

Third report on evaluation in the United Nations system: Integration and use

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Annex I: Evaluation system activities in organizations
of the United Nations system, 1984-1985

Annex II: Table of contents of companion report JIU/REP/85/10

References

SUMMARY

In 1977 the JIU reported on renewed interest in evaluation to improve organizational performance in the United Nations system, and in 1981 on actions taken to develop evaluation systems and begin using them. In 1982 the ACC cited evaluation as an "essential and integral" part of "an overall management development effort", and the General Assembly affirmed continuing support for evaluation efforts in each agency. This report reviews current progress in integrating and using evaluation (Chapter I).

Evaluation is now being actively used in a more systematic way in almost all organizations, particularly through built-in self-evaluation but for in-depth programme evaluations as well. Central evaluation units remain very small (on average only 2.1/2 professional staff each) despite increased workloads. These units have generally performed well, but on average spend half their time doing in-depth studies and reporting, leaving little time available for evaluation system oversight and support and for the considerable expansion of system coverage which is still needed (Chapter II).

The organizations have given increasing attention to integrating evaluation into their decision-making processes. However, the emphasis on programme inputs still overshadows concern with results, design improvement responsibilities and actions are not clear, and training to build staff understanding and capabilities organization-wide is still relatively weak. More positively, computerized information systems offer new opportunities to improve performance information, and management review processes focus more and more on efficiency and management systems (Chapter III).

Built-in self-evaluation systems have helped clarify and harmonize evaluation methods, and efforts are underway to establish appropriate methods for various types of in-depth evaluation. The organizations need to maintain clear standards to ensure evaluation quality (Chapter IV).

Many organizations have begun modernizing and streamlining their internal feedback processes, and evaluation reporting to governing bodies has been widely established. Long-term development efforts are needed to ensure that timely, relevant information on performance is provided to meet programme decision-making needs organization-wide (Chapter V).

The organizations have become much more active in support of evaluation by governments, but resources are still quite modest relative to pressing administrative capacity needs. Actions are underway to better harmonize inter-agency evaluation activities, and the outlines of an international evaluation network are gradually beginning to emerge (Chapter VI).

The growing evaluation experience provides many patterns of substantive use to improve operations, "evaluations of evaluation", and steadily growing demand from secretariat and governing body users. Yet much remains to be done to further develop evaluation, firmly integrate it, and realize its full value to adapt and improve organizational operations to best meet the needs of Member States (Chapter VII).

Evaluation is demonstrating its value and being used more widely than ever before in the system, at a time when the organizations' tasks are also more challenging than ever. Each organization should work steadily to improve performance information through expanded evaluation coverage and strengthened design, monitoring, and training efforts, and provide evaluation quality control, appropriate co-operative efforts, and adequate central evaluation unit staffing (Chapter VIII).

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Evaluation is a process which attempts to determine as systematically and objectively as possible the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and impact of activities in the light of their objectives. 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 help to provide accountability to inter-governmental bodies for effective use of resources, and to stimulate general organizational interest in assessing experience and applying the lessons learned to future operations on a continuing basis.

2. The initial Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) report on evaluation in 1977 found that interest was at a "take-off point" in the United Nations system 1/. The Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC) concluded that the JIU survey provided an excellent starting point for a longer-term but determined and coherent effort at the systematic introduction, development and use of evaluation 2/. The second JIU reports, in 1981, found considerable progress in evaluation system development in most organizations, but observed that they were entering a second critical stage of widespread implementation 3/.

3. The ACC stated in 1981 that it "strongly supports the thesis articulated in the JIU reports that evaluation should be seen as essential and integral to the processes of policy formulation, programme planning, budgeting and implementation management, rather than being perceived merely as a desirable addition to these processes." It cited the need to strengthen evaluation skills and institutional capability for effective evaluation support, and to "integrate evaluation with the organizational decision-making process in an overall management development effort" 4/. The General Assembly also confirmed its "continuing support for the development of evaluation systems and evaluation units within each agency", and encouraged all agencies to "assure their own evaluation capacity, in order to make evaluation an integral part of the agency's programming and development process." 5/

4. This report provides an overview of the "critical stage" of evaluation implementation in which the agencies of the system are now engaged. As indicated by its subtitle, the report is particularly concerned with the issues of integration of evaluation into the decision-making and operational processes of the agencies, and with the use which is being made of evaluation.

