

Report
on the use of Travel Funds
in the Food and Agricultural Organization
(FAO)

Prepared by
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Joint Inspection Unit

Geneva
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INTRODUCTION

1. The present report is the third in a series undertaken by the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) on the use of travel funds by the members of the United Nations system.
2. The task of the Inspector was different from those which he had in connexion with his previous reports on the use of travel funds in the United Nations and in the World Health Organization (WHO): the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has taken measures during the last few years to ensure better financial control and to make a more rational use of travel funds. To this end, a special study was undertaken by a consultant in the area of travel, telephone and communications. In addition, a task force was created to study the problem, and the Director-General issued a number of circulars covering the travel of staff, procedures for appraisal of travel authorizations, etc.. A new travel control system was introduced at the beginning of 1972 which is still in force. Lastly, the Council devoted special attention to the problems of travel and travel expenditure, and envisaged measures to strengthen control over the use of travel funds. A review of travel criteria was undertaken by the Finance Committee and clear indications were given for assessing the validity and economy of departmental travel (FC 31/24).
3. With all this in mind, the Inspector paid special attention in the present study to the implementation of the above-mentioned measures and to the results achieved.
4. The findings of the Inspector and his recommendations reflect the situation he found when studying this very delicate field of expenditure.
5. In the course of the study he visited FAO headquarters in Rome twice for about a week, the first time to collect information and to discuss the question of travel with various FAO officials, and the second time to check the factual accuracy of his draft report. He would like to express his appreciation to all the staff whom he interviewed and for the co-operation and assistance rendered to him.

Chapter I

TRAVEL ON OFFICIAL BUSINESS - NON-STAFF TRAVEL

6. In Chapter IV, Section 406 of the FAO Manual, provisions are set forth governing travel expenditure incurred by individuals other than staff members or their dependents.

Chairman and the members of the Council

7. Pursuant to resolution No. 79 of the sixth session of the Conference, FAO pays the fare for a direct round trip for the Chairman of the Council from his home station to the place of meeting of the Council and Conference, or to any other place where the Chairman makes a trip in connexion with Council affairs.

8. Pursuant to General Rule XXV (b), the Organization pays the expenses properly incurred in travelling by one designated representative of each member of the Council by the most direct route, from the representative's capital city or duty station, whichever is less distant, to the site of the Council session and return.

Programme and Finance Committees

9. The travel of members of the Programme and Finance Committees are governed by General Rules XXV (g) and XXVII (g). According to the above rules, the members of the Programme and Finance Committees should be reimbursed for the cost of their travel expenses, and, in accordance with the travel rules of the Organization, they should also be paid a subsistence allowance while attending sessions of the Committees.

10. As for the mode of transport and standard of accommodation, the members of the Council, until 1972, were able to choose their own route and mode of transport but reimbursement was limited to the cost of economy or tourist-class accommodation for air travel for individuals equivalent in rank to an official at the D-1 level and below and for first-class accommodation for individuals equivalent in rank to an official at the D-2 level and above. These provisions were different from those governing the standard of accommodation in the United Nations, where every member of a subsidiary organ elected in an individual capacity is entitled to first-class accommodation regardless of his rank.

11. However, bearing in mind the increase in air fares, the Council at its 1972 November session, decided that henceforth, with the exception of the Chairman of the Council, all members of the Council and the Programme and Finance Committees should travel economy class, with no distinction in terms of distance (CL 59/REP, page 53, paragraphs 321-323).

12. This was the first initiative and action of this kind made by the executive organ of a specialized agency, and the Inspector in his report on the use of travel funds in the World Health Organization (JIU/REP/74/3, page 30, paragraphs 101-103) has already recommended to the Executive Board that it consider the possibility of following the above-mentioned decision of the FAO Council.

13. Although such measures will result in some savings and reduction of travel expenditure, particularly in view of the increased air fares, more important is the principle embodied in the decision, namely, to use the most economical way when travelling at the expense of the Organization.

14. If the example of the FAO Council were followed by the other members of the United Nations system, particularly by the United Nations, this could lead to a uniform approach and standardization of travel rules throughout the whole system.

Representatives of special bodies, technical panels, etc.

15. FAO pays the cost of travel and a daily subsistence allowance to individuals selected by the Conference or Council to serve or represent the Organization on bodies such as the Appeals Committee, Staff Pension Committee and the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board and officers of regional councils when their travel expenses are to be borne by the Organization in accordance with appropriate agreements.

16. The travel costs and daily subsistence allowance are also paid to persons serving the Organization in a personal capacity but without specific compensation. This group includes persons in Government service - or other individuals - who are invited by the Organization to attend FAO meetings in their personal capacity or to serve on panels or render other special services to the Organization and to whom no honorarium or other compensation is payable by the Organization.

17. As for the standard of accommodation, the decision of the Council concerning the travel of the members of the Council and the members of the Programme and Finance Committees was not extended to the above-mentioned category. Under Rules 406.342 and 406.343 (Section 406, Non-Staff Travel) "the Organization pays economy or tourist class accommodation for air travel for individuals equivalent in rank to an officer at the D-2 level and below, and subject to the exception specified in paragraph 406.344, for first class accommodation for individuals equivalent in rank to an officer at the Assistant Director-General level and above". Rule 406.344 stipulates that travel within the European and Mediterranean areas will be by economy or tourist class for all

travellers except those individuals equivalent in rank to Director-General or Deputy Director-General. Where an economy or tourist-class flight is not available at the required date and time, first class may be used.

18. As a matter of principle and considering the role that the Council and Programme and Finance Committees play, the Inspector wonders why the Council limited its decision on the standard of accommodation to members of the Council and Programme and Finance Committees, and did not consider extending it to all other persons serving the Organization in a personal capacity.

19. In the Inspector's view, the Council might wish to reconsider this question as a matter of principle and extend its decision of November 1972 to all other persons serving the Organization in various capacities. This would be a step forward and would be in accordance with the principle that all non-staff members should be treated equally. The Director-General could be authorized in very exceptional cases, when considering an elderly person, to grant first-class travel.

Chapter II

TRAVEL OF STAFF ON OFFICIAL BUSINESS

20. As was already mentioned in the Introduction, FAO has taken a series of measures in order to tighten or exercise control over the use of travel funds.

21. The new travel control system, established at the beginning of 1972 (and which is still functioning) embodies the following measures:

- (a) Final responsibility for approval of travel within funds available should remain with the Assistant Director-General, heads of units not falling within a Department and heads of regional liaison offices while the Deputy Director-General should approve all travel by Assistant Directors-General and heads of headquarters units not falling within a Department.
- (b) The Programme Evaluation Unit on behalf of the Deputy Director-General/Director-General, should be the central point for co-ordination of travel plans and analysis of travel performed.

