

UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC
AND
SOCIAL COUNCIL



Distr.
GENERAL

E/5182/Add.1
5 July 1972

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

REPORTS OF THE JOINT INSPECTION UNIT

Country programming and after
(JIU/REP/71/12)

Addendum

COMMENTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL AND THE
ADMINISTRATOR OF UNDP

1. The report on "Country programming and after" prepared by Sir Leonard Scopes of the Joint Inspection Unit has been carefully reviewed by the United Nations in consultation with the UNDP and the other concerned bodies and departments of the United Nations. However, in view of the nature of the report, it has been found more practicable to present a consolidated statement of views, rather than to submit the comments of the Administrator, UNDP, under a separate heading. Although the conclusions reached and suggestions made are largely based on Sir Leonard's recent inspection tour of three North African countries, they also derive from his rich experience of previous years of inspection and have, thus, a wide applicability. The conclusions and suggestions of the report are of great relevance at a time when UNDP is in a position to draw the first tentative conclusions on its new system of country programming, following the approval of a first series of 19 country programmes by the Governing Council in January 1972 and the receipt of another 16 country-programmes to be submitted to the June 1972 session.
2. Clearly, it is necessary to be cautious in drawing firm conclusions in the case of a system which represents an important departure from former practices and perspective and which was initiated less than a year ago. UNDP does not consider that adequate information on the practical experience of country programming will be available for an in-depth and comprehensive review of the existing guidelines and instructions for the formulation and annual review of UNDP country programming before the fall of 1972, i.e., when a third series of country programming documents will have been received and reviewed.

3. It is a matter of some gratification that the report underlines that as a result of the country programming approach, there is already "an evident sharpening of priorities in national planning bodies and healthy pruning of projects of less direct relevance to national development". The Secretary-General also fully agrees with the

/...

general observation in the report that the central planning authorities "were pleased at the prospect of working under the new system, with its promise of more rational planning and, above all, avoidance of the continual frustrating and expensive task of processing hypothetical projects in order to fill up a 'pipeline' for possible selection and approval by the Governing Council of UNDP".

4. The following comments on the specific conclusions and suggestions of the report are offered:

Harmonization with national planning cycles

5. There is no implication in the new country programming approach that the duration of an individual assistance project should necessarily synchronize with the development plan of the country. The projects included in a country programme can be of different durations; many projects are likely to be taken up at any point of the country programming period and completed well within that period; some other projects may happen to coincide with the programming period; while there may be still others which are likely to span over two or more programming periods. There is no assumption in even national development plans that projects within the plan should synchronize exactly with the plan period.

6. The more relevant consideration is whether the country programming period should coincide with that of the national development plan. Here, the basic requirement under the new country programming approach is that the country programme should generally be derived from and be within the framework of the national development plan of the country. This does not imply that the country programmes should necessarily be formulated at the same time as the national development plan is being elaborated. The proper and most effective timing in each case will depend on a number of considerations among which the relative volume of the IPF and that of the other sources of technical assistance and pre-investment finances available to the country, will be of particular importance. However, on the basis of the experience of country programming gained so far, it can be stated that though it is not essential to achieve an absolute synchronization between national development plan and country programming periods, there is great advantage in bringing about such a synchronization to the maximum extent possible. More appropriately, country programming periods should commence immediately after the basic framework for the national development plan has been established. Many of the developing countries which have or are in the process of going through country programming exercises have shown such a preference regarding the timing of the preparation of country programmes. Some of them have requested delays in the formulation of their country programmes mainly with the intention of undertaking such an exercise immediately after the elaboration of the framework of the national development plans and the establishment of their development objectives and priorities.

7. The difficulties regarding the synchronization between country programming and national development plan periods are likely to arise more particularly at the initial stage when the country programming machinery is just being assembled at the country level and is being operated more or less on an experimental basis. In time, the country programming and national development plan periods are expected to be more closely meshed. The device of annual review will also be of help in this process.

/...

8. The criterion of the continuity of projects does not justify the concentration of UNDP assistance in particular areas, such as education and training as suggested in the report. There could be many projects in other areas also, such as, industrialization, natural resources development etc., which meet the criterion of continuity and which are of an catalytic nature and have a high multiplier effect. The sectoral emphasis in the country programme and the selection of projects to be included therein will differ from country to country depending upon the development objectives and the stage of development of the country and the availability of technical pre-investment assistance from other sources. The very purpose of the country programming exercise is, among other things, to take all these factors into account in order to determine the sectors and projects to which UNDP assistance should be given. Thus, if some developing countries show preference for UNDP assistance in the fields of education and training, this would naturally be reflected in their country programmes. However, in general, it can be stated that UNDP assistance will continue to be utilized in wide areas of development and that it has not been possible, at least at this early stage, to draw a common pattern in reviewing the priorities established by Governments.

Possible extension of country programming

9. The report emphasizes the importance of the possible extension of country programming to incorporate other United Nations inputs into the system of country programming. This is consistent with both the letter and spirit of the consensus. The resident representatives have been asked to take this important aspect of country programming fully into account while rendering assistance to Governments in the preparation of country programmes. It may also be pointed out that some countries have used the opportunity of UNDP country programming to develop "master plans" for technical assistance from all sources. Every effort is being made to encourage this trend.

Concentration of United Nations aid

10. The suggestion in the report that United Nations Advisers remain at a higher technical level than that of those whom they advise and that United Nations assistance should increasingly consist of highly qualified teams of advisers at the highest level of execution of national policy cannot be applied across the board for all developing countries. The United Nations development system has been providing this kind of highly selective assistance mainly through inter-regional advisers, regional advisers and the recently established United Nations Development Advisory Teams. Efforts are being made to improve, strengthen and expand these services. Nevertheless, these services will continue to remain one among many kinds of assistance being provided to developing countries. This highly selective assistance is mostly required by the relatively more developed among the developing countries. A large number of developing countries, particularly the least developed among them, whose needs are now being given special emphasis in the context of relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, will need assistance in the form of different kinds of expertise and other inputs, over a wide range of development fields and over a fairly long period of time. One also cannot over-emphasize the

/...

fact that one of the very important purposes of country programming exercise is to determine the different kinds and packages of assistance required by different developing countries. However, the question of a possible "concentration of United Nations aid" mentioned in paragraphs 6, 7 and 8 of the report, has received constant attention from UNDP over the years.

11. The Secretary-General also concurs with the suggestion in paragraph 7 of the report that Governments should be clearly informed of the inability of the United Nations system to execute a given project if that be the case. This will not only enable the Governments to seek other help in what may be a vital sector of their development plans, but also place on UNDP a responsibility to look, where necessary, for an executing agent outside the United Nations system.