5. During late 1984 and early 1985 the JIU gathered information on evaluation system activities and progress from all system organizations (including the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and the World Bank, which are not participating organizations of the JIU), and the Inspector visited almost all of them to further discuss evaluation status and issues. Relevant documents, guidelines, policy statements and reports were reviewed, the organizations' views were solicited on system-wide evaluation issues, and their comments were obtained on the resulting draft reports. Another report (JIU/REP/85/10) provides brief summaries of the progress and current status of evaluation in 24 organizations (see the table of contents in Annex II). The Inspector wishes to express his thanks to all who contributed their efforts, insights and ideas to these reports.

II. APPROACHES

6. Most of the organizations have now moved from the conceptual and design stage to the action stage of evaluation system implementation. The nature of their evaluation activities and concerns, of course, therefore changes substantially. This Chapter identifies the basic patterns which are emerging. These changing patterns also have a significant impact on the responsibilities and operations of

the small central evaluation units, which continue to be a critical element in further developing evaluation capacity, quality and use throughout each organization.

A. Changing patterns of evaluation activity

7. The ACC comments on the 1981 JIU reports observed that it would have been more informative to include a table illustrating the location of central evaluation units, their staffing strength, their degree of involvement in evaluation, and the areas covered by evaluation. JIU considered this possibility during the 1981 study, but concluded that evaluation activities in most organizations were still at such a tentative stage that a table would have had very limited value.

8. In 1985, however, most organizations have moved on to much more firm implementation actions and experience, and a table of evaluation system activities in the system can be presented. Annex I presents information on 24 organizations, including the United Nations and eight of its larger entities as well as 15 specialized agencies of the system. The table provides total professional staff and financial resource data for each organization; the title, location and resources of its central evaluation unit; the major types of evaluation established or being established; and the status of other major evaluation system functions.

9. The collection and comparison of complex organizational processes in a very simplified table of course requires considerable caution. Among the many qualifications that could be noted (some others are expressed in the notes to the Annex table) are the following:

(a) One need only examine the summaries of evaluation activity in the 24 organizations presented in JIU report 85/10 to recognize that evaluation system requirements and activities vary quite considerably according to the size, structure, mandates, programme mix, and policies of the organization concerned.

(b) Central evaluation units are a key to effective evaluation system operations. However, in organizations like WHO and UNICEF, which are highly decentralized in their operations and have worked extensively to establish evaluation responsibilities within managerial processes organization-wide, the central evaluation unit responsibilities and operations are inevitably much different than in other organizations.

(c) In some organizations, such as UNHCR, IFAD, and ITC, the predominant programme emphasis is on assistance (field) activities. In others, such as the United Nations and UNCTAD, headquarters programmes and activities are much more important. Thus, a lack of evaluation activity indicated for a particular area in the table may represent a significant gap still to be filled for one organization, but may be of only minor significance to another.

(d) The indication in the table that an organization has established an activity (built-in self-evaluation of headquarters programmes and activities, or evaluation guidelines, for instance) cannot easily show whether the activity provides very limited, moderate, extensive, or complete coverage of that area, or express a judgement on the quality of that activity. Similarly, the indication that a particular evaluation activity is "being established" is something that remains to be seen. (For all these reasons, the summaries for each organization in JIU report 85/10 are essential to help clarify the summary data presented in the Annex table).

10. With these basic cautions in mind, some observations about significant evaluation patterns can be ventured as the basis for discussion in the chapters which follow. First - quite simply - evaluation is now being actively used in organizations throughout the United Nations system.

(a) The 1977 JIU evaluation report found that only two of 13 organizations surveyed had established some type of evaluation system, while six others had systems under development.

(b) The 1981 JIU reports found that 12 of 23 organizations had established some type of system, while five others had a system under development.

(c) In 1985, 21 of 24 organizations (WIPO has become a participating organization of JIU and has been added to the survey) have established some type of evaluation system (although the United Nations and UNESCO have fallen considerably behind the other large agencies in system implementation).

(d) The three remaining organizations without an established evaluation system of their own are all smaller, highly-technical specialized agencies which the Inspector believes do not need full evaluation systems at present. However, WMO has established evaluation processes for certain programmes, leaving only ITU and UPU with no specific evaluation processes other than those required of them in the UNDP-supported projects which they execute.

(e) The scope of coverage of programmes and projects under these evaluation systems has also expanded, as most organizations have now moved from initial evaluation testing towards organization-wide implementation.

11. Second, evaluation is being used in a more diversified and systematic way. In 1981, most organizations were concentrating on evaluation of individual technical co-operation projects as the basic component of their internal evaluation systems. Now, however, evaluation efforts are becoming much more multi-dimensional.

(a) Three-quarters of the organizations have established procedures for both in-depth project evaluations and broader evaluations of technical co-operation (field) activities. Almost as many have established or are establishing built-in self-evaluation procedures for projects (some organizations which earlier relied on in-depth project evaluation are now adding built-in self-evaluation processes as well).

