

SECOND REPORT ON
EVALUATION IN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

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Table of Contents

SUMMARY	<u>Paragraph</u>	<u>Page</u>
I. INTRODUCTION	1 - 6	1
II. APPROACHES	7 - 27	2
A. Expansion of Activity	7 - 9	2
B. Choice of Approach	10 - 14	2
C. Central Evaluation Units	15 - 20	4
D. Coverage	21 - 27	5
III. INTEGRATION WITH THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS	28 - 35	7
IV. METHODOLOGY	36 - 47	9
A. Areas of Agreement	37 - 41	9
B. Problem Areas	42 - 47	10
V. FEEDBACK AND REPORTING	48 - 67	12
A. Internal Feedback	49 - 59	12
B. Reporting to Governing Bodies	60 - 67	14
VI. CO-OPERATIVE EFFORTS	68 - 89	16
A. With Governments	69 - 76	16
B. UNDP	77 - 86	17
C. Other Co-operative Activities	87 - 89	20
VII. SUPPORT FOR EVALUATION	90 - 98	22
VIII. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	99 -115	24
A. Conclusions	99 -105	24
B. Recommendations	106 -115	26

ANNEXES

- I. Selected Bibliography
- II. Table of Contents - JIU/REP/81/5,
 Status of Internal Evaluation in
 United Nations System Organizations

SUMMARY

A 1977 JIU report on evaluation in the United Nations system found that interest was at a "take-off point". This 1981 status report indicates that evaluation activities exist in the system on a wider scale than ever before. Considerable progress has been made, but much remains to be done to ensure that the new or improved internal evaluation systems are firmly established, and will actually be used to carefully assess results and improve programmes.

The number of organizations with evaluation systems has more than doubled from those surveyed in 1977. Chapter II discusses the strong trend toward built-in self-evaluation as the basic approach because of its broad coverage, quick feedback and low cost. However, most organizations have central evaluation units so small (2 officers or less) that system implementation is jeopardized.

Chapter III discusses the importance of integrating evaluation with organizational decision-making processes in an overall management development effort. Evaluation has already proven useful in improving project and programme design, but linkages with other phases of the management cycle are not yet firm.

Agreement is emerging that evaluation methodology must adapt to specific organizational situations and focus pragmatically on simple and effective formats. But Chapter IV notes that methodologies are not yet well developed beyond the project level, and there are still strong temptations to mis-label more casual reviews as "evaluations".

Most systems are just now reaching the evaluation feedback and reporting stages discussed in Chapter V. Systematic internal feedback processes, evaluation "memory banks", and follow-up procedures are needed. Initial reports to governing bodies have been well received, and it appears that good evaluation reporting can help simplify overall performance reporting.

Chapter VI reviews the strong interest in increased work with governments to improve their own evaluation activities, which JIU will study separately in 1981. After a lengthy review and inter-agency consultation process, UNDP is also ready to revise and strengthen its field project monitoring and evaluation system.

Support for evaluation has increased through greater understanding and initial positive use of evaluation findings, as noted in Chapter VII, but overall support is still fragile. Evaluation systems must be clearly established and a firm commitment made by governing bodies, top management and staff to steadily improve evaluation quality.

Chapter VIII concludes that internal evaluation systems have passed with general success through the first critical stage of introduction and development, but are now entering a second critical stage of widespread implementation. The present challenge is for organizations to strengthen and use these systems effectively. While evaluation system development will continue to be gradual, the next few years will be very important in establishing the value of evaluation in the United Nations system. The Inspector recommends that the organizations consider:

- the merits of a built-in self-evaluation approach;
- sufficient evaluation staffing to meet expanded system implementation needs;
- evaluation system coverage and development plans, guidelines on integrated management system relationships and development, and basic evaluation standards;
- specific evaluation analysis, follow-up and reporting mechanisms and procedures;
- present and future actions to assist developing country evaluation activities;
- (UNDP) action to implement a revised project evaluation system;
- effective training programmes to support evaluation system development.

Another report (JIU/REP/81/5) summarizes internal evaluation status in 23 United Nations system organizations, and includes recommendations for some of them.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Evaluation is a process which attempts to determine as systematically and objectively as possible the relevance, effectiveness and impact of activities in the light of their objectives. Internal evaluation systems attempt to help maximize the effectiveness of an organization's activities by providing analytical information on results, impact and effectiveness to secretariats and inter-governmental bodies to improve current and future programmes. They also provide accountability to inter-governmental bodies for effective use of resources, and stimulate general organizational interest in assessing experience and applying the lessons learned to future operations on a continuing basis.
2. In 1977 the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) made a report on the status of evaluation in the United Nations system (JIU/REP/77/1) 1/. The report noted that while the system was expending some \$US 2,000,000,000 annually and devoting significant resources to planning, programming and reporting processes, there was little real evaluation of the results of this work - despite various products loosely labelled as "evaluations". Some organizations were progressing towards internal evaluation systems, but there was a general lack of evaluation principles and methods and a wide variety of approaches and efforts. The report noted, however, that evaluation interest, which had risen and fallen periodically in the United Nations system since the 1950s, was once again at a "take-off" point, with high - perhaps too high - expectations of what could be accomplished. The report concluded that evaluation had considerable potential to improve operations, and that gradual progress towards more systematic evaluation was needed.
3. The Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC) found this status report and its recommendations to be an excellent starting point for a determined, coherent effort at the systematic introduction or development of evaluation (E/1978/12). The ACC comments cited the complexity and difficulty of evaluation and the expectation that improvement would be a gradual and long-term process requiring much work and investment. The comments concluded that if results achieved would fulfil expectations the additional evaluation efforts would be well-justified; if not, the organizations would have to consider whether they should be pursued in the proposed direction.
4. During 1980 the JIU made a follow-up review of evaluation status in the United Nations system. A series of interviews was conducted with top managers, evaluation officers, and staff of the organizations to discuss the status, structure, progress, operations and results to date of their evaluation efforts. Documents, guidelines, policy statements and reports were reviewed, recent system-wide reports were considered, the organizations' views were solicited on system-wide evaluation issues, and their comments were obtained on the resulting draft reports.
5. This report summarizes the considerable progress that most organizations have made in the past few years in developing or improving their internal evaluation systems. Many quite positive developments have occurred, and some distinct patterns have emerged. At the same time, the evaluation field still faces some substantial problems, and the relative success thus far in establishing evaluation systems now brings them to the critical stage of broad implementation and a direct test of their practical value.
6. The following chapters discuss these patterns, problems and potentials on a system-wide basis. Another report (JIU/REP/81/5) contains individual one-page summaries of the status of internal evaluation systems in 23 organizations (listed in Annex II) plus recommendations in a number of cases. A bibliography of recent system-wide documents is contained in this report, and a bibliography of evaluation documents of the individual organizations is presented in JIU/REP/81/5.

1/ Full citations of the documents mentioned in this report are given in the bibliography in Annex I.

II. APPROACHES

A. Expansion of activity

7. A significant change in United Nations system evaluation activity since 1977 is the simple increase in the number of organizations with evaluation systems. The 1977 report surveyed 13 organizations, while the 1980 survey was expanded to include 23, with the following comparison of generalized status:

	<u>Internal evaluation systems</u>	
	<u>1977</u>	<u>1980</u>
Some type	2	12
Under development	5	5
None	6	6
	<u>13</u>	<u>23</u>

8. Changes have taken place beyond these basic numbers. The two organizations with existing systems in 1977 (FAO and UNDP) have added important new dimensions. Four of the five organizations (WHO, UNESCO, ILO, UN) which were beginning to develop their systems in 1977 have now moved forward to implement them, while one has fallen behind earlier plans (UNIDO). One organization (IAEA) of the six organizations (IAEA, ICAO, IMCO, ITU, UPU, WMO) which had no unified evaluation system in 1977 is now developing one, while several others have had evaluation possibilities discussed in their governing bodies. Of the ten organizations added to the 1980 status coverage, three (the World Bank, WFP and UNFPA) have recently been strengthening established systems, one (ITC) has been substantially expanding the scope of its system, five others (UNEP, IFAD, UNCHS, UNICEF, and UNHCR) have established or are developing them, and one is considering evaluation possibilities (UNCTAD). Activity in each of these agencies is summarized in JIU/REP/81/5.

9. The organizations which did not have, or were not developing, internal evaluation systems in 1977 were the "smaller", "highly technical" specialized agencies. They did not appear to need evaluation because of their more intimate size and the effort which such systems implied. The 1980 survey, however, disclosed that "small" agencies such as ITC, WFP, UNFPA, UNEP, IFAD and UNCHS have already developed relatively successful or promising evaluation systems, while other small agencies are considering them. In addition, a variety of useful evaluation techniques and approaches are being tested in various parts of the United Nations system (see following sections) which are not as expensive, elaborate or cumbersome as some evaluation observers had once feared. These developments, when coupled with the impression that the smaller specialized agencies are now more conversant with evaluation work and more receptive to simple evaluation techniques which could be adapted to their particular needs, suggests that small organization size need not preclude, and may even facilitate, a pragmatic internal evaluation process to improve operations.

B. Choice of approach

10. In a 1979 report on initial guidelines for internal evaluation systems (JIU/REP/79/2) the JIU discussed the advantages and disadvantages of four basic operating approaches to internal evaluation: (a) self-evaluation, made by the people responsible for conducting the activity; (b) "task force" or "peer group" evaluation, made by a team of staff members from other parts of the organization working on a part-time or ad hoc basis; (c) central evaluation, made by a unit of evaluation specialists; and (d) outside evaluation, made by consultants hired to conduct ad hoc evaluations. The report noted that most internal evaluation systems would probably have some combination of these approaches, reflecting basic decisions on centralization/decentralization, extent of coverage, evaluation time and resources available, and concern with a participative process.

11. Perhaps the most significant pattern which emerges from the 1980 survey of evaluation system status - and one which affects the topics in each of the following chapters - is the growing acceptance of built-in self-evaluation as the basic component of most organizations' internal evaluation systems. This trend is not unanimous. Nevertheless, each of the larger specialized agencies (FAO, ILO, UNESCO, WHO) and the World Bank have emphasized various types of built-in self-evaluation as the major or even dominant component of their internal evaluation systems, and several other larger and smaller organizations are moving in this direction as well.