Plan of operation

12. There is now no separate plan of operation for UNDP-assisted projects. The plan of operation has now been subsumed under the project document, for the designing and elaboration of which very detailed procedures have been laid down. In the project document, there is much greater emphasis than ever before on a clear definition of objectives and detailed elaboration of the activities for realizing these objectives. This, to a considerable extent, has helped in resolving the problem of definition of terminology, though it is agreed that there are certain terms still being used in the project document which need to be redefined with a view to promoting a more consistent understanding of what they mean.

UNDP field offices

13. UNDP, when considering staff for re-assignment or rotation, takes into account a number of factors, such as their length of service in the organization, the areas of previous assignments and the duration of those assignments, family situation in regard to educational facilities and available health facilities at given duty stations, in addition to the main consideration, which is the staff member's suitability for a particular post. These considerations have contributed to the maintenance of a generally high staff morale in the field. UNDP also endeavours to ensure that a staff member is not successively assigned to a series of hardship duty stations, taking all factors into account. Further, it tries to ensure the timely arrival of replacement staff, although, understandably, it is not in most cases possible to provide overlapping of staff. However, situations arise where reassignments involve a number of staff moves at the same time, and it is not always possible to synchronize their timing. On a number of occasions, timely assistance from nearby offices has been provided when the situation so demanded, and this policy will continue as appropriate.

After care

14. The point raised in the report about post-operational consultations and assistance is well taken. However, it may not be necessary to install any institutional machinery to handle this aspect separately, as this can be very well provided for within the framework of country programming. The possibility of

/...

maintaining an unprogrammed reserve fund out of IPF at the disposal of the resident representative and the authority delegated to the resident representative for sanctioning expenditure on small-scale activities are likely to go a long way towards meeting the requirements of post-operational consultations and other forms of assistance for already completed UNDP projects. It would also appear that the responsibility for identifying needs for such assistance and bringing them to the notice of the organizations of the United Nations development system will rest primarily on the resident representatives. Also, to a large extent, the need for taking ad hoc action for post-operational project assistance will be minimized with a more systematic evaluation of the country programmes as a whole and of the projects contained therein.

Probation for project personnel and operational teams

15. Better selection of and better working conditions for project personnel, including security of tenure, are objectives requiring continuing efforts in order to find satisfactory solutions, including perhaps the suggested period of probation. However, probation alone would not suffice, since difficulties do not arise only at the beginning of an expert's mission. Further, such a procedure might indeed make recruitment even more difficult. The problem is currently under review in UNDP, as is the suggestion made in paragraph 16 of the report concerning the designation of a "second-in-command" for particularly large projects.

16. While the contracts of project personnel properly fall within the purview of participating and executing agencies, the Administrator of UNDP takes an active interest in conditions of service of the project personnel to ensure that problems of service in the field do not have an adverse effect on the delivery of the programme. The Administrator of UNDP is to submit a preliminary report on this subject to the fourteenth session of the Governing Council.

Fellowships and seminars

17. According to the present procedures for offering fellowships, the programme of training is generally drawn up by the United Nations expert in consultation with the counterpart selected for fellowship abroad. The United Nations expert is also consulted if any change in the programme of training is to be made. Though this general procedure is being followed for large-sized projects, the Secretary-General is aware of the fact that there have been many deficiencies in its implementation. Every effort should therefore be made to associate the United Nations expert more closely and on a more systematic basis with the direction and content of his counterpart's training.

18. The activities under UNDP interregional programming are now going to be carried out increasingly in the form of action-oriented projects designed to solve specific problems of development common to a group of developing countries or developing countries as a whole and having a direct and discernable impact on their development process. This would imply a shift of emphasis away from general seminars which have so far been held at regular intervals, so they do not necessarily constitute

/...

action-oriented projects designed to solve specific development problems through activities undertaken at the country level. However, there could be seminars which may be directly related to specific operational problems and can thus directly stimulate operational activities. Moreover, exceptions would continue to be made for training seminars. These seminars should be specifically designed to upgrade skill in the areas concerned. The Secretary-General also agrees with the recommendation in the report that the ex cathedra approach to seminars should be avoided.

UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC
AND
SOCIAL COUNCIL



Distr.
GENERAL

E/5182/Add.2
28 July 1972

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

REPORTS OF THE JOINT INSPECTION UNIT

Country programming and after
(JIU/REP/71/12)

Note by the Secretary-General

Addendum

OBSERVATIONS OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATIVE
AND BUDGETARY QUESTIONS

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions submits herewith its observations on the report entitled "Country programming and after" (JIU/REP/71/12), prepared by Sir Leonard Scopes of the Joint Inspection Unit, and on the related comments of the Secretary-General and the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The report, dated December 1971, was received by the Advisory Committee in March 1972; in accordance with established procedure, the Committee is transmitting it to the Economic and Social Council, along with the related comments.
2. The report is concerned with the adaptation of policies and procedures for United Nations assistance activities, especially in the light of the adoption by UNDP of country programming and the greater emphasis which it places on national priorities. The Advisory Committee appreciates the fresh approach of the Inspector to these matters, and his identification of some of their practical implications. While the Committee finds the comments of the Secretary-General and the Administrator useful, it regrets that they do not address themselves fully to all the Inspector's recommendations. The Committee urges that comments on future reports of the Joint Inspection Unit address themselves to each recommendation and that in each case it be made clear which recommendation is being referred to.
3. Recommendation 1 deals with the organization of the Inspectors' own work and the Advisory Committee agrees that the savings to be made by grouping country inspections should be weighed against the practical limitations which may be inherent in such an approach.
4. The Secretary-General and the Administrator concur with the Inspector's recommendation 2, and the Advisory Committee commends this recommendation to

recipient Governments, which are in the best position to implement it when formulating their country programmes.

5. The Inspector has made a cogent case for his recommendation 3, while recognizing, as do the Secretary-General and the Administrator, that its application depends on the varying conditions that exist in the developing countries. This is a recommendation that Governments should bear in mind when considering in which areas assistance from the United Nations system is likely to be most productive. The above remarks also apply to recommendation 4, which recognizes that the United Nations system is not able to solve all the problems of the developing countries.

6. Recommendation 5 of the Inspector has to do with the delay in recruiting suitable experts, a matter touched on in his report entitled "Some technical co-operation activities of UNIDO in Algeria and Tunisia" (JIU/REP/71/11). It is difficult to imagine that projects could be considered without taking into account whether the specialists needed to implement them will in fact be available in good time, but there appears to be little doubt that this aspect is given insufficient attention. The Advisory Committee therefore endorses the Inspector's recommendation, on condition that the forecast of recruitment prospects furnished by the prospective executing agencies is a realistic one and not just a pro forma exercise. The experience of UNDP should be a safeguard against unrealistically optimistic forecasts. As for recommendation 6, experience tends to confirm the Inspector's contention that there have been cases where projects which manifestly could not be executed within a reasonable time were not cancelled or terminated, with resultant wastage of time and resources. The Advisory Committee notes that the Secretary-General and the Administrator concur with this recommendation.

