

Note on the Asian and Oceanic Postal Training School (AOPTS)

Prepared by

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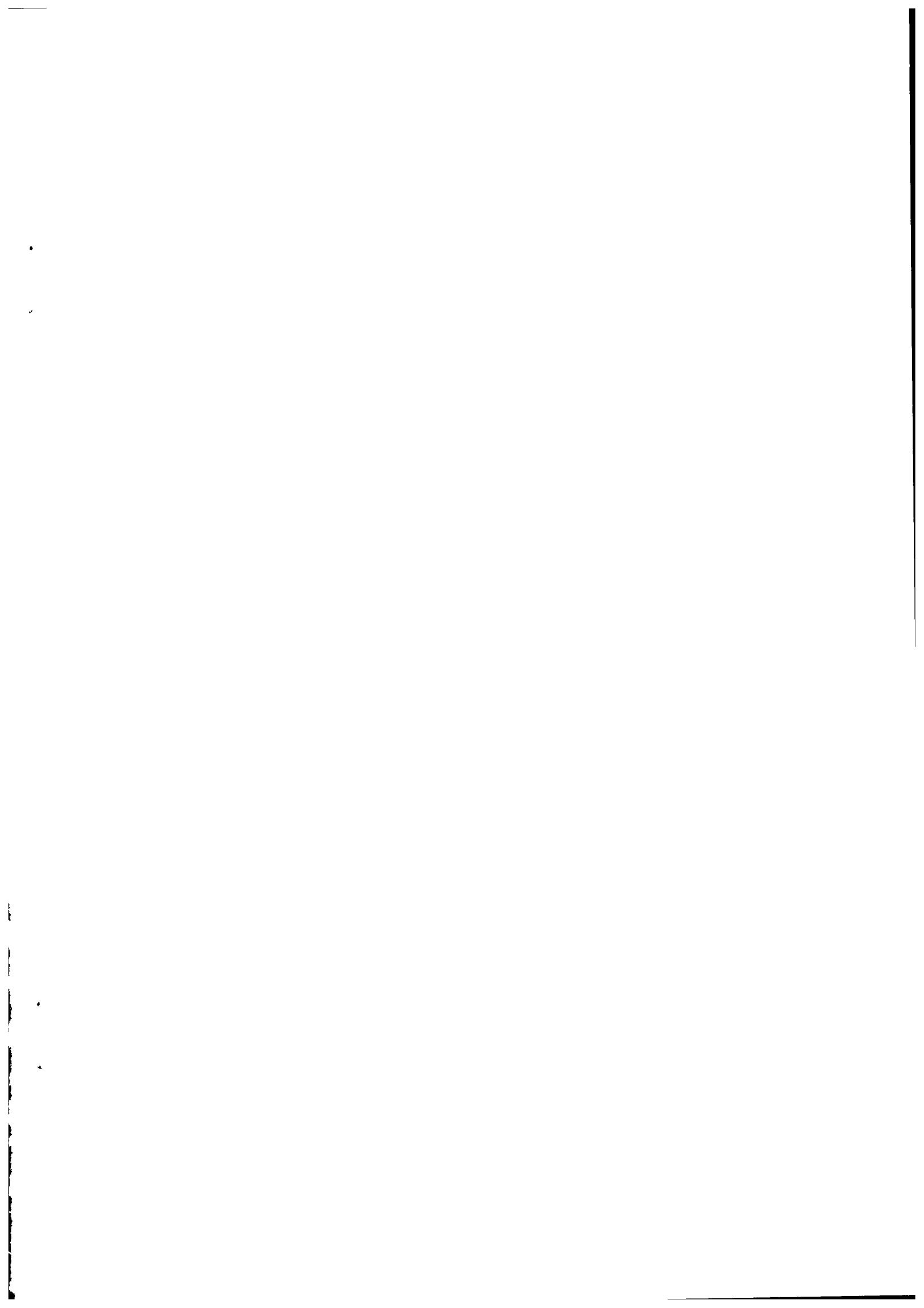
Joint Inspection Unit



Joint Inspection Unit

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Handwritten initials and signature

Dear Mr Debatin,

... I enclose herewith, for information, a Note on the Asian and Oceanic Postal Training School (AOPTS) (JIU/NOTE/80/1), prepared by Inspector J.J. Rodriguez-Arias.

The Note is issued in English only and has been sent to the Director-General of the Universal Postal Union for action as necessary.