22. As for the procedure that should be followed, it consists of the following requirements:

- (a) Schedules listing travel plans for all staff duty travel, and non-staff duty travel should be prepared for the first month of each biennium by the units and regional liaison offices for clearance by appropriate unit heads, Assistant Director-General at headquarters and heads of regional liaison offices.
- (b) Every two months thereafter, a report should be prepared by each unit, showing:
 - (i) travel completed during the preceding two months with detailed itinerary including stop-overs (e.g. January and February);
 - (ii) changes in travel plans previously submitted for the following two months (i.e. March-April);
 - (iii) travel plans for the next two months (i.e. May and June).

In other words, there is a four-monthly schedule on a rolling two-months basis.

23. On the basis of this procedure, the Programme Formulation Unit receives the reports from the Department and units, and makes analyses of the data submitted. Such reports have been made for the years 1972 and 1973.

24. The Inspector wanted to know how, in practice, the new system was functioning and what results were being achieved in carrying out the instructions issued by the Director-General and the recommendations of the Task Force. His analysis of the data he was able to obtain for travel performed during the period January to December 1973 disclosed the following:

Schedules of travel

25. Although the instructions for the use of travel schedules/report forms clearly indicate what should be written in each column, the Inspector found no uniformity in reporting. In some Divisions, the columns are not fully completed, particularly those parts dealing with the purpose of travel, grade of staff travelling, details of cities visited. In one Division, travel reports indicated in the column concerning the purpose of travel only "as mentioned before".

26. In the report forms of revised travel there are so many changes that the question arises as to what is the purpose of reporting travel plans. Sometimes changes are also made in the columns dealing with funds. Considering that all travel is strictly planned and connected with the approved programme of work, the Inspector wonders why there should be changes in so many cases to the initial travel plan.

27. The Inspector considers that travel must be planned in accordance with the programme of work and that in each travel report form an indication should be given as to whether it is planned travel, revised travel or completed travel even if it would be repeated in some cases. The question arises of the necessity of submitting all these three forms (planned, revised, completed travel) to the Programme Formulation Unit which should analyze, in the Inspector's view, only travel completed.

28. The names of the staff members travelling (or who plan to travel) are given according to the trip, which, to some extent, is good practice, offering better control of the trips planned. However, it does not give the number of the trips made by each staff member of the Division. Sometimes under the same trip two or three persons travelled in different directions.

29. The Inspector considers that the Departments, Divisions or units reporting the travel completed for the given period, should try to list for each staff member the total number of trips undertaken during the period. To facilitate this performance,

the Inspector is of the opinion that statistical information and data for travel authorizations be computerized so that a quarterly tabulation by Division concerning trips completed is produced, showing:

- (a) traveller's name, with dates of travel, duration of travel, expenses, source of funds and places visited;
- (b) localities visited, with names of travellers and dates of visits.

30. Besides this, each Division or unit should prepare on a quarterly basis the number of meetings staff attended, and list the number of staff members who attended each meeting.

31. This, if approved, would give a clear picture of the frequency of the travel performed by some staff members, duration of the travel, the absence from the duty station and also multiple attendance at the same places or at the same meeting.

32. The Inspector found that analyses of the Programme Formulation Unit are limited to the cities or countries visited by the staff members. This could be misleading. Although some visits are marked "continued", which indicates only part of the trip, this does not give the picture of the whole itinerary of the staff member's travel. This does not show how many other cities were really visited. Such analyses, which have been made for 1972, show a tendency to visit some places frequently, but it is not enough.

33. In the subsequent paragraphs, the Inspector will proceed according to the practice used in his two previous reports on the use of travel funds, and will analyze in detail the data given him, or which he came across in the course of his study.

How itineraries are drawn up

34. As the Inspector has already mentioned, although the instructions are clear and request that the names of the cities and countries be indicated in the itinerary, in many cases only the names of the country or of the region are given. For example:

- (a) the itinerary of a staff member from one Division was given as "Ethiopia";
- (b) in another case, only "Egypt, Seychelles, Mauritius, etc." or "Hungary, Poland, Yugoslavia, Romania, Bulgaria" were given;
- (c) in another Division of the same Department "Brazil, Peru, Colombia, Panama, Honduras, Mexico, USA" were given as the itinerary;
- (d) in yet another Department the itinerary of a staff member included "Dahomey, Cameroon, Chad".

35. Such examples could be found in almost all travel reports. The Inspector does not wish to burden this report with other examples, but in his view, the present practice of listing only countries in the itinerary does not give a full picture of the places visited by a staff member in his travels. In the case of the inspection of projects for example, it would be normal to list all places included in the trip, particularly in Latin America or Africa where, to visit places other than the capital, travel by air (and, consequently, expenditure) is sometimes necessary.

36. Another aspect of the problem is the fact that very often staff undertake long trips covering many countries and sometimes two or more continents. Many examples of this kind could be quoted. For example, one travel report of a staff member listed the following countries: Jamaica, Panama, Guyana, Brazil, Bolivia, Ecuador, Colombia, Venezuela. Cost - \$2,500 (overhead), purpose - project inspection.

37. In another example from the same Department, the itinerary included the following countries: Dominican Republic, Chile, Haiti, Argentina, Venezuela, Peru, Bolivia. Cost - \$2,660 (overhead), purpose - project formulation.

38. The itinerary of another staff member in the same Department included the following countries: Indonesia, West Indies, Canada, USA. Cost - \$475 (regular) plus \$3,366 (project), purpose - UNDP/FAO project review mission.

39. In another Department, the itinerary of a staff member included Cairo, New Delhi, Bangkok, Penang, Kuala Lumpur, Singapore, Djakarta, Colombo, Cochin, Calcutta, Beirut. Cost - \$2,782 (project), purpose - study of aquatic pollution conditions ... and other forms of assistance related to water pollution.

40. One other example from the same Department included Bangkok, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Djakarta, Manila, Tokyo, Hong Kong, Saigon. Cost - \$4,039 (project), duration - 47 days, purpose - to sample and evaluate available data on the crustacean resources in the overall area of the South China Sea and adjacent waters covered by project RAS 72/025.

41. Fifty-nine days were spent by one staff member visiting Bujumbura, Abidjan, Accra, Nairobi, Dar-es-Salaam, Akosombo, Kossu, Bamako. Cost - \$3,036 (project), purpose - within the framework of the staff responsibility for the design and implementation and supervision of integrated large-scale fisheries statistical sampling surveys at the African Inland Water Projects.