7. The argument adduced by the Inspector in support of his recommendation 7 is that words used in plans of operation often have no precise, unambiguous meaning. This is a defect of international and other bureaucracies that is unfortunately not confined to documents of this type. While the Advisory Committee recognizes that the advice of an expert legal draftsman might be useful in avoiding possible legal complications, it is not convinced that that would necessarily make plans of operation clearer and more readily understood by the officials who must be guided by them. The Committee notes that UNDP is giving attention to this matter.

8. The Advisory Committee fully concurs with recommendation 8, on which the Secretary-General and the Administrator have offered no comments.

9. Recommendations 9 and 12 are closely related. The conditions of service of development personnel were dealt with at some length in the capacity study, 1/ and ~~are currently receiving the attention of the Governing Council of UNDP and the Administrator.~~ 2/ However, whereas the emphasis is usually laid on the need to

1/ A Study of the Capacity of the United Nations Development System (DP/5)
(United Nations publication, Sales No. E.70.I.10).

2/ See the Administrator's report entitled "Personnel for development assistance" (DP/L.246).

improve conditions of service, the Inspector calls attention in his recommendation 9 to another aspect, namely the desirability of having field staff - at least those employed directly by UNDP, as distinct from project personnel - "take the rough with the smooth" and accept postings to less attractive areas. The Advisory Committee agrees that a sense of devotion to the task of development by the persons involved is eminently desirable, and it recommends that the Administrator take into account the Inspector's recommendations in his study of ways to improve the quality of field representation. Improved recruitment practices should help to ensure the selection of personnel who are well suited to the task in hand, from the viewpoint of both expertise and personal commitment.

10. In view of the arguments set out by the Inspector in support of his recommendation 10, the Advisory Committee trusts that the Administrator will, when redeploying posts among the offices of resident representatives, carefully consider the implications of any temporary under-manning that might result.

11. Recommendation 11 deals with a problem which has been repeatedly raised by the Joint Inspection Unit, namely how best to phase out assistance projects. The Inspector recognizes that the new country programming procedure may perhaps eliminate this problem, and in their comments the Secretary-General and the Administrator tend to confirm that possibility. Whether the new procedures instituted by UNDP will in fact overcome all the obstacles which have been met with in the past is, however, a matter of conjecture. The long-term impact of projects is affected by the manner in which they are phased out. For this reason the Advisory Committee considers that the Administrator should carefully monitor developments and make new proposals should the measures described in paragraph 14 of his and the Secretary-General's comments prove to be inadequate.

12. The comments of the Secretary-General and the Administrator do not deal with recommendation 13; the Advisory Committee considers this a reasonable recommendation and urges that it be implemented. The Committee notes that the Administrator has recommendation 14 under review.

13. ~~There appears to be agreement on the usefulness of recommendations 15 and 16~~ and the Advisory Committee recommends that they be implemented.



UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC
AND
SOCIAL COUNCIL



Distr.
GENERAL

E/5182/Add.3
28 July 1972

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

REPORTS OF THE JOINT INSPECTION UNIT

Country programming and after
(JIU/REP/71/12)

Note by the Secretary-General

Addendum

COMMENTS OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL
CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION (ICAO)

1. Paragraphs 1-4. No comment necessary.
2. Paragraph 5. As at present there is no ICAO regular programme of technical assistance (with the exception of a small programme for training under Assembly resolution A16-7), the suggestions in this paragraph do not apply to ICAO.
3. Paragraph 6. This is not foreign to ICAO experience. It seems clear that, in many cases, there has been a natural and logical evolution of assistance to developing countries provided through UNDP by ICAO from ab initio training to more sophisticated training such as the Civil Aviation Safety Centre in Beirut, or to the setting up of STOL airline operations. Fellowship training has shown a similar evolution.
4. Paragraph 7. The comment in this paragraph concerning the requirement of an executing agency to submit a statement of "the probability of recruiting, in good time, the specialist required" is not a new suggestion by JIU. When it was raised two years ago, the following answer was given and it still seems to be applicable: "The idea of obtaining a previous guarantee of quick recruitment from the Agency before approving the project is not practical. The UNDP and agencies cannot very well deny needed assistance because recruitment difficulties are anticipated. The thing to do is to start recruitment action as early in advance of the project approval as possible, and keep making efforts to expedite recruitment."
5. Paragraph 8. This seems to be too extreme a generalization to be useful. Certainly, there are occasions where a few large projects would be more useful than many small ones; there are also many occasions where a small project providing a very specific type of assistance can be of considerable value to a Government.

6. Paragraph 9. The comment in this paragraph about the definition of the word "project" appears to be well taken. However, ICAO has not in the past had difficulty with the legal interpretation of a Plan of Operation.

7. Paragraph 10. It is not ICAO practice to require a signature ceremony. The Plan of Operation, after signature by the President of the ICAO Council and UNDP, is forwarded to the UNDP resident representative with the request that he obtain the signature of the Government.

8. Paragraphs 11 and 12. These do not apply to ICAO.

9. Paragraph 13. It is agreed that the follow-up of completed projects is of very considerable importance. In general, ICAO maintains close relationships with completed projects of an institutional nature through correspondence, visits by regional officers, assignment of training advisers for short-term periods etc. In certain cases, in addition, continuing assistance has been provided by ICAO through the Technical Assistance Component of the UNDP after the completion of the larger-scale SF project. In any case, the terminal report produced by the agency will make specific recommendations concerning follow-up when applicable.

10. Paragraph 14. In this regard, ICAO procedure is as follows:

A one-year contract is normally given to a new expert or to an ICAO expert transferred to a new country. Following one year of satisfactory service the contract is usually extended to cover the entire remaining period as provided for in the Plan of Operation. In addition, there is a provision in the expert's contract to permit an early termination in the case of unsatisfactory service, but this provision is seldom used.

11. Paragraph 15. This does not apply to ICAO operations. An ICAO expert may have to travel within his country of assignment from time to time, but his normal residence cannot be remote from the place in which the majority of his work has to be done.

12. Paragraph 16. This problem has not arisen in ICAO, and it is not considered likely to arise, so that the designation of a "second-in-command" appears unnecessary.

13. Paragraph 17. This subject has also been raised by JIU in the past, and at that time the following comment was made:

"In ICAO/SF projects, fellowships are listed in the Plans of Operation and are usually completed in time in accordance with the work schedule. ICAO Project Managers have definite responsibility in suggesting the exact time for beginning training and the programme and the place for such training."