(b) Evaluation is also spreading, more slowly but nevertheless distinctly, to headquarters programmes, sub-programmes and support activities, now found in half the organizations.

(c) Although it is still infrequent, one-third of the organizations have had some type of external evaluation performed and published during the past several years.

(d) Progress is also being made in establishing certain basic evaluation system functions which were cited as important concerns in the 1981 JIU reports. Of the 21 organizations with some type of evaluation system:

- (i) two-thirds have established evaluation work plans;
- (ii) almost all have established or are establishing their own evaluation guidelines;
- (iii) all but UNCHS (and including WMO as well) have established or are establishing some specific form of regular evaluation reporting to governing bodies;
- (iv) however - unfortunately - less than half the organizations have established a staff training programme in evaluation.

12. Third, evaluation efforts are moving beyond the evaluation of individual technical co-operation projects to the broader programme level. It appears that

both governing bodies and senior management of the organizations want to devote greater attention to the evaluation of technical co-operation programmes, project clusters, and headquarters programmes and activities.

(a) The most widely used form of evaluation at present, established or being established in fully 20 of the organizations, is broader evaluations of technical co-operation activities beyond the individual project level: groups of projects, country programmes, projects in a region, projects under a "theme" or in a sector, or technical and support processes.

(b) One-third of the organizations, primarily the larger ones, have established or are establishing built-in self-evaluation for all or part of their headquarters programmes and activities, usually at the sub-programme level, which can serve as important "building-blocks" for broader programme evaluations.

(c) More than half the organizations have established or are establishing some form of programme evaluation for headquarters activities.

(d) The external evaluations which have been made in about one-third of the organizations have almost always taken the form of broader programme evaluations.

13. The above observations, of course, deal only with the quantity of evaluation being done, but the three patterns mentioned shape the issues discussed in the remainder of this report. The expanding evaluation workloads place considerable burdens on the small central evaluation units (next section). The evaluation processes need to be fully and systematically integrated into organizational decision-making to steadily strengthen a results and performance emphasis (Chapter III). The growing diversity of evaluation types, especially increased programme evaluation, raises new methodological challenges (Chapter IV). Integration requires a continuing flow of evaluation feedback, follow-up and reporting information (Chapter V). Increasing evaluation activity both permits and requires stronger co-operative links among programme partners, clients, and organizations (Chapter VI). Finally, the growing experience of the organizations in each of these areas provides a basis for addressing the critical underlying questions: How well is evaluation being used? And what is its value? (Chapter VII).

B. Changing central evaluation unit responsibilities

14. The 1981 ACC comments cited the JIU's findings that the major problem in evaluation system development was the very small amount of resources devoted to staffing central evaluation units. The ACC agreed that sufficient resources were essential to develop the institutional evaluation capacity needed to effectively support organizational decision-making processes. While noting the pressures created by zero-budgetary growth policies, the ACC concluded that a modest level of resources devoted to evaluation could yield far greater progressive benefits - in either savings or increased effectiveness - than its cost. At the same time, evaluation could help the organizations to better deal with severe overall budget constraints by identifying areas and programmes of greater or lesser effectiveness and helping to apply available resources judiciously.

15. JIU reported in 1981 that, excluding the World Bank, only about 50 professional staff posts existed in the 23 organizations for central evaluation units. JIU observed that such minimal staffing - only two or one or a fraction of one officer's time in more than half the organizations - could permit development and initial testing of an internal evaluation system. System implementation, however, would add a heavy workload which would be very difficult for the small staffs to carry out effectively.

16. The Annex table shows that the staffing situation has changed little in the intervening four years. Again excluding the World Bank (which has had a substantial staffing expansion to meet extensive new programme evaluation requirements

and now represents more than half of the central evaluation staff system-wide), professional staff posts for central evaluation units have risen only to 58, an increase of 16 per cent. Meanwhile, however, the number of organizational evaluation systems has increased from 12 to 21, an increase of 75 per cent. Furthermore, this comparison does not take into account the expanded workload created by the greater scope, complexity, and activities of the evaluation systems.

17. This picture is not quite as bleak as it seems. Several organizations have been able to add some consultant resources (although this figure too is very small). Others have been able to make some use of cost-free experts or interns on a temporary basis, and a few have added some senior general service staff. A few organizations have been able to establish several specific evaluation posts elsewhere in their organizations which function as more than just titular "evaluation focal points" and help to support the central unit in evaluation work. In addition, a number of the posts which were counted in the 1981 JIU staff totals mixed evaluation work with other responsibilities - a situation in which evaluation work too often tended to be crowded out by other, pressing short-term tasks. Some organizations have subsequently clarified their staffing arrangements to establish at least one full-time evaluation officer post, and the current Annex table attempts to indicate more carefully where fractional evaluation posts and combined functions still exist.

