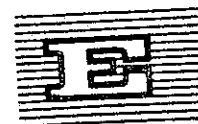


UNITED NATIONS  
ECONOMIC  
AND  
SOCIAL COUNCIL



Distr.  
GENERAL

E/5231/Add.1  
2 January 1973

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Fifty-fifth session

REPORTS OF THE JOINT INSPECTION UNIT

REPORT ON TREATMENT OF WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT  
IN THE UNITED NATIONS FAMILY OF ORGANIZATIONS

(JIU/REP/72/3)

Addendum

COMMENTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL, THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF UNIDO  
AND THE ADMINISTRATOR, UNDP

Comments of the Secretary-General

1. Inspector Jha has prepared a valuable report in the complex field of water resources development in the United Nations family of organizations. His report coincides with related events, in particular the establishment of the Economic and Social Council Committee on Natural Resources and Council resolution 1673 (LII). The latter calls for "a concise report covering the outlines of the work programme and the sphere of competence of the organizations and agencies of the United Nations system in the field of mineral, water and energy resources development, together with the views of those organizations and agencies on the most rational division of responsibilities between them in these fields" and for "proposals as to the most advisable measures to co-ordinate the formulation and implementation of the programme" in these fields. 1/ The report and proposals are to be considered by the Committee on Natural Resources at its third session, scheduled to convene at New Delhi in February 1973, and afterwards by the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination and the Council. Inspector Jha's report should therefore be made available to the Committee on Natural Resources as a valuable complement to the other documentation when the Committee meets in February 1973.

1/ In addition, at its fifty-third session, the Council, in its resolution 1728 (LIII), decided that this report should serve as the in-depth sectoral study called for in Economic and Social Council resolution 1643 (LI).

### Need for a total and integrated approach

2. The Secretary-General endorses the main theme of Inspector Jha's report, which is that a total and integrated approach to water resources development is needed. This should take into account all aspects of water resources development, including the balanced and most efficient utilization of water for various purposes on a rational and scientific basis. Inspector Jha believes that this should be done both at the national and international level. It is only in recent years that recognition is being given to water from the resource point of view, and practical progress has been made in a number of countries, particularly developing countries, in pursuing this approach. In many countries, however, it is the fragmentary, partisan or user approach which persists for historical and administrative reasons. Such shortcomings in applying a total and integrated water approach also exist at the international level, where various organizations operate under various constitutions, resolutions, work programmes and budgets. Many of the points of deficiency mentioned by Inspector Jha (paragraphs 19-29, 35, 42-44, 87-88, 100, 102, 108), arise from the fact that, as he points out in paragraph 19, "each has its own concept of its competence and responsibilities and of priorities based on the most extensive interpretation and application of its mandates".

3. The fact that the interests of the organizations of the United Nations system in the water fields are not identical and that activities sometimes overlap is brought out in the report. Compounding the problem is the fact that terms tend to be given different meanings in different contexts, as is evidenced in the report itself where terms such as "water field", "water resources", "water problems", "bearing on water", "relation to water" and "field of water" (e.g. in paragraphs 2, 17, 19, 39, 43, 55, 60, 64, 67, 70, 84, 111, 119.1(e), 120.12, 120.20, 120.23 and 120.27) are used loosely and imprecisely. The report would have been richer, too, if it had taken into account (for example in paragraph 5) new concepts made possible by technological progress such as large water grids. A clear distinction should also have been made between operational (or field) activities and non-operational activities (substantive servicing of governing bodies, research, publication, seminars, conferences). The former are subject to requests of individual Governments or groups of Governments, while the latter are subject to programming and approval of intergovernmental bodies. This distinction has considerable importance when considering programming and co-ordination and the role of UNDP (paragraphs 78-91 and related paragraphs in conclusions and recommendations). This fact as well as apparent misunderstandings about UNDP practices (in paragraphs 91, 114, 117, 120), for instance with regard to allocating funds and according priority to proposals of requesting Governments, raise doubts as to the soundness of some of the recommendations in the report.

### Role of regional economic commissions

4. Inspector Jha makes a number of perceptive comments about the role of the regional economic commissions. It must be pointed out, however, that if fuller use is to be made of their experience and expertise (paragraphs 50-58, 85, 105, 119.1), and if they are to play the strengthened role visualized for them in the report, the present obstacles imposed by limited resources would have to be overcome. It is up to the Governments themselves to decide whether this should be done.

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### Establishment of new regional centres

5. It is proposed in the report that four regional centres for water resources be established to act as "expert forums" composed not only of representatives of the regional economic commissions and the specialized agencies but also of experts appointed in their individual capacities. These centres would be independent of the regional economic commissions although they would be serviced by their secretariats. The Secretary-General questions whether the establishment of regional centres on the lines proposed would be an effective way of seeking a greater degree of co-operation and co-ordination in regional water programmes. These centres would basically be without institutional moorings, since they would be expressing views and giving advice but would not be responsible to any particular intergovernmental bodies. Responsibility to intergovernmental legislative bodies does seem to be essential if an integrated programme of water resources development at the regional level is to be developed. Recommendations from regional centres composed of individual experts cannot be expected to have the same weight as, for example, collective decisions reached by representatives of Governments participating in the work of the regional economic commissions. It is also proposed that the regional centres would not be substantive operational groups. However, if the idea of water resources centres independent of the regional economic commissions is extended to other areas, it must be considered whether this would not result in the future in the creation of a number of circles, as it were, compartmentalized by subjects, but without an over-all intersectoral or legislative view by the commissions themselves. What might be more appropriate, if this idea is to be pursued in some form, would be for officers to be seconded to the commissions - for example, from UNDP for the programming of pre-investment studies and investigations, from the IBRD group and the regional banks to study financial questions and assist in the preparation of studies leading to project investments, and from the specialized agencies as links with their organizations and drawing on their respective specializations - who would contribute to the integrated approach at the regional level.

6. There already exists at the regional level institutional machinery for dealing with water resources development. The Economic Commission for Europe has a Committee on Water Resources Problems and the governmental representatives who participate are, in their own countries, responsible for the formulation and application of water policies and thus have a direct authority over the co-ordination of governmental and intergovernmental action. The Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East's periodic water resources conferences have been the main instrument through which much development (which in this region has been varied and of large dimension) has taken place. These conferences already have interagency participation which could, of course, be strengthened. In addition, the conferences already possess the desired legislative links since they report to the Commission and the agencies report to their respective intergovernmental bodies on the elements for which they are responsible. Similarly, the proposal (paragraph 98) to dissolve the Joint Water Resources Group of the Economic Commission for Latin America seems to be in conflict with the idea of strengthening the role of the regional economic commissions. It should also be mentioned in connexion with paragraph 98 that the two panels in Buenos Aires and Delft, which are criticized for not having produced "appreciable results", involved

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little United Nations expense and were largely financed by the host Governments who derived considerable benefits from them. The resulting documents, which will be issued shortly, are expected to be highly useful to water planners and water policy-makers.

#### World water centre

7. One of the principal recommendations of the report is the establishment of a world water centre (paragraphs 66-70, 97-99, 109, 118). In the absence of a fuller and more in-depth analysis of functions, organization, administrative relations and financial implications than that now contained in the report, it is difficult to comment on this proposal in any detail. In general, however, the Secretary-General considers that the proposed centre is likely to prove as ineffective as its predecessor, the United Nations Water Resources Development Centre, and believes that its establishment in the form recommended would weaken existing intergovernmental efforts to deal with water problems and would negatively affect the exercise by the United Nations of its Charter responsibilities for co-ordination.

8. The recommended structure and functions of the centre do not seem to differ basically from those of the United Nations Water Resources Development Centre, which was not delegated any decision-making authority by UNDP or the agencies. Since, however, the report merely mentions that centre (paragraphs 33 and 34), it is not possible to know on what basis Inspector Jha came to the apparent conclusion that the experiment, if repeated, would have a different outcome.