42. To attend the Colombo Plan Consultative Committee, and to discuss country programmes one staff member from another Department spent 27 days visiting New Zealand, West Samoa, Fiji Islands, Hong Kong, Bangkok, New Delhi, Kathmandu. Cost - \$2,000 (regular) plus \$1,000 (overhead).
43. In the report on travel completed by a staff member from one Division, it was stated on the itinerary "world-wide", that the purpose was "radio reportage on agricultural and economic development". Costs were paid by the Bayerischer Rundfunk and the staff member spent 60 days on the trip.
44. The itinerary of a staff member from a big Division included Copenhagen, Hamburg, Brussels, Paris, Ottawa, New York, Washington, Minneapolis, San Francisco, Tokyo, Seoul, Bangkok - 29 days at a cost of \$2,999 (overhead), purpose - participation in Expert Trade Mission of UNDP/SF ROK 11 ESC 105. Thus the staff member visited Europe, the United States and Asia.
45. In another Division of the same big Department, a staff member visited Washington, New York, Mexico, Tokyo, Bangkok, Cairo, Beirut and spent 27 days at a cost of \$3,480 (overhead). Purpose - consultations with the USDA Census Bureau, IASI, UN Statistical Office, attended ACC Sub-Committee on Statistics, attended Advisory Committee of Asian Statistical Institute (Tokyo), visited the regional office, etc..
46. A staff member, taking part in the Preparatory Mission for Joint FAO/NORAD Seminar on food and nutrition policy planning spent 40 days visiting almost all Asian countries (India, Bangladesh, Thailand, Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Pakistan) at a cost of \$2,400.
47. A staff member from one Department spent 90 days, at the expense of the Regional Consultants Fund, visiting the following cities: Accra, Cotonou, Lagos, Ibadan, Samaru, Abidjan, Bamako, Bamba, Ziguinchor, Freetown. Purpose - to follow up on the Guinean Zone Conference.
48. The Inspector has quoted examples from almost all Departments to demonstrate the tendency to prepare itineraries including as many countries as possible. The question arises as to whether in many of them the purpose could have been achieved by visiting fewer countries, or whether some part of the task could not have been performed by the regional offices or other country representatives. It is striking how many people are travelling, as will be shown below, so that there is a need to distinguish between the work of headquarters and the regional offices in order to achieve better co-ordination of the work of the Organization.

Frequent visits to some cities

49. In spite of the fact that the Programme Formulation Unit had, during 1972, already drawn attention to the frequent visits of the staff to certain regions or cities, this trend continued during 1973.

50. It is interesting to note in this connexion that there was a big difference between trips planned and those carried out, as will be shown below:

Region	Trips planned for the period 1.1-31.4	Trips carried out during the period 1.1-31.4	Unplanned trips for period 1.1-31.4 but carried out
Africa	128	243	163
Asia	86	111	70
Europe	242	376	224
Latin America	162	126	82
Near East	118	102	42
North America	58	66	30

51. The foregoing analysis suggests that travel plans for the given period are not well thought out. Hence, new, unscheduled trips are included, which did not originally figure in the travel programme. As for the countries which were frequently visited, the Inspector will quote some of them for each region to better illustrate the present situation.

52. For example, for the African region, it is worth mentioning that, during the first four months, 18 trips were made to Ethiopia, 14 to Ghana and 21 to Kenya.

53. For the same period in the Asian region, India was visited 25 times, Indonesia 13 times, Thailand 21 times and the Philippines 9 times.

54. As for Europe, during the same period, France was host to 70 trips, West Germany 26, Italy, 54, Switzerland 79 and the United Kingdom 33 trips.

55. In Latin America, Brazil was visited 17 times, Chile 15, Peru 14 and Mexico 13 times.

56. In the Near East, Egypt was visited 24 times, Syria 10 times.

57. In North America, Canada was visited 24 times, the United States 42 times.

58. This analysis, although limited to only one-third of the year shows clearly the repeated visits to some countries, or regions. No doubt the total number of trips undertaken during 1973 will more clearly underline this trend and show a greater number of trips to some countries.

59. In the Inspector's view, the difference shown between the trips planned, revised and actually carried out requires stronger control by the Assistant Directors-General. The introduction of revised travel plans gives room for greater manoeuvring by the staff, and many changes in the originally planned trips do not reflect sound planning. Some of these changes are naturally the result of changed conditions or new unforeseen requirements, but a tighter control over the revised travel plans would reduce the number of trips. The trips and travel plans must be strictly connected with the programme of work in which case only exceptional changes could be introduced into the proposed travel plans.

Long absence from duty stations

60. In his analysis of the travel reports submitted by the Departments to the Programme Formulation Unit, the Inspector was surprised at the number of staff travelling, as well as the long absences of some members from their duty stations, particularly of some senior officers or Directors, who should usually run and guide their Divisions or units.

Frequent travelling of staff members

61. In the Agricultural Department, of which one Division's reports covered only the first quarter of the year, staff were absent from their duty station for 4,995 days. In one Division of this Department, staff were absent for 1,296 days; in another for 2,029 days. In another Division, out of 55 staff members listed in the Administrative Circular No. 73 of 13 March 1973, 31 staff members travelled, plus three Professional staff members who were not listed among the staff of this Division. The total number of staff who travelled during 1973 for this Division was 34, which is an average of 38 days travel each. One staff member of this Division was absent from his duty station for 104 days, another one 86 days, a third 74 days. In another Division of the same Department the staff members travelled during 1973 for 963 days. Out of 56 staff members listed in the above-mentioned Administrative Circular No. 73, 37 listed staff members, 2 unlisted and one non-staff member travelled. Altogether 40 people travelled on behalf of this Division. One staff member was on a trip for 90 days and another for 67 days. In another Division of this Department out of 63 staff members listed in the Circular, 43 travelled plus 3 unlisted staff members,

spending a total of 2,029 days travelling. One staff member travelled for 141 days, another one 142 days, a third one 141 days. One Director was absent for 87 days, another one for 52 days, a third one for 72 days. In another Division of the same Department, out of 58 staff members, 23 travelled in the first quarter of 1973 and spent a total of 478 days travelling.

62. In the Development Department, staff members were absent on trips for 824 days. In one Division, out of 11 staff listed in the Administrative Circular, 3 listed staff and 3 unlisted staff members (a total of 6 staff members) were absent for 191 days. One staff member was absent for 95 days. In another Division of the same Department, out of 75 staff members 37 travelled. In addition 9 persons who were not members of the Division travelled at the expense of the Division, making a total of 1,283 days. One staff member was absent for 104 days, another Director of the same Division was absent for 59 days. One senior adviser was absent for 80 days, one chief of a regional service was absent for 83 days. In the Office of the Assistant Director of this Department, out of 7 staff members, two listed and one unlisted spent 116 days travelling and one of whom alone travelled for 110 days.

