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REPORT

on

THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE FAR EAST

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CONTENTS

| | <u>Paragraphs</u> | <u>Pages</u> |
|---|-------------------|--------------|
| I. INTRODUCTION | 1 - 2 | 1 |
| II. CONSTITUTION AND EVOLUTION OF ECAFE | 3 - 14 | 1 - 7 |
| III. INTERNAL ORGANIZATION | 15 - 20 | 7 - 15 |
| IV. ECAFE AND THE SPECIAL AGENCIES | 21 - 28 | 15 - 18 |
| V. ECAFE'S RELATIONS WITH OTHER UN BODIES | 29 - 38 | 19 - 22 |
| UNCTAD | 30 | 19 |
| UNIDO | 31 - 38 | 19 - 22 |
| VI. ECAFE AND UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS | 39 | 22 |
| (i) Office of Technical Co-operation | 43 - 50 | 23 - 26 |
| (ii) Substantive divisions of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs | 51 - 55 | 26 - 28 |
| (iii) UNDP | 56 | 28 - 30 |
| VII. THE OPERATIONAL ROLE OF ECAFE | 57 - 59 | 30 - 32 |
| VIII. SOME PROBLEMS OF ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT | 60 - 63 | 32 - 35 |
| IX. CONCLUSION | 64 - 67 | 35 - 37 |
| X. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS | | 38 - 44 |

I. INTRODUCTION

1. This report is based on the visit during the month of March 1969 of the three inspectors subscribing to it to Bangkok and besides Thailand, to two other ECAFE countries, India and Cambodia. During this visit the inspectors had the opportunity of looking into the work of ECAFE and had prolonged discussions with the Executive Secretary of ECAFE, U NYUN, and with heads of divisions and other officers of that organization, who gave generously of their time and facilities, for which they are thankful. They also had talks with UNDP and agency regional and country representatives.

2. The objectives of the inspections were to examine the working of ECAFE and make an evaluation of its present and future role in the field of regional co-operation and as an organization fitting into the evolving pattern of United Nations activities. The views on these questions of the member governments whom the inspectors could contact, were found to be extremely useful.

II. CONSTITUTION AND EVOLUTION OF ECAFE

3. ECAFE was created by a resolution of the Economic and Social Council adopted on the 28 March 1947. It is worth noting that in the case of ECAFE (as indeed with other regional commissions) the initiative came from member states. As the preamble to the General Assembly resolution of 28 March 1947 shows, it was on the recommendation of the General Assembly to ECOSOC "to give prompt and favourable consideration to the establishment of an economic commission for Asia and the Far East", in order "to give effective aid to the countries devastated by war", that ECAFE was created.

4. In the course of time ECAFE has undergone adaptation and expansion both in its membership and in its mandate and objectives, in response to the needs of changing times and the wishes of the member governments. This has been brought about by several amendments, initiated by the member governments of ECAFE and approved by ECOSOC.

Most of the amendments relate to additional membership, which has grown from ten members (of which six from outside the region) in 1947 to twenty-seven today (including three Associate Members and seven from outside the region). Some of the amendments, however, have been concerned with the re-orientation of the mandate and objectives of ECAFL.

5. In 1951 the words "and development" were inserted after the word "reconstruction" in the first paragraph of the Commission's terms of reference, so as to involve ECAFE in the long-term planning and development desired by member governments. In the same year the Commission was empowered to perform such advisory services "within the available resources of the Secretariat as the countries of the region may desire, provided that such services did not overlap with those rendered by the specialized agencies or the United Nations technical administration", "to assist ESCO, at its request, in discharging its functions within the region in connexion with any economic problems, including problems in the field of technical assistance", and "to deal, as appropriate, with the social aspects of economic development and inter-action of economic and social factors". Thus the totality of the mandate of ECAFE covers a vast field and relates to almost every aspect of the economic, social and technological re-construction and development of the countries within the ECAFL region. The complexity of the task is further magnified by the fact that this region covers an area of 30.3 million square kilometres and a population of 1,700 millions - about a fifth of the land surface of the earth with more than half of the world's population.

6. ECAFE's mandate may be summarized as follows:

- to initiate and participate in measures for facilitating concerted action for the economic re-construction and development of Asia and the Far East, for raising the level of economic activity and for maintaining and strengthening the economic relations of these areas both among themselves and with other countries of the world.
- to make or sponsor investigations and studies of economic and technical problems of development within the territory of ECAFE.

- to undertake or sponsor the collection, evaluation and dissemination of such economic, technical and statistical information as the Commission deems proper;
- to perform such advisory services as countries of the region may desire, avoiding overlapping with the specialized agencies and the United Nations Technical Assistance administration;
- to assist ECOSOC, at its request, in discharging its functions within the region in connexion with any economic problems, including problems in the field of technical assistance;
- to study and take into account in carrying out these functions the social aspects of economic development and the inter-relation of the economic and social factors.

7. Aside from the formal amendments to the founding resolution, much of the re-orientation and adaptation in ECAFE's work and functions have come about without any formal amendments of its mandate. The latter is indeed wide enough to give scope for new lines of thinking and activities in the field of - to quote from the founding resolution - "concerted action for economic re-construction and development" and "for raising the level of economic activity in Asia and the Far East".

8. Deliberations in the Commission's annual sessions, with participation by high-level government representatives, which in turn have naturally reflected the evolution of economic thinking and of member governments' outlook on economic development, have stimulated and in fact sometimes pushed and steered ECAFE into new lines of studies and activities.

9. Landmarks in ECAFE's evolution and growth and in the orientation of its activities are:

- (a) 1951 - The Commission's so-called "Lahore Agreement" under the terms of which member countries of the Commission located outside the region agreed as a general rule to refrain from opposing economic proposals predominantly concerning the region, which had the support of most of the regional countries.

- (b) 1960 - The Commission's resolution recognizing that many of the region's problems are too vast to be dealt with effectively and economically at the strictly national level and urging economic co-operation among members.
- (c) 1963 - The decision of the Commission at its nineteenth session to convene a ministers' level meeting to formulate a specific programme of regional economic co-operation.
- (d) December 1963 - The **First Ministerial Conference** which adopted the so-called "Manila resolution," recommending the prompt convening of ad hoc meetings of representatives and expert groups to study and suggest practical programmes aimed at increasing regional co-operation and to make recommendations for institutional arrangements for trade liberalization and removal of quota restrictions etc. among countries of the region; concerted measures for promoting exports and stabilizing prices of primary commodities; co-ordinated establishment of industrial and other projects on a regional and sub-regional basis; establishment of an Asian Development Bank; rationalization of ocean freight rates and co-ordination of maritime transport facilities and where necessary of air transport facilities. The Manila resolution brought EC.FE into vast, new, important and complex fields of regional economic co-operation.
- (e) 1965 - The Second Ministerial Conference which adopted a resolution on "Dynamic Asian Economic Co-operation" in such important and complex forms, inter alia, as the organization of national development plans, the investigation of measures for regional trade liberalization, and the rationalization of shipping and ocean freight rates. Other measures which the Second Ministerial Conference decided should be undertaken were action programmes for joint and multilateral industrial ventures; joint resources surveys; joint off-shore prospecting; implementation of the Asian highway five-year plan; establishment of regional and sub-regional telecommunication links; a study of measures to minimize typhoon damage, and regional co-operation in implementing population policies.

(f) December 1968 - The Third Ministerial Conference adopted a resolution on a 'Strategy for Integrated Regional Co-operation', with special emphasis on regional trade promotion and the possibility of establishing payments or clearing unions with a view to providing such payments support as might be necessary for the schemes of trade expansion. The Conference called on ECARF to undertake various studies and take appropriate action for the implementation of its decision. It also constituted itself into a Council of Ministers to be called into session from time to time as sufficient progress was made on action programmes. Lastly, the Ministerial Conference asked ECARF to set up a task force for the Secretariat to carry forward the programme in practical and co-ordinated ways and to undertake activities in support of the decisions of the Council of Ministers.

10. We have thought it fit to narrate in some detail ECARF's evolution and growth since its inception in order to convey an idea of the responsibilities that have devolved on the Commission in the course of time and to describe its present status as an instrument for the promotion of regional economic co-operation in the service of the member states in the region. It is in the light of this that we propose to examine the effectiveness of ECARF, as at present constituted and organized, in carrying out its tasks; the adequacy or otherwise of its internal organization; the extent of back-stopping it receives from United Nations Headquarters and from other bodies in the United Nations system engaged in development and technical assistance activities in the developing countries, and what improvements might be necessary to make ECARF a truly effective regional body.