14. Paragraph 18. The holding of seminars is not normally a part of ICAO technical assistance projects, so that this comment is not applicable.

UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC
AND
SOCIAL COUNCIL



Distr.
GENERAL

E/5182/Add.4
1 August 1972
ENGLISH

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH/FRENCH/
RUSSIAN/SPANISH

REPORTS OF THE JOINT INSPECTION UNIT

Country programming and after
(JIU/REP/71/12, December 1971)

Addendum

COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL AND ACTION TAKEN BY THE
EXECUTIVE BOARD OF WHO

A. Comments of the Director-General of WHO

1.

2. The report is of a general character; there are no specific references to WHO. The report contains valuable observations on the opportunities and constraints for multilateral technical assistance activities; it deals firstly with some basic problems of country programming and secondly with a number of organizational and managerial questions related to the provision of United Nations aid. At various degrees the United Nations and the specialized agencies have been concerned with all these questions, and individual and collective efforts are being pursued in order to find the most rational solution to them. On the whole, the report represents a useful contribution to these efforts.

3. Concerning the suggestion in paragraph 5 that eventually all United Nations inputs should be incorporated into the system of country programming, it should be pointed out that it is necessary first to achieve a full consolidation of resources sector-wise. As the fabric of society is composed of various factors, the development process has been and continues to be a composite of sectoral developments like industry, agriculture, health, education, etc. The strengthening of individual sectors and the increasing of their potentials are therefore prerequisite to any integrated development process. The same applies to aid of the United Nations system. The main effort should be centred on the improvement of the development/operational potentials of the United Nations itself and of each of the specialized agencies. It is on such a foundation that an integrated assistance to development should be built.

4. WHO, long before the advent of UNDP country programming, has endeavoured to develop a total country approach based on the health needs of countries regardless

of the different sources of funding involved. At the same time, UNDP Resident Representatives have always been kept informed of WHO's activities under the regular budget and other sources either by advanced information, prior consultations, visits, meetings and through WHO's documents which are widely distributed. The Director-General has agreed to the inclusion of WHO regular programme activities in the sectoral profile which additionally encompasses assistance from bilateral sources.

5. The observation in paragraph 6 regarding the growing demands of countries for foreign advisers with greater expertise reflects adequately the evolution in this field as experienced by WHO. Constantly on the alert to guard against the possibility of recruiting staff of an insufficiently high standard, there are increasing instances when the Organization opts for recruiting a short-term consultant in a specialized field rather than a long-term generalist.

6. On the other hand, the recommendation in paragraph 7 that UNDP should require the presumptive executing agency to submit a statement of the probability of recruiting in good time the specialists required needs some precision. This recommendation assumes that the recruitment process is entirely controlled by the executing agency. In fact, the selection of a candidate is but one step in the recruitment process. Delays occur thereafter and for a number of reasons which are often beyond the control of the executing agency. In addition to unforeseen personal and professional problems, there could be delays from the releasing government or the recipient government. A desirable improvement therefore requires measures at different levels.

7. The Director-General endorses the recommendation in paragraph 9 that measures should be taken to improve the working of plans of operation. Regarding the observations on the ceremonial signature of plans of operation, this is not a custom followed by WHO. Plans of operation are, in general, signed by each signatory at his normal place of work and consideration is even now being given to delegating to the WR the authority to sign plans of operation on behalf of the Regional Director.

8. The Director-General agrees with the importance of the follow-up on completed projects as recommended in paragraph 13. This is the normal practice in WHO which is also facilitated by the Organization's regionalized structure and the institution of WHO Representatives who are expected to review annually the health situation in their respective countries. The evaluation of completed projects is also undertaken at the request of governments and the regional offices have the possibility of recruiting short-term consultants to undertake such a task.

9. In paragraph 14 it is recommended that a period of probation linked with more secure tenure of office after probation should be devised for United Nations technical assistance specialists. In WHO any full-time appointment of one year or more is subject to probation of at least one year (Staff rule 320.3) and, to some extent, the suggested assurances are implicit in the relationship between the executing agency and the expert. It should, however, be emphasized that for a number of reasons, an explicit assurance would be inappropriate in some cases.

/...

10. The observations on fellowships and seminars in paragraphs 17 and 18 are pertinent but the situations encountered are certainly neither general nor static. In WHO, various steps are being taken to cope with this problem. Thus, for example, the Organization has developed a classification of educational meetings, i.e. courses, symposia, seminars, conferences, workshops, etc., with definitions of the type of educational methods applicable and the type of participants to attend. Careful consideration is always given to the selection of the most suitable schemes for each training project.

B. Action taken by the Executive Board of WHO

The Executive Board,

Having considered the Joint Inspection Unit report on "Country Programming and After" and the Director-General's report thereon,

1. Concurs with the comments and observations of the Director-General on this report;
2. Thanks Sir Leonard Scopes for his report;
3. Requests the Director-General to transmit his report and the decisions of the Executive Board to:
 - (i) The Secretary-General of the United Nations for transmission to the Economic and Social Council through the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination;
 - (ii) The External Auditor of the World Health Organization;
 - (iii) The Chairman of the Joint Inspection Unit.

UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC
AND
SOCIAL COUNCIL



Distr.
GENERAL

E/5182/Add.5
21 March 1973

ENGLISH

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH/FRENCH/
SPANISH

Fifty-fifth session

REPORTS OF THE JOINT INSPECTION UNIT

Country programming and after
(JIU/REP/71/12, December 1971)

COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL AND ACTION TAKEN BY THE COUNCIL OF THE
FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

I. Comments of the Director-General

1. This report may be considered as being primarily addressed to the Administrator of UNDP since the over-all responsibility for Country Programming rests with UNDP. However, in view of FAO's involvement as Specialized and Executing Agency for one of the largest and most important socio-economic sectors, it is indeed appropriate that the Director-General should comment upon it and submit these comments to the governing bodies in accordance with established procedures.

2. In paragraph 4, which deals with the "Harmonization with National Planning Cycles", the Inspector states that "there are clearly going to be a number of countries which will regard economic planning as an act of sovereignty which it is desirable to keep in domestic hands, until a certain stage of decision has been reached and passed". Experience gained from the 19 Country Programmes approved by the UNDP Governing Council in January 1972, and those under preparation for a similar number of countries to be approved by the Governing Council in June 1972, indicates that no hard and fast rule has yet manifested itself on this aspect of Country Programming. It is known that at least 50 per cent of new projects in the approved Country Programmes are extensions (with modifications) or out-growths of existing projects. No special reticence by Governments has been noticed in relying upon advice from the agencies; and of course the agencies must continue to take the initiative in providing recipient Governments with appropriate assistance in planning for development within their social and economic sectors.