18. The 1981 JIU report also noted no clear trend in the organizational location of evaluation units, with somewhat more units placed in programming divisions than in the offices of executive heads, and the smallest number in administrative or financial offices. In 1985, this same pattern seems to have stabilized. Nine of the 20 central units are in programme divisions (primarily in larger organizations and presumably to enhance feedback to operations). Seven are under executive heads or their deputies (mostly in smaller agencies), two are in technical co-operation units (UNHCR and ICAO), one is under a governing body (the World Bank) and only one (an evaluation co-ordination function) remains with an administrative unit (IAEA). The Inspector draws no specific lessons from this pattern: evaluation must be linked with several key organizational processes, and there is no single organizational panacea to apply on a common basis.

19. While central unit staffing and location have not changed much, however, evaluation responsibilities have. The predominant task of the 1981 period - system design and testing - has shifted to a much broader variety of system implementation tasks. Recognizing that individual central evaluation units can differ considerably in their structure, responsibilities, priorities, processes and resources, an "average" pattern of present central evaluation unit activities is as follows, with the tasks presented in descending order of time spent:

- (a) actual conduct of evaluations (38 per cent);
- (b) system development (11 per cent);
- (c) oversight of evaluation system functioning (10 per cent);
- (d) external reporting to governing bodies (9 per cent);
- (e) internal reporting (6 per cent);
- (f) project and programme design (5 per cent);
- (g) informal counselling and advice (5 per cent);
- (h) staff training (4 per cent);
- (i) briefing and debriefing (4 per cent);
- (j) liaison with other organizations (3 per cent),
- (k) miscellaneous functions (5 per cent).

20. This long list of responsibilities falls into three major clusters. First, the central units must devote, on average, almost half their time to direct evalua-

tion work. Not only do they spend the largest single portion of their time actually conducting evaluations, but a considerable portion of the external reporting to governing bodies involves preparing these evaluations for publication and governing body discussion. Some units have had to work extensively on follow-up of past evaluation reports to meet governing body requests for further discussion. Furthermore, the evaluations which the units are more and more requested to perform - headquarters and field programme evaluations - are more complex and demanding studies because of their broad scope and in-depth approach.

21. Second, the central units still devote about one-quarter of their work to systems development. Despite the progress made, much remains to be done to achieve broad coverage of all organizational activities, and the evaluation systems are only now venturing in a major way into the challenges of evaluating diverse headquarters programmes, support activities, and broader technical co-operation programmes. Again, the work expands far beyond technical "system development" work itself: project and programme design, informal counselling and advice, and staff training are other important systems development tasks which generally require considerable and continuing central unit involvement.

22. Third, the units must manage the evaluation systems on a continuous basis to ensure that they function effectively. This involves not only system oversight and internal reporting and feedback, but briefing and debriefing (particularly for consultants), liaison with other organizations, and the inevitable miscellaneous responsibilities. Built-in evaluation, which is now being applied to most organizations' technical co-operation projects and is increasingly being established for headquarters programmes as well, requires the central unit to also perform essential, time-consuming guidance, support, co-ordination, and analytical functions. A 1983 JIU report on the UNDP evaluation system - certainly one of the most extensive and geographically-dispersed ones in the system - illustrates in considerably more detail the many activities which must be brought together in an integrated process of evaluation system management 6/.

23. An essential element - and issue - in each of these three broad areas of central unit responsibility is that of evaluation system quality. In-depth evaluations should be systematically conducted, with careful attention and sufficient time for evaluation planning, data-gathering, analysis, report writing, and feedback and follow-up. System development to cover new areas must be carefully prepared and introduced to establish effective new evaluation processes and enhance the overall evaluation system. And system management requires continuing close support and oversight by the central unit to ensure that evaluation work done throughout the organization is of as high a quality as possible and that the system is functioning efficiently and effectively.

24. Fulfilling these three major tasks with the tight resources presently available raises a direct cost-effectiveness question. The increase in central unit professional posts to 58 (again excluding the World Bank) indicates very little progress in recent years relative to increasing tasks. When spread across 23 organizations these 58 posts average only about two and one-half posts per organization. They represent only one-quarter of one per cent of the more than 20,000 total professional staff in the 23 organizations. They also provide only one professional evaluation staff post for each \$190 million of the organizations' biennial expenditures. Admittedly, a few organizations have evaluation officers in certain special sectors, and a few others are working to establish evaluation "networks" to aid the central units. More importantly, evaluation is gradually, and properly, being "built-in" to operations as a normal and essential component of programme managers' responsibilities. In most organizations, however, the small central unit is still the only specific evaluation staff resource, and in all the organizations it must continue to be an essential manager, "focal point" and stimulus for effective evaluation system development and use. At present, only one professional staff post out of every 350 is devoted to systematically evaluating the effectiveness with which the organizations carry out their operations. This is a very small number.