9. The proposed composition of the centre - a group of "eminent men" selected on the basis of their present qualifications and acting in their individual capacities, "assisted" by representatives of the United Nations and the agencies - and its independent character, while they might possibly ensure a co-ordinating role for the centre, would deprive the United Nations of the right of exercising, in this important field, the co-ordination responsibilities assigned to it by the Charter. The establishment of the centre would also weaken the very basis on which the United Nations carries out such responsibilities, i.e., the actions taken in this area by its intergovernmental organs. When the report assigns to the centre the functions of "'watchdog' on behalf of Member States", it does, in fact, imply that a body composed of a few selected experts would be empowered to act as the "watchdog" of organs composed of the representatives of the Governments of those States. While it is stated that the views of the centre would only have to be "seriously taken into account", the stipulation that the United Nations and its agencies must "consult" the centre before acting would remove the co-ordination centre from the organizations and their organs to individual experts.

10. In this sense, this proposal contradicts another main recommendation in the report (paragraph 118.1) that co-ordination at the intergovernmental level should, to the extent possible, be strengthened. In particular, the report seems to underrate or prejudge the outcome of the current efforts of the Committee on Natural Resources to clarify functions and division of responsibilities within the system in areas within its terms of reference, including water, and to provide the Economic and Social Council with the expert advice it needs to exercise effectively its co-ordinating responsibilities.

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11. Thus, instead of making suggestions to use existing machinery more effectively, and to improve relationships and communications between existing co-ordinating bodies, the report calls for the creation of yet another mechanism to co-ordinate water programmes and the addition of another layer of co-ordination on top of existing arrangements, now functioning under the aegis of ACC (Sub-Committee on Water Resources, prior consultation arrangements etc.) and the Economic and Social Council (Committee on Natural Resources and CPC).

12. As mentioned in the introduction to this submission, the Committee on Natural Resources has met for only two sessions and will, at its third session in New Delhi, begin a comprehensive review of activities of the system and co-ordination arrangements in the field of natural resources including water. Any drastic change in the present institutional set-up before the Committee has concluded this review and any judgement as to the ability of the Committee "to perform detailed and effective programme co-ordination in the field of water resources" (paragraph 41) would at this stage appear inappropriate.

#### Comments of the Executive Director of UNIDO

13. The Executive Director of UNIDO has commented upon this report to the effect that the interest of UNIDO with regard to industrial uses of water is more than peripheral. Its activities in industrial branches, such as chemicals, iron and steel, non-ferrous metals, pulp and paper etc., involve the consideration of water as an important input with regard to planning of these industries and their efficient operation. While UNIDO has prepared the necessary documentation on the industrial use of water, it has also participated actively in the various bodies of the United Nations concerned with water resources, namely the ACC Sub-Committee on Water Resources Development, the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, etc., and it is also involved in a preliminary way with the preparations for the International Water Conference which is being planned to be held in 1975 or shortly thereafter.

#### Comments of the Administrator, UNDP

##### General

14. The report illustrates the need for an integrated approach to water resources development at the country and regional levels as well as at the level of the United Nations family or organizations active in this field. This problem, however, is not peculiar to the developing countries and to the international organizations active in providing technical and financial assistance, as may be noted from the various special commissions and studies which have been undertaken in the major industrial countries of the world, particularly during the post-Second World War period, aimed at rationalizing water resources institutions and at introducing greater co-ordination in the planning, development, management and use of such resources. An awareness of these problems and the solutions proposed for them is useful and could facilitate placing the issues faced by the developing countries in the proper perspective.

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15. Water resources cut across geographical boundaries, political subdivisions, functional ministries and agencies, and in most instances (particularly in arid and semi-arid environments) are a basic factor of economic planning. Therefore, institutional arrangements for integrated planning, management and use of water resources are closely linked with the particular philosophies and approaches to administrative organization and economic planning prevailing in each country. Additionally, the technological developments of the last two decades with respect to identifying and quantifying water resources, their planning and management, call for increasing sophistication and availability of adequate technological infrastructure to facilitate the adaptation of technology and its application under specific local conditions.

16. Consequently, the efforts of the international community could most effectively be focused on the formulation of appropriate technological mixes for water resources planning and management at the country, subregional and regional levels and on mobilizing the required expertise (qualitatively and quantitatively) for this purpose which would also facilitate the mobilization of financial resources essential for rational planning and development of water resources.

17. In connexion with the above, it may be noted that the regional banks (African Development Bank, Asian Development Bank, and Inter-American Development Bank) and IBRD have over the years provided, in association with their loan activities, considerable technical assistance in the field of water resources and this has been growing at an accelerated rate in recent years. It is, therefore, essential to ensure that any international effort aimed at improving water resources planning and management should be harmonized with the activities of the regional banks and IBRD. This point could perhaps receive greater emphasis in the report.

18. The JIU report is under study by UNDP, particularly in the light of the above as well as in view of the experience with country programming and the need to ensure that the bulk of financial resources will be used directly for assistance to countries rather than to supporting costly regional and world institutions.

#### Specific comments

19. The UNDP shares fully the report's views that it should be actively involved in rationalizing the technical assistance efforts in the field of water resources. With the introduction of country programming, the UNDP role has been intensified since water resources sectoral programming has been an integral part of most country programmes to date, which has had the effect not only of rationalizing technical assistance in this sector but also of articulating the intersectoral and intrasectoral linkages and relationships. The organizations of the United Nations system, particularly the economic commissions, have been and are fully involved in the country programming exercise and in its sectoral components, including water resources. The role of UNDP in this area is implemented through the regional bureaux as well as through the appropriate technical advisers in the Bureau for Programme Policy and Co-ordination. Even a cursory review of the country programmes approved or being submitted for approval to the January 1973 Governing Council (for example, Burma, Chile, Kenya, the Philippines, Hungary and

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Yugoslavia) will reveal that an integrated approach to water resources management is being increasingly reflected and provided for in these documents.

20. Increasingly in recent years UNDP has actively encouraged the agencies (within the framework of the ACC Sub-Committee on Water Resources Development and the country programming exercises) to operationally integrate water resources development activities within the framework of consistent and agreed strategies suitable for specific countries. For example, UNDP has taken the initiative in urging the formulation of uniform guidelines for water resources surveys and feasibility studies with a view to ensuring that rational development and management of water resources would follow as soon as possible upon completion of such studies. Similarly, UNDP has been urging the utilization of empirical data derived from UNDP-financed projects in the preparation of scientific papers for seminars and panels of experts in order to ensure that the results and experience are utilized in the formulation of over-all policy and in the preparation of conceptual papers. Additionally, it has been recommended that an in-depth analysis be undertaken of the experience with water resources and hydrological institutes with a view to ensuring that this type of institutional assistance becomes more closely related to the needs of countries, and that a world roster of experts in the field of water resources be established to facilitate more effective utilization of human resources by the concerned agencies.

21. At the request of Governments and with our encouragement, UNDP assistance is increasingly being provided not only to strengthen national machinery for co-ordination of water resources at the national level but more importantly to improve the capabilities of Governments to effectively plan and implement multipurpose water resources projects and regional and national over-all water resources policies (the Mexico National Water Study, the Kenya National Water Master Plan, the Planning and Development of the Vistula River System in Poland, and the Establishment of a National Water Authority in Ethiopia are only a few illustrations of this).

22. The management of interdisciplinary projects executed by one major agency in association with one or more agencies has been receiving considerable attention with a view to increasing its effectiveness. Accordingly, steps have been taken to define in some detail in the project document the specific scope and nature of the responsibilities and of the activities to be undertaken by the associated agency(ies) under the over-all technical and management responsibility of the major agency. The report's recommendations along these lines are therefore most welcome.

23. We note with considerable interest the need to further rationalize the areas of competence of the different agencies with a view to at least minimizing

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destructive overlapping and competition among them and to ensure that agencies in fact have internally acknowledged expertise and competence in the field for which they claim rights to serve as executing agencies. Consideration may be given to reducing the number of agencies now claiming competence in this field with a view to consolidating and improving the over-all quality and efficiency of technical assistance in water resources.