3. It may be observed in this connexion, that Country Programming, as conceived and as defined procedurally, envisages a continuous process. The Country Programme itself is formulated in broad terms and individual projects within each

socio-economic sector can be replaced by others in the reserve list or even by new ones, provided the latter fall clearly within the objectives of the approved Country Programme. In addition to the flexibility thus provided in substituting projects in the light of Government wishes resulting from changed circumstances and priorities, the Country Programming procedures provide that periodic evaluations shall be carried out of the Country Programmes by the Government with the assistance of UNDP and the Executing Agency as and when required. The procedures also provide that, as a result of these evaluations, projects may be reoriented or modified, as necessary.

4. As regards new projects, the "Pre-project" device is certainly proving very helpful in ensuring that the project formulation process has been fully completed and has taken into account all the possibilities and weaknesses at the local level, whether of a technical or logistical nature. Since these are recognized as being country projects, FAO believes that it is the Government concerned which must indicate the time when it is ready to commence field operations. Naturally the Executing Agency has a responsibility in assisting with the preparatory work, but for realistic performance recording and statistics we believe that, after a period of pre-project activity, the starting point of full project field operations should be clearly identified in the country itself. Various devices are being introduced or are under consideration by FAO which would enable it to respond more rapidly to the requests for expert assistance, but with increasing experience resulting from Country Programming, delays can be confidently expected to decrease.

5. We agree that education and training are fields which are naturally suited for UNDP assistance. This has been an accepted concept from the start of SF operation and all projects, whether large (of the SF type), or small (of the TA type), are envisaged to contain an educational or training component.

6. In paragraph 5 the Inspector discusses the possible extension of Country Programming. It would seem premature, however, to comment on the Inspector's conclusions since his report was written before any Country Programmes had yet been approved by the UNDP Governing Council and the first group of 19 Country Programmes are only just starting on the first programming cycle. In this connexion, the Inspector advocates a procedure with regard to inputs which is already to a large extent being followed. At the programming stage, recognition is given to the expected aid inputs from UNICEF, WFP, etc. during the programme cycle and although contributions from multilateral, bilateral and non-governmental organizations are outside the Indicative Planning Figure, the UNDP resident representative has the responsibility to help the Government (as well as donors) take into account all expected foreign aid inputs from whatever sources at the programme planning stage. So far as FAO is concerned, the SAA/CRs are instructed to assist the UNDP resident representative in keeping him fully informed on all the expected inputs from both within and outside the UNDP IPF which fall within the food and agriculture sector.

7. In paragraph 6, the Inspector discussed the topic of concentration of United Nations aid and refers to the growing impression that, as a result of decades of United Nations assistance, many developing countries can pride themselves on having the local indigenous experts with high technical standards.

/...

He concludes therefore that one of the most serious problems now confronting the United Nations development system is to ensure that United Nations advisers remain at a higher technical level than those whom they advise. While agreeing in principle with this conclusion, the Director-General draws attention to the fact that the transfer of pure technology per se as a contribution to socio-economic development is no longer accepted as being valid. Experience has shown that managerial competence and practical operational ability are essential requirements for socio-economic development and constitute an area in which developing countries need considerable and sustained assistance. Consequently, while technical qualifications continue to be important, FAO believes that scarce, high-level technicians can often be supplied to those countries which require them by such means as regional seminars, training centres or group-country projects sharing the expertise; in most other cases, however, including the 25 countries which are classified as "the least developed of developing countries", technical assistance should focus attention not simply on supplying experts with the requisite technical competence, but with demonstrated managerial and operational ability as well.

8. In paragraph 7 of the Report, the Inspector offers the suggestion that, when it is found that a project undertaken cannot be put into execution within a reasonable time, the country concerned should be so informed at an early date, thus enabling it to seek other help. The UNDP Guidelines governing the Country Programming exercise cover this point. As stated above, there is every indication that the new Country Programming procedures (although by no means perfect) will facilitate and improve project operations; and FAO itself is actively gearing itself to undertake its Executing Agency role with increased efficiency. Having said this, however, it must again be emphasized that the major characteristic of Country Programming is that it is the Programme of the Government concerned, and that this has brought about a shift to the country level of responsibilities and initiatives for project operations. In practice therefore the UNDP resident representative, who is responsible for the monitoring of UNDP-financed projects and who is assisted by the SAA/CR for projects in the food and agriculture sector, is best suited to alert those concerned in the Government and at the headquarters of the Executing Agency of any operational deficiencies and delays. At its headquarters, FAO is introducing a system whereby these danger signals from the field are fed into the management system in such a way as to produce quick and effective results.

9. In the light of the preceding comments, one would hesitate to accept the slogan offered by the Inspector in paragraph 8 of the Report, namely "to do half as much twice as well". The question of the optimum size of the projects has received considerable attention by the UNDP Governing Council, the UNDP secretariat as well as by FAO and the consensus is that there can be no rigid rule, that there is a place for all types of projects to meet the particular circumstances in the developing countries. Moreover, there is no clear evidence that larger projects are necessarily more successful than smaller projects.

10. In paragraph 9 the Inspector discusses the question of Plans of Operation. As new procedures are being introduced for what are now called "Project Documents", it is felt that comments on the Inspector's observations would be somewhat outdated by these new developments. On this subject, the Inspector suggests that "it would be helpful to seek the advice of an independent legal draftsman... for his uninhibited

/...

criticism and suggestion for improvement". Since this is a matter for which the UNDP is responsible, it is assumed that the Inspector will receive the comments and advice from that quarter indicating the considerable improvements which have already been introduced.

11. In paragraph 10 the Inspector recommends doing away with the ceremonial signature of Plans of Operation which takes place from time to time. It can be pointed out that the ceremonials, when they do occur, are always on the initiative or the request of the Government concerned. While certain economies in travel may be possible in this connexion, FAO normally utilizes senior personnel in the country (usually the SAA/CR) as FAO's representative to sign on behalf of the Executing Agency and only in rare cases, if an HQ or regional officer happens to be visiting the country on the request of the government authorities, does he undertake the signing of the Plan of Operations on behalf of FAO.

12. Regarding the Inspector's observations in paragraph 13 concerning "after care", it would be relevant to refer to the evaluation procedure which has been established under Country Programming. The new procedures now provide for what is termed a "built-in evaluation" in each project and a periodic and terminal evaluation. The periodic evaluation may lead to reformulation of an ongoing project facing difficulties. The terminal evaluation would focus attention on the follow-up, including possible "successor" projects.