63. In the Economic and Social Policy Department, staff travelled for 5,062 days. In one Division, out of 33 staff members, 13 travelled, plus 2 staff members who were not on the list of the staff of that Division, making a total of 15 persons. One staff member was absent for 49 days, another one 32 days, while one Director was away from Rome for 52 days. In another Division of the same Department, out of 17 staff members listed in the Division, 14 travelled for 400 days; among them is one staff member who travelled for 66 days in 1973.

64. In another Division, out of 59 staff members, 43 travelled and spent 1,229 days away from headquarters. One of the staff members was absent for 121 days during which time he spent a great part of his absence as Acting Project Manager (76 days); another staff member was away from his desk for 75 days. One Director was absent for 45 days. In another Division, out of 6 staff members listed, 2 travelled and 4 persons who were not on the list of that Division travelled altogether for 251 days; one staff member was absent from his desk for 104 days. The Assistant Director-General alone was away during the same year for 86 days. In another Division of the same Department, one Director travelled for 93 days; another Director travelled for 176 days.

65. In the Fishery Department staff members travelled for 2,587 days during 1973. One staff member in one Division was absent from his desk for 128 days, another one 104 days. The Director of the Division was away for 62 days. In another Division of

the same Department, one of the staff members travelled for 124 days, while another travelled for 76 days.

66. In the Forestry Department, out of 77 staff members listed in the Department, 48 plus 3 unlisted members spent a total of 2,212 days travelling. One staff member was absent from his desk for 110 days, another one for 101 days.

67. Perhaps the Inspector has mentioned more Departments than necessary to show that there is a great movement of FAO staff. Although the data for some Departments is incomplete, it could easily be seen that, except for the Office of the Director-General, which the Inspector would not normally take into consideration (the executive heads of almost every UN organization are officially invited by Member States to visit their respective countries), the staff of FAO, according to the rough estimates of the Inspector drawn from the travel reports submitted to the Programme Formulation Unit, have travelled for a total of 18,395 days not including the travel of the Office of the Director-General.

68. The impression that the Inspector got, after studying the travel of each Division, was that almost everybody has to travel during the year. Since some staff members, in several cases those who should run and manage the Divisions or Departments, are absent for many days from their duty station or post, the question arises as to how they are able to ensure the smooth running of the affairs of their units or posts, or whether, in some cases, the posts are really needed if a staff member is absent for many days from his office.

Multiple attendance at some meetings or multiple presence on some trips

69. In spite of the tighter control imposed on travel, and the number of persons travelling, in order to secure more rational use of funds, there are still examples of multiple presence on some travels. There are, of course, cases which require the presence of more than one staff member on a trip undertaken by the staff of a Division or Department, or in the case of some meetings which require the presence of several staff members, particularly when the FAO has to provide the servicing of the meeting concerned. However, there are cases in which the presence of one staff member alone could have achieved the required purpose.

70. The Inspector will quote some examples which, in his opinion, show the unjustified presence of more than one staff member:

- (a) In one Division, two staff members travelled to Iraq in order to draw up a communications programme for the Euphrates resettlement and to advise the Government of Iraq on agricultural information communications. Bearing in mind that one of the staff members was a P-5, the Inspector's view is that this staff member alone could have performed the task.
- (b) To attend the ninth session of APEC, four staff members travelled to Canberra. The Inspector wonders whether the presence of such high officials (three out of four) was necessary or whether the meeting could not have been attended by a smaller number of staff.
- (c) Two staff members visited the Hanover Industrial Fair.
- (d) Two staff members spent 8 days together, and one alone another 25 days in Tunis, to attend discussions at the seventh ADCASA Tunis Exercise. Probably the one who spent 33 days could have done it alone.
- (e) Two P-4 staff members spent about 20 days together visiting Kathmandu, Kuala Lumpur, Colombo, to discuss the micro-economic framework for CPS.
- (f) To attend the COPAC meeting for 5 days in Geneva, three staff members, one P-5, one P-4 and one P-2 were sent. Was it absolutely necessary that three staff members attend this meeting?
- (g) Two P-5 staff members spent seven days in León, Spain, to attend the Ad Hoc Conference on Planning of Rural Areas.
- (h) Three staff members attended the third Joint FAO/WHO Conference on Food Additives - two P-4 and one P-3. Could not this task have been performed by two staff members?
- (i) To attend the FAO/WHO Food Standards Regional Conference for Africa, three staff members travelled; one D-1, one P-4 and one P-2. They spent together 11 days in Nairobi while one of them stayed another 15 days. The Inspector does not wish to state that the above-mentioned Conference was not important, but his impression is that this attendance was, to some extent, excessive.
- (j) Two Professional staff and two General Service staff spent almost one month in Mexico, to attend the Inter-Group on Hard Fibres.
- (k) To hold consultations with UNCTAD, two staff members travelled to Geneva. Was it not possible that the D-1 staff member could have performed this task?

- (l) To attend the seventeenth session of the Governing Group on Rice, six staff members - three Professionals and three General Service - were sent.

Although the host Government paid the fares for the staff, the Inspector wonders whether so many staff were really needed.

- (m) For ad hoc consultations on tobacco, three staff members (two Professional - one P-5 and one P-3 - and one General Service) spent about 10 days in Izmir (Turkey).

- (n) Was it necessary for two staff members - one D-1 and one P-3 - to visit Japan to study agricultural adjustment? Was not the D-1 sufficient to perform this task?

71. One striking example of the multiple attendance at a conference was the number of FAO staff who attended the Technical Conference on Fishery Management and Development in Vancouver, Canada. There were seven staff members in all (one Assistant Director-General, one D-1, two P-5, three P-4). Besides this, four members of the FAO secretariat, including a D-1, as well as seven interpreters, attended. Although the host Government provided its own secretariat (six staff and four interpreters) and also paid for the FAO secretariat, the number of those who attended the Conference from Rome appears excessive.

72. There are other examples of this kind, but the Inspector does not wish to burden this report by quoting any more. In his view, the Assistant Director-General should tighten control in this respect and limit the number of staff travelling for the same objective, to the minimum. General Service staff, whenever possible, should be recruited locally to avoid unnecessary expense. It is difficult to believe that at the present time, it is not possible to find suitably qualified technical staff in the field.

Chapter III

TRAVEL REPORTS

73. The purpose of submitting travel reports is to offer the possibility of ex post facto evaluation of the trips undertaken and to assess whether the money spent has been properly used and whether the results justify the travel. The practice of submitting travel reports exists in every national Government and in some international organizations. In principle, this is the case in FAO, but in practice the Inspector found during his inspection that reporting on travel requires more discipline and control.

74. First of all, each personal file should, as a general rule, contain a record of each trip undertaken by that staff member. The Inspector asked for the staff files of one Department and went through them all. He was surprised to find few travel reports in the files. Later, at his request, the staff members of that Department gathered a good number of the reports and submitted them to him.