Yours sincerely,

Murray Chase
Executive Secretary
Joint Inspection Unit

Mr Helmut Debatin
Under Secretary-General
Department of Administration,
Finance and Management
United Nations
New York
N.Y. 10017

cc: Mr A. Duque, Mr D. Cardovez, Mr A. Mango, Mr R. Barnes, Mr B. Sevan,
Mr K.K.S. Dadzie, Mr J. Ripert. Mr L. Cottafavi & Mr M. Allaf UNCG

Same letter to Liaison Officers of all participating organizations.

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Cumulative accomplishment (1970-79)

I. PURPOSE OF STUDY

1. This is one of a series of assessments initiated by the Joint Inspection Unit on selected regional training and research institutions established in the developing countries with the assistance of organizations of the United Nations system. The purpose is to examine the effectiveness of these institutions and their potential as focal points of technical co-operation in the context of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action, and to contribute to the measures requested by the UNDP Governing Council at its twenty-fourth session 1/ in regard to the international community's support of technical co-operation efforts already underway among the developing countries.

2. The Inspector visited the Asian and Oceanic Postal Training School (AOPTS) in October 1979 after consulting with officials of the Universal Postal Union, and had the opportunity of discussing its programme activities with the Director of the School and some members of the staff. The Inspector also exchanged views with members of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the Regional Representative in the UNDP Office in Bangkok. On the basis of these discussions the present note examines the contribution made by AOPTS to the building of TCDC links and channels in the Asian region and offers some recommendations concerning the programme of the School and the continuation of UNDP and UPU support.

1/ DP/L. 320, July 1977.

II. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3. The Asian and Oceanic Postal Training School (AOPTS) originated from a resolution adopted by the first Congress of the Asian-Oceanic Postal Union (A.O.P.U), held in Manila in December 1965, which recommended the establishment of a Regional Postal Training School for middle-grade postal staff.
4. The recommendation was promptly followed up by the central office of the A.O.P.U. and the Universal Postal Union (UPU), which requested the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to assist in setting up such a School. The project was approved by the UNDP Governing Council in 1970. A plan of operation was signed in the same year by the participating governments. Thailand offered to host the School at Bangkok.
5. The first plan of operation covered a four-year period (1970-1974), Phase I, during which the School's training programme consisted essentially of postal management courses for middle-grade staff. Experience gained in the first phase of the project suggested the need to train senior managerial staff as well, and to diversify the School's training programme to include all sectors of postal activity. Phase II of the project was accordingly approved in October 1974 to cover a three-year period (1974-1977). During this period, the School was to expand its activities by organizing, in addition to postal management courses for middle-level staff, specialization courses for all interested postal administrations in the region.
6. UNDP/UPU institutional support to the School was planned to be terminated in 1977. It is at present the responsibility of the Asian-Oceanic Postal Union of which it became an organ in May 1977. Nevertheless, the assistance of UPU and in certain aspects the co-operation of UNDP could be continued. A project for the improvement of AOPTS, covering consultants' missions and the provision of new equipment is under consideration 2/.
7. At present the participating countries are: Indonesia, Philippines, Republic of Korea and Thailand, but the School is providing training services to 27 countries throughout the region.
8. At the commencement of its Eleventh Postal Management Course in May 1979, AOPTS moved to its permanent location at Laksi (Bangkok) in the new buildings (offices, classrooms and dormitory) provided by the host country.

2/ A Project Document for a third phase was approved by UNDP in January 1980 to finance the services of two new consultants in 1980 and 1981, for six months each, plus US\$ 31,600 for equipment.

III. OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

9. The UNDP/UPU project arose from a need expressed by the participating countries for a sufficient number of trained middle-grade personnel that would be able to cope with the increasing volume of their postal traffic. The objective stated in the plan of operation for the first phase was "to assist the Governments in improving and expanding their postal administration through the establishment of a school for the training of middle level personnel in these countries". The plan of operation also envisaged advisory assistance to the postal administrations of the countries concerned with a view to improving their existing postal training schools and study programmes for junior staff.

10. The long-range objective of the second phase was to upgrade the qualifications of staff responsible for the running and management of the postal services. Training was to focus on modernization and progressive development of the postal sector, so as to meet the communication needs of the countries concerned and thereby contribute to their economic and social development.