11. The fact that ECARF's growth has responded to the trends of thinking and the wishes of member states on the subjects of economic development and regional co-operation is a sign of its vitality and of the fact that it fulfils a real need. Every time, the accretion of responsibilities to ECARF has meant a considerable strain on its organizational and administrative resources. Its internal organization has necessarily tried to keep pace with the development of member states' thinking and with the demands of resolutions such as those adopted by the Ministerial Conferences, which involve ECARF in complex studies and in more and more action-oriented programmes.

12. During the first decade or more of its existence, ECAFE's work consisted largely of gathering information and data, research activities and advisory services. This was necessarily so, as economic information about most of the countries of the region was either totally lacking or meagre, and the countries themselves, most of which had just emerged into independence, did not possess the necessary statistical services and infrastructures in the economic field. Latterly, however, there has been increasing emphasis on practical or action-oriented programmes. All government representatives whom we met, while acknowledging the usefulness of ECAFE's economic studies and analyses, urged that its activities should be more action-oriented. They felt that the needs of the countries of the region were so great and pressing that they could not afford the luxury of learned studies and analyses only; and that what the people of this vital area needed were programmes which would help develop natural resources, increase production and industrialization, stabilize raw material prices and expand trade.

13. The change in the orientation of ECAFE's objectives has been duly reflected in the programmes that it has undertaken in recent years. Apart from its normal activity of making studies, undertaking economic analyses and helping governments to make their own studies and set up their own statistical and other economic services, ECAFE has been instrumental in initiating important regional economic projects. We will have more to say about this later, but among such striking projects may be mentioned the Mekong Development Project, the Asian Highway Project, the Asian Institute for Economic Development and Planning, the Asian Development Bank and the establishment of the Asian Coconut Community. Other projects which ECAFE has initiated or which are likely to take shape in the near future are off-shore prospecting in the Pacific and Indian Ocean areas of member states concerned; the establishment of regional telecommunication links; a typhoon damage control project; the Asian Statistical Institute; and the Asian International Fair (to be held in Iran in 1970).

14. In sum, the recent record of ECAFE in the field of regional co-operation is impressive. ECAFE has conceived of these regional projects, has made the basic theoretical and statistical studies connected with them, has acted as a catalyst in securing the agreement of and co-operation among the member governments concerned, has set up or helped in setting up the necessary machinery for the implementation and operation of such projects and in many cases has exercised supervision in their execution. In other words, while continuing its function of economic studies and research and advisory services to member states, ECAFE has increasingly become an operational or very nearly operational body in the field of regional economic co-operation. Having regard to current trends and to the decisions of the Ministerial Conferences, particularly the latest such conference held in December 1968, it is obvious and, indeed, inevitable that ECAFE will have to undertake in the future even greater responsibilities in these directions.

III. INTERNAL ORGANIZATION

15. The inspectors devoted much of their time to the examination of the internal structure and organization of ECAFE in relation to its various responsibilities.

16. To carry out its tasks ECAFE has organized its secretariat into eleven divisions. There are a number of subsidiary bodies, committees, conferences and special bodies, composed of government representatives or government level experts which are serviced by the various divisions concerned. In many cases, the constitution of subsidiary bodies came, chronologically, first and resulted in the creation of new divisions or units or in the reorganization and sometimes sub-divisioning of pre-existing ones.

17. The divisions:

- carry out or sponsor the basic studies in the specialized fields falling within their charge, in accordance with ECAFE's terms of reference and with a view to stimulating regional co-operation in these fields;

- > service committees, conferences, seminars, etc. with which they have a lien: e.g. the Industry and Natural Resources Division services the Committee on Industrial and Natural Resources and the Asian Industrial Development Council meetings and their sub-committees; the International Trade Division services the Committee on Trade and its sub-committees; the Transport and Communications Division services the Transport Committees and its sub-committees and working groups on Highways and Highway Transport, Water Transport, Railways and Telecommunications; while the Research and Planning Division services the conference of Asian Economic Planners and maintains a liaison with the Asian Institute for Economic Development and Planning in Bangkok;
- > organize and prepare material for seminars and ad hoc expert study groups which are called from time to time under the auspices of the Commission;
- > perform operational or quasi-operational functions in respect of specific regional projects, if any;
- > provide advisory services through regional advisers to governments, at their request, in the fields of activity with which they are concerned;
- > organize training courses in the countries of the region or at ECAFE Headquarters or in third countries, as may be convenient or appropriate, and
- > prepare for the annual meetings of the Commission, take follow-up action and implement decisions of the Commission in the particular field to which they are attached.

18. These constitute onerous tasks. It is our definite opinion, after a detailed examination of the work of each division and after discussions with the Chiefs of divisions and other staff members, that they are able and dedicated men, with some among them of outstanding competence, who are carrying out their responsibilities with a minimum of professional staff and in trying physical conditions (see paragraph 20). All governments with whom we spoke have high praise for U NYUN's idealism and dedication to the cause of Asian regional economic co-operation and its consummation in what he likes to call "the Asian way".

19. While we have found the divisions well organized and ably run and the internal organization of the secretariat on the whole adequate, we would like to offer the following comments:

- (a) There is an unevenness in the work load of the various divisions. To some extent this is inevitable, since different divisions deal with different subjects of varying priorities, in all of which progress is not uniform with regard to studies and initiatives for regional action. Nevertheless, it is well worth considering whether the divisions could not be reorganized with a view to spreading the work load more evenly and possibly reducing their number. Until 1960 there were eight divisions. Thereafter the Bureau of Flood Control was made into the Division of Industry and Trade. The Statistics Section was separated from the Research and Planning Division and made into a full-fledged division. Likewise, the Population Section of the Social Development Division, was constituted into a Population Division. It seems to us that it might be possible to merge some of the divisions; e.g. the Population Division and the Social Development Division whose work is in many ways inter-related. The fact that the former is financed mostly out of extra-budgetary funds should be no barrier to their merger, provided the identity of the two components is more or less maintained. Likewise, it might be considered whether the Statistical Division should not be restored to the Research and Planning Division as a specialized component of it. The Statistical Unit should service all divisions, including that of Research and Planning, while maintaining adequate technical liaison and close co-ordination with the UN Statistical Division at Headquarters.
- (b) With the accretion of each fresh responsibility there has been a tendency to create a new division. We note, however, that the Executive Secretary has shown commendable regard for economy and the prevention of proliferation of units or divisions by organizing a task force for the implementation of the

resolution on "A Strategy for Integrated Regional Economic Co-operation" adopted by the Third Ministerial Conference. This task force is drawn from among the existing staff and the work in this connexion has been farmed out to a select group of officers drawn from different divisions, who thus assume additional responsibilities.

- (c) We feel that certain divisions need strengthening, both as to the numbers of professional staff and the level and calibre of their chiefs. In particular, in the context of the important mandate on trade promotion and extension, clearing and payments union agreements, etc., given by the Third Ministerial Conference, the Trade Division seems weak and needs strengthening. Similarly, the Joint FAO/ECAFE Agriculture Division - in itself a good example of co-operation between the specialized agencies and the regional commissions, and one worthy of emulation by other specialized agencies and UN bodies - though headed by an FAO officer of ability, is small, considering the importance of agriculture for the ECAFE region. It is our impression that this joint unit has tended to lose momentum and needs to be strengthened and given additional support, both by ECAFE and FAO.
- (d) With the increase in the number of divisions and in the responsibilities and activities of ECAFE, the question of co-ordination within the ECAFE secretariat assumes increasing importance. The Executive Secretary is an extremely busy official. He has to make extensive tours to the countries of the ECAFE region for talks with Governments at the highest level. He has also to attend many conferences and meetings outside the region, besides personally attending meetings, conferences, seminars, etc., which are held under the auspices of ECAFE. To ensure effective co-ordination of day-to-day work and activities of the various divisions, we consider that the Executive Secretary needs high-level

assistance. The Special Assistant of the Executive Secretary is a very able officer, but besides his functions as a Special Assistant to the Executive Secretary, he has to look after various substantive matters in the office of the Executive Secretary, such as the Technical Assistance Unit, the Information Service, the Editorial Service, the Language Service and the Public Administration Programme of ECAFE. He just does not have enough time left to devote to internal co-ordination matters, though we note that in recent months the Special Assistant has been able to take some positive steps in this regard. He also does not possess the necessary seniority to exercise effective co-ordination of the activities of divisions, many of which are headed by officers senior to him. We are of the view that the Executive Secretary should be assisted by a high-level Deputy, who should be number two in the hierarchy and should, under the guidance of the Executive Secretary, assist him in the work of internal co-ordination. In addition to the work of co-ordination proper, the Deputy should also be responsible for assisting the Executive Secretary in the task of administration and management and, in particular, in matters of higher personnel management requiring the attention of the Executive Secretary. Such an officer should, of course, be a hand-picked one and personally acceptable to the Executive Secretary. We are convinced that if a Deputy to the Executive Secretary is inducted, better co-ordination and management and greater efficiency will result.