75. Secondly, although, in principle all staff members should submit written travel reports, this is not the case in practice. The Inspector was told that the Directors of the Departments and the Assistant Directors-General do not write reports but they verbally report at the morning meetings or the collegium meetings. Although the Inspector did not ask for all the reports of the Department to be submitted to him, and the reports he read were on a selective basis, he found that the responsible staff members wrote the following for many reports: "No reporting in writing" (Director travel); "No reporting in writing" (Assistant Director-General travel); or "No written reports" (Division Director). A Division Director's report stated: "Reports verbally to Assistant Director-General at noon meeting". One could question what remains of such reporting after a month or two.

76. Normally, it should be expected that a staff member give an account of his activities or evaluate the work of the meeting or consultations etc. when submitting his travel report. The Organization and those responsible for the ex post facto evaluation of the trips should know what his contribution was.

77. The Inspector, when reading some reports, was confronted with conference documents or publications prepared by the other organizations or the secretariat of the working group. In these cases, it was difficult to see what, if anything, had been written by

the staff member who attended the meetings. For the purpose of illustration, the Inspector will mention some examples:

- (a) The staff member participated in preparing the final report published by the FI Institute of Lima.
- (b) The staff member submitted (indicated) the Bulletin issued by the Institute where the session of the Panel of Experts was held (he participated in the fourth session of the Panel of Experts on stock assessment on Peruvian Anchovets) with the following remark: "Prepared in co-operation with other members of the meeting".
- (c) The report on a trip to Paris to attend the Joint UNESCO/IOC/WMO Group of Experts in Igoss Technical System Design and Development and Services Requirement/ITECHI contained in seven lines, what the staff member said at the opening session and nothing else. The staff member spent 13 days on the trip.
- (d) Two staff members who attended in London the first meeting of ICG and GIPME submitted as a report official document IOC/GIPME 1/3 (summary report), in which in the margin of page 3 was written in pencil that the staff member: "Has participated in the drafting of the summary report". For the other staff member, it was stated that he also participated in the meeting, but a travel report was not prepared.
- (e) After having attended a Second Tripartite Technical Meeting for the Timber Industry in Geneva, a staff member submitted an official ILO report on the cover page of which was stated: "Report prepared by the International Labour Office".

78. The examples quoted above are taken only from three Departments. Probably more could have been found if the Inspector had had the time to go through the other Departments' travel reports. In his opinion, these examples alone offer possibilities for judgement on the way reports are submitted.

79. As for reports which are submitted in good form, the Inspector wishes to stress that they lack uniformity in the way they present the trips undertaken. Some examples will be quoted to illustrate the situation:

- (a) A staff member who spent 28 days travelling at a cost of \$3,840 (agency overhead) visited the United States (Washington and New York), Mexico, Tokyo and Bangkok, the purpose of the trip being "consultations with USDA,

Census Bureau, IASI, UN Statistical Office; to attend the ACC Sub-Committee on Statistics; to attend Advisory Committee of Asian Statistical Institute in Tokyo, etc.". The report on such a long trip is very short. On his visit to Washington where he spent 12 days, the staff member wrote one page; on his visit to New York (2 days' duration), he wrote three paragraphs or half a page; Mexico, three and a half lines; Tokyo, 17 lines (one and a half pages); Bangkok, one page. The question arises: "What is the value of such reporting? Does it give a complete picture for the assessment of cost benefit?".

- (b) Another staff member who spent 30 days visiting Brasilia, Sao Paulo, Lima, Quito, Bogota, San Jose, Georgetown, submitted a report of three pages (Brasilia, two paragraphs; Sao Paulo, three paragraphs; Lima, three paragraphs).
- (c) Another staff member spent 29 days visiting Copenhagen, Brussels, Paris, Ottawa, New York, Washington, Minneapolis, San Francisco, Tokyo, Seoul, Bangkok. The purpose of the trip was (i) to assess the world market potential for canned mushrooms, canned asparagus and frozen strawberries, (ii) to buy samples of canned mushrooms and asparagus and to send them to the Project Manager in Seoul. The staff member was accompanied by two counterparts (in an advisory capacity). The report written by the staff member was summarized in one page. The cost of the trip was \$3,834 - UNDP funds.
- (d) A staff member who spent 33 days in Indonesia participating in the Fish Canning Mission at a cost of \$2,045 submitted a report of one and a half page, one and a quarter of which included travelling instructions and itinerary, while the summary of observations was written in three lines in the following way: "Reference is made to the mission report 'A Study of the Feasibility of the Canning of Fish and Shellfish in the Republic of Indonesia' presented on 26 June 1973 to the Fisheries Director-General, Djakarta.". On the cover of this document, FIEF/TRAM/816, was written, "Report of Travel to Indonesia".
- (e) After having spent 53 days at a cost of \$3,036 (Project), a staff member submitted a very concise report of two and a half pages, covering his visits to the Ivory Coast, Ghana and Tanzania. Although the Inspector does not question the quality of the report, it was too brief.

- (f) A staff member who attended the Second International Conference on Port and Ocean Engineering under Arctic Conditions and spent six days in Reykjavik devoted in his report of one page, 12 lines to the Conference.
- (g) A staff member who spent 20 days in Bangkok to attend the ninth session of the International Co-ordination Group for the Co-operative Study of the Kuroshio and Adjacent Regions (CSK) submitted as his report a Conference document of UNESCO. Recipients were requested to retain this copy for use at future meetings. On the cover page was written "Report prepared in conjunction with other participants" but it was obvious that it was a conference paper prepared by the secretariat of the Conference (DOC/CSK IX/2 - Paris, July). Cost of trip - \$1,852 (Project).
- (h) One staff member visited Ghana, Senegal and Mauritius from 18 June to 2 July 1973 and submitted a travel report of one page. His visit to Mauritius was described in two lines - "The discussions held in Mauritius had for its purpose to prepare a short PPA phase of the Special Fund Project MAU/73 (007) - Marine Fisheries Development.". Was this really a report?

80. One very interesting note was submitted to the Inspector on a travel report:

"In response to your request for a travel report for my participation in the IODE meeting, New York, 9-13 July 1974, attached I am transmitting to you the report of the Working Group as well as a paper prepared by me as requested in that report, since that time submitted to the Geneva session of the same meeting in 1974. No specific travel report was written on the subject since the report of the meeting itself was available at the time I returned to office; at which time, with internal memoranda, the report was submitted to the officers concerned for action."

81. The Inspector does not wish to burden this report by quoting more examples. He took only three Departments, selected the interesting trips and went through their reports. What he found has been indicated above.

82. This does not mean that he considers that the value of a report is dependent upon its length alone. Nor does it mean that he did not come across some reports which seemed to him, although not being an expert, interesting and written in a very intelligent way with the staff's personal judgement and evaluation. But in many cases the Inspector found the reports very disappointing and empty.