11. In the short-term, the second phase was to be geared towards the following:

- further training, re-training specialization courses (statistics and forecasting, management, instructor training, etc.) for active managerial staff members;
- organization of lectures on specific subjects relating to postal organizational and operational problems;
- organization of training courses for the managerial staff of the postal services of the participating countries and of other countries of the region;
- training of instructors required by the School and by other national instruction centres;
- advice to the postal administrations of the region on how to organize or improve the training system for operational staff 3/.

12. The objectives of the second phase represented a carefully thoughtout and practically-oriented programme, the successful implementation of which benefited not only the participating countries but several other countries and territories of the region.

13. Although only five countries were signatories of the plan of operation, the project from the outset initiated an arrangement whereby non-participating Asian countries which so wished could award fellowships to their staff members to receive training at the AOPT School. This ingenious arrangement has not only proved highly successful but has also broadened considerably the geographical scope of the School. It is estimated that more than twenty-five Asian countries at present benefit from the School's training activities.

14. The School's authorities may wish to study the prospects of inter-regional contacts, co-operation and exchange, a move likely to expand the geographical coverage of AOPTS and enhance its TCDC character.

3/ These immediate objectives are provided on page 10 of the project document for Phase II.

IV. ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

A. Institutional Framework

15. The AOPT School was supervised and managed by two main bodies between 1970-1977: the Governing Board and the Local Executive Committee. The Governing Board comprised the head of the postal administration of each participating country or his representative as full members with voting rights. Members without the right to vote are: the Director of the central office of the Asian and Oceanic Postal Union, the Director of the School, the UNDP Resident Representative in Bangkok, and the Project Manager.

16. The Governing Board discharged the following main functions:

- determined the scales of salaries and conditions of service for the School's managerial, teaching and administrative staff;
- appointed the Director of the School and defined his duties;
- determined, in particular, the general policy of the School, established its guiding principles and supervised its budget.

17. The Local Executive Committee, based in Bangkok, ensured the continuity of the work of the Governing Council between the latter's annual plenary sessions. The Committee was composed of the Director-General of Posts and Telegraphs of the Thai administration, the Director of the School, the Project Manager and the UNDP Resident Representative.

18. After the termination of UNDP/UPU institutional support in 1977, the School's organizational framework was reshaped.

19. The School is presently under the responsibility of the Asian-Oceanic Postal Union which serves as its main source of policy guidance.

B. Funding

20. During the first phase the host Government's contribution in-kind included the following:

	<u>US\$ equivalent</u>
- project personnel	30,950
- land and buildings	300,000
- miscellaneous	12,000
- equipment and maintenance	13,600
TOTAL	<u>356,550</u> 4/

21. The in-kind contribution of other participating governments covered mostly student travel costs which amounted to US\$ 10,800 (equivalent).

22. Governments' contributions in cash in the first phase totalled US\$ 139,100 (equivalent), of which \$ 86,400 was allocated for training

4/ Source: Plan of Operation.

(student board), and \$ 52,700 for national project staff. The host Government was exempted from cash contributions because of its significant in-kind contribution to the project. However, it footed part of the local costs which amounted to \$ 48,700. Governments' and UNDP contributions to the project during its first phase may be summarized as follows:

<u>Governments' contribution</u>	<u>US\$ equivalent</u>
In-kind	367,350
In-cash	139,100
Towards local costs	48,700
Total (Governments)	555,150
<u>UNDP Contribution</u>	641,900
Total	<u>1.197,050 (Phase I)</u>

23. The financing of the project during the second phase (1975-77) is set out below:

<u>Governments' contributions</u>	
In-kind (Thailand)	431,500
In cash (Other Governments)	283,135
<u>UNDP contribution</u>	353,300 ^{5/}
Total equivalent US\$	<u>1.067,935 (Phase II)</u>

Source: Terminal Project Report, 1977.

24. UNDP contribution under the two phases covered the international project staff, equipment and fellowships. It would seem that UNDP assistance was inadequate to meet all the fellowship requirements. This prompted the UPU to provide assistance from its special fund for the financing of fellowships in Postal Management for Korea and the Philippines, which had been included in the UNDP contribution.

25. In addition, Australia and New Zealand provided fellowship grants for the benefit of countries using the School only on a fellowship basis. The grants received and promised are set out below:

Donor Country	Fiscal Year*				
	1975/76	1976/77	1977/78	1978/79	1979/80
Australia	\$A 25,000	32,000			
Australia/Papua New Guinea					
Training Vote	\$A 12,000	12,000			
Suppl. Grant (Australia)		13,000			
New Zealand			\$NZ 10,000	10,000	10,000
Totals	\$A 37,000	57,000	-	-	-

* Refers to fiscal year of donor countries.