12. The reasons why these organizations emphasize the built-in self-evaluation approach are generally as follows.

(a) It can be designed, at least in theory, to cover the entire range of the organizations' activities, rather than the limited sample coverage which the other three approaches can provide.

(b) It provides a continuous process of rapid information feedback on emerging experience and results to the programme and project managers who need it most to quickly adjust objectives and implementation strategy, and to improve future activities.

(c) It facilitates the integration of evaluation as a normal part of the management cycle and the mutual strengthening of both evaluation and the other processes in this cycle, particularly project and programme design (see Chapter III).

(d) It is a participative process which can increase direct staff commitment and involvement in both the specific operational activity and in the evaluative focus on results.

(e) Its findings, developed by the managers responsible, are more likely to be accepted and acted on than those imposed by a "policing" process from outside or by outsiders whose findings can be dismissed out of hand as the judgement of people unfamiliar with the actual conditions of the activity.

(f) Its findings, particularly if tied to a programme budgeting structure, can be aggregated to provide a systematic information and reporting device on overall operations and patterns of successes and problems for future improvement, and to identify areas for subsequent in-depth evaluation.

(g) When built-in to normal managerial processes, it significantly reduces the "add-on" costs of a more elaborate and sophisticated system, which is important in an era of budgetary stringency.

13. The drawbacks of built-in self-evaluation - the need to use simplified evaluation methods and the question of whether staff can objectively evaluate their own work - are recognized by the organizations, but these factors are felt to be outweighed by the above list of benefits which built-in self-evaluation can provide. It can serve as the basic component of the evaluation system, with a combination of the other methods added on as extensively as the organization wishes and as financial resources permit. Task force, evaluation unit staff, peer-group teams, consultants, joint inter-agency missions, national institutions, donor government officials, host governments and governing body members (or combinations of these groups) have all been used by the United Nations system organizations at one time or another.

14. These alternative approaches can be used for evaluations which involve a more extensive scope or require in-depth treatment. For instance, broad programme or policy evaluation, evaluations of groups of projects, and evaluations of administrative or management processes extending throughout the organizations lend themselves more to use of consultants, task forces, or evaluation staff. In addition, since built-in self-evaluation is usually an "ongoing" evaluation of activities while they are underway, or upon completion, "ex post" evaluation to assess impact several years after completion may require more use of other evaluators because of scope, complexity and availability of staff. And whether the approach be built-in self-evaluation or another type, the opportunity to broaden participation by including all involved groups is always an important consideration.

C. Central evaluation units

15. All United Nations system organizations with an internal evaluation system (and several which have only technical co-operation evaluation activities in conjunction with UNDP) have a central evaluation unit of some kind. In the systems based on built-in self-evaluation, these units tend to have primarily service and co-ordinative functions, in which they are responsible for developing and testing evaluation methods and procedures, assisting and advising staff in evaluation matters, conducting training courses, supervising system operation, analysing evaluation information, maintaining liaison with evaluation and review groups inside and outside the organization, carrying out various reporting functions, and perhaps doing some direct evaluation work. Units in systems without a built-in self-evaluation component have some of the above functions, but tend to spend a much greater portion of their time conducting evaluations, back-stopping consultants or task forces engaged in evaluation, and handling reporting functions.

16. The 1979 JIU report on initial guidelines noted that evaluation units might be: (a) attached to the top executives in the organizations; (b) integrated with planning and programming activities; or (c) combined with administrative and financial services units. While a trend is not yet clear in this area, somewhat more of the units are located in programming divisions than in offices of the executive heads, and more in these offices than in administrative and financial units. What may be significant is that those units which are integrated with programming units tend to be the newest ones, while units which have been in existence for a longer period are more often in offices of the executive heads or administrative and financial offices. This may be linked to the trend towards built-in self-evaluation (direct feedback links are considered more important than independence) and to new emphases on programming (direct feedback links to programming are considered more important than those to the usual management review and financial groups).

17. Central evaluation units are also considered as "focal points" in the internal evaluation systems and, in the systems utilizing built-in self-evaluation, as a central oversight and co-ordinating "balance wheel" which ensures the quality and performance of the overall system. It appears, however, that in many organizations the linkages between the evaluation unit and various decentralized programme and operating units, field offices, management review groups, and even other management cycle processes are not yet clear or well-developed. To the extent that this is so, it indicates that central evaluation units are still "grafted on" to the existing structure in a rather uncertain and insecure fashion, and have not yet really become established as an integral part of the organization's management process. This important problem is discussed further in Chapter III.

18. Perhaps the most conspicuous fact to be noted about the central evaluation units, however, is their small size, both relative and absolute. Excluding the World Bank, only about 60 professionals are engaged full-time in evaluation system work. This is only a fraction of one per cent of the some 18,500 professional staff and \$3,600,000,000 total expenditures of the 22 organizations (1979 figures). Even when the costs of consultants, missions, support staff, and evaluation participation by other staff (generally as a part of their normal management functions) are considered, this is still a very small resource commitment to systematic determination of the organizations' project and programme results. It also contradicts earlier fears that internal evaluation systems might prove elaborate and costly.

19. Although the organizations have been extremely pragmatic and cost-conscious in evaluation system development to date, a critical cost-benefit point is now being reached. More than half the organizations have only two or one or a fraction of one officer's time. Such minimal staffing can permit the development and initial testing of an internal evaluation system. But many systems are now ready to proceed with the essential on-going functions of evaluation training, system supervision, information analysis, general support and advisory functions, reporting on evaluation findings, and - in many cases - direct participation in

individual evaluation studies. These activities comprise a very heavy workload, particularly in the built-in evaluation systems. It also appears that a more appropriate balance is needed in a number of organizations between the staffing for programming, budgeting, management services, and evaluation functions.

20. If internal evaluation systems are to be fully implemented and function effectively, it is vital that evaluation units be strengthened to match their present and future system implementation responsibilities, preferably by staff reassignment. Evaluation can provide considerable benefits to improve operations in the organizations, but if the cost side of the cost-benefit relationship continues to be held so severely in check, most of these benefits will never be realized.

D. Coverage

21. Another important consideration in selecting and applying an evaluation approach is the type and extent of evaluation coverage it will provide. Organizations emphasizing built-in self-evaluation choose broader coverage in less depth and at less cost, while those emphasizing central evaluation would reverse this pattern, and others would seek some degree of balance between the two. The coverage decision also involves a further set of inter-related questions.

(a) Should emphasis be on evaluation of projects, programmes, administrative and support processes, or policies, and in what combinations?

(b) What is the proper mix or emphasis to be given to evaluation of field activities versus regional or headquarters activities?

(c) What dollar value of total expenditure should mark the "cut off" point below which activities are considered too small for evaluation to be worthwhile?

(d) How much of the evaluation effort should be devoted to "ongoing" evaluation of activities under implementation, and how much to "ex post" evaluation of completed activities?

(e) To what extent should evaluation be "built-in" as a standard element of activities, and should such evaluation take place at regularly scheduled intervals or at key points such as the mid-point of implementation or before a new phase begins?

(f) Should a rolling pattern be developed which permits sample coverage of all major types of activities over a given period, or should evaluations be scheduled on an ad hoc basis to respond to problems, needs, and top management or governing body requests?

(g) How should evaluation fit in with other processes such as tripartite project reviews or required terminal reports, or with studies by management service units or inspectorate generals?

(h) What priority should be given to joint evaluation efforts with other United Nations system organizations, host governments, or donor governments?

22. At present, the extent and composition of evaluation coverage in the United Nations system is quite unclear. Some organizations, for instance, regard project evaluations as the essential building block for a system while others are emphasizing programme evaluations; some are very concerned with joint evaluation efforts while others want to develop their own systems first; and some place primary emphasis on developing field-level evaluation while others are very interested in headquarters activities.

23. An important related problem is that of linkage between these various organizational activities to form an orderly overall internal evaluation system. In particular, the two major areas of field projects and headquarters programmes differ considerably in terms of the methodology, staffing and resource requirements, operational mechanisms, feedback, and other factors involved. While they should therefore be treated differently, it is also important to link them in a meaningful and coherent way. Thus far there has not been much progress in this

area by most organizations, in either a programming or an evaluation sense, but this is another important methodological and conceptual issue which needs to be developed in practice.

24. This diversity is appropriate as each organization adapts evaluation to its own structures, policies, needs and resources, and uses a gradual testing approach in extending its evaluation system. Some are still in the early stages of system design, and several of the more established systems emphasize the need for flexible application of evaluation processes to meet emerging needs rather than a rigid forward work plan. Even those organizations which have decided on built-in self-evaluation or central unit evaluation as the basic component of their systems are still considering in what ways and to what extent they may want - and have the resources - to add to this coverage.

25. The current lack of clarity about coverage plans and evaluation strategies, however, makes an assessment of internal evaluation system progress - which this report attempts - a difficult task. If evaluation processes are to follow their own inherent concerns with matching results against objectives, then the "evaluation of evaluation" requires that time-phased objectives and work plans of these systems be carefully established so that system progress towards desired results can be periodically assessed.

26. Many organizations now have only a general, sometimes vague plan for developing evaluation and committing resources to it, which has slowed progress. The systems could be strengthened more quickly if specific plans and resource commitments are developed and agreed on. Each organization should present specific time-limited plans regarding its evaluation systems to its governing body. These plans should clearly indicate, inter alia, specific objectives, coverage to be obtained, the mix of approaches to be employed, linkages with other management processes, anticipated results, and resources required. Organizations that have programme budgets should integrate their evaluation coverage and development plans with them in accordance with formal guidance contained in the Medium-Term Plan. Other organizations should prepare their evaluation plans to cover one or more budget periods.