13. Regarding paragraph 14 of the Report, on "Probation for Project Personnel", it will be of interest to note that further steps are at present being taken by FAO to ensure that experts of the right calibre are being appointed and that appropriate consultation takes place at the end of probationary periods. A proposal has thus been put forward that UNDP should be involved in the prior evaluation of candidates for PM and certain key project expert posts. The organization is in fact of the opinion that the UNDP resident representative, who receives candidatures to obtain government clearance, may at the same time review such candidatures and consult with FAO as needed.

14. A plan is now also being studied to bring about systematic appropriate consultations with supervisory field staff before important personnel actions are taken regarding individual experts, such as confirmation of appointment after fulfilment of the probationary period of the expert.

15. Regarding the complaint from field staff regarding insecurity of tenure, it is firmly believed that the new Country Programming system, providing for advance planning of country operations over a five-year period, will to a large extent obviate such difficulties in future.

16. Mention should also be made of the new recruitment planning procedure, introduced in FAO as from the beginning of 1972. A salient feature in this connexion is the systematic preparation of complete project manning tables preparatory to any recruitment effort on individual cases. It is again believed that this new measure of advance planning will make it possible to take action well in advance regarding expert extensions or contract expiries.

/...

17. Under the heading of Operational Teams" the Inspector offers the recommendation in paragraph 16 "to have an informal understanding between Government, UNDP, Executing Agency and field team concerned for the designation of a second-in-command to take charge during the temporary absence of the titular team leader". This is also a matter to which FAO has given attention and it is felt that, under the procedural arrangements which are being introduced, FAO is unlikely to be faced with difficulties resulting from the absence of the Team Leader or Project Manager. One of the major objectives of FAO's reorganization is to introduce the concept and the related procedures whereby the SAA/CR is the "primus inter pares" of all of FAO's field project personnel serving in the country. Just as the UNDP resident representative may call upon the services of any field expert for a specific job on the request of the Government, so also can the SAA/CR, in collaboration with the UNDP resident representative, call upon available expertise to meet particular requirements at a given time. In doing so, however, care is taken to ensure that any short-term utilization of existing field project personnel for work outside his specific project assignment is undertaken without detriment to his longer-term assignment.

18. Regarding "Fellowships and Seminars", the Inspector's observations outlined in paragraphs 17 and 18 are in line with procedures followed in FAO. We fully agree with the need for a very careful selection of lecturers for seminars to ensure that they give lively talks and that they are supported by visual media and other practical demonstrations.

19. Finally, the Director-General wishes to thank Inspector Sir Leonard Scopes for his useful report and, upon his retirement to express appreciation, on behalf of FAO, for the outstanding services he has rendered to the United Nations system as a member of the Joint Inspection Unit.

II. Action taken by the Council

~~The Council gave considerable attention to the Report on Country Programming and after endorsing in general the views of the Director-General and of the Programme and Finance Committees on this report which, though issued at an early stage after the introduction of country programming, the Council felt contained a number of valuable suggestions.~~

Specific references were made to several of these suggestions including (a) the need to limit the range of United Nations technical assistance to areas in which it could have the greatest catalytic effect; (b) the importance of co-ordinating United Nations assistance with programmes sponsored by bilateral agencies; (c) the effecting of improvements, based on experience in country programming, in the formulation, execution, appraisal and follow-up of field projects; (d) the limitation in the value of food aid projects because of the financial burdens these projects placed upon many Governments, and (e) the extension of country programming to include all external inputs.

The Council requested that its views on these matters as well as those expressed in the debate on FAO/UNDP co-operation be borne in mind in future discussions by the Director-General with UNDP and at IACB.

/...

Extract from the report of the Programme Committee
on its twenty-first session

The Committee endorsed the Director-General's comments on country programming but felt that the usefulness of the report was reduced by the fact that many changes in country programming procedures had recently occurred. It was suggested that the subject might be considered for re-examination by the Unit at a later time after further experience with Country Programming.

The Committee made specific comments on paragraphs 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12 and 13 of the Director-General's comments:

(a) Paragraph 6. The Committee noted that with respect to the extension of country programming to include inputs from all sources, as the Inspector had suggested, this was already to a large extent being carried out by taking into account expected inputs from UNICEF, WFP, etc. and that the resident representative, in consultation with the Senior Agricultural Advisers/FAO country representatives, were required to keep the Government informed of foreign aid inputs from all sources at the programming stage.

(b) Paragraph 7. With regard to the Inspector's suggestion that more highly qualified experts were required in certain countries because of the higher "indigenous ability", the Committee fully supported the Director-General's view that the concept of the transfer of pure technology was not valid in all cases and that in any event in most countries there was still need for expertise with managerial competence and operational ability. High level technical knowledge required by some countries could be provided by regional seminars, training centres or group-training projects.

(c) Paragraph 8. The Inspector had suggested that recipient countries should be informed when delays are expected to occur in the commencement of execution of projects. The Committee agreed with the Director-General that, as major responsibility in country programming had been transferred to the field, it was now the responsibility of the resident representative, assisted by the Senior Agricultural Adviser/FAR country representative, to alert Governments when operational difficulties or delays occur in respect of the implementation of UNDP projects.

(d) Paragraph 9. The Committee felt that the Director-General's comments were not directed to the specific point raised by the Inspector which in effect suggested that the UNDP-financed assistance should be concentrated on fewer and larger projects of high quality. However, the Committee agreed with the Director-General that there was still a place for all types of projects and that in any event it was for Governments to decide upon the amount and nature of the projects to be included within their country programmes.

(e) Paragraph 10. The Committee endorsed the views of the Director-General in opposing the suggestion of the Inspector that "independent legal draftsmen" be recruited for the drafting of Plans of Operation or "Project Documents".

/...

(f) Paragraph 12. The Committee attached great importance to the need for "after care", post-project evaluation and follow-up as recommended by the Inspector and now to a large extent included in the new programming procedures.

(g) Paragraph 13. The Committee concurred with the Director-General's concern to the suggestion that UNDP should be consulted on the selection of Project Managers and key project expert posts as it believed that this would increase the already very serious delays in fielding of project personnel. It noted with satisfaction that the Programme Working Group of IACB had taken a strong position on this matter and had suggested that the present procedures under which Resident Representatives are given an opportunity to express their views on candidates submitted was sufficient to achieve the purposes set forth in the UNDP Governing Council's Consensus on this particular matter.

Extracts from the reports of the Finance Committee
at its twenty-seventh and twenty-eighth sessions

Twenty-seventh session

After a preliminary examination of the JIU report by Sir Leonard Scopes on Country Programming and After (JIU/REP/72/12) and the Director-General's comments thereon (CL 59/6), the Committee decided to defer substantive consideration of this item to its Fall Session. By this time it would have before it the report of the June Session of the UNDP Governing Council and a secretariat report on Headquarters relationships with the field.