- (e) We consider that the Research and Planning Division, which is at present largely engaged in the preparation of the annual Economic Surveys and the Quarterly Economic Bulletins for Asia and the Far East, should become the nerve-centre for economic thinking and for stimulating comprehensive measures for regional economic co-operation. This Division should be both a thinking division, providing through its studies and economic analyses the raw material for further planning, as well as a service division to the various substantive divisions in ECAFE. Its present

studies and economic analyses, particularly the Annual Surveys and the Quarterly Bulletins, are impressive and useful, but we feel that a reorganization and strengthening of this Division is necessary, so that it may become more dynamic and better able to help in the discharge of ECAFE's additional responsibilities. It might also be considered whether the Annual Economic Survey should not be a biennial instead of an annual publication, any striking changes in the years in which a comprehensive economic survey is not published being brought out in supplements. This would, we believe, enable the Research and Planning Division to shift its work to a greater degree towards action-oriented programmes.

- (f) The methods of determining relative priorities when formulating the work programme for any given year seem to us to need improvement. The present practice seems to be for each division to draw up its work programme mainly at its own initiative and partly in fulfilment of the wishes and resolutions of the Commission and of the various subsidiary bodies with which it is concerned. The division then submits its programme to the Executive Secretary who, after considering all the proposals, approves a final list for submission to the Commission. Whilst recognizing that it is right that in the first instance each division should formulate its own proposals for inclusion in the work programme and that at the top, the Executive Secretary draws up a list of priorities for submission to the Commission, we feel that the intermediate processes need improvement. For the problem of co-ordination arises not merely at the final stage, but also at the stages of formulation and subsequent inter-divisional consultations. The greater the number of divisions, the greater the danger of parallel or overlapping schemes with different hallmarks. Thus, we have seen a paper from the Special Assistant

to the Executive Secretary dated January 1968 which emphasizes the importance of the merging of parallel and inter-related projects. We also learnt of some progress made during the last year in this direction, resulting in a reduction in the number of projects as compared to previous years. We consider, however, that the determination of priorities is of such great importance that it might be useful for the work programme to be screened, prior to its discussion in the Commission, by a Working Group of experts representing the member governments of ECAFE. This could be done shortly before the Annual Session of the Commission.

- (g) ECAFE's calendar of meetings is a formidable one. During 1969, 48 meetings totalling 237 days are scheduled. The corresponding figures for the previous six years are 5 (197), 4 (172), 50 (201), 39 (170), 32 (186) and 34 (189). Practically throughout the year one meeting or conference or another is in session. The proliferation of conferences is, of course, a problem that bedevils the entire UN family, but for a relatively small organization like ECAFE it assumes serious proportions. It seems to us that the calendar of meetings is such, that little time is left for the secretariat to recover and pursue the tasks of reflection, analysis, formulation and implementation of regional co-operation plans. Something drastic has to be done about it. We would suggest that there should be a ceiling of 180 working days during the year for conferences. Within this ceiling, there should be a strict rationing of time for the various meetings and conferences on the basis of priorities proposed by the secretariat and approved by the Commission. This would increase efficiency, economize funds, reduce the volume of documentation and ease the present financial and man-power strain on member governments arising from the obligation to be represented at a multitude of conferences and meetings.

(h) The working conditions of the members of the ECAFE secretariat, except for those who work in the new building constructed with the help of the Netherlands, are most unsatisfactory. Thus the Sala Santithan - a building owned by the Thai Government, has been placed at the disposal of ECAFE, but not in its entirety. The conference hall and a considerable portion of the ground floor are under the control of, and used by the Thai Government, and every time ECAFE wishes to use the conference hall, it has to ask the Government's permission. The increase in ECAFE staff over the years has necessitated the partitioning of rooms into cubicles and even the building of further cubicles in the corridors. Most of these cubicles are ill-lighted; moreover, the building of cubicles in the corridors has greatly increased the fire hazard. Finally, most of the office accommodation is not air-conditioned. As a result of all this, ECAFE personnel has to work in stifling conditions, in great congestion and even at personal risk. The modern and commodious building erected as a result of the Government of the Netherlands' generosity is adequate only for accommodating some important administrative services and the staff concerned, and thus fulfils but a small part of the need. The Executive Secretary has an impressive model plan for a new secretariat building to be constructed as an annex to the Sala Santitham, but so far it remains a show model only. A prior connected question is, of course, that of the permanent headquarters of ECAFE. We understand that the Government of Thailand have allotted land to ECAFE but have not favourably reacted to the request for constructing a building thereon for the use of ECAFE. We hope the Government of Thailand will provide and construct a suitable and adequate building. In case they are not agreeable, the solution may well be the erection of a building with the help of voluntary contributions from member governments of ECAFE and the United Nations. We understand that some governments of the region have indicated their willingness to contribute. One way or another, we feel that the time has come for a fresh and urgent look at this whole problem of accommodation and better working conditions, with which efficiency of performance is closely bound.

20. In the event of a new construction, the latter should be large enough to provide for common premises for all or most of the regional specialized agency offices. If all of them are brought under the same roof, co-ordination among the members of the UN family engaged in the field of regional economic co-operation will undoubtedly be greatly improved, if only for the reasons that in a large and crowded city like Bangkok, where circulation is most difficult, much time that has to be spent in travelling from one UN premises to another would be saved, and economy would result from common administrative services. The gathering together of all the UN agencies on the same premises should not, in our view, create any difficulty in the preservation of the identity of the various agencies, which the latter are, understandably, anxious to maintain, by suitable markings and apportionment of the building and premises. Indeed, both the impact of the individual agencies and the image of the UN family as a whole are likely to be strengthened thereby.

IV. ECAFE AND THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES

21. A perusal of ECAFE's terms of reference, as indeed of those of other regional commissions, clearly shows that these comprehend the whole field of economic reconstruction and development. While the specialized agencies and other UN bodies have global interest and operations in their respective specialized fields, the regional commissions are concerned with a restrictive geographical area. The latter's mandate, however, covers most of the areas of interest of the specialized agencies and other UN bodies. It is obvious that the objectives of the UN bodies engaged in social and economic activities converge and meet in the regional commissions; and there is a mutuality of interest between the specialized agencies and other UN bodies and the regional commissions in the regions in which the latter operate. Each can give assistance and support to the other in the achievement of their common tasks and goals, through an integrated approach and without encroachment on each other's activities. It should be the aim to develop to the maximum extent possible such mutual support and liaison, so that United Nations activities as a whole, in any particular region, should be an integrated effort, without overlapping; multi-dimensional instead of vertical

22. UNESCO, ILO, FAO, ICAO, IAEA and UNICEF have regional offices in Bangkok. However, the countrywise composition of the regions in the charge of the regional representatives is not identical; each specialized agency has in fact grouped countries into regions according to its own concept and convenience. Hardly any of them has the same configuration as the ECAFE region. This fact, to some extent, detracts from the mutuality of interests referred to above.

23. Co-operation between the specialized agencies and ECAFE varies from agency to agency, both in extent and frequency of collaboration. This is, of course, understandable, being partly due to the fact that not all the specialized agencies operate directly in the basic economic fields which concern ECAFE most, though the broadening of its mandate to include the social aspects of economic development has brought ECAFE into a common field with such specialized agencies as UNESCO and WHO (whose activities hitherto had touched ECAFE's only marginally) and has extended its relations with others like ILO. We note, for instance, that in the execution of the Mekong River Project several specialized agencies concerned with the various aspects of the project, e.g. hydrology, agricultural development, health, manpower training etc. etc., co-operate with the Mekong Office which, with financial support from UNDP, functions under the auspices of ECAFE. There have been other instances of co-operation, such as in the preparation of the Asian Manpower Plan by the ILO; collaboration between the ILO Regional Office in Bangkok and the Asian Institute for Economic Development and Planning; joint participation by UNESCO and ECAFE in the Inter-Agency Task Force concerning Integrated Rural and Community Development, etc. We understand that the Director-General of UNESCO has proposed the establishment in 1971/72 of a science unit with the primary aim of liaison with ECAFE in the promotion of regional co-operation in science and technology. We welcome this proposal.

24. Notwithstanding some instances of co-operation between agencies and ECAFE, there appears to be no systematic collaboration on an active and continuing basis, especially in the field of programming, which we consider necessary for integrated effort in the areas common to the specialized agencies and ECAFE, to the mutual advantage of both and to the maximum benefit of the countries of the region. There is much room for improvement in this regard and it is necessary in our view to take effective steps for improving substantially the existing level of co-operation and co-ordination, without duplication and overlapping.