27. These evaluation plans and the results should then be reviewed periodically. However, given the evolving character of evaluation and its potential for favourably influencing the whole range of the organizations' work, governing bodies might wish to pay particular attention for a number of years to evaluation coverage and also to use the results of evaluation as part of their general review of programme planning and execution. Governing bodies might also ensure that the coverage of the evaluation plan corresponds to their own preoccupations.

III. INTEGRATION WITH THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

28. One of the most difficult problems which internal evaluation systems face is the tendency to regard them as a self-contained management technique which merely needs to be introduced into an organization to swiftly improve operations. In fact, evaluation is only one phase - although an important one - in the basic management cycle. It cannot have its full impact until it becomes part of a continuing commitment to development and improvement of the overall management system. The 1979 JIU report on initial evaluation guidelines contained a chapter which discussed this relationship (JIU/REP/79/2).

29. Most of the organizations have emphasized the importance of integrating their internal evaluation systems with the organizational decision-making process. However, those organizations which are relying primarily on self-evaluation are aided by its built-in nature, while those that stress an independent central evaluation approach are hampered somewhat by their self-imposed distance from other processes. In attempting to develop the integration principle, the organizations have generally followed one of four different strategies:

(a) strengthen various processes such as design, monitoring and programming as necessary pre-conditions before installing the evaluation system (as done by ILO, the UN and UNICEF);

(b) begin designing and installing the evaluation system, with parallel attention to building linkages to other parts of the decision-making process;

(c) adjust and improve relationships among the various elements already in place (as done by FAO and ITC);

(d) most ambitiously, recognize and undertake evaluation only as an integral part of a simultaneous and comprehensive management development effort (as done by WHO).

30. While many organizations might prefer to have the commitment and support required for the WHO strategy, the previously established components for adjustments as in FAO and ITC, or the preparatory stages used by the ILO, UN and UNICEF, most organizations have tended to follow the evaluation-and-linkages approach ((b)) in response to demands for action to develop an internal evaluation system. Which-ever approach is followed, however, the mutual relationships seem quickly to have become clear. Evaluation, with its emphasis on results obtained, the orderly sequence of activities, and lessons drawn from experience can strengthen the other decision-making processes; but these processes, in turn, can also greatly enhance the effectiveness of evaluation activities if they are linked with it.

31. Because the organizations' evaluation situations are so diverse and often still at an early implementation stage, a summary of linkages with other phases of the decision-making process can still only be an approximate one. The following preliminary observations, however, do seem to apply.

(a) Planning: in a number of organizations, evaluation will eventually extend to the medium-term planning process and to formulation of strategies and policies, but it has not yet had much impact at this level.

(b) Programming: evaluation is closely linked - at least conceptually - to the ongoing programming process and may have its greatest long-term use at this level. In particular, an effective programme budgeting process provides a very useful framework in which to aggregate and apply evaluation findings in an orderly and "built-in" manner, while the absence or weakness of this structure complicates both evaluation conduct and feedback. As noted in Chapter II, there is also a strong need to develop programming and evaluation linkages between field projects and headquarters programmes, an area in which progress has been slow.

(c) Design and Formulation: perhaps the most direct impact of evaluation efforts in many organizations thus far has been the feedback of information on weaknesses in project and programme design. Better design, clearer statements of objectives, progress indicators, and more logical and orderly implementation

sequences are very much needed both to make projects and programmes more effective and to facilitate their evaluation.

(d) Monitoring and Implementation: a good monitoring system (continuous oversight of operations for conformity to work plans) can free evaluation to concentrate on results and patterns of experience, while a poor one can bog subsequent evaluation down in a web of input and implementation details. At present there appears to be some confusion and overlap between the two functions and a need for improved monitoring methods to support evaluative work.

(e) Management Information Systems: evaluation both relies on the management information system for basic data and can provide data for it. The larger organizations are currently working to develop such systems, generally in computerized form, and to make them less cumbersome and more timely than at present.

(f) Review: all organizations have a variety of units which should both use results of evaluation studies and provide data for evaluation. The larger organizations in particular have all of the following: external and internal auditors; central management services; programming and budget units; special task forces and advisory bodies; and budgetary, financial or administrative committees of governing bodies. There does not often seem to be a clear division of responsibilities and an integrated review structure among these various groups.

(g) Reporting: internal evaluation systems, with their emphasis on effective feedback of results to users, appear to have a very significant role to play in reporting processes (as discussed further in Chapter V).

(h) Follow-up: the key element at the end of the management cycle is follow-up to ensure that appropriate actions have been taken, including application of evaluation findings. There appears to be general agreement that follow-up is presently given too little attention and emphasis.

32. This basic decision-making process is - or should be - a unified system which is synergistic - that is, in which co-operative action among the components creates a total process which is stronger than any of its individual elements. The evaluation component, with its focus on the results and quality of the entire sequence, has much to contribute. An encouraging development is the growing number of instances in which evaluation system design and development is raising questions and suggesting ways to strengthen and clarify formats and processes in the design, programme budgeting, monitoring, reporting and other components.

33. At the same time, there appears to be some considerable frustration and concern over the difficulties of establishing firm and effective linkages and feedback between evaluation and the other components. There are various reasons for this. Despite considerable progress in programme budgeting in recent years serious gaps may still exist in programming, as discussed in a 1978 JIU report on programming and evaluation in the United Nations (JIU/REP/78/1). The small, new evaluation units in many organizations have not yet achieved the influence of the many longer-established and larger units and processes in the management system. Many evaluation systems have not yet had time to evolve the full range of approaches and formats needed to strengthen and interact with other components (see Chapter V).

34. In 1980 the Consultative Committees of ACC on Substantive Questions (CCSQ (OPS)) and Programme Matters (CCSQ (PROG)) held a joint meeting on evaluation. A discussion paper (ACC/1980/OPPG/2) noted that among the key contributing factors to critical evaluation problems are failures of the overall management system to provide the "technical pre-conditions" for evaluation, insufficient clarity of roles and responsibilities for evaluation, unrealistic expectations of evaluation as an organizational panacea, and a "piece meal" approach to evaluation rather than regarding it as a part of a general management strategy to increase the quality and significance of the organization's activities.

35. Evaluation is a management tool, but it is only part of a set. If used correctly, it can provide substantial feedback to improve, clarify and strengthen other decision-making elements while in turn being strengthened itself - and there are a variety of situations in which this mutually beneficial exchange is already occurring within the United Nations system organizations.

IV. METHODOLOGY

36. The 1979 JIU report on Initial Guidelines for Internal Evaluation Systems (JIU/REP/79/2) included a rather extensive chapter on methodological considerations. The report noted the factors hindering use of more precise analytical methods and techniques in the United Nations system. It discussed the particular importance of well-structured statements of objectives and difficulties in formulating them in practice, and the potential for developing good indicators as a vital part of the evaluation process. An initial list of levels of evaluation ranging from the simple to the most complex was presented, and the challenges involved in the further development, choice and assessment of evaluation methods and techniques were examined. This Chapter discusses major current patterns of agreement and problems as a supplement to the 1979 discussion.

A. Areas of agreement

37. There appears to be considerable agreement among the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (CPC), ACC, JIU and various governing bodies of the organizations that common evaluation principles and guidelines are needed in the United Nations system, but that the extent of this effort is constrained by the differing policies, structures, fields of activity, and nature of operations of the organizations. Several years of discussion have indicated an interest in continuing co-operation to gradually develop such principles and guidelines, within a flexible approach which recognizes the diverse organizational needs. The JIU glossary of evaluation terms (JIU/REP/78/5) and initial guidelines (JIU/REP/79/2) are intended to serve as a broad common guidance framework and to encourage movement towards common understandings of evaluation, with revision in the future as experience is gained. The ACC and the governing bodies of individual organizations which have considered them have given general endorsement to these two reports.

38. A second area of emerging agreement concerns the level of evaluation methodologies. In its 1979 comments on the JIU initial guidelines, the ACC agreed fully that many problems and constraints prevent full use of more sophisticated methodologies in the system, and that in most cases "ideal" or "desirable" evaluation may not be possible in the near future (A/34/271/Add.1).

39. The 1980 survey of the organizations' internal evaluation systems indicates fairly widespread support for this pragmatic approach. No one is really satisfied with the quality of current methodology. But the emphasis is moving away from elaborate evaluation techniques and theories towards simple but effective formats for built-in self-evaluation based on clear statements of objectives, better project and programme design, and the development of indicators. The general concern is to design, test, and gradually adapt, improve and extend such basic methodologies for widespread use.

40. This pragmatic approach is facilitated by the cost-conscious, participative, and rapid operational feedback elements of built-in self-evaluation, and the related belief that evaluation must be as simple and as directly useful as possible and not promise more than it can deliver. The cost of the methodologies used should be reasonable. They should provide credible results, and they should be understandable to evaluation users. The pragmatic approach also has the virtue of flexibility: built-in self-evaluation is generally regarded as only the basic component of a system, to which more sophisticated evaluation components can be gradually added to the extent that the organizations consider them cost-beneficial.

41. Nevertheless, "appropriate" evaluation methodology is a two-edged sword. If evaluation is too costly, time-consuming and scientifically sophisticated, it will not be accepted and used to improve operations. If evaluation is too casual or is of poor quality, however, the same discouraging results will occur. The continuing struggle to find appropriate and effective methodological standards is currently reflected in two major problem areas, as discussed below.

B. Problem areas

42. A first problem is posed by the need to gradually extend evaluation systems to more and broader types of organizational activities. At present, most of the effort in designing and implementing evaluation methodologies has been for technical co-operation projects in the field. This in itself presents a substantial methodological challenge in attempting to blend objective rigour with simplicity to obtain widespread application and use, generally by non-specialist staff. While progress appears to have been fairly satisfactory at this level, significant additional challenges remain.

(a) Various programme-level evaluation efforts undertaken throughout the system show the difficulty of focusing sharply on results because of the breadth of activity, ambiguity of objectives, lack of time-phased targets, and often uncertain coherence of the "programme".

(b) Development of appropriate methods for assisting evaluation efforts by governments at the national and sub-national level is particularly complicated because of the diverse systems and management capacities involved.