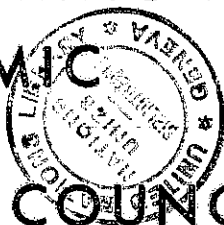
24. In conclusion, it is felt that considerable additional technical, administrative and financial analysis would be required to facilitate scientific consideration of the desirability of establishing world and regional water resources centres as proposed in the JIU report. It is particularly essential to examine carefully whether the aim of strengthening co-ordination in the field of water resources development may not be furthered more effectively and at considerably less cost through the processes and arrangements already in existence and through the process of intensification and evolution rather than by establishing a costly set of new structures.

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UNITED NATIONS  
ECONOMIC  
AND  
SOCIAL COUNCIL



Distr.  
GENERAL

E/5231/Add.2  
4 January 1973

ENGLISH

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH/FRENCH/  
RUSSIAN/SPANISH

Fifty-fifth session

REPORTS OF THE JOINT INSPECTION UNIT

Report on treatment of water resources development  
in the United Nations family of organizations  
(JIU/REP/72/3)

COMMENTS OF THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES

Addendum

CONTENTS

	Page
I. FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS (FAO) . . .	2
II. WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO) . . . . .	9

I. FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS (FAO)

Comments of the Director-General

A. General Observations

The Inspector is to be congratulated on undertaking a serious appraisal of this subject with the limited resources available to him. In general it is a fairly comprehensive report. However, in view of the importance of the subject and the far-reaching effect of the proposals which he offers, it is unfortunate that he did not have the means nor the time (see paragraph 15) to carry out a more thorough investigation. As he himself points out "the United Nations family of organizations today spends some thirty million dollars every year on activities and operations connected with water". This being so, the subject merits a most thorough examination which bears constantly in mind that the end point of all our water work is basically the water users, a fact to which the report does not appear to give sufficient consideration. Nor does the report give adequate recognition to a second essential factor, i.e., that over 75% of all water controlled by man is consumed by agriculture.

The report deals with a multi-sectoral activity with which a number of organizations are concerned. The general theme is that there is need for greater coordination of water work within the United Nations. This is a fact which is generally acknowledged. The problem of planning the total resources of water for different end uses is complex depending on local conditions and needs. It has been and is under constant study at inter-agency level and determined efforts are being made to improve coordination and exchange ideas on common planning through the ACC Sub-Committee on Water Resources and medium-term plans.

The Inspector proposes another solution by creating a World Water Center. It would be the focal point of water activities within the UN system, especially for discussion of world wide aspects of water problems and would be staffed with a group of high level experts to provide assistance in coordination in the water field and serve as Secretariat for ACC Subcommittee on Water Resources Development. According to his proposal this World Water Center should be independent of any agency or organ of the UN system which works in the water field, either Regular Program or Field Program.

The Inspector, as an adjunct to the World Water Center then develops a whole new machinery for coordination and technical discussion consisting of Regional Water Centers attached to and serviced by Regional Economic Commissions.

Recently ECOSOC established a Standing Committee on Natural Resources which has already taken up for consideration the coordination of activities in the water resources field. A separate report is being prepared indicating the role and responsibilities of the different Organizations and their competence in this field for consideration by this Standing Committee this would be a Committee at government level as opposed to the body of experts proposed by the Inspector. It would be a duplication of effort if yet another body, or bodies, were to be established even before this governmental committee had come to grips with the problem.

The Inspector would appear to have taken the easy course of suggesting new institutional machinery. When problems of coordination arise it is indeed very tempting to fall back upon the method of re-organization without fully examining the actual facts behind the problems and how the new machinery could deal with chronic problems more effectively than the existing machinery. Reorganization in itself seldom solves problems; it merely shifts them, often creating new ones.

In these days of financial stringency in the UN family of Organizations, it would seem more realistic - and with the right motivation entirely feasible - to solve the water coordination problems by meeting them head on at inter-agency bodies established for this purpose. Further

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it must be taken into account that the international community is at present firmly against the proliferation of new bodies. At its summer session in 1972, ECOSOC approved a resolution against the establishment of any new subsidiary body until a working group had examined the functions and role of existing subsidiary bodies; the Inspector's recommendations regarding Global and Regional Water Centres would appear to be in direct conflict with this established policy. The establishment of Centres would result in the duplication of expertise without a clear designation of responsibility for implementation of projects which must obviously continue to be assumed by the Agencies with expertise in this field.

The Inspector admits that his proposals involve some proliferation and additional expenditure (which he anticipates would be small) but he considers this to be justified. It is our experience that proposals of this nature normally result in considerable cost, for additional documentation, meetings and travel, and it is our conviction that they would not meet the need for a more rational utilization and development of water resources.

Finally, in these general observations, it may be noted that were the line of argument proposed by the Inspector to be adopted it could be extended to all multi-sectoral activities in which the UN is engaged and that if new global, regional and sectoral machinery were to be established for their coordination over and above those set up under UN Charter obligations, the United Nations system could compound rather than resolve its problems of coordination.

#### B. Specific Comments

The following sections of the report would appear to warrant specific comment:

Paragraph 3, second sentence. "For example, water affects forests, and deforestation, as is well-known, leads to diminished rainfall." FAO hydrologists believe that the last phrase of this sentence is not based on factual evidence.

Paragraph 13, second sentence. "UNESCO, WMO and to some extent the United Nations are concerned directly or indirectly with the survey, inventory, classification and evaluation of water resources". In this activity he has not mentioned FAO, yet it is estimated that of the nearly 80 million dollars of FAO/UNDP expenditure for water projects from 1959 to 1970, over 30 million dollars has gone into hydrologic and hydrogeologic studies. These studies consist of survey, inventory, classification and evaluation of water resources and at present they are being conducted by about 45 FAO experts in the field. The sum expended by FAO for these studies alone is at least two and a half times the sum expended by the United Nations Office of Technical Cooperation for all water work in the same period. It should be noted that hydrology in itself is only a rather small field of the total water sciences. In FAO the main use extends to the design and operation of irrigation projects, design and operation of farm irrigation systems, plant and animal production and the fisheries industry. In other words, water alone is not the end but the means to an end.

Paragraph 24, penultimate sentence. "UNESCO, WMO, FAO and UN are all interested in an inventory of water resources, and are working in that area". This is in contrast to the previously quoted sentence.

Paragraph 48, first sentence. "It is not surprising that some of the most striking and successful projects for water development in which the United Nations system is involved are regional river basin projects covering a large number of countries in which several United Nations organizations are participating and cooperating". This is correct to a limited extent. At the same time FAO's experience with international river projects indicates that the inherent difficulties in developing good working relations between countries requires a greater input of time and patience than is usually the case of within country projects.

Paragraph 48, second sentence. "Regional Economic Commissions have become important foci of regional cooperation in the field of water resources, prevention of floods, pollution, etc.". Only ECAFE has an active progressive programme in water while the other Commissions, although listing it as an activity, are not providing the degree of leadership implied in this statement.

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Paragraph 50 (Role of Regional Economic Commissions). The strengthening of the Regional Economic Commissions for various purposes has received considerable attention in recent years. The main theme of the "Study on Regional Structures", following Sir Robert Jackson's "Capacity Study", is also the strengthening of the Regional Commissions in the area of economic and social development in which they could play a part. This is being pursued separately and the recommendations of the Inspector with regard to the Regional Economic Commissions may have some relevance to the study on regional structures. It should be pointed out, however, that the Regional Commissions have thus far been concerned with broad studies at the regional level concerning economic and social development and with a few projects of a regional character such as international highways, general planning institutes, etc. They have little expertise concerning field projects in the use of water. If they were to assume operational responsibilities with regard to such projects, they would duplicate much of the expertise which is now available in many of the Specialized Agencies and this could hardly be justified.

Paragraph 52 (Role of Regional Economic Commissions). This refers to the need for greater activity by the Regional Economic Commissions in the field of water accompanied by support from UN Headquarters. This is a question of UN policy but the activities proposed could place the Commissions in the category of operating agencies and appears to conflict with the recommendation that the Regional Centres should serve as coordinators only. It is suggested that regional seminars, studies and conferences on water be carried out with adequate UN backstopping but no reference here is made about backstopping by other UN Organizations qualified in this field.