25. The agency representatives are invited to and usually attend, either in person or through a deputy, the meetings of ECAFE and its subsidiary bodies but, generally speaking, they are merely present; they hardly participate. At a couple of meetings which we attended - a seminar and an expert group - the seats of two specialized agencies were not even occupied. We wonder if all specialized agencies and other UN bodies are sufficiently interested in ECAFE's work and have issued appropriate instructions to their regional representatives or offices. We would like to see agency regional representatives take a more lively and constructive interest in the studies and deliberations of ECAFE, participate fully in the discussions and give the benefit of their technical knowledge to ECAFE; and in turn feed back to their parent bodies the knowledge acquired by them of the developments at ECAFE and of the thinking of the member states of the region, particularly in regard to regional co-operation. Fresh instructions may be issued in this regard. Likewise, it is for the secretariat of ECAFE and ECAFE bodies, both at government and expert level, to seek and make use of the expertise of the specialized agencies and to encourage their representatives to participate fully in the meetings convened by ECAFE. Aside from the other measures suggested below, it would be useful for the regional representatives of agencies to participate actively in the annual meetings of ECAFE officials and UNDP resident representatives in the ECAFE region, which we are suggesting in a later section of this report.

26. We are of the opinion that a much closer and more concrete nexus than exists at present should be established between ECAFE and the specialized agencies and other UN bodies. In a few cases this nexus already exists, e.g. between FAO, WMO and ITU and ECAFE. A joint FAO/ECAFE unit was established in 1951, resulting in the posting of an FAO officer, who now heads the joint FAO/ECAFE agriculture Division. A joint WMO/ECAFE unit located within the ECAFE secretariat has been formed since 1968. A WMO technical co-operation officer (paid for by UNDP) heads a new regional technical assistance project for typhoon damage control. A joint ECAFE/ITU unit was established in 1961/62. The secretariat of ECAFE provides offices and services to the unit and the ITU experts advise ECAFE in regard to the proposals for inter-regional telecommunication links. The joint WMO/ECAFE unit is attached to the Division on Water Resources and the ECAFE/ITU unit to the Transport and Communications Division. These are good examples of co-operation. We have already observed that the joint FAO/ECAFE Agriculture Division needs to be strengthened. Furthermore, the FAO officer heading the joint Division should receive increased technical support from the FAO regional office in Bangkok and from FAO Headquarters.

27. In respect of those specialized agencies which have no parallel arrangements to those of FAO and the other agencies mentioned above, but have regional offices in Bangkok, we suggest that liaison officers should be appointed and attached to the divisions of ECAFE which deal with related matters. In addition to the regional representative himself attending the more important meetings, it should also be the function of the liaison officer to attend intensively the meetings of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies and expert groups. He should keep his regional representative informed and assist him in making detailed reports to the headquarters of that agency.

28. As regards those specialized agencies which have no regional office in Bangkok, the function of liaison officer should be performed by the country representative, if there is one.

V. ECAFE'S RELATIONS WITH OTHER UN BODIES

29. In the case of those UN bodies which are not specialized agencies but operate under UN General Assembly resolutions and whose work is closely connected with that of ECAFE in the regional field, such as UNCTAD, UNIDO, etc. there should be even closer arrangements between them and ECAFE than those envisaged with the specialized agencies, for the simple reason that, if one may use the expression, they are members of the same household.

UNCTAD

30. A good working relationship has already been established between UNCTAD and ECAFE. We note that UNCTAD increasingly considers the regional commissions as its regional arm for initiating regional action in the pursuit of the objectives of UNCTAD's 1964 Resolution. ECAFE has set up a Trade Promotion Centre in Bangkok. This Centre was established a short while ago, is staffed at present by one professional officer and forms part of the Trade Division which, as we have already observed, is itself rather weak. We consider that the ECAFE Trade Promotion Centre should act as a fully-fledged regional arm of the GATT/UNCTAD Trade Promotion Centre. Parallelism and overlapping should be avoided and real complementarity should be established. For this purpose, we think that both the ECAFE Trade Promotions Centre and the Trade Division should be strengthened. Among the ways of doing so would be the posting to ECAFE on a tenure basis of personnel from UNCTAD, who would also constitute a useful link and liaison between the two bodies. This is all the more necessary since developing countries now attach overriding importance to trade promotion and expansion within and outside the respective regions.

UNIDO

31. UNIDO has participated with ECAFE in two regional missions; one for export promotion and the other a Fact-Finding Mission on Agricultural Machinery Industries, organized under the aegis of the Asian Industrial Development Council. UNIDO is in consultation with ECAFE about the proposed Second Asian Industrial Conference (1970) and the Long-Range Industrial Plan for the ECAFE region. Some other minor activities are also the subject of bilateral consultations. However, the existing mutual collaboration appears still to be only marginal. Last year, UNIDO participated in

only one of five missions sent out under the auspices of the Asian Industrial Development Council: and of the many conferences, seminars, etc., on technical subjects organized by UNIDO, ECAFE participated in only one. No systematic rapport seems yet to have been established and developed between the two bodies. This may be partly because UNIDO is a new organization, still in the process of evolving its relations with the various members of the UN family; and partly because the two bodies have not yet been able to work out between them a system of balanced and mutually advantageous collaboration and co-operation.

32. From the very early years, all ECAFE member states have been showing deep interest in the field of industrialization, in response to which, over the years, ECAFE has gathered considerable knowledge on the subject about the countries of the region. It has set up a strong Industry and Natural Resources Division. It is but appropriate that UNIDO should take advantage of ECAFE's knowledge and experience in this matter, particularly in the area of regional co-operation which, in the form of joint industrial ventures, is acquiring great importance. Indeed, the Industry and Natural Resources Division of ECAFE should function as the regional instrument of UNIDO.

33. The Industrial Development Board at its 53rd meeting on 9 May 1969 unanimously adopted a largely-sponsored resolution underlining the importance of co-operation between UNIDO and the regional economic commissions and requested the Executive Director of UNIDO to include in his annual report the extent and the specific measures of co-operation implemented or being developed with the regional commissions in agreement with the Executive secretaries of the latter. We would like to see the development of much closer collaboration on a two-way basis between UNIDO and ECAFE, the former providing guidelines and the latter furnishing UNIDO with its specialized knowledge and experience and with the results of analyses of regional, sub-regional and individual country problems of industrialization. ECAFE should also function as the instrument for achieving collaboration and co-operation between the Asian Industrial Development Council and UNIDO.

To achieve the much closer practical and purposeful co-operation and co-ordination in the programming of their activities which we recommend, the initiative has to be taken by both bodies. The agreement reached in July of this year in Geneva, i.e. since our inspection, between the Executive Director of UNIDO and the Executive Secretary of ECAFE, which we welcome, will, we hope, facilitate this co-operation, especially in the programming of the activities of the two organizations.

34. There exists an agreement between UNDP and UNIDO under which the latter is to appoint field advisers in individual countries, attached to the UNDP resident representative. The areas of operation of the advisers usually cover not only the country of the resident representative but some others as well. The UNIDO Field Adviser attached to the UNDP representative in Bangkok, for example, covers six countries. In effect he is a sub-regional officer. The idea of posting a UNIDO field officer to particular countries is a good one, but this does not answer the need for close collaboration between UNIDO and ECAFE, as underlined in the preceding paragraph. The Field adviser attached to UNDP's resident representative has to be away a great deal on tour and is frequently unable to attend and participate in the relevant meetings of ECAFE. This is not a satisfactory position and is unlikely to improve substantially, even if the area of operations of the Bangkok Field adviser is reduced with the projected appointment of more UNIDO field advisers.

35. What seems to us important is that there should be a qualified and high-level Regional Industrial Officer attached by UNIDO to ECAFE. This would help in the establishment of the rapport, co-ordination and co-operation between the two bodies which we consider essential. The Regional Industrial Officer could also give technical advice to field officers within the ECAFE region and supervise on behalf of UNIDO/ECAFE the projects in the region, supplementing their supervision by field officers. This will also fulfil to some extent the purpose of the Asian Industrial Development Council's proposal that UNIDO post regional liaison officers to ECAFE.

36. We understand that while UNIDO would not be opposed to this idea, it does not have the funds for the attachment of regional industrial officers to the regional economic commissions. It is emphasized that the project of attaching regional advisers to UNDP resident representatives in different areas materialized only because of the UNDP's agreement to finance it.