(c) Not much has yet been done in the evaluation of administrative and support processes.

(d) Evaluation of policies and strategies, perhaps the broadest and most difficult level, has scarcely begun. However, activities such as those in conjunction with the Third Development Decade may eventually require such evaluations by the agencies.

(e) Other activities such as research, negotiations, conferences, and standard-setting may pose complex problems of evaluation.

(f) Increasing interest in inter-sectoral evaluations conducted jointly by several organizations raises challenging questions of appropriate common methodologies.

(g) While some success is being obtained in evaluating results, relevance and effectiveness of activities, the evaluation of their impact, particularly through ex post studies several years after completion, remains an enormously complex undertaking which has thus far hardly even been addressed.

43. A particular concern expressed by staff in a number of agencies was that evaluation will be "forced" into areas where it is really not appropriate, thus adding another reporting task for staff who feel that they are already overburdened in this respect. Hopefully, the gradual, pragmatic testing approach adopted by most organizations will avoid making evaluation such a burden. Further experience may well show that certain of the above areas are quite amenable to evaluation, that others can be assisted by evaluation concepts short of formal evaluation coverage, and that others are simply not evaluable except at very high cost. In some of these areas more sophisticated evaluation methods and use of specialists may well be required, but this is a matter for each organization to decide.

44. The second problem is the loose application of the "evaluation" label. The 1977 JIU status report observed that because of the lack of a clear definition, many organizations tended to place the label of "evaluation" on almost any type of review, report, discussion or study which contained an element of examination of experience. This was a major reason for the JIU glossary of evaluation terms (JIU/REP/78/5), which now provides a generally accepted definition of evaluation as a systematic and objective attempt to determine the relevance, effectiveness and impact of activities in the light of their objectives (as stated in paragraph 1 of this report). The glossary also discussed several things which evaluation is not, and differentiated evaluation from appraisal, monitoring, inspection and audit.

45. Discussions with the organizations during 1980 gave encouraging indications that staff, top management, and governing bodies are now more knowledgeable about what is and what is not evaluation, and about evaluation methodology. The seriousness of the problem of mis-labelling other activities as "evaluations" does appear to have diminished somewhat as internal evaluation systems and their training activities have begun to expand and to heighten awareness of what evaluation and its methods entail.

46. In order to be accepted and used by the organizations as a normal and integral part of the management process, however, evaluation findings must be logical, objective, reasonable, and practical. The temptation to call more casual monitoring, reviews, or inspections "evaluations" is still a strong one, even though they may be unsystematic, lacking in factual and analytical content, and concerned with input delivery and activities rather than results (i.e. not in accord with the definition given above). The organizations' specific evaluation efforts need to be continually and critically assessed for quality and usefulness, in an effort to gradually but steadily improve them.

47. The 1980 CCSQ discussion meeting on evaluation concluded that common standards of evaluation would be desirable, but only insofar as they grew out of the context and experience of individual agencies. While the JIU initial guidelines report (JIU/REP/79/2) addresses this problem, it would appear difficult to develop more detailed standards which are acceptable to all organizations. However, if the organizations wish to adopt common standards, ACC could designate a lead agency to do so with the assistance of others who are interested.

V. FEEDBACK AND REPORTING

48. Feedback and reporting comprise the critical stage at which findings from the internal evaluation system are presented and put to use to improve the organization's programmes. Since this (together with follow-up) is the final stage in the evaluation process, experience is still rather limited because many organizations are now only beginning implementation on a broader scale. Nevertheless, a variety of feedback and initial reporting efforts have been undertaken, and they suggest some significant potential for effective use of evaluation.

A. Internal feedback

49. The first major group of evaluation "users" is the secretariats of the organizations - the executive head, managers, planners and programmers, and headquarters, regional and field staff. At present, most organizations still lack sufficient general organized knowledge of what has been accomplished in the past and whether current resources are being used effectively in line with established objectives. Much more attention is devoted to planning and programming than to determining whether programmes were in fact carried out and with what results. Evaluation can provide analytical information on results, successes and problems to improve present and future activities in general, and can help to clarify priorities, assess cost-effectiveness, and improve planning and programming quality. It should also stimulate interest throughout the organization in assessing experience and applying the lessons learned to operations on a continuing basis. These benefits can only be realized, however, if effective feedback, reporting and follow-up mechanisms exist.

50. Many organizations are still establishing and developing their internal feedback mechanisms, but whether they are only now designing them, beginning to implement them, or improving those which have already been established, there is widespread agreement that this is a critical area that will require much attention. As discussed in Chapter III, most organizations have a situation in which evaluation is being introduced with a concurrent development of linkages to already-established planning, programming, design, monitoring, management information, review, reporting and follow-up functions. But there is concern with the effectiveness of the linkages established so far.

51. The feedback mechanism receiving most attention appears to be that concerning project design and formulation. Clarifying and improving the quality of such designs serves to improve the projects overall and to establish the pre-conditions for good evaluation. A second link is that between evaluation and programming. This work is still largely concerned with building better design, objective, indicator, output, and results concepts into new multi-year programme budgets or organizational work programmes. Since many of these are very recent, actual evaluation system feedback will have to wait until implementation is well underway. Feedback in both these areas should be facilitated in those organizations in which evaluation units are a part of programming divisions. There is need for attention as well to the difficult but important task of establishing linkages between field projects and headquarters programmes.

52. Feedback linkages also appear to be facilitated in the systems which have adopted built-in monitoring and/or evaluation approaches. The particular vehicles vary somewhat among organizations, with WHO relying on its programme profiles, FAO on its auto-evaluation procedures, UNESCO on its performance monitoring system, the ILO on its project evaluation reports, the UN on its programme performance reporting system, and the World Bank on its project performance audits. While the particular devices vary, they all tend to serve three different feedback purposes: (a) direct feedback to responsible managers on the status and progress of their activities; (b) relationship of the information to the programming and implementation cycles; and (c) the aggregation of the information as inputs to reporting on the overall status of programmes.

53. In addition to the development of linkages with design, programming, other management cycle phases, and individual activity managers, both the built-in

self-evaluation and centralized evaluation systems have utilized other feedback processes. Many evaluation units have specific responsibilities for informal consultations with staff, participation in working groups, and conduct of evaluation training courses or workshops. In a growing number of cases this takes up considerable time as the systems begin implementation and puts heavy pressure on the small evaluation units, as discussed in Chapter II. A number of other feedback techniques have been used, such as circulation of published reports among staff for information purposes, the issuance of new programme guidance, and special training or workshops related to specific evaluation findings.

54. Not much has yet been done to develop another important mechanism for orderly feedback - an evaluation memory bank, i.e. an orderly accumulation of evaluation findings as a basis for analysis and summary reporting on lessons learned. The World Bank, for instance, has established a computerized system with key information on all project evaluations made, and each year's findings are related and added to those of previous years. UNDP has been developing a project implementation monitoring system under its Integrated Systems Information Project (ISIP), which should eventually prove useful to many organizations. Other organizations have not progressed this far: some have specific plans to incorporate a memory bank in their systems; for others it is too early to be specific; and others have modest banks, are now accumulating the initial data, or have lacked the time to develop them fully. This last point may become critical in many systems. Memory banks will be established, often as part of a computerized management information system, but the important task of analyzing this information and presenting it will impose another significant burden on the small central evaluation units.

55. In addition, not much has been done on follow-up in the system as yet. Orderly follow-up procedures are needed to periodically review the status of corrective actions based on approved evaluation conclusions and recommendations. Many organizations have not reached this stage, but even those with more experience and established follow-up procedures agree that more emphasis, action, and clarification of specific roles and responsibilities will be needed in this area if evaluation is to be applied effectively.

56. Despite this rather mixed and incomplete feedback picture which United Nations system internal evaluation systems currently present, two significant positive patterns should be mentioned. First, the evaluation emphasis on critical analysis of the results of organizational activities is already feeding back useful information which is leading to improvements and clarifications in existing management processes. This has been most noticeable in project design, but is also beginning to bring improvements in programming processes, particularly through the design, testing and application of the built-in evaluation formats and procedures noted above. Evaluation feedback can also help achieve clearer, simpler and more effective processes of monitoring, management information, and reporting, by focusing on which information is useful and which is not.

57. The second positive pattern is the strong emphasis of almost all the organizations on a system which is constructive and participative rather than a "policing" activity. Whether the organization relies primarily on a built-in self-evaluation approach or one which stresses an independent evaluation team, the organizations are emphasizing participation by all concerned to the extent possible under the given approach, and the idea that evaluation seeks an objective focus on experience to improve activities through a learning process, rather than a control process which exists only to find fault and blame individuals. This constructive focus appears at present to be the actual style of operation within the system rather than mere self-serving rhetoric, and hopefully it will remain this way.

58. Despite these encouraging signs, however, the generally early stage of evaluation system development within the organizations means that many internal feedback challenges must still be addressed and overcome. The 1980 CCSQ discussion paper on evaluation (ACC/1980/OPPG/2) noted a number of critical factors to consider. Evaluation activities must be undertaken with a clear purpose and

intended use if they are to be useful in the decision-making process, rather than just "doing an evaluation" as a routine process. The feedback links must connect those who produce the findings with the people who are to use them in a systematic and orderly way so that the users get the information when required and in an acceptable and credible form, rather than ad hoc or not at all. Roles and responsibilities for collecting, analyzing, presenting, reviewing, acting upon, disseminating and following-up on evaluation findings must be clearly established, so that a true system exists. And the management system must be not only established but steadily and objectively used to improve operations and overall management processes.

59. These factors indicate that internal "quality control" will become a central concern of internal evaluation systems as they move from the developmental to the implementation stage. With effective and orderly internal feedback processes and action, evaluation can fulfill a dynamic role in steadily improving the quality of organizational decision processes. With weak and disorderly feedback processes, evaluation is wasted. Just as evaluation attempts to critically assess the relevance, effectiveness and impact of the organization's activities, so must the organization critically assess the relevance, effectiveness and impact of its internal evaluation system. The experience of the next several years should show more clearly whether this desired dynamic relationship actually occurs.