25. Keeping the central units relatively small is of course desirable since all support staff units should be as tightly staffed as possible. In addition, the real strength of the evaluation units thus far is their stability. Several staff members now have more than 15 years of evaluation experience. A growing number have already done evaluation work for four to six years, and even in the newer units many now have one to three years' experience. Given the growing complexity of further evaluation system development and demands for more in-depth evaluation, this accumulated experience and low turnover is an important resource for the organizations to maintain, and is itself a form of evaluation quality assurance.

26. The Inspector believes that the central evaluation units have been performing well thus far in expanding their systems and taking on more and more operational, quality control, and managerial tasks with only a slight overall staffing increase. The cost side of this cost-effectiveness relationship, however, can be suppressed only so long before it has the inevitable effect of reducing effectiveness. A 1983 United Nations report presented a particularly useful analysis of the process of strengthening evaluation units, allowing them to move from minimal evaluation introduction and maintenance functions (with at least one professional staff member) to a continuing, active, systematic and higher-quality set of evaluation activities (three to four professional staff) 7/.

27. The Inspector has made very few specific recommendations for added staff in central evaluation units in JIU report 85/10, although he strongly supports the strengthening which several organizations are considering. He believes, however, that all organizations should keep the professional staffing needs of their central evaluation units under careful and continuing review (particularly as they are required to do more and more direct, in-depth programme evaluation work) to ensure that staff resource levels match responsibilities and tasks and do not jeopardize the quality of evaluation system work. Central evaluation resources in most of the organizations are still fragile, but the firm control of evaluation staff growth thus far should leave at least some leeway for strengthening as evaluation use expands in the future.

III. INTEGRATION WITH THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

28. In 1981 the ACC stated that it "strongly supports" the JIU thesis that evaluation should be seen as essential and integral to the processes of policy formulation, programme planning, budgeting and implementation management, rather than being perceived merely as a desirable addition. In the past four years, the organizations have given considerable attention to this integration process, but the establishment of more streamlined, results-oriented decision-making requires continuing reassessment, improvement, and adaptation to changing circumstances and needs. Evaluation, with its basic emphasis on reflection and effectiveness, is being slowly incorporated, but much remains to be done. For the present, evaluation is at least helping to raise some useful new perceptions and questions about decision-making structures, emphases and flows.

A. Programming cycle

29. The main objective of evaluation is to help improve the current and future effectiveness of an organization by providing decision-makers with analytical information on project and programme performance and results obtained. Over the past decade, most organizations have established a process of six-year medium-term plans and biennial programme budgets, which provide the basic programming framework. Monitoring and evaluation are the elements which must be systematically built into this framework to complete the programming cycle through steady feedback from operations.

30. During the past several years, there has been some very positive progress in this area. The increasingly widespread use of built-in self-evaluation for both technical co-operation and headquarters activities has been a key factor. Its "built-in" nature establishes it as a normal component in the programming process, and its simplified structure permits broad application. Periodic scheduling provides steady, continuing feedback, and the fact that it is implemented by programme managers at the operating level permits this feedback (and use) to be rapid and direct. The standardized format also facilitates analysis of evaluation findings for internal and external reporting to top management and governing bodies, and provides a useful set of "building-blocks" for programme evaluation.

31. Built-in self-evaluation is steadily being supplemented by evaluation of broader programmes and administrative and support processes, and even some policy evaluation. These exercises add a more in-depth and independent assessment of results and performance made by central staff, consultants, or governing body representatives to support decision-making and future policy formulation at the programme level.

32. Even more basically, the emphasis of evaluation on results and performance appears to be helping to further develop and improve overall organizational decision-making processes. WHO has moved farthest in this area, with its "managerial process for WHO's programme development". As recommended by the World Health Assembly in 1978, WHO has developed an integrated approach to policy formulation, development of general programmes of work, medium-term programming, programme budgeting, monitoring, evaluation and information support. During the late 1970s the basic framework was established and the managerial process was tested to ensure that it was practical, economic and comprehensive. During the past few years, the methods have been refined and internal mechanisms strengthened to ensure that all components, including evaluation, are co-ordinated and systematically used in a continuing operational cycle at country, regional and global levels. This WHO internal managerial process parallels - and has as its basic purpose to support - a permanent, systematic managerial process for the development of effective national health systems under the Global Strategy of health for all.