Source: Terminal Project Report, 1977.

^{5/} This amount was subsequently raised to US\$ 416,725 following several project revisions.

26. With the exception of the host Government's contribution, the financial support of the participating countries is rather weak (30% of total cost). The phasing out of UNDP institutional support will require an increase in the contribution of AOPTS' member countries and the use of IPFs resources seems advisable at least to finance fellowships in some cases.

C. Staffing

1. National staff

27. Under Phase I, the national staff comprised the following:

- Director of School
- Two instructors
- Two assistant instructors
- Administrative and local support staff

During Phase II, two assistant instructors were added to the national staff already in place under Phase I. At the end of UNDP assistance, a Director of Studies was appointed to the staff to take over some of the duties formerly performed by the Project Manager.

2. International staff

28. During the two phases, the international staff consisted of a Project Manager and two experts. A third expert was appointed in 1975 to serve for seventeen months as training adviser. At present, short-term consultants from UPU under UNDP financing are co-operating with the School.

29. The AOPT School has, on the whole, been adequately staffed since its inception in 1970. The competence of both the national and international staff was a determining factor in the success of project operations during UNDP assistance. The quality and dedication of the national staff remained of the same high order after UNDP support. The continued technical support provided by UPU after 1977 - particularly the short expert services - has significantly enabled the national staff to extend the School's record of achievements as a regional focal point in postal management training. Consultant services have also been provided to the School free of charge by the Government of Australia.

V. TRAINING PROGRAMME

30. The syllabus for Phase I consisted of the following principal subjects:

- Postal legislation;
- Financial services and accounting procedures;
- Personnel management;
- Organization of postal establishments and administrative procedures;
- Postal procedures and routing of mail;
- Mail handling and mechanization.

In addition to the above, the School was to advise national postal administrations in the region, especially those of the participating countries, on the improvement of postal training schools or on the establishment of appropriate schools where necessary and feasible.

31. The above training programme was expanded during Phase II to include specialization courses designed essentially for the senior managerial staff of postal administrations. The syllabus featured the following new subjects:

- Instructor-training
- Administrative and operational management;
- Postal service inspection;
- Postal statistics;
- Preparation of postal development plans.

32. It would seem that the specialization courses delivered during Phase II were particularly successful both in terms of annual intake and geographical coverage. Eighteen countries of the region participated in these courses, with the result that the training capacity of the School had to be supplemented with the provision of an additional expert in 1975. Furthermore, in order to rapidly satisfy the pressing need for trained personnel, the original plan to send fellows to England for training as instructors was abandoned in favour of training instructors within the Asia region. This latter approach turned out to be more cost effective.

33. The training programmes envisaged under both phases have, on the whole, been successfully implemented. The Inspector is pleased to note that the AOPT School has continued to consolidate and expand the results achieved during UNDP assistance and that the duration of the general courses is being shortened. The UNDP/UPU terminal project report of 1977 suggests that the instructor training course was particularly successful, and contributed significantly to building up a reservoir of instructor talent in the Asia region. The table in the Annex, which shows the cumulative accomplishment of the School since its inception, not only supports the assessment of the terminal report but also provides a complete and satisfactory picture of the School's training capacity and geographical scope.

34. The School has assisted in the organization and conduct of some important seminars and meetings in the Asia region, such as the 1970 UPU-AOPU Postal Seminar in Manila, and the ESCAP-UPU Inter-governmental Working Party of Postal Experts held in Bangkok in 1974. These regional activities are a valuable complement to the School's training programme. However, it will be necessary to emphasize in-country activities whenever financially possible by organizing in-country seminars and study workshops and providing increased technical support and advice to the national postal administrations and training schemes of the participating countries.

35. The Inspector is of the view that the minor problems noted in the terminal report in connection with the language shortcomings of some students, and the inadequate prior postal experience of others can be obviated with time and without prejudice to the School's high quality of instruction.

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

36. The AOPT School is at present a firmly established and growing regional training institution covering the postal management training requirements of an important number of countries in the Asia-Pacific region. The political and financial backing of the participating governments, especially that of the host Government (Thailand), ensured the smooth establishment of the School, while UNDP/UPU institutional and financial support advanced and expanded its substantive role in the formative phase (paragraphs 6/8, 12/14 and 19).