83. As for the reporting to the "morning meetings", "the collegium meeting", or the "noon meeting", the Inspector went through the minutes of these meetings and found that such form of reporting has only an information value to those present at the

meeting and that while this practice may be very useful from the point of view of information, it is not a substitute for a report and does not dispense with the necessity of submitting a written report.

84. In analyzing the whole situation in this respect, the Inspector considers that, except for the Director-General who submits his reports at the meeting of the Assistant Directors-General and Deputy Director-General or other higher staff members who might attend these meetings, all other staff members should submit their written travel reports as an ex post facto assessment of the value of the trips undertaken. In the Inspector's view, the Assistant Director-General should, together with the Directors of the Departments and units examine the reports very carefully and insist that they be submitted in a very analytical way in order that a proper evaluation of the activities of the staff who travelled can be made.

85. In future, no staff member should be allowed to submit his travel claim without a report being submitted to the Directors. The Finance and Administration staff responsible for the approval of the travel claims should be responsible for checking whether the travel reports have been submitted prior to the approval of the claims.

86. All staff files should, in future, contain copies of travel reports. No reports of a group or meeting or conference, particularly those issued by other organizations, should be accepted as a report by the staff member who travelled. Every staff member should submit an account of his own activities.

Chapter IV

SOURCES OF TRAVEL FUNDS

87. FAO has several funds financing its programmes and activities. Besides the regular programme where appropriations are by object of expenditure and where it is clear how much has been spent on travel, there are other extra-budgetary and trust funds which are also sources for staff travel.

88. In the programme and budget for 1972/73, annex 6 (page 520), expenditure is given in the following way under the column "staff duty travel":

- staff duty travel - meetings (estimate for 1972/73, \$270,000; a decrease of \$25,000 over 1971)
- staff travel - other (the figure of \$2,102,054 represents an increase of \$268,254 more than in 1970/71).

89. In addition to the above, information was given in annex 7 (page 523 - programme of work and budget for 1972/73 - annexes) on the allocation of agency overheads for 1970/71 - UNDP, special funds, trust funds, World Food Programme. The total expenditure was broken into three columns - personnel services, travel, and other provisions - so that it could be seen that for 1970/71 the total amount of money for agency overhead costs spent on travel was \$828,250. It is regrettable that the same data was not given for 1972/73 in the programme of work and budget for 1973/74, which would have given a full picture of travel expenditure by the FAO for 1973. Data, therefore, was only given in annex 5, page 633, by object of expenditure: in group III - expenditure for staff travel on official business to meetings in 1972/73 amounted to \$498,000, and staff duty travel for other purposes, \$1,964,630. The Inspector made some calculations of his own for the Departments which submitted the travel reports every two months to the Programme Formulation Unit and examples are given to illustrate the magnitude of travel undertaken by staff from extra-budgetary funds:

- (a) In the Fishery Department, out of 203 trips undertaken in 1973, only 86 were from the regular budget, while the rest of the travel expenses were paid for from extra-budgetary funds. It is interesting to note that 16 trips were paid for from agency overheads while the rest of the trips were in connexion with projects.

- (b) In the Forestry Department, out of 159 trips, only 57 were made from the regular budget; 21 were from agency overheads and the rest in connexion with projects.
- (c) In the Development Department, out of 130 trips only 28 were made from the regular budget; 52 were from agency overheads and the rest from the money provided for projects.
- (d) In the Agricultural Department, 388 trips were made during 1973. Only 129 were made from the regular budget while 56 were from agency overheads and the rest from project money.
- (e) In the Economic and Social Department, out of 418 trips made during 1973 by the staff of that Department, 256 were made from the regular budget, 56 from agency overheads and the rest from project money.
- (f) In the Office of General Affairs and Information, 130 trips were made; 67 were from the regular budget, 16 from agency overheads and the rest from project money.

90. The Inspector has quoted these examples to show that with the exception of the Economic and Social Department and the Finance and Administration Department where the trips undertaken on the regular budget were more numerous than the trips undertaken from other funds, in all other Departments the share of the regular budget was very low and the trips undertaken by FAO staff members during 1973 from extra-budgetary funds were far more numerous than those undertaken from the regular budget.

91. It would be worth while to know for what reason so-called "agency overheads" were used. From the Inspector's calculations, during 1973, 222 trips were included in this category of expenditure. In analyzing these trips, the Inspector was doubtful whether some could appropriately be charged to agency overheads. He will quote some, which, in his opinion, are the most interesting examples:

- (a) One staff member went to New York and Washington at a cost of \$1,515 "to attend the fifteenth session of the UNDP Governing Council". (This staff member, incidentally, made seven trips from agency overhead funds during 1973.).
- (b) Another staff member visited Caracas, Bogota, Washington, New York, at a cost of \$1,250 "to have discussions in South America with Government officials and the resident representatives of USAID and with UNDP officials in North America".

- (c) Three staff members travelled to Geneva "to accompany another official who attended the sixteenth session of the Governing Council of UNDP".
- (d) To attend the regional meeting of resident representatives, one staff member travelled to Bangkok.
- (e) A staff member attended the Working Group on Technical Co-operation in Developing Countries.
- (f) A staff member travelled to Geneva to attend the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner for Refugees.
- (g) To attend the UNDP Governing Council in New York, a staff member spent \$2,000 from agency overheads.
- (h) The same staff member went to Lima at a cost of \$1,718, to attend periodic meetings of the regional bureaux in Latin America.
- (i) Another staff member was in New York to attend the fifth session of the Inter-Organization Board.
- (j) To consult with host country authorities and selected universities, a staff member visited New York, Washington, Colorado, etc., at a cost of \$1,874.
- (k) Another staff member visited New York, Washington, Mexico, Tokyo, Bangkok, Cairo, Beirut, spending \$3,480 from agency overhead funds to consult with USAID Census Bureau, IACI, UN Statistical Office; to attend the ACC Special Committee on Statistics; and to attend the Advisory Committee of Asian Statistical Institute.
- (l) A staff member visited Bangkok, Tokyo, Ottawa, Boston, at a cost of \$740 to lecture at the Asian Statistical Office on a long-term programme of agriculture.
- (m) Another staff member spent \$1,510 to attend a seminar on statistical organization called by the UN Statistical Office in Ottawa.
- (n) For the purpose of interviewing (interview travel), one staff member spent \$173 from agency overheads.
- (o) To attend the first session of UNEP Governing Council, a staff member visited Geneva at a cost of \$282.
- (p) To attend the twenty-fourth Congress of the International Astronautic Federation, a staff member visited Baku (USSR) at a cost of \$1,380.