33. Other system organizations have also taken significant initiatives to strengthen their overall decision-making systems in the past few years, including (and often stimulated by) the need to build evaluation into the basic programming cycle. (The following actions are further discussed and cited in the bibliography of the accompanying JIU report on individual organizations).

(a) The United Nations has established regulations and rules governing programme planning, the programme aspects of the budget, the monitoring of implementation and the methods of evaluation. The evaluation component has only been partially implemented so far, but the preamble to the regulations approved by the General Assembly in 1982 stressed that this programming cycle aims to subject all programmes of the Organization to periodic and thorough reviews, and to afford Member States and the Secretariat an opportunity for reflection before choices are made.

(b) FAO has supplemented its auto-evaluation process with a system of annual work plans, implementation progress reports, and central review and evaluation of findings. It has implemented a field project management information system and annual evaluation plans for technical co-operation projects. It has also revised its evaluation guidance to consolidate and streamline the evaluation system and ensure more systematic, effective feedback, in order to improve design and implementation in a more integrated way throughout FAO.

(c) UNDP, in collaboration with an inter-agency working group, is engaged in a full-scale revision and testing of its existing project monitoring, evaluation and reporting processes and practices, as a central element in improving and integrating its evaluation system structure.

(d) UNICEF, UNFPA, and WFP have each prepared recent reports for their governing bodies which review and analyze monitoring and evaluation activities within their programming systems, and suggest new initiatives and areas for further integration, streamlining, and improvement.

(e) Several other organizations have undertaken internal reviews and re-assessments of their programming processes and the evaluation role, with particular attention to the strengthening of evaluation feedback for operational decision-making.

34. These initiatives all indicate heightened attention to the quality of decision-making processes. Upgrading these processes, however, is a demanding, long term effort. Most of the organizations have certain unavoidable structural problems to cope with.

(a) Coverage: In most of the organizations, all activities are subject to monitoring and evaluation in theory. In practice, however, the programming cycle presently applies unevenly to regular versus extra-budgetary activities, to headquarters versus field programmes, to administrative and support activities, and to negotiating, standard-setting, regulatory, and other special functions. Where solid programme structures do not exist, it is much more difficult - though not impossible - for monitoring and evaluation to follow. In addition, although evaluation has spread fairly widely to technical co-operation projects, the modest resources available have constrained the increasing efforts to evaluate other programmes and activities. Such evaluations are still exploratory and highly selective relative to the many areas which could be evaluated.

(b) Responsibilities: If the programming cycle is to operate in a systematic, integrated way, responsibilities for the various phases involved must be clearly established, co-ordinated, understood and applied throughout the organization. Planning and programme budgeting responsibilities have become relatively routine in most organizations, but specific monitoring and evaluation roles, functions, and linkages are still being clarified. In many organizations there also appears to be considerable potential for streamlining and harmonizing information flows, since programme cycle documents, older review processes, administrative control and statutory reporting requirements, requests for ad hoc "activity" reports and the newer monitoring and evaluation processes have become intermingled in a rather unclear and congested review and control structure. Another complicating factor is the need to attempt to harmonize the organization's programming processes with those of many other partners, which can vary quite widely in scope, requirements and quality: donor governments in trust fund or multi-bilateral activities, host governments in technical co-operation programmes and projects, and co-operating agencies, non-governmental organizations, or national institutions which participate in specific programmes or serve the organization as specialized implementing agencies.

(c) Synchronization: As the programming cycle implies, the phases should move in an orderly and repetitive flow. In practice, however, not only is there a need for cycles within cycles (for instance, extensive participative feedback and negotiation in the programming process), but many flows are not yet in harmony. Most notably, frequent programme changes during a biennium are often reflected only when the next cycle is considered, status and fund disbursement reporting may lag many months behind implementation, and evaluation and assessment findings may not be made available until long after the relevant programme decisions have already been made. Careful planning is essential to ensure that these phases fit together effectively.

(d) Orderly analytical information flow: The medium-term plan, programme budget, and evaluation reports are only the more visible pieces of a full organizational decision-making process. JIU reports on the United Nations programming system in 1978 8/ and 1982 9/ cautioned against regarding these documents as more

than a formal structure and outer shell of a programming system. To contribute to proper resource allocation and effective control, the system should include time-limited objectives and clearly defined outputs, internal work programmes for producing these outputs, a steady flow of information to decision-makers on implementation and budgetary status, and built-in achievement indicators. All these components, however, should not be applied mechanistically, but employed to facilitate management and governing body decision-making needs.