B. Reporting to governing bodies

60. The second major group of evaluation users is comprised of the various inter-governmental bodies of the organizations and their member governments and representatives. They, like the secretariats, also presently lack sufficient organized knowledge and analytical information on results to improve and adjust present and future policies, plans and programmes. Evaluation can provide this type of information as well as the periodic accountability for use of resources which gives reporting to inter-governmental bodies a more formal character than the continuous internal feedback processes described in the preceding section. Reporting to governing bodies can also serve the needs of users outside the organization - other organizations, inter-agency bodies, and the clientele or beneficiaries of the organization's activities.

61. Although such reporting is also still in its early stages, the number of such reports is now growing rapidly. Among these recent reports are the following types and examples, each of which is cited in the bibliography of the JIU status study of evaluation in the individual organizations (JIU/REP/81/5).

(a) reports using monitoring or evaluation data to assess the overall performance and programmes of the organization in new or pre-existing reports, prepared by the United Nations, FAO, UNESCO and WHO;

(b) evaluations of programmes or of a particular subject area, prepared by the United Nations and UNDP (jointly with other agencies);

(c) summary reports on project evaluation patterns, prepared by ITC, UNFPA and the World Bank;

(d) reports on the status of evaluation system development and activities, prepared by the United Nations, UNDP, UNIDO and the World Bank;

(e) reports combining evaluation system status and summary or sample reporting on evaluation findings by UNEP, ILO and UNESCO.

62. Most of these reports have been initial efforts, regarded by the organizations as "starting points". Only a few have become an established series or go back further than 1978: most were published for the first time in 1979 or 1980. They thus represent not so much finished evaluation "products" as reporting processes to be further refined as the internal evaluation systems themselves gradually develop.

63. The initial efforts do shed light on certain reporting factors. First, there is still considerable fear within some organizations that objective evaluation reporting to governing bodies on successes and problems will bring public

exposure, penalties and censure, and thereby undermine staff confidence in the evaluation process. This runs counter to the basic accountability functions of reporting, but is a real fear nonetheless. Although some of the reports noted above are too new to have yet elicited reactions, the others would seem to allay these fears, in that the governing bodies have generally reacted positively to the reports, as a mutual learning process that seeks to use experience constructively to improve the results of current and future programmes.

64. A second factor which evaluation reporting efforts suggest is that general performance reporting channels are already very crowded. Over the years many organizations have gradually accumulated a whole range of status reports, annual reports, special reviews, in-depth studies, and progress reports. These many reports can bury governing body delegates in a flood of documentation and tie up secretariat staff in what seems to be an endless series of reporting tasks, but still not yield much useful information on progress and results. Evaluation, with its focus on providing timely and appropriate analytical information and results to meet user needs, has the potential to streamline organizational reporting processes to governing bodies by gradually clarifying, combining or eliminating present cumbersome reports and sharpening their focus.

65. A third related factor is the level of detail of evaluation reporting. There have been concerns that detailed reporting on many specific activities would focus on people rather than activities, divert governing body attention to unnecessary review of details of particular programmes, and make evaluation reporting a very cumbersome process as internal feedback data would have to be "dressed up", elaborated on, and extensively reviewed before public presentation. However, most current evaluation reporting is being done on a summary or selective rather than a detailed basis, and this appears to have been both quite acceptable and pertinent to the concerns with excessive reporting efforts.

66. The early reporting efforts available so far suggest the following evaluation reporting patterns for the future:

(a) Evaluation findings, and particularly the aggregated findings of built-in self-evaluation, can be used to improve the quality of overall programme status reports which many organizations now periodically provide to their governing bodies. Evaluation can also help link these reports more closely to medium-term plans, programme budgets, and work programmes through the emphasis on results in the light of objectives.

(b) For less comprehensive evaluation systems, periodic summary reports can be made on patterns of evaluation findings on successes, problems and operational needs.

(c) Periodic reporting can be made on internal evaluation system development and coverage plans (as discussed in Chapter II).

(d) Evaluation also can be used for reporting on selected topics, or to sharpen and clarify special studies, reports, and in-depth reviews requested by governing bodies, to the extent that resources permit such studies.

67. "Quality control" of evaluation systems is needed not only from secretariats, as discussed in the preceding section, but from governing bodies as well if evaluation reporting is to serve its proper role in improving organizational decision processes. Governing bodies need to understand evaluation purposes and methods, and the role of evaluation in developing and strengthening the overall management system. If good evaluation reporting is provided by secretariats but not used, or if mediocre evaluation reporting is provided and accepted, the same results will occur: evaluation quality will go down, and a great deal of time and effort on the part of both groups will be wasted without any improvement in the organization's activities. With mutual commitment and support, however, as discussed further in Chapter VII, the continuing development of effective and well-focused reporting methods can be greatly enhanced.

VI. CO-OPERATIVE EFFORTS

68. While the organizations have properly been concerned with the development and strengthening of their own internal evaluation systems, a variety of co-operative activities exist which can be very important in strengthening evaluation on a United Nations system-wide basis. These include co-operative efforts with governments to strengthen their evaluation of development activities, the UNDP evaluation system and activities with executing agencies, and other co-operative efforts, as discussed in the following three sections.

A. With governments

69. Co-operative work with governments to strengthen their evaluation of their development activities appears to be very much an idea whose time has come. The 1977 JIU status report noted briefly that many United Nations system activities were merely a part of the more comprehensive development efforts of national governments, and that governments should be encouraged to evaluate, on their own or jointly, the benefits and impacts of their programmes and of United Nations system activities.

70. During the past two years interest and efforts in this area have increased rapidly. The lead has been taken by WHO, with its basic emphasis on supporting national health strategies, programming, management development, and evaluation. UNICEF has adopted a similar decentralized country programming and management development approach to assist governments. IFAD is emphasizing integrated monitoring and evaluation components in its projects which are the responsibility of local or national institutions wherever possible. The World Bank has been working to strengthen general governmental evaluation functions through some on-the-job training and regional seminars. FAO is developing considerable interest in co-operative evaluation work as an outgrowth of the 1979 World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, and both UNESCO and ILO have conducted initial evaluation training exercises for national officials. Several other organizations have indicated interest in similar efforts to work with governments in the evaluation and management development areas, beyond the usual participation in existing project evaluation exercises. Some bilateral technical assistance programmes are becoming active in these efforts as well.

71. Support for this idea has also come from ACC. In its 1979 comments on the JIU Initial Guidelines report (A/34/271/Add.1), the ACC stated that the guidelines might also lend themselves to use by governments in their own evaluations of programmes and projects, and that active national participation in evaluation at the country level would seem essential in order to safeguard full government involvement in and control of technical co-operation activities, to which the United Nations organizations' contributions are usually of only limited scope. The 1980 CCSQ discussion meeting on evaluation (ACC/1980/8) also noted active involvement of governments in the evaluation of country projects and instances in which they were being aided in establishing their own mechanisms for project evaluation, and felt that this trend should be enhanced through assistance to appropriate mechanisms.

72. The JIU has discussed this subject in several recent reports. A 1978 report on the role of experts in development co-operation (JIU/REP/78/3) emphasized the concept of government management and the need to strengthen national review and evaluation processes through UN system assistance. A 1979 report on United Nations system technical co-operation activities in Sri Lanka (JIU/REP/79/16) noted the considerable interest there in improved monitoring and evaluation systems. The report recommended critical assessment by host governments and United Nations system organizations of existing review and evaluation quality, and increased efforts by United Nations system organizations to work on a continuing field-level basis with governments to strengthen their development management capabilities, including evaluation. The synthesis of United Nations organizations' comments on this report (E/1980/82/Add.2) endorsed the need to reappraise technical co-operation design, review and evaluation systems and to apply them more systemati-

cally (see following section), increased reliance on national capability to manage development activities, and government efforts to improve their own monitoring and evaluation capabilities. And a 1980 JIU report on UNICEF planning and programming at the country level (JIU/REP/1980/3) examines the problems and potentials for UNICEF efforts to assist governments in planning and programming, information-gathering, and monitoring and evaluation.

73. This rapidly-increasing interest in co-operative evaluation development efforts with governments appears to be greatly facilitated by two recent trends. First, as discussed in the reports cited above and many other recent documents, the essential criteria of success in United Nations system technical co-operation are the transfer and adaptation of technical and managerial skills to strengthen self-reliant development, with a focus on results and effectiveness rather than resource inputs and dependence on international assistance. An essential element of such self-reliance is government responsibility for UN system-assisted projects within their total development programmes, and for gradual national assumption of management functions such as evaluation with the assistance of the United Nations system organizations.

74. The second trend is the movement of United Nations system organizations towards built-in self-evaluation, as discussed throughout this report. The self-evaluation emphasis on full participation and improvement based on direct application of lessons learned from experience fully supports the self-reliance theme. The reasons supporting self-evaluation in the United Nations system organizations - built-in and widespread coverage, rapid feedback, integration with the management cycle, participation and acceptance, systematic structure, and lower cost - would all appear to apply equally well in developing countries. And, as in the organizations, self-evaluation approaches in countries would allow widespread application of simplified methods by non-specialists, while not precluding additional and more sophisticated evaluation work as needs arise and resources permit.

75. The challenge of co-operatively strengthening evaluation processes in developing countries, particularly at the field level, is of course very substantial, and the effort will have to be a gradual and careful one. Government interest and commitment must in many cases be developed. New methods must be developed or adapted, and must be flexible and pragmatic for application to differing national situations, structures, and policies. Parallel attention must be given to strengthening design, programming, monitoring and reporting processes. Analytical data on basic conditions and progress will be difficult to organize and obtain. Management capacity and resource problems must be addressed. Existing skills, institutions, and experience must be identified and utilized. And processes of technical knowledge transfer, particularly through appropriate training, must be developed.

76. Despite these many constraints, the growing interest and activity in co-operative efforts to strengthen governments' activities to evaluate their own programmes is a very logical extension of the efforts of United Nations system organizations to develop evaluation systems, and holds great promise for improved technical co-operation activities in general. The JIU plans to begin a study in 1981 to survey United Nations system activities in this important area, the approaches, processes and techniques which are being developed, and possible directions for further progress.