92. The Inspector considers it unnecessary to give further examples; by quoting the foregoing he wishes to show the variety of purposes for which FAO staff are spending agency overheads. In his view, most, if not all of the trips undertaken, raised doubts about the appropriate use of agency overheads. In spite of the Director-General's instructions, the above examples show clearly the lack of control. This must be exercised by the Assistant Directors-General and Directors.

93. The above practice also raises the question of the necessity for a clear definition regarding the use of overhead funds. The Inspector does not wish to dwell on this subject any longer but it is clear that tighter control is necessary and clear criteria should govern the use of overheads. This applies not only to UNDP funds, but also to trust funds, and the principal step to be taken is to show that agency overhead funds are being properly used.

Chapter V

EXCESS BAGGAGE

94. Excess baggage is considered to be any baggage not carried free of charge by the transportation company (rule 302.7531). Charges for excess baggage when authorized prior to the commencement of travel are reimbursable only where the instructions under which the staff member is travelling are sufficient to warrant such reimbursement. The FAO reimburses the charges for authorized excess baggage for the following types of travel:

- (a) on appointment, change of duty station and repatriation;
- (b) on official duty travel;
- (c) on home leave travel.

95. When travel is by air, tourist or economy class, staff members are authorized excess baggage up to the first-class free baggage allowance carried on the same route. The FAO, besides the 10 kgs. of excess baggage in excess of the free allowance, may authorize, on the travel authorization form, an additional allowance of accompanied baggage up to a maximum of 12 kgs. which must be justified by the traveller and specially approved by the Division Director.

96. As can be seen, the FAO allows 22 kgs. for excess baggage, an allowance which is unheard of in the United Nations. Although this measure is not general, as an exception, it seems that a staff member travelling tourist class could have a total of 42 kgs. of baggage. The Inspector considers that due to the new situation created by the decision taken by the Council at its fifty-ninth session and the decision of the General Assembly contained in resolution A/RES/3198 (XXVIII) of 18 December 1973, by which those who are entitled to first-class air travel were considerably reduced, the Council and the Director-General might wish to consider this matter again and decide that no excess baggage allowance should be reimbursed when the official travel is for two weeks or less. On the other hand, when official duty travel is longer than two weeks, excess baggage not exceeding 10 kgs. might be reimbursed. In the Inspector's view, no additional accompanied excess baggage of 12 kgs. should be allowed in future for official duty or home leave travel.

Chapter VI

MODE AND STANDARD OF TRANSPORT

97. In his report on the use of travel funds in the United Nations (JIU/REP/72/4 (A/8900)), the Inspector recommended that all reimbursements for travel be limited to economy class, except for the Secretary-General and those who accompany him.

98. The decision of the General Assembly (A/RES/3198 of 18 December 1973) applied later by almost all members of the United Nations system, limited this reduction in standard to D-2s who now travel by tourist or economy class.

99. The decision of the FAO Council taken at its fifty-ninth session, brought a new element to this subject. By deciding that, with the exception of the Chairman of the Council, all members of the Council and Programme and Finance Committees are reimbursed the cost of air travel by economy class by the most direct route with no distinction in terms of distance, the Council, first among the governing bodies in the United Nations family, gave an example and opened a new avenue of economy. The Inspector was told that this measure is being extended to all other persons serving the Organization in an individual capacity or rendering services to the Organization in other ways.

100. The Inspector, in his report on the use of travel funds in WHO (JIU/REP/74/3) expressed the view that the Executive Board of WHO might wish to follow the example of the FAO Council. If the action taken by the FAO Council were to be followed by the other members of the United Nations system, this would bring a uniform approach to this matter by the members of the elected bodies of the whole United Nations family.

101. Although the Inspector considers that the decision taken by the General Assembly in the above-mentioned resolution is a good step forward, bearing in mind the decision of the Council taken at its fifty-ninth session, he does not see any reason why this measure, now being applied to the members of the Council and the Programme and Finance Committees, should not be extended to the Assistant Director-General and Department Directors generally of the FAO thus limiting reimbursement of first-class air tickets to the Director-General and those who accompany him, and to the Chairman of the Council. This measure is justified not only as a matter of principle but also from the point of view of economy, bearing in mind particularly the increase in air fares during the past year.

102. The Inspector does not see way there should be any distinction in responsibility between the members of the Council and Programme and Finance Committees and the Assistant Director-General and Deputy Director-General, which could justify, in future, the authorization of first-class air travel for the Assistant Director-General and Deputy Director-General.

CONCLUSIONS

103. In the present report, as has been said in the Introduction, the Inspector wanted to check the extent to which measures introduced by FAO in order to tighten control over the use of travel funds have effectively been carried out. The report contains his findings following an analysis of travel and the use of travel funds in FAO mainly in 1973.

104. After having discussed this matter with Departments and Divisions and studied carefully travel reports submitted on a two-monthly basis to the Programme Formulation Unit and having looked at some of the travel reports submitted after completion of the travel, the Inspector has arrived at certain conclusions.

105. The Inspector must admit that he was encouraged by the decision taken by the Council at its fifty-ninth session in November 1972 whereby first-class travel was limited to the Chairman of the Council and all other members of Council and Programme and Finance Committees would travel in economy class regardless of distance. Although the Inspector was told that this decision had been applied to all individuals rendering services to FAO in various countries, he considers that the practice should be formally endorsed by the Council, bearing in mind that there are numerous non-staff members whose trips are charged to the various travel funds of FAO. This measure would be justified not only as a matter of principle, but also from the point of view of economy given the constant increases in air fares and the increasing differences between the first- and economy-class fares.

106. Although the control system, introduced in 1972, is still functioning and the Programme Formulation Unit endeavours to make an effective control of the use of travel funds, the Inspector considers that this control should be strengthened if the Organization wants real control to be introduced and effectively carried out. Bearing in mind the small staff of the Programme Formulation Unit and the very small possibility of opposing the Directors and Assistant Directors-General, it would be impossible to expect that, under present conditions, the Unit could exercise a really effective control.

107. It is true that two-monthly travel reports on travel completed are scrutinized and analyzed by the Unit, but the examples quoted in this report show a picture which could not be considered satisfactory. In the view of the Inspector, the itineraries should clearly indicate all the cities visited, the number of days spent in each city, and the purpose of the travel. Many changes made to the original programme of travel

show that the planning of the trips was not properly done. The numerous unscheduled trips are clear proof of this. It could be admitted that a few of these trips could not have been foreseen and planned due to changed conditions, but better planning would reduce, if not completely eliminate, unscheduled travel.

108. Frequent visits to some cities or regions, already shown by the Programme Formulation Unit in its quarterly reports in 1972, have been continued. There are cases of frequent visits of the staff of the same Department to a region or a city. In this connexion the Inspector wonders whether there could not have been more co-ordinated action.