Paragraphs 55-58 (Regional Centres for Water Resources). To achieve an integrated approach as well as joint planning and programming at the regional level, the Inspector proposes the establishment of Centres at each of the Commissions to give advice to UNDP, the various agencies concerned and the governments of the region. In addition to the fact that the composition of the Centres seems rather large (over 20 members) and that travel expenses will thus be heavy, it is not clear to whom they will report (and for what purpose) and how the functions outlined would be related to those carried out at present by the specialized agencies. Logically, their parent body should be the proposed World Water Centre but there is no discussion of their relation with this body. In addition, there is no indication of what action is expected from the "specialized agencies and other bodies concerned", the Governing Council of the UNDP and the "governing bodies of the agencies represented in the Centre" (which again includes the specialized agencies), all of which receive the Regional Centre's reports. Furthermore, many of the functions of the regional water centres duplicate those carried out at present by the specialized agencies. Finally, it is not clear how the Centre would be an "independent" body if the Secretariat is provided by the Natural Resources Division or Water Resources Division of the regional economic commission concerned, which are part of the UN-Secretariat.

It should also be noted that there would undoubtedly be a conflict in the recommended functions of the Regional Water Resources Centres as the UNDP has recently issued instructions indicating that some of these functions come under its purview; since UNDP controls the funds its views will probably prevail.

Paragraph 63 (Legislative Coordination). To provide coordination at the global level, the Inspector makes recommendations on legislative, administrative and technical aspects. At the legislative level, he emphasizes the necessity of strengthening the coordinating role of ECOSOC and its subsidiary bodies, but does not elucidate. As for "administrative" coordination (ensuring that programmes are implemented and coordinated without overlapping and in the most effective and economical way), he considers this within the purview of ACC. However, this conflicts with one of the functions of the World Water Centre, i.e., to "advise ECOSOC and participating organizations on questions of planning and coordination of programmes in the water field" (para. 70).

Paragraph 64. "...there are too many cooks' in the water field...". In our view the problem in the UN organizations is, to put it also colloquially that "the pastry cook too often tries to become the meat cook". In other words, if all the cooks stayed in the disciplines assigned to them by their governing bodies or by agreement there would be fewer problems.

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Paragraphs 67 - 70 (A New Global Machinery). To provide machinery for overall coordination and an integrated approach on a global basis on water problems at the technical level, the Inspector proposes the creation of a World Water Centre for the UN and the specialized agencies, an independent body which would also act as a watchdog for Member States. It would be made up of experts acting in their individual capacity, selected for a term of four years. The specialized agencies, among others, would be invited to assist the Centre. The Centre would be responsible functionally to ECOSOC and to the legislative bodies of the participating organizations. Although the Centre would function as an "independent" body, its secretariat (made up of staff from and financed by the UN organizations) would be responsible administratively to the UN Secretary-General. Where the loyalties of the staff would lie under such confused lines of authority is an open question.

One of the functions of the World Water Centre would be to review critically information supplied by the UN organizations on their programmes and activities in the water field and communicate the results of the review to the organizations and their policy-making bodies (paragraph 70.b). The Inspector does not say in what form these results should be communicated - recommendations on priorities, changes in programmes or projects? In the next paragraph (70.c) he speaks of the agencies inviting the comments of the Centre on their proposed programmes and activities in the water field and taking these comments into account before finalizing their programmes. It is therefore not clear what purpose the "critical review" called for in para. 70.b is intended to serve.

Further the question arises, in examining paragraph 70.d whether independent governing bodies of the UN organizations would be prepared to subject their approved programmes to a review by the UN World Water Centre.

The proposal that the UN Water Resources Centre should be detached from the UN Resources and Transport Division and merged with the secretariat of the proposed UN World Water Centre might be a sound one were it not that the World Centre will be responsible administratively to the Secretary-General of the UN which in effect would appear to leave the Centre in almost the same jurisdictional position as is the UNCTAD at present.

Paragraph 86, "joint planning and programming". The Inspector's remarks under this heading (which includes the formulation of long-term programmes by joint Secretariat working groups) seem to ignore the fact that such groups cannot give final agreement since programmes must be approved by governing bodies. It is particularly important that this point be clarified in view of the suggestion in paragraph 86 that UNDP "should insist on joint planning and programming in areas of common concern before deciding on a project or who is the executing agency".

Paragraph 87, third sentence. "In the first place in a multi-disciplinary water project it is often not very easy to decide which agency is interested in the end result, the claims of more than one agency being more or less balanced". This should not be the case as the project must have a basic purpose such as municipal and industrial water, hydro-power, recreation, flood control or irrigation. Even though the project is multi-purpose, in practically all instances there is one use more important, either monetarily or quantitatively, than the others.

Paragraph 88 (Associated Agencies). FAO is well aware of this situation which has been allowed to continue by UNDP. By controlling the project funds UNDP could quite easily require and obtain the coordination of the executing agency and associate agency should they desire.

In discussing the role of UNDP, the Inspector states (in paragraph 90) that he does not anticipate a great deal of difficulty in translating into practice the concept of "joint executing agencies". On the basis of experience, it seems to us that joint execution of projects could be most difficult and divided responsibilities could lead to avoidable conflicts.

Finally, with regard to water pollution, which is an important activity referred to in this report, the new Centre on Environmental Pollution will have considerable responsibility for overall coordination. The Inspector has not taken into account the role of his proposed Water Centres and the focal point on environmental pollution with regard to water pollution.

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### Conclusions

The remarks above are offered in a constructive spirit and in full appreciation of the Inspector's very useful contribution to the subject of water resources development. He has thoroughly analysed the work of all the UN agencies in this field and has quite correctly identified the major problem as that of inadequate coordination of effort. FAO recognizes this problem and is determined to do its part in resolving it.

However, it is our view that improvements in coordination must be sought first by each UN organization; by limiting its activities to its own respective constitutional mandate and by improving its own internal planning and coordination. It must then extend its efforts to the inter-agency level by mutual consultation and cooperation through existing machinery such as the ACC Sub-Committee on Water Resources and the Standing Committee of ECOSOC on Natural Resources.

It might be noted that for planning of multi-sectoral activities new procedures are being developed through programme budgeting and medium-term plans and, when adopted by the different agencies, including the United Nations, will provide instruments for carrying out coordination in a practical manner. We cannot support the thesis that coordination will be achieved by creating additional machinery for this purpose.

A careful study of the Inspector's report must recognize that there would be extremely wider ramifications, not only to water programmes but to other multi-disciplinary activities carried out by UN organizations. Their approval would establish a precedent that could have very far-reaching structural and financial consequences. We must of necessity keep in mind the present financial situation of the United Nations as a whole and the clearly stated opposition of both donor and recipient countries against the establishment of new and separate agencies or similar bodies whenever problems of coordination arise.

Nevertheless, we concede that there is a problem yet to be resolved in the coordination of water resource activities within the United Nations system. We also concede that FAO shares the responsibility of finding more effective solutions to this problem in order to provide better service to member countries.

While we cannot accept the solution proposed by the Inspector, we would recommend that a task force composed of representatives of the UN organizations concerned be convened to examine this whole matter in greater depth. This examination could be carried out by the ACC Sub-Committee on Water Resources Development, on a democratic basis, providing the representatives are accorded full authority to speak officially on behalf of their respective organizations. The task of the Sub-Committee would be to gather information about what the various organizations are actually at present doing (and not merely what they are supposed to be doing), and then to develop rational and complementary lines of endeavour for each of them. Working from this basis it would be possible to develop a sound method of continuous cooperation. However, this approach would only be successful were all the UN organizations to accept it. As far as FAO is concerned, we are eager to promote such an understanding and to do our level best to make it successful.

Attached, for information, is an extract from Appendix II of the Report. (JIU has suggested that all the Appendices, covering the work of the Agencies, need not be submitted to governing bodies.)

Extract Appendix II of the JIU report concerning FAO's  
mandate, competence and activities in the  
field of water resources development

MANDATE AND COMPETENCE

1. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations is deeply involved in many aspects of water resources including their development for the promotion of agriculture, fisheries and forestry.

2. Water, together with soil, is the natural resource on which agriculture and fishery are based. Certain of man's actions in agriculture, forestry and fisheries can lead to over-exploitation and destruction of water as a renewable natural resource, while other activities can lead to improvement of natural conditions.