37. As already stated, we support this project, but we would like to see it further complemented by the creation of a post of Regional Industrial Officer with ECAFE (and with the other regional economic commissions, except perhaps ECE). We would strongly urge UNDP to consider the possibility of giving financial support for the appointment of such regional officers. If for some reason it is not possible to have two officers in Bangkok - one with ECAFE and another with UNDP - it would be best to have a single officer attached to ECAFE as Regional Industrial Officer, who could also function as Field Adviser to the local UNDP resident representative.

38. Other ways in which interlocking of the activities of the ECAFE and UNIDO can be achieved are the secondment of UNIDO personnel on a tenure basis to ECAFE and vice versa, as well as increased mutual participation in and joint preparations for seminars, study groups, conferences and training courses, whether organized by UNIDO or ECAFE.

VI. ECAFE AND UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS

39. Finally we come to UN Headquarters itself. ECAFE, as a limb of the UN, is administratively responsible to the Secretary-General of the UN and has day-to-day dealings with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, headed by the Under Secretary-General of that department.

40. We have used the word 'administratively', because ECAFE is at the same time responsible to the member states of the ECAFE region and is subject to their parliamentary control and guidance in policy matters, under the overall control of ECOSOC. It is this dual position which gives ECAFE and indeed the other regional commissions a unique status and primacy among regional bodies of the UN family - a uniqueness which must be recognized.

41. Over the years ECAFE has received good support from the UN Secretariat. Indeed, without this it would not have been possible for it to function and expand its activities. However, just as ECAFE has had to adapt itself and

re-orient its activities in conformity with the wishes of the member states, some re-orientation in the treatment of ECAP at UN headquarters seems necessary, in the light of ECAP's enhanced responsibilities in the field of regional economic co-operation. We shall endeavour to give precision to this point later, but generally speaking, it appears to us that some additional measure of devolution of authority from Headquarters to ECAP is necessary to enable the latter to meet the new challenges and function more effectively as a regional arm of the UN.

42. In this connexion, we shall consider the inter-relationship between ECAP and the following elements of the UN Secretariat:

- (i) Office of Technical Co-operation;
- (ii) Various divisions of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs which at Headquarters are involved in the regular Technical assistance programmes;
- (iii) UNDP;
- (iv) The Administration.

(i) Office of Technical Co-operation

43. The activities of ECAP under the regular Technical Assistance budget have, in the past, been well supported by the O.T.C. Such Technical Assistance takes the form of regional advisers, institutes and training centres, and study tours and short-term seminars. A Technical Assistance Unit has been established in ECAP under the direct control of the Executive Secretary; it receives technical instructions from Headquarters.

44. Regional advisers are expected to be available at short notice for specific Technical Assistance assignments of short or medium duration in response to Government requests. They are expected to spend the major part of their time in the field and while at regional headquarters, to confine their activities to work directly related to operational activities and to assisting, as required, in the substantive and administrative aspects of regional seminars, study tours and other regional projects sponsored by the respective economic commissions.

45. The United Nations regular Technical Assistance programme for the year 1969 provides for a total of 211 man-months for the services of regional advisers attached to ECAFE at a total cost of \$417,700. Twenty-one regional advisers are currently serving in the ECAFE region.

46. Unfortunately we were not able to acquaint ourselves in actual practice with the work being done by the regional advisers attached to ECAFE, but differing views were expressed by governments as to their usefulness. Some of the advisers were judged very highly, whilst as regards others there were reservations. A common complaint was that their stay in the various countries they were called upon to visit was too brief and that the recommendations put forward following these short visits were consequently insufficiently substantiated. It appears also that a few of them do not combine the right balance of technical knowledge and broad experience.

47. Under existing procedures, regional advisers work within the secretariat of ECAFE. They cannot visit a country unless they are formally invited to do so. Even when such a formal invitation is forthcoming, Headquarters must authorize the visit and though to date no request has been turned down, the formalities are labour-, cost- and time-consuming and the adviser's visit is therefore necessarily delayed. (We learn with satisfaction that since our visit to Bangkok, UN Headquarters has allocated to the Executive Secretaries of regional commissions the authority to approve regional advisers' country visits). Countries requesting the services of a regional adviser are required to pay 12.5% of the total cost. This requirement causes a financial burden to many governments and often inhibits them from making such requests. In one or two cases in the past this payment has been waived. We understand that such waivers in the case of the UN regular programme are based upon inter-agency agreement on country waivers under the United Nations Development Programme.

48. As regards country experts, the present arrangements for informing ECAFE of expert missions organized by Headquarters to individual countries in the ECAFE region are not fully satisfactory. In some instances, there has been insufficient notification of or consultation with the ECAFE secretariat. We would suggest that adequate procedures be devised to improve co-ordination in this respect.

49. Under present procedures, all programmes for such tours and short-term seminars, even though planned by the regional secretariat, have to be approved by UN Headquarters. This review by Headquarters sometimes leads to their revision; as a result, certain types of projects tend to be too standardized and not necessarily adapted to the varying conditions in the different countries.

50. We consider that in order that ECAFE can function more effectively as a regional arm of the United Nations, some measure of additional support and decentralization is necessary. A few suggestions follow.

- (a) To make full and effective use of regional advisers, they should be permitted to undertake more work related to operational activities. Such work might consist of consultancy services to the ECAFE secretariat in the field of the adviser's competence re. projects of regional and sub-regional co-operation during periods when the adviser is not visiting a country or writing reports.
- (b) The rules requiring payment by the recipient country of 12.5% of advisory costs should be reviewed and made more flexible, depending upon the payment capacity of each country. We suggest that the best way of dealing with this problem would be to allow waiver in the case of countries whose contribution to the UN budget does not exceed a certain predetermined percentage, as agreed upon in the LACE; and to apply the rule flexibly, taking into consideration the merits and circumstances, in all other cases.
- (c) The Executive Secretary should be authorized to approve cost plans for seminars, study tours and training courses approved by Headquarters within an actual or notional allocation made by Headquarters and subject to any guidelines that Headquarters may issue regarding their preparation. This would avoid unnecessary delay and enable the seminars to be structured and prepared in conformity with the needs of and conditions in the region. At the same time, the Executive Secretary should ensure that maximum use is made of existing staff resources within the Commission's secretariat.

- (d) Headquarters should consider the possibility of transferring some Technical Assistance staff to the commissions, who could, among other things, become focal points of information for country and regional programmes.
- (e) There is some duplication and overlapping in the matter of sending experts to various countries of the region at the request of the Government. The ECAFE secretariat comes into the picture only insofar as it is informed by Headquarters of the appointment of the experts and comments on their reports, one copy of which is sent direct to ECAFE by the experts. Sometimes, where additional travel costs are considered justified by Headquarters, country experts come to Bangkok for briefing by ECAFE. While there need be no change in procedure for the appointment of country experts, there should be consultation with ECAFE regarding the implementation of country requests. Furthermore, in certain fields where ECAFE is particularly well equipped to provide professional backstopping to country experts, a large part of such backstopping could with advantage, be left to the regional secretariat. This would also reduce the cost of field visits from Headquarters.

(ii) Substantive Divisions of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs

51. As regards the various divisions in the Economic and Social Affairs Department at Headquarters, involved in Technical Assistance in the field, which deal with matters which are, regionally speaking, also of concern to ECAFE, we noted with satisfaction continuing correspondence and communications between them and many of the related ECAFE divisions. The degree of rapport is naturally not uniform and seems to vary from division to division, depending on the personal appreciation by the director of the importance of the regional commission and the extent of help that he can receive from the commissions. Some divisions, such as the Centre for Development Planning, Projects and Policies at Headquarters, have been able to evolve close co-operation with the regional commissions. The main areas

of co-operation relate to the review of experience in the implementation of development plans and the formulation of a development strategy for the United Nations development decade. The second, Third and Fifth sessions of the Committee for Development Planning, were held at the headquarters of ECLA, ECA and ECAFE respectively. The regional secretariats joined with the Centre in the planning, organization and servicing of these sessions and, in consultation with the Centre, prepared the principal substantive documents for the meetings. One of the main topics of the agenda for these meetings was the review of experience in development planning and planning implementation, with special reference to the problems of each region.

52. Following these meetings, Inter-Regional Planning Seminars were organized jointly by the Centre for Development Planning and the Regional Institutes of Development and Planning concerned. Furthermore, the Centre for Development Planning normally participates in various regional planners' conferences and experts' meetings on planning and projects organized by the regional commissions, to some of which the Centre has contributed substantive documents.

53. We also learn that the Centre for Development Planning has established two joint missions with the Economic Commission for Africa, to study the possibility of economic co-operation in East and West Africa respectively, and is planning similar joint missions with ICATE and ECLA.