37. The Inspector notes with satisfaction the increasing regional interest in the School's activities and the constant review and improvement of its training programme to reflect and meet the expressed needs of the countries of the region. These reviews should be continued and new special short courses added to the programme as appropriate. The work programme of AOPT School should be better co-ordinated and complimented with the two regional projects of East Asia and West Asia on the Improvement and Development of Postal Services (paras. 32/33).

38. The recommendations contained in the terminal report, especially with respect to the inclusion of a French language section for Laos, Vietnam and Kampuchea 6/, as well as the judicious selection of instructors and lecturers, are sound and should be followed up. But the Inspector thinks that the duration of the Postal management course could be further reduced (paras. 13, 31, 33/35).

39. The School should increasingly support national postal training activities and should generally emphasize its in-country efforts by organizing study workshops and "refresher" seminars, providing technical advice to the national postal administrations of the region. The pursuit and achievement of these objectives will of course be conditional on the availability of the necessary financial and technical resources (paras. 10/11, 31 and 34).

40. The training of instructors should be stepped up with a view to strengthening national self-reliance in the field of postal administration and management and to build up training staff for the School taking advantage of present UNDP/UPU backstopping (paras. 33/34).

41. The TCDC potential of this regional institution should be further developed along the lines recommended by the Buenos Aires Plan of Action. The assistance and support of the Asian-Oceanic Postal Union, and the co-operation of ESCAP, could be very valuable in this regard to stimulate greater participation of the School's Member States and to increase the future contributions of its participating countries in association with the host Government (paras. 1, 14, 23 and 32/34).

6/ The UPU has informed the Inspector that it proposes holding a number of mobile courses for these countries as part of the regional programme for Asia and the Pacific for 1982-1986.

42. UPU should continue to provide overall technical guidance and back-stopping to the School especially in the form of short-term consultant services, and ensure that trainees continue to receive advice from the School after their training (paras. 29/30 and 34).

43. Although in most cases postal operations are regulated by law, the preparation by the School of a Postal Administration and Operation kit could be useful not only for training purposes but also for improving the technical aspects of postal administration. The School's newsletter could also include more technical information (para. 34).

44. The work programme of AOPT School should be better co-ordinated and complemented with the existing two regional projects of East Asia and West Asia on the improvement and development of postal services (para. 14).

45. The School authorities should consider the possibility of developing inter-regional contacts and programmes with other developing countries. Language should not necessarily constitute an impossible barrier in this regard (paras. 2, 14, 41).

46. Subject to the availability of resources, the School should also develop a self-evaluation capability to enable it to assess the effectiveness and relevance of its training activities, as well as their impact in the countries being served. Periodic evaluations of its activities and surveys of regional needs would help improve the design of courses while adjusting the level of training to the evolving requirements of the participating countries (paras. 33/34).

47. The Inspector recommends that in the future UNDP financial assistance be limited to support the School's programme activities in the field (paras. 6, 20/23).

48. The possibility of using country IPF's to finance fellowships should be further explored to increase as much as possible the use of the School's services by the countries of the region (para. 25).

THE ASIAN AND OCEANIC POSTAL TRAINING SCHOOL
Cumulative Accomplishment

(30 July 1970 - 25 July 1979)

COURSES	Postal Management	Instructor Training	Routing and Circulation	Postal Statistics	Audit and Inspection	Total
Country						
Number of courses	11	6	4	4	3	
Afghanistan				3	2	5
Bangladesh	3	6	2	4	4	19
Bhutan	1					1
Brunei			1	1		2
Burma		1		1		2
Cook Islands					1	1
Fiji	4		1	1	2	8
Gilbert & Ellice	2	1		1		4
Indonesia	6	10	4	6	6	32
Korea, Rep. of	62	10	4	6	4	86
Laos	4			1		5
Malaysia	3	2	2	2		9
Maldives	1			1		2
Nepal	3	3	2	3	2	13
New Hebrides				1		1
Pakistan	4				1	5
Papua New Guinea	8		3	2	2	15
Philippines	108	13	14	12	10	157
Solomon Islands	1					1
Sri Lanka	2	2	2	1	2	9
Taiwan	12					12
Thailand	132	14	19	18	14	197
Tonga			1		1	2
Tuvalu	1					1
Vietnam		2				2
TOTAL	357	64	55	64	51	591