However, the Committee wished to record some of the questions to which it would give particular attention when this item is again discussed. These included:

(a) the financial and structural implications for the Organization of the introduction of Country Programming;

(b) paragraph 5 of the Inspector's report in which reference is made to the heavy burden placed upon Governments in the planning and administration of United Nations technical assistance;

(c) paragraph 7 which suggests that a study be carried out for the purpose of concentrating United Nations assistance efforts rather than attempting to cover "the whole range of human endeavour". In this connexion, it was suggested that, in view of the present exercise on priorities and savings, FAO should establish clear criteria for the selection of field projects for which it was best qualified to execute;

(d) paragraph 8 which suggests that consideration be given to fewer but larger UNDP-financed projects.

/...

Twenty-eighth session

Following the preliminary examination carried out at its twenty-seventh session, the Committee reviewed this report (document CL 59/6) by Sir Leonard Scopes in the light of the several points raised at the previous session. It considered that this was a useful report and it expressed appreciation to the former Inspector for the frankness of his observations and for the concrete nature of his proposals made on the basis of experience gained from many investigations of field projects. The Committee gave particular attention to the Inspector's view that there should be "fewer but larger projects" and that the United Nations Aid Programme should attempt to "do half as much twice as well". It took note of the report by the Secretariat on developments in country programmes which indicated that there would be a continuing and perhaps increasing need for small projects in the form of high-level consultants. The Committee concluded that the United Nations system should be more selective in providing technical assistance and do so in as efficient a manner as possible.

The Committee noted the observations of the Director-General, and found that they supplemented and clarified many of the Inspector's observations as they applied to FAO which had been made at an early stage in the implementation of the new system of Country Programming.

The Committee took note of the oral reports of the Secretariat with respect to some of the problems arising from the introduction of country programming, which would be discussed at the forthcoming meeting of the Inter-Agency Consultative Board. It gave particular attention to the need for FAO to participate to the fullest extent possible in the appraisal of country programmes and projects on the basis of sound and proven criteria.

The Secretariat indicated that no financial or structural changes for the Organization had so far been involved in the introduction of country programming. The Committee felt that this matter should be kept under review and that further reports should be submitted as developments occurred in the implementation of this new system of technical assistance, bearing in mind the financial implications.

UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC
AND
SOCIAL COUNCIL



Distr.
GENERAL

E/5182/Add.6
19 March 1973

ENGLISH

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH/FRENCH/
RUSSIAN/SPANISH

Fifty-fifth session

REPORTS OF THE JOINT INSPECTION UNIT

Country programming and after (JIU/REP/71/12,
December 1971)

Comments of the specialized agencies

- I. Observations of the Director-General of the ILO
- II. Preliminary observations of the Director-General of UNESCO
- III. Comments of the Director-General of UPU
- IV. Comments of the Secretary-General of IMCO

I. Observations of the Director-General of the ILO

In recommendation No. 2, Sir Leonard suggests that thought should be given now to the eventual incorporation of other United Nations "inputs" into the system of country programming. The Director-General agrees and would point out that the "consensus" resolution provides that "in the process of country programming, efforts should be made at all levels to co-ordinate all sources of assistance in the United Nations system, with a view to achieving integration of the assistance at the country level". At the recent UNDP Programme Working Group in London the statements made by the representatives of WFP and UNICEF showed no opposition from these agencies to the integration of their inputs into those of the United Nations development system. On the contrary, they took the view that it was a weakness of the recently completed country programming exercise that integration of these inputs into those of the United Nations development system could not be achieved to the desired degree. In so far as the ILO regular programme activities are concerned the ILO has accepted the principle of co-ordinating these activities with those financed under the UNDP and the Director-General informed UNDP to this effect on 15 January 1970.

Sir Leonard proposes in recommendation No. 3 that close attention should be paid to current experiments in small, concentrated, high-level projects as possible models for the future in appropriate circumstances. The Director-General would observe that what Sir Leonard proposes is, in fact, the trend in many countries, especially those which have reached a relatively high level of scientific and technological knowledge. The ILO is making a conscious effort to respond to this new trend. However, it might be unwise to generalize on this basis and not to recognize the fact that there are countries, including the so-called least developed ones, whose needs for external aid are for the most part at more basic levels.

In recommendation No. 4, Sir Leonard Scopes suggests that the United Nations should try to avoid the temptation of omnicompetence, and to recognize that there may be fields of activity better suited for multilateral technical assistance than others. The Director-General would agree with this. The ILO's technical assistance is not intended to be a substitute for bilateral aid. It is intended to be a specific and complementary contribution in those areas of activity where it would be useful to focus the best available international experience, and which are directly related to the attainment of the social objectives of the organisation.

In recommendation No. 5, Sir Leonard suggests that at the time of examination of suggested projects, UNDP should ask prospective executing agencies for a forecast of recruitment prospects. The Director-General would agree with the principle that recruitment prospects should be one of the determining factors for decisions on individual projects. There is some hesitation about adding further formalized steps to the existing complex procedures for project approvals (especially since this would appear to be unnecessary) as agencies can, and the ILO does, take into account recruitment prospects when preparing the time-table

/...

for project formulation and implementation which forms part (annex II) of the country programming. 1/ Practically in all cases, or where large-scale projects are concerned, full consultation between the UNDP and the agency on recruitment prospects does take place prior to project approval.

In recommendation No. 6, Sir Leonard proposes that projects which are particularly urgent for a developing country's economy should be put into operation with all speed, or else, if the required expertise cannot be provided without undue delay, be dropped in agreement with the Government. The information given in the preceding paragraph under recommendation No. 5 is relevant also to the point made in this recommendation. The underlying object of setting up a time-table for project formulation and implementation is to ensure that the aid sought from the United Nations development service is, in fact, available and can be given at the time required.

In recommendation No. 7, Sir Leonard suggests that the advice of an independent legal expert should be taken to improve the wording of plans of operation, so as to distinguish more clearly between the different roles to be played by the Governments on the one hand, and the international advisory staff on the other. The Director-General recognizes the value of this recommendation but would like to observe that "plans of operation" have now been replaced by "project documents" which have already reached a high degree of standardization. If the UNDP who have primary responsibility for the format of project documents were to suggest further improvements in this respect the Director-General would be pleased to follow their recommendations.

Sir Leonard points out in recommendation No. 8 that proposals for the ceremonial signature of Plans of Operation should be carefully scrutinized in the interests of economy. The Director-General agrees with Sir Leonard's recommendation: but Plans of Operation are now replaced by the Project Document and usually there is no ceremony for the signing of the Project Documents. They are signed by the three parties concerned at different stages, places and times.