3. FAO's interest and competence in the water field derive from the responsibilities placed on it by its constitution and by a series of directives of FAO conferences.

4. FAO's mandate, which is in general terms under its constitution, has been elaborated and given precision by various directives concerning water resources, given to the Secretariat by FAO Conferences. These directives concern integration of the two basic natural resources of agriculture, soil and water, and their management in a technically and economically efficient system of production and include:

- Appraisal of water resources.

- Coordination of work for development of land and water resources and for the management of large water-sheds, river basins, flood control and water conservation.

- Increased efficiency of water utilization, use of brackish water and sewage water and prevention of salinity.

- Investigation and use of surface and ground water resources.

- Control of marine and inland water pollution for fisheries.

- International water legislation and administration.

- Prevention of over-exploitation, erosion and pollution of natural resources and the rational use of such resources.

- Conservation of natural resources of water along with those of forests, fisheries and soil and preparation of an inventory of water resources.

5. Apart from indicating the field of priorities from time to time the FAO Conference has emphasized an integrated approach to the problems of water resources.

6. The need for cooperation with other international agencies with regard to water problems was emphasized. It was observed "with clear differentiation of functions greater understanding and, therefore, closer cooperation, are facilitated and concrete results become available to member countries through joint endeavour".

7. The basic importance of FAO's work in the investigation and development of water resources for increasing agricultural production, mainly through irrigation and drainage of croplands, and developing fish production, was re-emphasized in the new concept of the "Five Areas of Concentration" evolved by FAO in 1968 are all directly or indirectly related to the development of water resources. Introduction of the new high-yielding varieties and the green revolution, in particular, are dependent on good water management and a timely and sure supply of water in quantity and quality.

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#### NATURE OF FAO'S ACTIVITIES

8. FAO's activities in the water resources field have been directed to:

- (a) the development of new water resources for agriculture, including surveys, planning for integrated development and use both on national and international rivers;
- (b) planning and most effective and economic use of all sources of water presentation, surface and underground, including supplementary irrigation with special reference to high-yielding varieties;
- (c) identification of land and water and of inland fisheries development projects;
- (d) use of water resources for fish production;
- (e) planning and design of efficient water control structures including drainage and land reclamation works;
- (f) operation and maintenance of water development schemes emphasizing economic, institutional, administrative and legal aspects of such water use;
- (g) transformation of traditionally irrigated areas into modern water managed schemes; and
- (h) conservation and improvement of the productivity of land under irrigation.

#### DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

9. FAO's activities to this end have included:

- (a) General surveys and programmes of systematic collection and processing of information;
- (b) research and studies; (c) publications;
- (d) conferences, working parties, seminars and training courses; and
- (e) technical and financial assistance.



## II. WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO)

Preliminary comments of the Director-General

1. The Director-General considers that the report on "Treatment of Water Resources Development in the United Nations Family of Organizations" represents a valuable study on the involvement of the United Nations system in the field of water resources and an effort to give an analysis of the existing shortcomings in the carrying out of the manifold activities within the System. This study deals with one of the most complex multi-sectoral activities, and appears at a time when apprehensions about water problems are justifiably increasing all over the world.
2. The report is particularly concerned with the co-ordination aspect. Throughout the report the Inspector points to inadequate co-ordination and the need for clearer delimitation of the role and responsibilities of the different organizations of the System. The effectiveness of the existing machinery for co-ordination is questioned, whether at the secretariat level under the auspices of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination and its Sub-Committee on Water Resources, or on a bilateral basis between interested organizations. The conclusions (Chapter III) and recommendations (Chapter IV) mainly deal with the problem of co-ordination and possible new arrangements in that respect. The Director-General's comments are consequently concentrated on these topics.
3. At the outset the Director-General wishes to state that WHO's main interest and responsibilities in this field relate to the far-reaching impact of the provision of adequate quantity and quality of water for human consumption, its uses and abuses on the human environment, particularly through the pollution of water resources needed for water supply, and ultimately the health of people. The focus of WHO environmental health interest and responsibility in water resources development is on the utilization of the resources for rural and urban water supplies, and the preservation of water quality through sanitary wastes disposal as a means of preventing and controlling communicable diseases, and for the promotion of physical, mental and social well-being.
4. The Director-General, while considering that co-ordination in the field of water resources has been working increasingly satisfactorily believes, however, that there is undoubtedly room for improvement, particularly in the long-term programming aspect of this activity, so as to rationalize the performance of the United Nations system in a field of such tremendous importance to any development.
5. As regards the observations in paragraphs 75-82 on joint planning and programming, it should be mentioned that FAO/WHO collaboration provides a good example in this direction and also that a considerable amount of joint planning and programming is already done by the Working Group on Hydrology of the ACC Sub-Committee on Water Resources Development.

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6. The Director-General has reservations about the proposals made in paragraph 89, particularly with regard to the "breaking up of projects into different identifiable components and disciplines and entrusting these to different agencies according to their competence as executing agencies or sub-executing agencies or sub-contractors". This is, undoubtedly, a larger problem than merely water resources development. It involves the UNDP practice in general and possible designation of an executing agency in "association" with another agency, and is a matter which would require an in-depth study due to its complexity.

7. The two principal recommendations contained in the report are (a) the creation of four regional centres for water resources, one attached to each regional economic commission, with structure and functions as outlined in paragraphs 55-58 and 106, and (b) the creation of a United Nations World Water Centre with structure and functions as outlined in paragraphs 66-70 and 109. The Director-General is unable to concur with these recommendations for a number of reasons.

8. The creation of such additional institutional machinery for co-ordination would only add to the proliferation of new bodies at a time when the Executive Board and the Health Assembly of the World Health Organization have, on several occasions, indicated their objection to such a trend. It should also be recalled that the Economic and Social Council, being the main organ for co-ordination in the United Nations system, decided in its resolution 1730 (LIII), to refrain from establishing any new subsidiary bodies until a Working Group of the Council had reviewed thoroughly the functions and role of the existing subsidiary bodies.

9. The report seems to have minimized the efficiency of the existing machinery, the possibilities which it offers for co-ordination, and recent changes in methodology and consequent progress achieved. It might, therefore, be appropriate to recall that, within the elaborated mechanism for co-ordination at the intergovernmental and intersecretariat levels, the ACC Sub-Committee on Water Resources is an intersecretariat organ for consultation and co-ordination which is exclusively concerned with water problems. The work of this sub-committee from the WHO point of view has been satisfactory in the last few years and therefore offers the potential for future co-ordination. On the intergovernmental side, the Standing Committee on Natural Resources of the Economic and Social Council and ECOSOC itself are actively involved in the activities of the United Nations system in the water resources field. There are also other institutions and organs related to WHO which play a useful role in the activities of the Organization in the water resources field, such as the International Reference Centre for Community Water Supply at the Hague and a network of 28 collaborating institutions throughout the world exchanging research information; the International Reference Centre for Waste Disposal at Dubendorf, Switzerland and a network of 43 collaborating institutions, and the establishment of the International Research Centre for Water Quality. Mention should be made also of the Pan American Sanitary Engineering Centre in the American Region (CEPIS: Centro Panamericano de Ingeniería Sanitaria y Ciencias del Ambiente), and the Central Public Health Engineering Research Institute (CPHERI), Nagpur, India. WHO is also collaborating closely with the United Nations Economic Commissions either by posting sanitary engineers to the seats of their headquarters or by other standing arrangements.

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10. From the financial point of view, the establishment of four regional centres and a World Water Centre would imply additional expenditure for which no estimates are given in the report. The lack of any indication of the financial implications of the proposals and of a cost/benefit analysis of their implementation, is another reason for which the Director-General cannot support them. This would be inconsistent with the financial practice of the Organization and also with the policy of financial stringency now prevailing throughout the United Nations system.

11. In the light of the foregoing, the Director-General believes that improved co-ordination in the field of water should be sought through the existing mechanism by strengthening its machinery and utilizing fully its potentials. This subject is now being examined in depth by the ACC, at the request of ECOSOC, in an endeavour to recommend concrete measures to strengthen co-ordination; the Inspector's views and observations will surely be analysed and reviewed in this context.