B. UNDP

77. UNDP is the world's largest single channel for multi-lateral technical and pre-investment assistance to developing countries. It currently supports more than 8,000 pre-investment and technical co-operation projects in virtually every economic and social sector. Since other United Nations system organizations participate in almost all these projects, UNDP's guiding policies, procedures and potential leadership role have an impact far beyond its own operations.

78. The UNDP evaluation system guidelines established in the mid-1970s emphasized individual project evaluations. As a rule, each "large" project (UNDP contribution of US\$ 150,000 or more) was to be evaluated on one or more of three occasions: (a) at the mid-point of implementation; (b) at the end of one stage and beginning of another; (c) at or near the end, when a substantial extension or successor project was proposed. These evaluations were to be independent examinations of a project's design, results and effectiveness. While they were a tripartite responsibility of the government, the co-operating agency and UNDP, they were to be conducted by persons not closely associated with project formulation, implementation and monitoring - in many cases using consultants. Evaluation provisions were usually agreed upon and scheduled in the project document, with about \$5,000 set aside for this purpose.

79. The project evaluation functions are supplemented by other review processes. Most important is the tripartite review, a monitoring exercise undertaken at least once a year to oversee project implementation and arrange for actions to improve implementation and effectively utilize results. They are undertaken by government, co-operating agency and UNDP field-level officials who are directly involved in the project. Other review procedures include terminal assessments of projects' achievements and periodic review of country programmes.

80. In 1977 UNDP extended its evaluation system to include a programme of joint "thematic" evaluations. These studies analyze technical co-operation experience in specific areas to determine factors leading to success or failure and improve the design and implementation of new projects. As of mid-1980, 12 substantive studies and two process studies were completed or underway in co-operation with eight other United Nations system agencies, and another five are expected for the 1980-82 period. The completed studies have been well-received, although some appear to have been rather broad in character and some difficulties have been experienced in obtaining the required data. UNDP has also begun implementing the Integrated Systems Information Project (ISIP) to improve project and programme data for overall supervision and management purposes.

81. There has been growing concern in recent years, however, that the existing UNDP project design and evaluation system does not contribute fully to system-wide evaluation needs. First, while many organizations have been designing, testing and implementing their own internal evaluation systems, the UNDP system and procedures have not changed, are in some ways not compatible with the newer approaches, and have been criticized as too cumbersome. Second, not many individual project evaluations have been conducted. In 1979, UNDP reported that only one-third of those called for by the procedures were carried out. The requirement to evaluate all projects with UNDP contributions of \$150,000 or more has become impractical, partly because inflation means that they are no longer "large" projects.

82. Consequently, the principal tool for examining projects has been the tripartite reviews, but there has been concern that in practice they often focus too much on discussion of implementation problems, and are not adequate for substantive review purposes or for assessing emerging project results. Some officials felt that in general UNDP has not been firm enough as a financing agency in taking action to ensure that project design, monitoring and evaluation procedures, training, and follow-up are implemented effectively.

83. During the past several years the UNDP Secretariat and Governing Council have emphasized evaluation as an important component in efforts to ensure high standards in technical co-operation, and the Governing Council has directed UNDP to work with other organizations to develop and consolidate programming, appraisal and evaluation into a comprehensive system of evaluation and feedback (DP/321, DP/380 and Governing Council decisions 79/10, 80/22). As part of this process, it requested the Administrator in 1979 to examine with the executing agencies ways of systematizing individual project evaluations and the related costs, and to report on these matters in 1980.

84. UNDP discussions with the executing agencies during 1979 and 1980, and the Inspector's discussions in preparing this status report, have indicated strong interest in more project evaluation activity, careful selection of projects for evaluation, better project design and reporting, strengthened tripartite reviews, more general evaluation feedback, and revision of the UNDP project evaluation guidelines. The Administrator prepared a progress report on these matters for the Governing Council in 1980 (DP/448), and will report more fully in 1981 on the analysis of past project evaluation and tripartite review experience and on improved project design and feedback.

85. In January 1981 UNDP officials informed the JIU that the review and inter-agency consultation process, which had stretched over several years, had been completed. New measures to enhance the quality of technical co-operation through improved design, monitoring and evaluation have been endorsed by the agencies, accepted by the Administrator, and are to be reported on to the Governing Council in June 1981. The Inspector strongly endorses planned UNDP action to implement these new measures. In this context, he recommends in the related report on evaluation status in individual organizations (JIU/REP/81/5) that UNDP designate sufficient full-time staff (which is not now the case) in its Bureau for Programme Policy and Evaluation to facilitate and monitor this implementation process. The process also should (and it is understood that in several major respects it already will) include the following steps.

(a) Tripartite reviews: The tripartite review process should be strengthened to emphasize emerging results. This was originally envisaged when the procedure was established, but the actual process has often focused too much on input delivery and implementation problems. Guidance for tripartite reviews should require more thorough preparation to allow assessment of the continuing validity of the original objectives, progress towards them, the anticipated degree of their attainment, and determination of any actions to be taken regarding the substance, duration and budget of the project. Oversight is also needed to ensure that tripartite reviews will in fact be conducted in this fashion. The reviews, led by the government representatives, could thus include an evaluative element with additional intellectual effort but at limited additional cost, which could be adapted to the size, duration and complexity of projects. They could also help to reinforce the self-reliant development capacity of host governments by providing government officials with direct experience in assessing objectives and anticipated results.

(b) Final project reports: Although a strengthened tripartite review process is very important for corrective purposes, assessment of results near project completion is also needed to orient follow-up activities and determine lessons learned for similar and future projects. Strengthening the existing final project reporting process could provide an additional built-in evaluative element. At present, final reports are usually prepared by the co-operating UN agency and approved by the government, and often made available only months or years after project completion. A more active government role would ensure that the follow-up proposed is realistic. Therefore, the final report should be prepared and approved both by project national and international staff before project completion. Under revised guidelines and with continuing review by UNDP, the reports should assess the extent to which each objective was attained and the reasons for successes or problems. They should also develop proposals for follow-up action by the government, including a further tripartite meeting two or three years later to review follow-up actions for important projects.

(c) Individual project evaluations: Evaluations of selected individual projects are essential to supplement the built-in procedures for strengthened tripartite reviews and final project reports. Since only a sample of projects can be chosen for such in-depth evaluation - either ongoing or ex post - and cost and staffing factors are substantial, the choice of projects must be a careful one. Project documents for some selected projects should specify when the evaluation will be made, who will do it, what aspects will be covered, and what

management decisions and follow-up procedures will be used. The evaluations should place particular emphasis on determining the relevance, effectiveness, and impact of the projects. There is also a strong need for necessary UNDP training, guidance and oversight to ensure that the evaluation and follow-up functions are carried out effectively at the field level.

(d) Evaluation of country programme implementation: To allow country programming to become a continuous "frame of reference" for technical co-operation activities, new country programmes should include an evaluative component highlighting the results, problems and achievements of the previous programming period. Since this work is a very complex and challenging process, as the JIU found in Sri Lanka, initial efforts would undoubtedly be modest. The increasing attention to evaluation in the United Nations system organizations, however, should gradually lead to more frequent and higher quality evaluative efforts. Consistent with the proposals made in Section A above, this work should be led wherever possible by the government.

86. The application of the new UNDP procedures, if conducted along the lines suggested above, should provide a very significant contribution to co-operative evaluation activities in the United Nations system. It can be of great help to the larger agencies who have recently been developing and improving their own systems, to those smaller agencies whose evaluation efforts at present depend entirely on the UNDP system, to developing countries in strengthening their development management capacities, and to UNDP itself, in its efforts to develop a comprehensive system of evaluation and feedback and to ensure high standards in technical co-operation.

C. Other co-operative activities

87. Three other areas of co-operative evaluation activity should be mentioned. First, there are presently a variety of co-operative evaluation efforts among the agencies. The primary one is the UNDP programme of thematic evaluations conducted with executing agencies, but there are other instances of agencies participating in another agency's evaluation missions, joint efforts, and working groups. These linkages have obvious potential to strengthen and harmonize evaluation activities, but there has also been concern that at present obstacles sometimes arise because of differing approaches and thereby hamper effectiveness.

88. Second, and related to the first, a number of officials noted the need for more inter-sectoral evaluation work, which, in accord with the unified approach to development, cuts across the sectors in which agencies now work to get at the broader integrated results and implications of their development activities. This has the same strengthening and harmonization potential as noted above, plus the methodological challenges that the broader scope of these evaluation activities will bring. Such evaluations, in accordance with the discussion in Section A above, should be made wherever possible under the leadership of the host government and with the active participation of the agencies concerned.

89. Third, while development of effective internal evaluation systems is the key to better evaluation within the United Nations system, broader co-operative activities and responsibilities also exist.

(a) The importance of the UNDP role was discussed in Section B.

(b) The Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (CPC), as the main subsidiary organ of ECOSOC and the General Assembly for planning, programming and co-ordination, has responsibilities under its mandate to consider and develop evaluation procedures and their use in the improvement of programme design. The Committee has requested a number of programme evaluations during the past few years and has held regular discussions of evaluation matters (A/35/38).

(c) The ACC has continued its interest in evaluation not only through its joint comments on JIU evaluation reports, but through the interest of its Consultative Committees on Substantive Questions (Operational Activities) (CCSQ

(OPS)) and Programme Matters (CCSQ (PROG)), which held a joint meeting in March 1980 to discuss evaluation as a topic of system-wide concern (ACC/1980/OPPG/2 and ACC/1980/8).

(d) The 1977 General Assembly resolution on restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system (A/RES/32/197) recommended measures to improve the effectiveness of internal evaluation procedures in respect of programme implementation, as well as appropriate methods to assist competent inter-governmental bodies in carrying out their responsibilities for evaluation. The Assistant Secretary-General for Programme Planning and Co-ordination in the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs (DIESA) in the United Nations has been given responsibilities to co-operate with other United Nations system organizations in the co-ordinated development of monitoring and evaluation functions in the economic and social sectors.