In recommendation No. 11, Sir Leonard proposes that a cheaper but more effective method of supplying post-project help should be devised. The Director-General would observe that one of the stated purposes of the annual review of country programmes is to afford an opportunity "to consider any question of follow-up on completed projects". Consequently, there are measures to provide major post-project help when it is needed, through revision of the country programmes. The Director-General has noted with interest Sir Leonard's suggestions in paragraph 13 for "after-care" through correspondence or visits by specialist consultants. In developing and refining the decentralized field structure this factor is being taken into account by the ILO.

Sir Leonard's proposal in recommendation No. 12 that a period of probation, linked with more secure tenure of office after probation, should be devised for United Nations technical assistance specialists. The Director-General shares the concern of Sir Leonard on this question but would like to point out that certain problems do remain. Experience shows that the existence of a formal probationary period would tend to discourage candidates from seeking expert assignments under the United Nations Development Programme. At the time of recruitment candidates are informed that while they are initially being offered a contract of 12 months, an extension of their contract for the entire duration of the post is subject to satisfactory performance and the concurrence of the Government. Thus, the first one-year contract de facto constitutes a probationary period. However, delays on the part of the recipient Governments on approving extensions of experts' contracts as well as frequent requests on the part of Governments for changes in the plans of operation add difficulties in obtaining for the expert a more secure tenure of office after probation. Initial experience with country programming suggests that these difficulties seem to have increased over the recent past.

Finally, Sir Leonard suggests under recommendation No. 15 that United Nations specialists should have a say in the courses of training to be followed by their counterparts. Apparently this recommendation is based on the assumption that in some instances training offered to fellows is not co-ordinated with project objectives and the specific needs of the counterparts concerned. The Director-General would point out that it has always been, and still is, the ILO policy and practice that chiefs of project or individual experts are responsible, after consultation with the National Director of the Centre, for recommending the study programme of the fellow (counterpart).

II. Preliminary observations of the Director-General of UNESCO

The Director-General considers that this thoughtful report makes a useful contribution at an appropriate time to the efforts of Member States and the United Nations family of organizations to introduce techniques and procedures for the complex process of country programming. The report also makes a number of practical suggestions on points of detail concerning the planning and execution of projects.

The report is addressed to all United Nations organizations and will no doubt be a subject of discussion within the framework of existing interagency meetings. The Director-General will be guided in these discussions by the views expressed by the Executive Board and by the experience already acquired in participating in country programming.

Below the Director-General presents his preliminary observations on those parts of the report most pertinent to the work of UNESCO.

Paragraphs 3 and 4 of the report: The Director-General notes that the Inspector reports as encouraging the limited experience with country programming but modifies this view by his emphasis on the difficulties of harmonization of United Nations aid with national planning cycles. These difficulties lead the Inspector to observe that education and training "are perhaps among those activities most naturally suited to United Nations assistance" (paragraph 4 of report). This view has long been advanced by UNESCO for the reasons cited by the Inspector.

Paragraphs 6 to 8 of the report: Concentration of United Nations aid. Projects entrusted to UNESCO have been larger than the average of UNDP projects particularly as concerns the counterpart contributions. Any trend towards a further concentration on larger but fewer projects would be welcome provided that the possibility of providing expertise for short periods is not eliminated in such fields as statistics where assistance may be required to set up, or improve, a small but key unit of the Government (paragraph 8 of report). The suggestion on a forecast of recruitment prospects is well taken as is the need for speed of execution which has been repeatedly stressed by the Director-General (paragraph 7 of the report).

Paragraphs 9 and 10 of the report: Plans of Operation (now called Project Documents). The Director-General agrees that the misuse of the word "project" has confused the roles of Member States and Participating and Executing Agencies. He agrees with the observations of the Inspector. Regarding the ceremonial signing of plans of operation (paragraph 10) almost all plans are signed by the Director-General at Headquarters and no trips are made for the main purpose of signing a plan of operation.

Paragraph 13 of the report: After-care. The Director-General feels that "After-care" should be an integral part of the planning process under country programming.

/...

Paragraph 14 of the report: Probation for project personnel. All UNESCO appointments include a nine-month probationary period.

Paragraphs 17 and 18 of the report: Fellowships and Seminars. The scheduling of expert assistance to coincide at appropriate times with the physical presence of a counterpart at the project site is one of the important elements considered in project planning. It has not always been possible, for a variety of reasons, to achieve ideal schedules but this is the objective. The Inspector's observations on seminars reflect the thinking of the Director-General.

III. Comments of the Director-General of UPU

Recommendation No. 2

The writer of the report suggests taking into consideration when preparing the programmes not only UNDP financing but also the very large contributions from certain specialized agencies under their regular programmes. The International Bureau fully agrees with this recommendation provided that it applies only to agencies with a programme of their own sufficiently large to justify such a measure. The UPU has no regular programme in the strict sense, but only a very small Special Fund financed by voluntary contributions from member administrations and intended solely to meet urgent needs. It is therefore clear that, despite the cogency of the recommendation, the Fund cannot be considered under the proposed measure.

Recommendation No. 5

While recognizing the importance of the problem, it is desirable that the organization responsible for implementing a project can let the UNDP know the possibilities of recruiting, in due course, the specialists required at the stage of preliminary examination of a project.

Recommendation No. 12

It is proposed that there should be a probationary stage, which would subsequently ensure greater security of tenure for United Nations technical assistance specialists. The UPU is afraid that the category of probationer may hamper the specialist's work or reduce his authority regarding the country authorities. To reduce this risk while avoiding the need to retain an unsatisfactory expert in his mission, the UPU engages its experts for an initial period of one year whatever the duration of the project to which they are assigned.

Recommendation No. 15

Owing to the problems raised in most projects by the selection and training of counterparts, it is not certain that the recommendation that the experts should take part in determining the contents of fellows' training courses can be systematically applied. However, the idea is a sound one and the International Bureau proposes to apply it whenever possible.

Recommendation No. 16

With increasing experience, the International Bureau has noted the disadvantages of "professional" lectures in seminars for senior officials, and that is why it endeavours, in accordance with the recommendation in the report, to use methods for ensuring active and efficacious participation by all participants at the meetings.

/...

IV. Comments of the Secretary-General of IMCO

The content of this report is devoted - as Sir Leonard Scopes emphasizes in paragraph 2 - to general thoughts about the future of United Nations technical assistance after the crossing of the watershed that country programming represents.

The remainder of the report does, in fact, follow this trend, and the comments are the outcome of all the missions undertaken by the Inspector during 1969, 1970 and 1971. Some of the suggestions he makes deserve, because of their importance, more thorough consideration by a body such as IACB.

As far as IMCO is concerned, some of the Inspector's recommendations pose no problems, either because they coincide with the procedures followed by the organization (recommendations 12, 13 and 15), or because they are in line with a need for efficiency and good management (recommendations 8, 14 and 16).