54. We consider these to be good examples of co-operation, cross-fertilization of ideas and exchange of knowledge and experience between Headquarters and the regional economic commissions. They could usefully be emulated by other divisions in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. In contrast, we note that there are some divisions in the Secretariat such as the Division of Natural Resources and Transport, which by all standards should have the closest co-operation with ECAFE and the other regional commissions, with strong divisions of Natural Resources of their own and with much knowledge of their respective regions, but whose co-ordination and co-operation with ECAFE appear to be minimal. This is also the case with the Division of Science and Technology which could with advantage make use of ECAFE's experience and knowledge of a region which is in urgent need of transfer of science and technology.

55. Among the specific methods that we would suggest for improving the rapport and mutual assistance between Headquarters and the regional commissions, especially between substantive divisions in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and related divisions within the regional commissions' secretariats are: a certain measure of rotation of officers on tenure basis; and meetings of the Director of the Natural Resources Division and other important divisions at Headquarters with the directors of the related divisions in the regional secretariats once a year in New York and on a rotating basis at the seats of regional commissions. Not only would such meetings establish closer co-ordination between Headquarters and the regional divisions, but knowledge and discussion of each others' projects and experience would benefit the regional commissions; each can learn from the others' experiments, methods and experience.

UNDP

56. The rapport and exchange of ideas between UNDP and ECAFE is at present insufficient. There are, of course, the annual meetings of resident representatives to which the Executive Secretary of ECAFE is invited, but these, in our view, should be held at the headquarters of regional commissions. This would be more fruitful than having them in different countries of the region by rotation. There is a good deal of complementarity in the objectives and functions of ECAFE and UNDP; the latter's approach is predominantly country-wise and its programmes are country programmes, whereas the approach of ECAFE (and that of the other regional commissions) is horizontal and regional. Thus each can complement and help the other. While we agree with the validity of the country programme approach, over-emphasis on this, with each country being treated as a totally distinct and separate entity, without due regard to regional needs and capacities can, in the long-term perspective, have somewhat disappointing results. The prime task of co-ordination and proper utilization of all the services and capabilities of the various components of the United Nations system consists in the proper distribution and balance of action and responsibilities among the various bodies, including the regional economic commissions. While this is a general problem concerning the entire UN system,

we would wish to underline it here, since UNDP has come to occupy a very special position in the development activities of the United Nations family. We feel therefore that it would be to the greatest mutual benefit of UNDP and ECAFE to work in closest collaboration, with as frequent exchanges of views and ideas as possible. To this end, it seems necessary for UNDP's quite proper emphasis on country approach to be tempered with a due appreciation of the importance and potentialities of the regional approach and the regional economic commissions' capabilities in regard to the latter. Our specific suggestions are the following:

- (a) UNDP headquarters officials, during their tours, should make a point of visiting the regional commissions and exchanging views with the Executive Secretary and his staff. The visits of UNDP officials to ECAFE and perhaps other regional commissions are at present few and far between and mostly in the nature of flying visits. This is not enough.
- (b) Joint meetings of UNDP resident representatives to the countries of the region and of the senior officials of ECAFE should be held once a year at the headquarters of the Commission to exchange views on and discuss the problems of the region and of individual countries, the trends of economic development and of regional economic co-operation, the experience of the resident representatives in regard to the execution of projects, etc., etc.
- (c) At present, ECAFE's comments to and advice regarding country projects are normally invited before they are finalized. Consultations with ECAFE (and other regional commissions) should be made obligatory. This is a salutary procedure. We feel, however, that in addition to this, in suitable cases in which ECAFE's special knowledge and experience may be valuable, these might be taken advantage of for the evaluation of country requests and also for helping governments to formulate them. ECAFE could also, in suitable cases, help evaluate projects during their execution. We understand from UN Headquarters that occasionally ECAFE is called upon by UNDP for these purposes. We believe, however, that the practice could be further developed with considerable advantage.

- (d) UNDP representatives should send copies of their annual reports and of any special reports of importance they address to Headquarters to ECAFE. Likewise, important reports and studies by ECAFE which might be of interest to the UNDP resident representatives should be made available to them.
- (e) During the visits of ECAFE officials to various countries, they should invariably contact the UNDP resident representatives. The latter should be informed beforehand of and acquainted with the purposes and progress of the visit and it should be for the UNDP resident representative to arrange the visiting officer's programme in conformity with his wishes and in the most beneficial way.
- (f) Although personal relations between the UNDP representatives in Bangkok and senior ECAFE officials are good, a better business rapport on a constructive basis should be established. There should be more frequent exchanges and discussions between the UNDP resident representative and the Executive Secretary and other ECAFE officials, the former becoming thus for practical purposes an effective linkman between ECAFE and UNDP headquarters.

VII. THE OPERATIONAL ROLE OF ECAFE

57. We are impressed by the range of operational and quasi-operational activities in the field of regional co-operation already to the credit of ECAFE and to which we have made reference in the preceding paragraphs. We have given considerable thought to the future possibilities and capabilities of ECAFE's involvement in the operational field. Various considerations in this regard have to be taken into account: e.g. the desirability of extending ECAFE's operational activities; the need to demarcate the operational responsibilities of ECAFE and those of specialized agencies; the importance of ECAFE (and other regional commissions) being the principal UN bodies for co-ordinating all United Nations activities in their respective regions; the importance of the country approach; the extent of ECAFE's organizational capacity to undertake extended operational activities of a multi-national character, etc.

58. We have already mentioned that the essence of efficient co-ordination consists in an appropriately balanced utilization of all the instruments available to the United Nations system. After giving due weight to the various considerations listed above, we are of the view that, subject to an agreed demarcation of spheres of action so as to ensure a right balance of functions and responsibilities, ECAFE, by virtue of its past evolution and experience, has reached the stage when it is ripe for increased operational involvement in projects of regional and sub-regional co-operation. To this end, we would propose the following:

- (i) The Commission should, at the request of governments, initiate, formulate and sponsor multi-national projects for economic co-operation, of whatever nature, and present them on behalf of governments to UNDP or the other UN authorities concerned, as the case may be. In doing so, the Commission would, of course, act in consultation with the UNDP resident representatives, the specialized agencies and other UN bodies concerned, and in accordance with established procedures.
- (ii) In respect of regional or sub-regional Special Fund projects of which the United Nations are prospective executing or participating agency and for which the Commission is qualified, the latter should normally be the executing agency. The Commission should also be increasingly delegated by the United Nations the responsibility for performing executing agency functions in respect of this class of projects in the ECAFE region.
- (iii) In respect of other multi-national regional or sub-regional projects for training or/and research which involve the active participation of several specialized agencies, the latter should be co-executing agencies with ECAFL, the co-ordinating role remaining with ECAFE.
- (iv) As regards other regional or sub-regional projects with individual country projects as components (e.g. a river basin development scheme), ECAFE should initiate the project, obtain the governments' agreement thereto, formulate the framework of the project in consultation with UNDP and the specialized agencies and, of course, the governments concerned, and present the project

to UNDP. After fulfilling this task, ECAFE's role should be that of a co-ordinating body, the execution of the project in each individual country being left to the specialized agencies and other executing agencies appointed by UNDP in the usual way. If any central co-ordinating office is necessary (e.g. the Mekong Office), ECAFE should be in charge thereof as the co-ordinating executing agency designated by UNDP. This is probably a new concept and may represent a variation from the present pattern. We believe, however, that it is time that new concepts and experiments in the execution of UNDP projects should be tried.

59. We would add that our suggestions in sub-paragraphs (iii) and (iv) above would be an improvement over the existing position as observed by us during our visit to ECAFE. The Mekong Office and the Asian Institute for Planning and Development, both located in Bangkok, are financed by grants from UNDP. These institutions have often had difficulties because they must at present serve virtually three administrative masters: ECAFE, the resident representative of UNDP and UNDP headquarters and, occasionally, the Office of Technical Co-operation at United Nations Headquarters. It would obviously be conducive to efficiency if ECAFE, with such additional backstopping as might be necessary, became the co-ordinating executing agency through which UNDP and others would operate.

VIII. SOME PROBLEMS OF ADMINISTRATION AND EFFICIENCY

60. ECAFE faces certain administrative problems. We invite attention to the recommendation in paragraph 31 of our report on the Economic Commission for Africa: 'On the matter of budget presentation, the present position is that various items of the budget of the regional economic commissions are dispersed and appear under different headings of the UN's composite budget. We think that, considering the importance of regional economic commissions, their budget should be shown separately and be easily identifiable, perhaps in present circumstances as an annex to the budget document'. This recommendation is equally applicable to ECAFE.