35. The major programming cycle problem at present, however, is still a fundamental imbalance in emphasis. Most decision-making time and effort of programme managers, top management and governing bodies is still devoted to the input side of programming (particularly preparation, adjustment and approval of programme budgets), with only a modest amount yet spent on the output side (using monitoring and evaluation information from programme implementation to assess, adjust and improve the programme results actually being obtained).

36. This predominant attention to inputs is not a surprise. Decision-making in public organizations has always tended to favour preoccupation with gathering and organizing inputs rather than coping with the inevitably complex and often disappointing process of determining what imperfect action has been able to achieve. The stubbornness of this problem was recognized a decade ago, for instance, by the UNDP "new dimensions" policy statement which stressed that "technical co-operation should be seen in terms of output or the results to be achieved, rather than in terms of input". In addition, medium-term plans and programme budgets were generally established earlier than evaluation processes, so that considerable effort has gone into "perfecting" these programming tools, with less enthusiasm left for fully developing the monitoring and evaluation phases. (It is also significant that the planning and programme budgetary processes were largely established before the current period of zero-budgetary growth and severe resource constraints in which evaluation is now struggling to become institutionalized).

37. An over-emphasis on programme budgeting has serious risks. Programme budget documents may include too much detail and routine information, taking a great deal of management time to prepare and sometimes proving indigestible for governing bodies as well. Programme budget timing can lock programme decisions into a rather rigid once-every-two-years process. Programme performance data and financial data have not yet been effectively combined, so that old patterns of input decision-making by objects of expenditure (staff costs, travel, furniture, etc.) may still dominate.

38. Most importantly, a heavy programme budgeting emphasis without systematic follow-up risks cynicism among participants about the entire programming cycle. Programme budgets can be viewed as a required ritual which is of little or no actual consequence because there is no subsequent process to establish whether activities were implemented as planned. This imbalance also risks a serious loss of credibility if an organization presents a succession of detailed plans and objectives without providing intervening critical reviews of results obtained in order to adjust and improve future actions.

39. The point is not that programme budgets (and medium-term plans) should be de-emphasized. They provide the only reasonably comprehensive framework that secretariats and Member States have for making decisions on what the organizations should be doing and how, and they have established a much-needed focus on programme goals and intended results which should only be further strengthened. Nor is the argument that evaluation should generate the same volume of documentation required for programme budgets. What is needed is a solid, pragmatic balance leading to a continuing process of operational and programming improvement.

40. Programme budgeting and evaluation therefore need to be firmly linked to provide a steady flow of analytic information to decision-makers on both resource levels and operational performance. The data should be provided at the times

and in the formats best suited to permit effective allocation of scarce resources and other basic policy judgements. This requires top management leadership to ensure that budget officers, programming and policy staff, the evaluation unit, and programme managers work closely together, rather than letting the budget perspective - with its stiff financial formats, concern for detail, short-term perspective, administrative and financial orientation, and tight time schedules - dominate the content of the information presented to decision-makers. Instead, monitoring and evaluation information should be blended in to provide a combination of relevant, current, and reliable information for integrated and well-informed decisions.

41. The programme budget is far from the only phase with which evaluation must be closely linked. The initiatives of the organizations cited above represent commendable efforts, but all organizations of the system need to periodically reassess the quality and relevance of their decision-making processes. Chapters V and VII explore further the evaluation feedback and reporting network, and actual evaluation use and value in organizational decision-making. Several other key elements are summarized in the following four sections.

B. Project and programme design

42. The project and programme activities of the United Nations system inevitably encounter many difficulties and frustrations as they attempt to help solve international economic, social, technical and co-operative problems. The underlying problems are often very complex and only partially understood. The aims of the activities must often be a compromise result of political negotiations, particularly as the scale and significance of the activity increases. The resources provided are very modest in relation to the urgent problems addressed. Success is often at the mercy of uncontrollable, external factors. The activities must often be experimental and catalytic, seeking innovative breakthroughs. For all these reasons, rigid and "optimal" pre-planning is not possible or desirable, and monitoring and on-going evaluation are essential mechanisms to facilitate prompt adjustments to the inevitable difficulties and changing circumstances and needs which arise during implementation.

43. Nevertheless, good project and programme design is essential, not only to facilitate good monitoring and evaluation but to raise the probabilities for success. If a programme does not know where it is going or how, it will certainly never be able to determine whether it gets there. Despite all the complications that will occur, a programme or project that is well-thought out and carefully organized beforehand can avoid many difficulties and help establish the basic management elements required to achieve the desired results. A well-designed programme or project, therefore, should define as clearly as possible the problem addressed, key external factors, the objectives (expected actions or changes), resource inputs required, the sequence of activities in the work programme, indicators to measure progress and performance, and the outputs (products expected).