12. Reverting to the remarks and the three recommendations specifically related to WHO, the Director-General is gratified to note in paragraph 112 the appreciation of the manner in which the projects in the field of water resources are executed by WHO.

13. Regarding the first recommendation (No. 16, page 35), dealing with the appointment of a liaison officer with the Economic Commission for Europe, the Director-General believes that this appointment is not necessary since the ECE is located in the same city as WHO headquarters. Effective liaison exists and is maintained between the WHO Regional Office for Europe and the different WHO headquarters' divisions and those of the Commission.

14. The second recommendation (No. 17, page 35), stems probably from a lack of information on the existing arrangements. The Director-General wishes therefore to recall that WHO and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development have developed as of October 1971, a co-operative programme to assist Governments in preparing water supply and wastes disposal projects that will ultimately improve the health of their people. WHO collaboration and co-ordination with the IBRD has been entrusted to the Pre-Investment Planning Unit within the Division of Environmental Health.

15. In connexion with the third recommendation (No. 18, page 35), the Director-General wishes to remark that the organizational set-up as a whole in WHO is under continuous critical review. Systematic efforts are pursued to create an administrative machinery suited to support efficiently and economically changing needs and priorities.

UNITED NATIONS  
ECONOMIC  
AND  
SOCIAL COUNCIL



Distr.  
GENERAL

E/5231/Add.3  
15 January 1973

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Fifty-fifth session

REPORTS OF THE JOINT INSPECTION UNIT

REPORT ON TREATMENT OF WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT  
IN THE UNITED NATIONS FAMILY OF ORGANIZATIONS

(JIU/REP/72/3)

Addendum

COMMENTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE  
WORLD METEOROLOGICAL ORGANIZATION

1. The study is comprehensive and painstaking efforts have been made to ascertain the general problem of water resources development with respect to "the extent to which the United Nations (family of organizations) is able... to carry out its tasks in this field in a systematic way,... and what further steps are necessary to these ends" (page 3, paragraph 12).
2. The evaluation of positive results of the United Nations organizations' activities, the remarks about the deficiencies and assessment of "grey areas" (chapter II, paragraphs 17-29) is objective and frank. The Joint Inspection Unit and Mr. Jha are to be congratulated for their efforts and for their approach to the above parts of the report.
3. The main comments from WMO's point of view, and perhaps in general, concern those parts of the report which describe the actual co-ordination and the proposals for future co-ordination arrangements and related institutional developments (chapter II, paragraphs 30-44 and paragraphs 45-99 respectively).
4. The remarks concerning the actual co-ordination are somewhat out of date, particularly with respect to hydrology and to WMO and UNESCO programmes and their inter-relationship. The report of the 19th session of the ACC Sub-Committee on Water Resources Development (ACC document CO-ORDINATION/R.927 and Add.1) answers many of the criticisms and already provides several solutions along the lines proposed in the report. The agreement reached in the ACC Ad Hoc Working Group on Hydrology, the already concluded WMO-UNESCO agreement on the joint convening of the End-of-the-IHD Conference, and the preparation of the WMO-UNESCO agreement on

post-IHD activities are already implementing many of the report's recommendations (chapter IV, paragraph 119, 1 (e), 2 (a), 2 (c), 2 (d), paragraph 120 - subparagraphs 24, 25, 26 and others).

5. The most important institutional recommendations of the report (chapter IV, paragraph 118; chapter III, paragraphs 45-99) concern the creation of four regional centres for water research and a United Nations World Water Centre. While in paragraph 66, it is stated that any new machinery should not be, serious doubts may be expressed as to whether the proposed machinery, if established, will succeed in avoiding becoming what it should not be. The very substance of directive co-ordination requires:

- (i) full information on the details of all activities;
- (ii) executive power to assign responsibilities and to operationally influence programmes and activities.

Both above requirements assume:

- (a) sufficient staffing - hence extensive financing;
- (b) encroachment on the prerogatives of the governing bodies of organizations involved in co-ordination.

Unfortunately both (a) and (b) above are in clear contradiction with the principles laid down for the establishment of the new machinery.

6. Practical experience in the more distant past and also in the recent past (United Nations Water Centre at the United Nations Headquarters established by ECOSOC Res. 675 (XXV) and practically dismantled by Res. 1033 (XXXVII), results of the Stockholm Conference, and of the first two meetings of the ECOSOC Natural Resources Committee) indicates that it would probably be premature to proceed with the institutional arrangements proposed in the report.

7. On the other hand, the fact that recent developments (for example in the field of hydrology in general and in WMO-UNESCO relationships in particular) very closely followed the main lines and implemented several recommendations of the report, indicates that, apart from the institutional proposals, the report is correctly evaluating the situation and points to efforts in the right direction.

8. As a concrete proposal to derive maximum benefit from the report it is proposed that the ACC Sub-Committee on Water Resources be directed to examine in detail all the recommendations contained in the report, and devise the ways and means for their implementation at an inter-agency level. A general consideration and evaluation of the feasibility of the institutional proposals for a new machinery may be included in the tasks of the Sub-Committee.

9. It is assumed that the recommendations will be taken into full account in the programming exercises and operational activities of all individual United Nations

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family organizations concerned. As for WMO, the recommendations (in particular those contained in paragraphs 78, 79, 80 and 120 - subparagraphs 25 and 26) are already being taken into consideration either entirely or to the maximum possible extent in WMO's programmes in hydrology and water resources.

10. There are a few particular comments and corrections of fact with respect to the description of WMO's activities in the report:

(a) In paragraph 27, WMO's interest and responsibilities in hydrology and water resources are somewhat confused. The definition of operational hydrology and terms of reference of the WMO Commission for Hydrology should serve as a basic reference for this formulation.

(b) In paragraphs 32 and 33, actions of ECOSOC with respect to water resources are recorded. It should be noted that it was ECOSOC Resolution 675 (XXV) which, back in 1955, invited WMO to accept responsibility within the United Nations organizations for water resources inventories (collection of hydrologic data, design of methods and organization of hydrological services - activities which may be grouped under the name of "operational hydrology").

(c) Several comments may be made on Appendix V of the report, which describes in detail WMO activities in hydrology and water resources. The definition of operational hydrology is completely missing from this description, the fact that IMO, the predecessor of WMO had a technical commission in the field of hydrology before the inception of the United Nations, and that the WMO Commission for Hydrology was established long before any other inter-governmental organ in this field (in 1957), may throw quite a different light on the appraisal of the alleged extension of WMO's activities in the fields of other organizations, in particular of UNESCO, which explicitly entered the field of hydrology only in 1965. Should Appendix V be given general distribution, several amendments to it would be most desirable.

11. ~~Paragraph 35, and in particular its last lines on the activities of the ACC,~~ does not do justice, either to the substance or to the form of ACC Sub-Committee reports (see in particular reports from 1970, 1971 and 1972).

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UNITED NATIONS  
ECONOMIC  
AND  
SOCIAL COUNCIL



Distr.  
GENERAL

E/5231/Add.4  
24 January 1973

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Fifty-fifth session

REPORTS OF THE JOINT INSPECTION UNIT

REPORT ON TREATMENT OF WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT  
IN THE UNITED NATIONS FAMILY OF ORGANIZATIONS

(JIU/REP/72/3)

Addendum

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE  
UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL  
ORGANIZATION

1. This informative report analyses the activities of the United Nations family of organizations in the field of water. It makes observations on the efficiency and impact of these activities in Member States. The report proposes measures to improve co-ordination among the United Nations organizations. In appendix IV to the report, Inspector Jha describes and appraises UNESCO's contribution in this field.

2. The preliminary observations of the Director-General are presented under two headings:

I - Observations on the recommendations (chapter IV of the report) of concern to UNESCO

II - Observations on points of detail

I. Preliminary observations on the recommendations of the Inspector of concern to UNESCO (chapter IV of the report)

3. Paragraph 118: Recommendations for consideration by ECOSOC and the legislative bodies of organizations concerned. Item 3.