(e) The JIU is also continuing its role of assistance to appropriate inter-governmental bodies in carrying out their responsibilities for external evaluation, as well as advising organizations on their methods for internal evaluation, periodically assessing these methods, and making ad hoc evaluations of programmes and activities.

VII. SUPPORT FOR EVALUATION

90. Even the most well-intentioned and carefully-designed internal evaluation system cannot succeed without firm support throughout the organization. Although some significant progress has been made during the past few years, there are still varying degrees of support for evaluation, and the overall situation in the United Nations system can best be described as fragile.

91. One important way to build support is through understanding. As the organizations have gradually developed, improved and begun to implement their evaluation systems, the effort to build understanding has been an important component, most often using training programmes in conjunction with system guidance. This process appears to have increased the appreciation among staff, top management, and governing bodies of what evaluation can do, its role in the organizational management system, and - equally important - its limitations.

92. A second base of support is through proof of usefulness. As the organizations' systems move out of the design and testing stages into implementation, a considerable number of examples are emerging of ways in which evaluation can provide improvements in the conduct of activities, design and programming of future work, and related monitoring, review and reporting processes. A particular facet of this effort is the demonstration that evaluation will be a pragmatic process with attention to appropriate use and a balancing of costs and benefits.

93. A third base of support is involvement and participation in the evaluation process which, when meaningful, can build commitment to the successful operation of the system. Particularly with the trend in the larger organizations towards built-in self-evaluation as the basic component of the internal evaluation system, there is a positive response based on participation in applying the system and making it work to improve programmes.

94. Despite these encouraging trends which have increased support in many parts of the United Nations system, overall support is still rather uncertain. In some organizations there is significant overt policy support for the evaluation concept, but behind the scenes there is little support in practice, or an actual struggle to prevent evaluation use. Sometimes this is evident in the very small resources provided for evaluation. In other situations there is simply an attitude which rejects the evaluation idea and any desire to use the results. In the organizations where evaluation is accepted it is usually because top management and the evaluation unit have worked carefully to build a solid base of support on which the system can gradually move forward.

95. There are a variety of underlying causes for this continuing struggle to build evaluation support.

(a) Hopefully, governing bodies, top management and staff will all be actively committed to making evaluation work, but this may not be the case. Strong governing body support can compensate for top management reluctance towards evaluation and vice versa, and one or the other can overcome staff resistance. But mutual support is much more to be desired than one group forcing evaluation on the others. In a few systems the support comes only from the evaluation staffs who must struggle as best they can while the three main groups demonstrate little evaluation interest. Intensity also varies, with some governing bodies showing great interest at times and indifference at others, and executive head interest changing accordingly.

(b) Evaluation system development is also hampered by simple fear of change and of public exposure of performance. The threat to disruption of established routines is always very unsettling to many people and evaluation, with its basic premises of critical examination of experience to improve future actions, can appear particularly threatening in this regard, the more so since the potential exists to direct evaluation findings at people rather than at activities and processes.

(c) Training is a very important tool to develop understanding of evaluation. But evaluation training courses, or evaluation components included in more general management courses, have been limited. There has also been very little practical material available for training purposes. The organizations are now developing materials as they expand their training programmes, and hopefully at least some of this material will be transferable. But training will be a continuing need even after evaluation systems are well-established, and the more relevant and clear the evaluation training and materials, the more rapidly staff, managers, and governing bodies will come to understand and support evaluation efforts.

(d) Evaluation is very much dependent on the quality of the management processes of which it is (or should be) an integral part, as discussed in Chapter III.

(e) The 1977 JIU status report noted that expectations for evaluation have recently been very high. As item (d) suggests, however, evaluation is not a "cure-all" for organizational ailments. While the expectations about what evaluation can accomplish appear now to be considerably more realistic due to the pragmatism with which systems are being developed, there is still a danger that excessive expectations can weaken support when actual results are compared with them.

(f) Finally, evaluation must contend with a very long-standing and strong emphasis throughout the United Nations system and elsewhere on inputs and quantity rather than results and quality. Organizations do indeed have a responsibility to mobilize resources and deliver them, but this should not obscure the basic concern with results that evaluation can provide. There is resistance in some quarters to devoting even minimal amounts of time to the results analysis and feedback stage, and this attitude also hampers support for evaluation.

96. Sufficient support has thus been provided to launch evaluation systems in most organizations, but the "support" issue is now shifting to the long-term commitment to make evaluation work. The improvement process will require considerable effort to apply evaluation wisely and use its findings on an ongoing basis.

97. One essential step in strengthening this long-term support for evaluation will be a clear-cut evaluation system. Rather than a tool which is loosely added on to existing processes, each organization must have a clear understanding of the roles of governing bodies, top management and staff in evaluation, the structure of the internal evaluation system and its linkages with the overall management system, the standards and procedures which govern evaluation system efforts, and the feedback, reporting and follow-up processes which apply.

98. The second essential step is the "quality control" process referred to in preceding chapters. The organization must have a commitment to critically examine the results of evaluation and its relevance, and use this experience to improve the quality of the evaluation system itself. Otherwise, internal evaluation systems will be only hollow shells and governing bodies, top managers, and staff will still lack the results information they need to improve their own efforts. The more that governing bodies, top management, and staff participate actively in evaluation, use evaluation to improve activities, strive to upgrade haphazard evaluation, and stress their commitment to using evaluation as a constructive improvement process, the more effective and successful the internal evaluation system will be.

VIII. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Conclusions

99. Since 1977 there has been a very considerable expansion of evaluation activity throughout the United Nations system. The large majority of the organizations have been developing internal evaluation systems or strengthening those which already exist. Much remains to be done, however, to ensure that these new or improved systems are firmly established and will actually be used to achieve their intended purpose of improving programmes.

100. The events of the past few years are, of course, a mix of positive and negative factors. The positive developments include the following.

(a) The number of organizations which are developing or establishing internal evaluation systems has more than doubled, and existing systems have been made more comprehensive.

(b) Several small agencies have developed evaluation systems, indicating that small size need not be a barrier to evaluation use.

(c) There is a significant trend toward built-in self-evaluation as the basic feature of evaluation systems, thus permitting broad coverage, quick feedback, wide participation, and lower cost.

(d) Evaluation has begun to provide useful feedback to other parts of the management process, particularly for project design and to some extent programming.

(e) Organizations are taking a pragmatic approach to evaluation methodology, seeking simple and useful evaluation formats and procedures.

(f) There appears to be a broader understanding of what constitutes evaluation, its methods, and its limitations (although temptations to label any review or monitoring activity as evaluation still exist).

(g) Evaluation in most organizations is demonstrating the intent to apply a constructive and participative process, rather than a "policing" attitude.

(h) A variety of interesting reporting formats to governing bodies has emerged in the last year or two, which, although they are now quite tentative and experimental, have promise for orderly reporting on results.

(i) It appears that evaluation emphasis on reporting of results can help clarify and systematize overall organizational performance reporting processes.

(j) Support for activities to assist governments in developing their own evaluation capabilities has grown rapidly.

(k) UNDP has introduced a programme of thematic evaluation of substantive and process topics with other agencies, which has produced useful and interesting results, and is revising its procedures to improve project design, monitoring and evaluation.

(l) Support for evaluation itself appears to have grown because of greater governing body and staff understanding of evaluation and encouraging initial uses of evaluation to improve activities and management operations.

101. Certain negative factors, however, hamper the usefulness of evaluation. They include the following problem areas.

(a) The staff resources which many organizations have devoted to central evaluation units are so small that it will be difficult for them to fulfil their responsibilities as the systems move from the development and testing stages to implementation.

(b) Many organizations do not have clear, time-phased objectives and plans for the further development, coverage, and progressive extension of their evaluation systems.

(c) Evaluation is not yet an integral part of management processes, and many linkages are ad hoc, uncertain or poorly-developed.

(d) Programming and evaluation linkages between field projects and headquarters programmes are poorly-developed and unclear, and little progress has been made in this area.

(e) Most organizations lack minimum evaluation standards, and poor quality work may detract from the credibility of the overall evaluation effort.

(f) Most methodological development has concerned project evaluation, with much still to be done in other areas.

(g) Attention is still needed to the problem of developing orderly and systematic feedback linkages so that evaluation findings are regularly used in other parts of the organizational decision-making process.

(h) Little has been done as yet to develop evaluation memory banks to permit general analysis of evaluation findings, and to establish follow-up procedures to ensure action on evaluation findings.

(i) Reports to governing bodies tend often to include non-priority information, thus hampering a clear and selective focus on programme results, successes and problems.

(j) Support for assistance to governments in developing their evaluation efforts still must be matched by approaches and actions which will be quite challenging to develop.

(k) Progress in revising UNDP's project design, monitoring and evaluation system has been slow, and therefore opportunities are being missed for strengthening evaluation activities and technical co-operation in general.

(l) Overall support for evaluation systems is still quite fragile in some organizations, because of fear of change, limited evaluation training efforts, weaknesses in other management processes, and the long-standing input and quantity preoccupations rather than an equal emphasis on results and quality.

102. At present, the first critical stage of introducing and developing internal evaluation systems is drawing to a close, generally successfully. Evaluation activities exist throughout the United Nations system on a wider scale than ever before, some encouraging initial uses have been made of evaluation, and governing bodies, top management and staff have become increasingly aware of evaluation and its potentials. Momentum has been established for further development.

103. The evaluation systems in most organizations are now embarking on the second critical stage - widespread use of evaluation, which presently does not exist. The 1978 ACC concerns with determining whether evaluation results will fulfill expectations therefore cannot yet be authoritatively answered. The actual depth of evaluation support remains uncertain, and there are some wide variations in the strength of individual systems. The danger exists that the newly-established evaluation frameworks may become only facades which provide the illusion of evaluation without its actual substance.

104. The current challenge is thus for governing bodies, top management, and staff of the organizations to use the evaluation systems which they have been developing and to make them work effectively. At present, only a very small proportion of the organizations' management efforts are devoted to carefully evaluating the results of programmes in order to improve them, relative to the dominant concerns with inputs and the implementation process.