109. Long absence from the duty station and generally speaking extensive travel by headquarters staff, raise the question as to how the programme and activities of the Organization can be properly carried out. The examples and data given in this report must be of concern to those who are responsible for a better image of the Organization. If the Directors and even some of the Assistant Directors-General, as is the case in almost every Division, are absent from their posts for a considerable time, one wonders how they can assure the smooth running of their Divisions/Departments or assure full responsibility in the carrying out of their programmes. No wonder that some of them complain that they are so overloaded that they have no time to write travel reports. If the Director-General and Deputy Director-General were to consider this matter, they would probably reduce the travel of the Directors and stipulate when and under what conditions their absence from the duty station might be considered not to be indispensable.

110. Multiple attendance at some meetings and some trips to the field could not be justified from the point of view of economy. The meetings should be attended by the minimum number of staff to assure the necessary services. The examples quoted by the Inspector offer a picture of extensive presence at some meetings. The travel of two or three staff members to the field for the same purpose could not be justified.

111. It is normal that the Director-General and Deputy Director-General (exceptionally) be accompanied on their travel on official visits to Member States by some staff members. But it is not understandable that Assistant Directors-General and the Directors, particularly the latter, are accompanied by one or two staff members, sometimes senior staff officials, on their trips. The Inspector cannot accept that a Director is not capable of going alone and making on-the-spot decisions if necessary. The same goes for the travel of two or more staff members to the field. Staff

travelling to the field, regardless of the purpose of the trip, must be prepared and well briefed so as to be able to perform fully the purpose of the travel. This should be strictly observed by those approving proposed travel.

112. In the Inspector's view the value of the travel undertaken by a staff member must be properly judged and evaluated by the Organization and those directly responsible for the given activity. In this respect the travel reports offer an ex post facto possibility of assessment. The findings of the Inspector in this report point to a lack of control. Some staff files do not contain travel reports, some reports are not written at all, etc.. The explanation given to the Inspector by some Divisions that Directors do not write reports but submit verbal observations to the collegium meetings or noon meetings is not convincing. While the Inspector completely agrees that the collegium or noon meetings be briefed and verbally informed about the trips undertaken by Assistant Directors-General or Directors, it is inadvisable that anyone be dispensed with writing a report. In the minutes of the collegium meetings or the other kinds of meetings ("noon - or morning meetings") only a few lines are given to the statement made by the staff member who undertook the travel. What would the subordinate staff members learn from this travel? How can the Organization judge the input of the staff member, his activities and result achieved if there is not a full analytical report written by the staff member? The Inspector went through dozens of travel reports and although technically speaking he was unable to judge the value of the reports, he can say that many are only a description of the itinerary, persons contacted and personal observations given only in a few lines. Sometimes the publications of other organizations were given to the Inspector as the reports of the staff who travelled.

113. In the Inspector's view, as already expressed in this report, except for the Director-General, all other staff members without distinction as to grade and rank, should submit written reports on the travel undertaken by them.

114. All the examples quoted in this report show that, despite all the measures introduced during the past few years in the FAO, they have not been effectively carried out and are evidence of a lack of a real control.

115. The presentation of travel expenditure in the programme and budget of FAO does not offer a real picture of this category of expenses. If we look at the number of trips (total estimated at 1,481) undertaken by the staff members shown in travel reports, and forms of travel completed, we could see that there are two categories of trips financed from FAO funds: (i) regular budget; (ii) agencies' overheads and projects (extra-budgetary). It has been shown that the regular budget share is very small by comparison with travel charged to extra-budgetary funds.

116. The Inspector considers that the programme and budget of FAO should show either in an annex or in a special table the total funds spent on staff travel, broken down into three categories: regular budget, agency overheads, and projects.

117. The ways in which agency overheads are being used for travel require, in the Inspector's view, a clear definition of the purpose of the overheads and reports on their use so that Member States could judge whether proper use was made of them.

118. The Inspector considers that the need for economies in the face of constant increases in air fares demands that the example given by the Council regarding standards for its members be extended to all staff members above the level of D-2 with the exception of the Director-General, so that in future only the Director-General and those who accompany him and the Chairman of the Council would be authorized to travel in first class at the expense of the Organization.

119. Finally, excess baggage reimbursement, if not discontinued, should be limited to trips on official business of more than two weeks' duration.

120. The Inspector was surprised at the high number of staff travelling from each Department. He wonders whether the time has not come for the Council and the Director-General to consider measures for the decentralization of some of the operational activities. Such a big concentration of the operational activities at headquarters requiring such an enormous movement of staff from headquarters to the field and the long absence of many staff members from their duty posts, while there are fully-qualified staff at regional offices, raises the question of the necessity for better and more effective co-ordination and co-operation between headquarters and the regional offices. The Inspector hopes that a better distribution of the work between headquarters and the regional offices would result in economy and greater efficiency.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Council may wish to consider extending the decision it took at its fifty-ninth session on travel of members of the Council and the Programme and Finance Committees to all other individuals serving the Organization in various capacities and reimburse them in future for air travel in economy class only.
2. The Council may also wish to consider the application of recommendation 1 to all staff members above the level of D-2 except the Director-General and those who accompany him.
3. The Council and the Director-General may wish to consider the question of strengthening the Programme Formulation Unit and to delegate to it more authority if they wish it to exercise a more effective control over the use of the travel funds.
4. The programme and budget presentation should in future include an annex showing the travel expenditure from all funds by FAO staff.
5. Travel plans should be carefully scrutinized by Assistant Directors-General in order to avoid frequent visits to certain regions or cities by staff of the same Department and envisage closer co-ordination of travel between Departments.
6. The attendance at meetings and field trips should be carefully scrutinized and kept to the minimum required for the performance of the tasks entrusted to the travelling staff members.
7. The Director-General and the Assistant Directors-General should carefully control the use of agency overheads to avoid any improper use of these funds for travel.
8. The Director-General may wish to introduce a proviso that in future excess baggage reimbursement would be limited to duty travel on official business for a duration of more than two weeks and would not exceed 10 kgs..
9. No travel claim should be approved until a travel report has been submitted to the Assistant Director-General responsible. No staff member should be dispensed with writing travel reports. Staff files should contain a copy of travel reports.
10. The Director-General and Assistant Directors-General should pay special attention to the long absence of some staff members from their duty station, particularly those whose presence at headquarters is necessary to assure the efficient and smooth running of their Divisions or Departments.

11. The statistical information and data for travel should be computerized in order that a quarterly tabulation by Division may be produced showing: (a) the traveller's name, with dates of travel, duration of travel, expenses, source of funds used, places visited; and (b) localities visited, with names of travellers and dates of visits.

12. In order to ensure better co-ordination and co-operation between headquarters and the regional offices, the Council and the Director-General might wish to consider the question of decentralization to the regional offices of some part of the operational activities of the Organization.