(a) The proposal to create a "World Water Centre" is of major importance and requires detailed study. On first consideration it seems uncertain that the

large additional cost would be justified by more effective co-ordination. However, if the governmental bodies concerned, particularly ECOSOC, so decide, the Director-General will submit to the Executive Board proposals for UNESCO's contribution towards the establishment and functioning of the water centre.

(b) The observations of the Inspector which set the stage for his proposals on machinery for global and regional co-ordination are important. In particular, the Director-General agrees with the Inspector's statement in paragraph 60 arguing against a "single organization dealing with the totality of water problems". However, the Director-General agrees that there is need to improve co-ordination.

(c) The Inspector's observations in paragraph 66 on what any new machinery should not be are endorsed. However, the arguments of the Inspector in favour of new machinery (paras. 67 to 70) are less convincing. There is insufficient information to permit a cost effectiveness analysis for the new machinery (see paras. 96 to 98). Therefore, before any decision is taken, detailed studies will be required at an interagency level.

(d) The assessment by the Inspector of the limitations of the existing arrangements for co-ordination (paras. 42 and 44) may not take sufficiently into account the potentials of this machinery, as an alternative to more formal structures and also the progress achieved by the ACC Sub-Committee on Water Resources Development at its recent sessions. At its sixteenth session in 1969 the Sub-Committee reviewed the responsibilities of the various organizations and defined problems of interagency co-ordination and collaboration. At its nineteenth session (February 1972) the Sub-Committee agreed that the spheres of competence defined in 1969 should continue to serve as a basis for the division of responsibilities among the United Nations organizations. At the same session the Sub-Committee prepared a preliminary statement on co-ordination in water resources.

An important step forward was made at the eighteenth session, in 1971, when the Sub-Committee considered measures for in-depth co-ordination of activities of United Nations organizations in some specific fields of water resources such as hydrology, hydrogeology, water pollution, water resources planning and water legislation. The Sub-Committee agreed that working groups of the Sub-Committee should meet from time to time as necessary to take up detailed co-ordination on the above topics of particular interest. As a consequence, an ad hoc working group for hydrology was convened in January 1972. The results of this ad hoc meeting are a good example of positive co-ordination in this area within the framework of the ACC machinery. It is considered that similar meetings could be convened in the future for the other fields suggested by the Sub-Committee.

The examples of unco-ordinated agency action such as the case cited in paragraph 20 are unlikely to be repeated since the recently adopted country programming procedures make mandatory the co-ordinated consultations and action suggested by the Inspector in paragraph 21.

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4. Recommendations requiring executive/legislative action by individual bodies (para. 120)

(a) Recommendation 12 corresponds fully to the view UNESCO has advanced in negotiations with UNDP and in interagency meetings.

(b) Recommendations 19 to 24 addressed to UNESCO:

(i) Recommendation 19: In paragraph 41 of annex IV, the Inspector has interpreted the statements of some "senior officials of UNESCO" as being too academic. In fact, these statements stressed the necessity of conceiving the study of water resources in its entirety, without subordination of hydrological investigations to a one-sided water use (agriculture, energy, community water supply, etc...). But the present and future programmes of UNESCO have always emphasized the importance of hydrology from the point of view of its practical application to water resources development, and taking into account the interrelations between the natural water cycle and human activities.

(ii) Recommendations 20 and 21: In paragraph 45 of annex IV the Inspector proposes the setting up of national training institutes and the organization of training courses on a regular basis. This has been the policy guiding the programmes of UNESCO in hydrology training. Thus, with a view to shift the bulk of hydrological training activities towards developing regions, a post-graduate course of one year duration was established in India in 1972. The establishment of a similar course for the Arab States is under consideration. At graduate level a highly specialized course was held in Chile in 1971 on the hydrology of snow and ice to assist the South American countries to utilize their water resources. A similar course is being prepared for Asian countries to be held in late 1973. Courses on the use of computers for data treatment are under preparation to be held in Japan for Asian countries and in Argentina for Latin American countries in 1973 or 1974 respectively.

At the technicians level, regional courses have been held in Mali (1965), Iraq (1966), Tunis (1967), Kenya (1969). Another course is under preparation to be held in Ghana for technicians from the English speaking countries in West Africa in 1973 and for Central American countries in 1974.

(iii) Recommendation 23: In paragraph 47 of annex IV, the Inspector recommends that within the UNESCO secretariat over-all responsibility in the water field should be concentrated in the Office of Hydrology. This recommendation corresponds to the factual situation, because, as the Inspector himself notes, "the Office of Hydrology is functioning more and more as a focus of UNESCO activities in the field of water resources". Some misapprehension

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seemes to have arisen in connexion with responsibilities of other divisions in the field of water. In view of the wide implications of water problems to various activities it is quite normal that programmes of several divisions in UNESCO touch upon such problems; this holds particularly for the fields covered by the Department of Environmental Sciences and Natural Resources Research (to which the Office of Hydrology belongs). In all such cases necessary co-ordination is assured and the Office of Hydrology retains primary responsibility for specific aspects of water resources.

- (iv) Recommendation 24: References made in the main body of the report and its annex IV to the relations between UNSECO and WMO bear mainly an historical significance. In effect the Director-General is glad to note that the recommendation made by the Inspector in paragraphs 76 and 77 of the report are already in the course of implementation, as a result of his initiative in early January 1972. The Director-General has already reported on this matter to the Executive Board at its eighty-ninth session. The Board approved the joint convening by UNESCO and WMO of the End-of-Decade Conference to be held in 1974, as a further step towards achieving a harmonization of the hydrological programmes conducted by UNESCO and WMO. The principles of the working agreement between UNESCO and WMO, that were proposed by the Director-General in January 1972, have been approved by the Executive Committee of WMO at its session in May 1972; the agreement is to be concluded shortly. The Director-General was most gratified to note the statement made by the Secretary-General of WMO at the forty-third session of ECOSOC in July 1972, in which Mr. Davies referred to the beneficial development of the collaboration between UNESCO and WMO, and to the initiative of the Director-General of UNESCO in this regard.

## II. Observations on points of detail in the body of the report and in annex IV

Most references to UNESCO in the main body of the report and in annex IV are well taken and do not call for further comment. The Director-General was pleased to note the positive evaluation by the Inspector of UNESCO's programme in hydrology (annex IV, paras. 38 and 39). The few points requiring correction or comment are described below.

5. Some of the figures given in the report, which refer to UNESCO's regular and extra-budgetary programmes are not accurate. Thus, in paragraph 17 of the main report, UNDP costs for projects entrusted to UNESCO during the period 1959/1970 are given as amounting to \$1.8 millicn, while in fact a calculation of UNDP contributions for the projects mentioned in paragraph 33 of annex IV gives a figure of over \$7.7 million.

Also, the foot-note on page 5 of the report indicates that the United Nations organizations have allocated only comparatively small funds to water resources

activities under their regular programmes, with the exception of WHO. This exception applies also to UNESCO, whose total regular programme expenditures since the starting of the International Hydrological Decade in 1965 amounted to over \$4 million.

6. In paragraph 43 of annex IV, the Inspector refers to the need to concentrate efforts within the programme of the International Hydrological Decade, and to recommendations made in this respect by the Mid-Decade Conference (1969). The Co-ordinating Council of the IHD and the secretariat have already taken action to implement this recommendation. At its sixth session in 1970, the Co-ordinating Council undertook a reorganization of its various working groups and panels with a view to concentrating activities on the basis of priorities recommended by the Mid-Decade Conference. The provisions made in 17 C/5 for the last two years of the IHD programme are also based on selective actions towards the most effective finalization of the programme.

UNITED NATIONS  
ECONOMIC  
AND  
SOCIAL COUNCIL



Distr.  
GENERAL

E/5231/Add.5  
21 March 1973  
ENGLISH

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH/FRENCH/  
SPANISH

Fifty-fifth session

REPORTS OF THE JOINT INSPECTION UNIT

REPORT ON TREATMENT OF WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT  
IN THE UNITED NATIONS FAMILY OF ORGANIZATIONS

(JIU/REP/72/3)

Addendum

COMMENTS OF THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES

CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
I. World Health Organization (WHO) . . . . .	2
II. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) . . . . .	2

## I. WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

### Action taken by the Executive Board

At its fifty-first session, the Executive Board adopted resolution EB51.R.47, in which, inter alia, the Board thanked the Inspectors for their report and agreed with the comments and observations of the Director-General on the report.