Furthermore, the Secretary-General might consider improving the existing methods of examination within the United Nations Secretariat of the budget estimates submitted by ECAFE (and the other regional commissions). At present, these estimates appear to be handled by several different offices within United Nations Headquarters without sufficient co-ordination. Before the estimates are finally placed before the Budget Division, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Regional Economic Commission Section should look into the substantive aspects of the budget. Indeed, this Section should be a focal point of co-ordination of the substantive aspects of the regional commissions' budgets in the light of the various trends in the different commissions. This is likely to promote greater efficiency and better administrative management.

61. Conditions in Bangkok are less attractive than in New York and at the headquarters of the various specialized agencies and other UN bodies. As a result, trained and experienced officers from ECAFE have moved away to UNCTAD, UNIDO and elsewhere. This continual drain on ECAFE's manpower cannot be but detrimental to its efficiency. Something should be done to reduce it. It might be useful to lay down a condition that anyone employed in one international organization cannot apply for or be recruited by another international organization without the consent of the Executive Head of the former. As regards United Nations staff, certain conditions could be laid down at the time of recruitment, such as that during a minimum period after recruitment the incumbents shall not apply for a post in another international organization or for transfer to another office of the United Nations. We do not minimize the difficulties of this problem and we appreciate that in the final resort, it is for the Secretary-General to deploy United Nations staff as he sees fit. We would suggest, therefore, that the Secretary-General might consider formulating suitable staff rules in this connexion and that in actual practice, in shifting staff from one United Nations office to another, the above considerations, among others, be borne in mind.

62. Another difficulty relates to geographical distribution. In ECAFE, as of 1st January 1969, 76.85% of the staff were from the region of Asia and the Far East, 8.33% from North America and the Caribbean, 6.48% from Europe, 2.78% each from the Middle East and from non-member states, and small percentages from other geographical areas. United Nations Headquarters, in pursuance of the various relevant General Assembly resolutions, insist upon a fair and equitable geographical distribution of posts by induction of personnel from outside the region. Apart from the practical difficulties of getting personnel from outside the region to serve in Bangkok, there are some obvious advantages of recruiting personnel from the region, since these are apt to have a better feel of the problems, ethos and aspirations of the people of this complex region. We find that the situation in other regional commissions is comparable with that of ECAFE. For example, in ECLA, 68.52% are from Latin America, 15.74% from North America and the Caribbean, 11.11% from Europe and 2.78% from Asia and the Far East. In ECE, over 81% of the personnel are from Europe and in ECA, 56.73% are from Africa, 23.8% from Europe and 7.69% each from North America, the Caribbean and Asia and the Far East. Theoretically speaking, the needs of geographical distribution could be satisfied by large-scale transfers between commissions, but this would be both impracticable and too costly, both initially and recurrently (home leave, etc.). We think, therefore, that the existing position in this regard is not worth disturbing except to the extent that a few more professional staff from outside the region could be inducted, as and when possible, to increase somewhat the percentage of extra-regional professional staff. Within the region itself, efforts should be made to have a better distribution of professional personnel from the different countries, subject of course to availability of qualified persons. Hitherto, we understand, there has been difficulty in recruiting qualified personnel from many of the countries of the region.

63. To avoid long delays in recruitment, it would seem necessary to delegate greater authority to the Executive Secretary of ECAFE (and of the other regional commissions) for the recruitment of professional staff. At

present, the Executive Secretary can fill vacant established posts by appointing professional staff for up to eleven months. This has been found to be too short a period to attract the right type of person. We consider that the Executive Secretaries should have the authority to recruit for up to twenty-four months without reference to the Appointments and Promotion Board.

17. CONCLUSION

64. We propose briefly to attempt an evaluation of ECARF's future role. In the initial years the collection of relevant data and the undertaking of economic analyses were necessary and indeed indispensable for providing a sound basis of technical assistance to governments and for the promotion of regional economic co-operation. High government officials with whom we talked have testified to the usefulness of those ECARF studies in providing economic information about countries of the region, including their own, and in stimulating economic thinking generally; from our other contacts also we believe that this by and large reflects the views of all member countries of the commission. In later years, while the work of gathering information and making analyses has gone on, ECARF, in response to the pressing demands of member governments, has had to become more action-oriented. Such a development is regretted by some economists in ECARF, who bemoan the lessening importance of the Research and Planning Division. We consider, however, that the trend towards action-oriented programmes is healthy and answers the needs of member states of ECARF. What seems necessary is to strike a balance. Economic analyses and studies must be continued and should be geared to producing practical results, providing a basis for the undertaking of large scale regional economic co-operation.

65. We are aware of the view which rather summarily dismisses ECARF and, indeed, other regional commissions, as academic bodies without much impact on developing countries. From our observations and talks with government representatives and in the light of ECARF's actual performance, this view is superficial. ECARF is mainly a deliberative body, but as such, it has played in the past and continues to play a highly important educative role in the region in making governments and peoples regionally minded. To

U NYUN, the present Executive Secretary, and his two predecessors, Mr. C. V. Narasimhan and Dr. Loknathan, a large measure of credit is due for inculcating this spirit of regional economic co-operation and planning among the countries of the region. ECAFE has been instrumental in conceiving far-reaching regional projects, like the Mekong River project, in the realization of which it has secured the joint participation, on a voluntary contribution basis, of many countries of differing political orientations. (The voluntary contribution for the Mekong River project alone has so far been over 150 million dollars). There have been other such regional projects and as each one has been realized, member countries have become more and more enthusiastic, until today ECAFE is playing a most valuable role as catalyst for regional economic co-operation. All this has been achieved, moreover, with a relatively small expenditure of funds.

66. As to the future, the unmistakable trend everywhere is towards multinational regional economic co-operation. Speaking specifically of the Asian region, the present trend towards regional economic co-operation through the channel of ECAFE and under the umbrella of the United Nations is to be greatly welcomed. We are convinced that given the necessary support, ECAFE could play a very important role on behalf of the United Nations in the future development of the region by promoting the "concerted action", its founding resolution lays down. The ECAFE method of concentrating on specific matters or commodities, such as coconut, rice, tea, etc., which are important resources of the region, is a good one; it helps to bring together countries which are sometimes politically apart and could be further developed with great benefit to the region.

67. In the Second Development Decade it is intended, firstly that the United Nations should be much more meaningfully involved than hitherto in assisting developing countries and helping them to help themselves; and, secondly, that the planning for this decade should be scientific and responsive to the needs of developing countries so as to achieve concrete results through integrated development. While the shape of the plan for

the Second Development Decade is not yet precisely known, global and regional targets of growth and economic progress will perhaps be laid down. It is obvious that such a vast undertaking, insofar as the United Nations is concerned, cannot be an over-centralized operation. The regional economic commissions, better organized and given better support, will have to function effectively as regional instruments of the United Nations system. If the results of the three Ministerial Conferences of the ECAFE region and the establishment of the Council of Ministers are any guide, ECAFE will have to play a dynamic role in helping the countries of the region to develop economic co-operation among themselves, thereby contributing to the fulfilment of the purposes of the United Nations in the field of international economic co-operation.

X. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. INTERNAL ORGANIZATION (SECTION III)

- (a) with a view to spreading the work load more evenly and reducing the number of divisions, a reorganization of the existing divisions of ECAFE should be undertaken. Special responsibilities falling to the ECAFE secretariat as a result of the Commission's decisions may be undertaken, as far as possible, with the help of special task forces drawn from among existing staff in different divisions. (Paragraphs 19(a) and (b)).
- (b) Some of the divisions dealing with subjects of special significance for the region should be strengthened, e.g. the Trade Division and the joint FAO/ECAFE Agricultural Division. (Paragraph 19(c)).
- (c) To secure more effective co-ordination and determination of relative priorities in the formulation of work programmes for any given year, the Executive Secretary should have the assistance of a high-level Deputy, who would be No. 2 in the secretariat hierarchy. (Paragraph 19(d)).
- (d) The reorganization and strengthening of the Research and Planning Division is necessary, with a view to making it the nerve centre for economic co-operation. The Division should be both a thinking division and a service division. (Paragraph 19(e)).
- (e) Consideration should be given to the possibility of making the annual economic survey a biennial rather than an annual publication as at present, any striking changes in the economic situation in the intervening year being brought out in a supplement. (Paragraph 19(e)).
- (f) The work programme prepared by the secretariat and suggested priorities may be screened shortly before the Commission's annual session by a Working Group of experts representing governments and appointed by the Commission. (Paragraph 19(f)).
- (g) A ceiling of 180 working days during the year may be placed on meetings and conferences. Within this ceiling there should be a strict rationing of time, on the basis of priorities proposed by the secretariat and approved by the Commission. (Paragraph 13(g)).