105. Successful use of evaluation will require further strengthening of the evaluation systems and improvement of the overall decision-making process. It will also require a constructive attitude which rewards and encourages those who carefully and frankly analyze their programmes to improve their conduct. While development will continue to be gradual, the next few years will be very important ones in establishing the quality and value of evaluation in the United Nations system.

B. Recommendations

106. Built-in self-evaluation (paragraphs 10-14). There is a strong pragmatic trend in almost all the larger organizations toward built-in self-evaluation as the basic component of the internal evaluation system. The "built-in" aspect provides widespread coverage, quick management feedback, modest cost, and an orderly linkage to strengthen other parts of the management cycle. The "self-evaluation" aspect provides participation which builds understanding and respect rather than fear. In addition, other evaluation approaches (such as central, task force, or consultants) can be added to the extent that the organization wishes.

RECOMMENDATION 1

Those organizations which do not now have a built-in self-evaluation system should carefully assess the modest costs and considerable benefits of this approach for their own use. Particular attention should be given to the potential for strengthening the organization's design, implementation, feedback, reporting, and overall management processes through a built-in self-evaluation approach.

107. Staffing of evaluation units (paragraphs 15-20). While central evaluation units should be small, particularly where they support a built-in self-evaluation system, in most organizations the units have only two or one or a fraction of an evaluation officer's time. Such restricted staffing may permit the design and testing of an internal evaluation system, but it is doubtful that it will allow the unit to fulfill the increased support, supervision, training, analysis, reporting, and perhaps direct evaluation participation responsibilities which broader system implementation requires. If the cost side of the cost-benefit relationship is held so severely in check, the central units will be unable to exercise their catalytic role in developing evaluation throughout the organization, and most of the considerable benefits which evaluation can provide to improve operations will never be realized.

RECOMMENDATION 2

Each organization should specify the responsibilities and tasks to be set for its central evaluation unit in order to further develop and strengthen the internal evaluation system during the next several years. Where the present staff is insufficient to carry out these responsibilities effectively - particularly in conducting training programmes, counselling staff, supervising system progress and quality, guiding or participating in specific evaluations, and analyzing and reporting on evaluation findings - prompt action should be taken to redeploy the necessary additional resources.

108. Evaluation coverage and development plans (paragraphs 21-27). Future evaluation system development is still a rather vague and uncertain process in many organizations. While a gradual approach is appropriate, evaluation activities should be guided by the process of objectives and work plans used for other activities. The current lack of clarity about coverage plans and strategies for future evaluation system development hampers both further progress and the continuing assessment of that progress.

RECOMMENDATION 3

Each organization should prepare for its governing bodies evaluation plans linked to the programme budget cycle or, for organizations without programme budgets, covering one or more budget periods. These plans should state which programmes and activities will be covered by evaluation, the extent and coherence of evaluation coverage, the types of evaluations to be done, who will perform them, how they will be reported, and what feedback and follow-up procedures will be used. The plans should also discuss the specific steps being taken or considered to further develop and strengthen the internal evaluation system.

109. Integration of evaluation with the decision-making process (paragraphs 28-35). Evaluation will have little impact if it is viewed as a self-contained management technique which merely needs to be "added on" to the existing management system.

While the built-in self-evaluation approach facilitates integration, the decision-making linkages do not yet seem clear in most organizations. If evaluation is made a firm and integral part of the management decision-making process of the organization, however, it can significantly strengthen the other components of the process, such as programming, design, monitoring, and reporting. At the same time, the higher quality of these processes can in turn improve evaluation. The strengthening of internal evaluation systems should therefore be only a part of a general and continuing management development and improvement strategy.

RECOMMENDATION 4

Those organizations which do not have up-to-date guidance on the nature and operations of their management decision-making process, in light of recent evaluation system and other developments, should prepare and issue new guidelines. These guidelines should identify the key phases of the decision-making process; the units, responsibilities, and documents or reports involved; and the logic and mechanisms which link the various phases. An important part of this process would be a careful analysis to identify problem areas, gaps, overlaps, and duplication, as a basis for continuing analysis of management system performance and formulation of a comprehensive strategy for further management system development.

110. The "evaluation" label (paragraphs 44-47). In the past few years there appears to be more knowledge in the United Nations system of what is and what is not evaluation, and about evaluation methodology. There is still a strong temptation, however, to label studies as "evaluations" even though they are not objective and systematic and contain few facts and little analysis of the relevance, effectiveness, and impact of the activities they examine - i.e. not in accord with the definition given in the JIU Glossary of Evaluation Terms (JIU/REP/78/5) which has been accepted by the organizations. The characterization of such studies as "evaluations" is misleading and can seriously undermine support for evaluation.

RECOMMENDATION 5

Organizations which have not already done so should design and issue basic standards for the conduct, content, and process of evaluation within the organization, taking into account the JIU guidelines on this topic (JIU/REP/79/2). Each organization should also take action on a continuing basis to critically assess the quality of its evaluation products, ensure that those studies not meeting the standard are labelled as "assessments" or "reviews," and strive to steadily improve the quality and standards of its evaluation (and other review) work.

111. Analysis and follow-up (paragraphs 49-59). Not much attention has yet been devoted to ensuring that evaluation findings are well-used within the organizations, since most organizations are only now moving into the broad system implementation stage. To realize evaluation benefits, however, it is important that evaluation findings be accumulated in an orderly way to identify patterns of success and problem areas and provide rapid and effective feedback to improve operations, and that a clear follow-up process be developed and used.

RECOMMENDATION 6

Each organization should establish procedures, mechanisms, and responsibilities to ensure that evaluation findings are assembled and maintained in a "memory bank" and analyzed for prompt and appropriate feedback into operations, and that follow-up on evaluation findings and recommendations is carried out.

112. Reporting to governing bodies (paragraphs 60-67). Evaluation reporting to governing bodies is still at a very early stage in most organizations. Experience to date does suggest that there is considerable potential for using evaluation reporting effectively to summarize lessons learned and to help improve overall performance reporting to the governing bodies.

RECOMMENDATION 7

Each organization should ensure that its processes, formats, schedules, and procedures for reporting on evaluation findings are integrated with existing performance reporting to best meet governing body needs. An important part of this process should be a careful examination to ensure that the integrated set of performance reports to governing bodies is well-organized to minimize duplication and documentation burdens on both the secretariats and the governing bodies themselves.

113. Co-operative work with governments (paragraphs 69-76). Actions by the organizations with governments to strengthen their own evaluation activities appear to be at the "take-off" stage. Much effort will be needed in a gradual process to develop this co-operative activity and find appropriate methods and approaches. This would enhance self-reliant development and the effectiveness of technical co-operation projects overall. JIU plans to begin a study of this important topic in 1981.

RECOMMENDATION 8

Each organization should assess and reinforce its activities for providing assistance to governments for strengthening their evaluation capabilities. This could be done both through special technical co-operation projects in evaluation processes and training, and by assisting governments to reinforce their role in the evaluation process for all projects assisted by the organization. To this end, the organization should identify specific problem areas, successes, alternative strategies, and training possibilities as a basis for further action.

114. UNDP project evaluation system (paragraphs 77-86). After a lengthy period of review and consultation, UNDP is revising its project design, monitoring and evaluation system. At present, only about one-third of "large-scale" projects and none of the smaller projects are actually evaluated. UNDP could make greater use of the evaluation systems being developed by other agencies. It should exert its considerable influence to ensure an effective design, monitoring and evaluation system with adequate coverage, emphasis on results, oversight of quality, and information to support the UNDP objective of comprehensive analysis and feedback to improve technical co-operation activities overall.

RECOMMENDATION 9

UNDP should take action on the structure of evaluation and evaluative processes presented in paragraph 85 of this report: strengthened tripartite reviews; improved final project reports; a revised individual project evaluation process; and evaluative attention to country programme implementation.

115. Evaluation support (paragraphs 90-98). Evaluation system development is a complex management and organizational endeavour. At present, support for evaluation is still fragile in most organizations. Building support will be a longer-term process relying on proof and usefulness of evaluation, effective integration of evaluation within the organizational system, and support for high-quality evaluation from governing bodies, top management, and staff. While the best training in evaluation is to actually do evaluation, an important supportive activity which has not received much specific attention thus far is evaluation training.

RECOMMENDATION 10

Each organization should carefully examine the adequacy of its staff training programme in evaluation, whether in specific courses or as part of broader management training courses. The amount, extent, quality and materials used in such training should be assessed, and appropriate action taken to ensure that evaluation training is effective in building understanding of, and support for, the internal evaluation system.

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STATUS OF INTERNAL EVALUATION IN UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM ORGANIZATIONS

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Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- I. UNITED NATIONS
- II. UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND (UNICEF)
- III. UNITED NATIONS CENTRE FOR HUMAN SETTLEMENTS (HABITAT) (UNCHS)
- IV. UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT (UNCTAD)
- V. INTERNATIONAL TRADE CENTRE UNCTAD/GATT (ITC)
- VI. UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (UNDP)
- VII. UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME (UNEP)
- VIII. UNITED NATIONS FUND FOR POPULATION ACTIVITIES (UNFPA)
- IX. OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (UNHCR)
- X. UNITED NATIONS INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION (UNIDO)
- XI. FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS (FAO)
- XII. INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY (IAEA)
- XIII. INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION (ICAO)
- XIV. INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT (IFAD)
- XV. INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION (ILO)
- XVI. INTER-GOVERNMENTAL MARITIME CONSULTATIVE ORGANIZATION (IMCO)
- XVII. INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION (ITU)
- XVIII. UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC, AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION (UNESCO)
- XIX. UNIVERSAL POSTAL UNION (UPU)
- XX. WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME (WFP)
- XXI. WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO)
- XXII. WORLD METEOROLOGICAL ORGANIZATION (WMO)
- XXIII. WORLD BANK

Annex I. Selected Bibliography of Recent Documents

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