## II. FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

### Action taken by the Council

The Council also gave its attention to the JIU report on Treatment of Water Resources Development in the United Nations Family of Organizations as well as to the comments of the Director-General and the Programme and Finance Committees on this report.

The purpose of the JIU study was to examine the activities of each of the members of the United Nations family involved in water resources, namely, United Nations, FAO, WHO, UNESCO, WMO and IAEA, and to determine the extent to which the United Nations system was helping to bring about a rational, scientific and systematic approach to the utilization of water resources for development. Based on this study, the report proposed measures for improved co-ordination and joint programming between organizations in the water sector. Amongst the principal measures proposed in the report, was the establishment of a new, additional machinery of Regional Water Resources Centres, one attached to each of the regional commissions, and a United Nations World Water Centre.

The Programme and Finance Committees in their reports to the Council appreciated the work done by the JIU Inspector, but disagreed with the principal proposal of a new, additional machinery, as it would mean an undesirable proliferation of United Nations bodies. The Director-General's comments had been endorsed by the two Committees.

In the discussion, members appreciated the work done by the JIU Inspector. However, it was felt that a new machinery for co-ordination in the water field, as proposed by the Inspector, was not an appropriate solution and the Director-General's comments proposing instead improvement of the existing arrangements for co-ordination within the ACC were endorsed by all speakers. One member particularly endorsed the Director-General's proposal of the ACC Sub-Committee studying the question of co-ordination in greater depth, for which its members would have to speak with the authority of their organizations. Another member mentioned that about 80 per cent of all water controlled by man was consumed by agriculture and concluded that FAO should be more active in this field. In this connexion, the Council was informed that only three United Nations organizations

had a substantive field programme concerned with water; of all UNDP-financed water projects, about 63 per cent have been carried out by FAO, about 22 per cent by the United Nations, and about 10 per cent by WHO; all other specialized agencies remained below the 3 per cent level.

In reply to a question on the effectiveness of the present system of co-ordination raised by one member, the Council was informed that in FAO's view the existing interagency machinery for co-ordination was, in general, satisfactory. Certainly, co-ordination in the field of water could and should be improved. Most of the other United Nations organizations were in agreement with FAO's view that the ACC Sub-Committee on Water Resources Development should remain the focal point of interagency co-ordination and co-operation in the water field.

With reference to the question of co-operation between the JIU and FAO in preparing the report and the surprise expressed by one member that the principal proposal by the JIU report had been rejected by the Director-General, the Council was informed that over the period of some two years when the JIU Inspector was preparing this report, every assistance had been rendered to him by the Secretariat. He had visited FAO on two occasions for discussions with officers who had provided him with all the information requested about the work of the Organization in this field. Eventually, the Inspector had submitted, to the Director of the division concerned very informally, extracts from his draft report for factual comments. These had been provided. The JIU then formulated conclusions or recommendations for incorporation in its official report. Once this was received by the Director-General, he commented on these conclusions and policy issues.

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

The Committee noted the importance of water resources development in the work of FAO and that more than 80 per cent of all UNDP expenditures for water development projects were channelled through FAO. The Committee noted that water resources development for agriculture was multisectoral, requiring an integrated approach from the inventory of resources to the use of water at the farmer's field. It was also informed that co-ordination amongst organizations in the United Nations family in the field of water was based on the end-use principle which was accepted by all United Nations family members but one.

The Committee appreciated the comprehensive work done by the Inspector in reporting and analysing the present situation of interagency co-ordination in the water field. In general, as mentioned by the Inspector, the Committee felt that water, because of its nature, was a subject which required co-ordination at the national and basin level more than at a regional or global level. Because of the diversity of its uses, however, different organizations dealing with specific aspects of these uses (agricultural, municipal and industrial uses) were involved, and interorganization co-ordination was needed in this respect. The Committee felt that this required both good will and good contacts between organizations concerned and, at the same time, close adherence by these organizations to their constitutional mandates in the water field.

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In view of this approach, the Committee fully endorsed the Director-General's comments and conclusions. In particular, the Committee supported and endorsed the Director-General's view that no additional co-ordinating machinery should be created and that, instead, full use should be made of the existing ACC Sub-Committee on Water Resources Development, which at present is the focal point of co-ordination and co-operation in the water field. The Committee also agreed with the Director-General's proposal that the Inspector's report be examined in depth by the ACC Sub-Committee with a view to clearer delineation of responsibilities between organizations, particularly where grey areas may still exist.

The Committee drew attention to the positive role UNDP was playing in the field of co-ordination in the new system of country programming, which, of course, would require close co-operation with the specialized agencies.

The Committee noted that the regional economic commissions were involved in water problems in a broad and general way only as far as economic and social aspects were concerned and warned against their becoming involved in operational activities in the field of water which would lead to duplication of the work of the specialized agencies.

The Committee was informed of the high cost of the many meetings which were held and of the many reports prepared in the field of water co-ordination during this biennium and recommended that an attempt be made to reduce the number of these reports and meetings to the absolute essential.

/Extract from the report of the Finance Committee on  
its twenty-eighth session/

The Committee reviewed this report by Mr. C. S. Jha and the Director-General's comments thereon (document CL 59/20). The Inspector reviewed the activities of all United Nations organizations in the field of water and his proposals essentially concern the creation of a new additional machinery for co-ordination in the field of water resource development consisting of an independent World Water Centre and Regional Water Centres, the latter ones being served by the regional economic commissions. On the request of the Chairman, the Committee was informed of the importance of FAO's role in the water field within the United Nations system, the effectiveness of the present system of interagency co-ordination through the ACC Sub-Committee on Water Resources Development, the reaction of other specialized agencies to the Inspector's proposal, which was in conformity with the Director-General's comments on the report, and the estimated cost factor of the Inspector's proposal.

The Committee generally agreed with the Director-General's comments and conclusions. Concern was expressed about the Inspector proposing new additional machinery for co-ordination in the water field by a World Water Centre and Regional Water Centres, particularly without proposing to abolish the existing machinery.

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Such proliferation of new organs was detrimental to the established policy and was not likely to solve problems of possible overlapping in the work of agencies. The Committee felt that a new co-ordinating machinery different from the present system for one single subject, namely water, might give an unwanted precedence for the creation of similar organs in other fields and thus upset the whole system of co-ordination within the United Nations family. The Committee also warned against a regionalization of the subject of water resources as a singled-out problem area.

In addition, the Committee agreed that the cost factor of the proposed new machinery appeared prohibitive under the present circumstances.

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UNITED NATIONS  
ECONOMIC  
AND  
SOCIAL COUNCIL



Distr.  
GENERAL

E/5231/Add.6  
20 June 1974

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

REPORTS OF THE JOINT INSPECTION UNIT

Report on treatment of water resources development  
in the United Nations family of organizations

(JIU/REP/72/3)

Observations of the Advisory Committee on Administrative  
and Budgetary Questions

1. In view of the specialist nature of the subject and the number of organizations involved, the Advisory Committee deferred its own comments on the above report. It is now apparent that whilst subscribing to the Inspection Unit's main theme that a total and integrated approach to water resources development is needed, the balance of opinion at both intergovernmental and administrative levels in the United Nations system is that the existing co-ordination mechanism is structurally adequate even though its full potential has not been realized.
2. The Inspector's report has served the useful purpose of drawing attention to some weaknesses of interagency co-ordination and to the piece-meal approach to water resources development by individual organizations. The report has also stimulated corrective action. But the remedy suggested by the Inspector, namely the establishment of a United Nations world water centre and of regional water resources centres, in addition to being costly, would add a new co-ordinating layer and thereby increase the danger of overlapping and duplication.
3. In all the circumstances the Advisory Committee accepts the opinion referred to in paragraph 1 above on the understanding that in the light of the Inspector's comments, no effort will be spared to make the existing mechanism work effectively. In that way the main purpose of the Inspector's report will be achieved in a cost-effective manner.