- (h) In view of the deplorable working conditions in the ECAFL secretariat, the problems of better accommodation require immediate attention. A suitable building needs to be constructed, either by the Government of Thailand or, if they are not agreeable, with the help of voluntary contributions from ECAFL member governments and the United Nations family. In the event of a new construction, the latter should be large enough to provide common premises for all or most of the regional agency offices. (Paragraphs 19(h) and 20).

2. ECAFE AND THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES (SECTION IV)

- (a) There being a mutuality of interests between the specialized agencies and the commissions in the regions in which the latter operate, such closer and more concrete nexus than exists at present should be established between ECAFE and the agencies; mutual support and liaison should be developed to the maximum extent possible, so that United Nations activities in any particular region constitute an integrated effort. (Paragraphs 24 and 26).
- (b) Regional representatives of the agencies should participate actively in the meetings and conferences called by ECAFE. They should also participate in the annual meetings of ECAFE officials and UNDP resident representatives in the region. ECAFE should, on its part, seek the technical advice of these representatives, both within and outside the meetings and conferences organized under ECAFL auspices. (Paragraph 25).
- (c) In the case of the agencies which already have a close relationship with ECAFE, namely FAO, WHO and ITU, the joint arrangements entered into between them and ECAFE should be given increased support. (Paragraph 26).
- (d) Those agencies which have no arrangements similar to those between ECAFE, and FAO and others, but have regional offices in Bangkok, should appoint liaison officers to those divisions of ECAFE which deal with related matters. (Paragraph 27).
- (e) In the case of those specialized agencies which have no regional office in Bangkok, the function of liaison officer should be performed by the country representative, if there is one. (Paragraph 28).

3. ECAFE'S RELATIONS WITH UNCTAD (SECTION V)

The ECAFE Trade Promotion Centre should act as a full-fledged regional arm of the GATT/UNCTAD Trade Promotion Centre in Geneva. The ECAFE Trade Promotion Centre and the Trade Division should be strengthened by the posting of personnel from UNCTAD, who would also be a useful link and liaison between the two bodies. (Paragraph 30).

4. ECAFE'S RELATIONS WITH UNIDO (SECTION V)

- (a) A much closer collaboration than exists at present between UNIDO and ECAFE is desirable on a two-way basis, the former providing guidelines and the latter furnishing UNIDO with its specialized knowledge, expertise and the results of its analyses of regional, sub-regional and individual country industrialization problems. There should be much closer co-operation and co-ordination also in the programming of the activities of the two bodies. The Industrial and Natural Resources Division of ECAFE should function as a regional arm of UNIDO and as the instrument for achieving co-operation between the Asian Industrial Development Council and UNIDO. (Paragraph 33).
- (b) A qualified and high-level Regional Industrial Officer should be attached by UNIDO to ECAFE. The Regional Industrial Officer should also give technical advice to field officers within the ECAFE region and supervise UNIDO projects in the region, supplementing the supervision exercised over those projects by the field officers. If, for some reason, it is not possible to have two UNIDO officers in Bangkok - one with UNIDO, the other with UNDP - a single officer should be attached to ECAFE as Regional Industrial Officer, who could also function as Field Adviser to the UNDP resident representative in Bangkok. (Paragraphs 34 - 37).
- (c) UNIDO personnel should be seconded on a tenure basis to ECAFE, and vice versa. There should be increased participation in joint preparations for seminars, study groups, conferences and training courses whether organized by UNIDO or ECAFE. (Paragraph 38).

5. ECAFE AND UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS (SECTION VI)

(1) OFFICE OF TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION

- (a) Regional advisers, during their spare time and when they are not visiting countries of the region or writing reports on their visits, may be used for consultancy services to the ECAFE secretariat in the field of their respective competence. (Paragraph 50(a)).
- (b) The rules requiring payment by countries of 12.5% of advisory costs should be made more flexible. For those countries whose percentage contribution to the UN Budget does not exceed a predetermined percentage agreed upon in the Inter-Agency Consultative Board, the requirement may be waived altogether; in other cases the rule should be applied flexibly, taking into consideration the merits and circumstances. (Paragraphs 47 and 50(b)).
- (c) The Executive Secretary should be authorized to approve cost plans for seminars, study tours and training courses approved by Headquarters, within an actual or notional allocation made by Headquarters and subject to any guidelines that the latter may issue regarding their preparation. (Paragraph 50(c)).
- (d) Transfer to the Commission of some Technical Assistance staff who could, among other things, become focal points of information for country and regional programmes, may be considered. (Paragraph 50(d)).
- (e) While no change in the procedure for appointment of country experts is necessary, ECAFE should be consulted regarding the implementation of country requests. As a corollary, in certain fields where ECAFE is particularly well equipped to provide professional back-stopping to country experts, it should be used for that purpose. (Paragraphs 48 and 50(e)).

(2) SUBSTANTIVE DIVISIONS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Much closer rapport than exists at present should be established between the divisions in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and ECAFE. Among the methods for improving the rapport and mutual assistance between them would be: (a) a certain measure of rotation of officers on tenure basis; and (b) annual meetings of the directors of divisions at Headquarters with the directors of the related divisions in the regional economic commissions in New York, or at the seats of the different commissions, on a rotating basis. (Paragraphs 54 and 55).

(3) UNDP

- (a) Officials from UNDP headquarters should make a point of visiting ECAFE to exchange views with the Executive Secretary and his staff; these should not be flying-visits. Adequately prepared joint meetings of UNDP resident representatives in the countries of the region and of senior officers of ECAFE should be held once a year at the headquarters of the Commission, in which the regional representatives of the specialized agencies should also participate (see recommendation 2(b)). (Paragraphs 56(a) and (b)).
- (b) ECAFE should be used more extensively in those cases in which its special knowledge and experience may be valuable, for the evaluation of country requests and for helping governments to formulate these requests. ECAFE should also be used in suitable cases for the evaluation of regional and country projects during their execution. (Paragraph 56(c)).
- (c) UNDP representatives should send to ECAFE as a matter of course copies of their annual reports and other reports of importance addressed to Headquarters and vice versa. There should be frequent exchanges and discussions between the resident representative of UNDP and the Executive Secretary and other ECAFE officials, the former thus assuring effective liaison between ECAFE and UNDP Headquarters. (Paragraphs 56(d), (e) and (f))

(4) THE OPERATIONAL ROLE OF ECAFE (SECTION VII)

- (a) There should be a further extension of ECAFE's operational role in regional economic co-operation. In consultation with the resident representatives of UNDP, the specialized agencies and other UN bodies concerned, ECAFE should, at the request of governments, initiate, formulate and sponsor multi-national projects for economic co-operation, of whatever nature, and present them on behalf of governments to UNDP or the other UN authorities concerned, as the case may be. (Paragraph 58(i)).

- (b) In respect of regional or sub-regional special Fund projects of which the United Nations are the prospective executing and participating agency and for which ECAFL is qualified, the Commission should normally be the executing agency. (Paragraph 58(ii)).
- (c) In respect of multi-national, regional or sub-regional projects for training and/or research which involve the active participation of several specialized agencies, the latter should be co-executing agencies with ECAFL, which should perform the co-ordinating role. (Paragraph 58(iii)).
- (d) With regard to other regional or sub-regional projects, with individual country projects as components, ECAFL should initiate, secure governments' agreements and formulate the framework of the projects in consultation with UNDP, the specialized agencies, and governments, and present the project to UNDP. If any regional co-ordinating machinery is necessary (e.g. the Mekong Office), ECAFE should be in charge thereof as a "co-ordinating executing agency." (Paragraph 58(iv)).

6. SOME PROBLEMS OF ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT (SECTION VIII)

- (a) Considering the importance of regional economic commissions, their budgets should be shown separately and be easily identifiable, perhaps in the form of an annex to the budget document. (Paragraph 60).
- (b) Before estimates sent in by ECAFL (and other regional commissions) are finally placed before the Budget Division, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Regional Commissions section should look into the substantive aspects of these estimates and act as a focal point for co-ordination in the light of the varying trends in the different commissions. (Paragraph 60).
- (c) The Secretary-General may consider formulating some suitable staff rules in regard to the shifting of staff from one United Nations office to another so that the drain of experienced staff from ECAFE to other organizations of the United Nations family be reduced to a minimum. (Paragraph 61).

- (d) It may be considered whether at the time of recruitment certain conditions should not be laid down, e.g. that during a certain minimum period the incumbent shall not apply for a post in another organization of the UN family or for transfer to another office of the United Nations. (Paragraph 61).
 - (e) The Executive Secretary's authority to appoint professional staff without reference to the Appointments and Promotion Board should be extended to a period of twenty-four months. (Paragraph 63).
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