44. The institutionalization of programme budgets in many of the organizations and the growing use of built-in self-evaluation for technical co-operation projects and headquarters programmes have provided an important impetus and framework for better design. The situation has improved considerably from a decade ago when it was still quite possible to find statements that a unit planned to spend considerable resources to "assist" some amorphous group to vaguely "improve" something at some unspecified future time.

45. Unfortunately, however, current evaluation findings still disclose many design problems which seriously hamper effective implementation. Objectives are ambiguous, unrealistic or impossible to measure. The basic problem addressed is poorly defined. Programme or project beneficiaries are not identified (or consulted). Important external factors are ignored. Objectives, activities and outputs are confused. The inputs/activities/outputs sequence of operations is poorly

thought out, leading to significant delays and disruptions. Responsibilities are unclear, so that important actions are not taken. Implementation is "open-ended" rather than time-limited. And in almost all the organizations, progress and performance indicators are still scarcely used. Discouragingly enough, experienced evaluation staff report that these same design problems occur again and again.

46. There appear to be two major causes of these continuing design problems: ambiguous design leadership responsibilities and sheer workload. Evaluation units have a clear responsibility for leading design improvement efforts in only a few of the organizations. In most, design responsibilities seem to be buried somewhere within the operations of a programming division or distributed to programme managers throughout the organization. They are "integrated" in a very general sense, but with no one specifically designated to lead and oversee a determined and steady set of actions to improve design organization-wide. In some of these organizations, evaluation staff are included in the project (if not programme) approval process, but their roles seem rather minor and perfunctory. In most others, they have to rely on providing feedback through general guidelines or specific evaluation findings to try to reach project and programme designers.

47. This limited evaluation staff involvement seems at least in part due to a fear by programme managers that evaluators will insert themselves into substantive decision-making and actually disapprove projects. The design role, however, is really an advisory and supportive one. It provides expert advice so that the project or programme will be as clearly conceived and well-organized as possible, in order to best achieve its intended results.

48. The second problem is the volume of design work needed. Many of the organizations not only have hundreds or even thousands of technical co-operation projects, but hundreds of headquarters programmes and sub-programmes and administrative and support activities which are increasingly coming under the programming framework. The relatively new and lightly-staffed central evaluation units are still generally preoccupied with evaluation system implementation; they presently spend on average only 5 per cent of their time on project and programme design. Weak design, however, has a direct negative impact on overall evaluation workloads. It makes evaluation much more time-consuming and inefficient as evaluators must struggle to sort out and reconstruct programme objectives and internal logic before they can begin to assess progress and results.

49. UNICEF, UNIDO, IAC, UNDP, JNCHS and WHO are among the organizations that have given particular attention to improving design processes. But ILO has taken the lead in this field with procedures which many other evaluation units have adapted for their own systems. The ILO system, since its inception in 1977, has stressed design and evaluation as the basic approach in its guidelines and procedures and staff training programmes, and as an ongoing process of design improvement as a consultative "service unit". The effort involved is considerable: the evaluation unit has conducted more than 50 design and evaluation seminars for 1,000 participants from inside and outside ILO; developed a computerized list of some 1,000 progress or performance indicators and consulted with staff on their use; and reviews and consults informally on about 200 project proposals and documents each year.

50. As the organizations gradually shift their design and evaluation attention from technical co-operation projects to systematic coverage of all types of programmes, subprogrammes, and administrative, support and special activities, "evaluability assessment" will become a much more significant need. This approach has traditionally been used by evaluators to assess in advance whether a programme is sufficiently well-designed to permit a successful evaluation. Increasingly, however, it is becoming a management tool in its own right, used to analyze a programme to identify changes and evaluative information which would make it more effective, evaluable and ready to be managed to achieve desired performance and outcomes.

51. Evaluability assessment is thus an important, ongoing management support responsibility and service which the central evaluation unit or other evaluation officers are technically well-qualified (if not presently staffed) to provide. Working in close conjunction with programme managers, any programme or sub-programme can be analyzed, using a growing body of practices and techniques, to help ensure that the "management basics" are in place for successful implementation. The main elements of evaluability assessment are:

- (a) reviewing the resources, legislative guidance, objectives, managers' and decision-makers' views, work plans, and logic of a programme to describe what it intends to accomplish;
- (b) documenting and agreeing upon the measures and data sources to be used to show that the programme is operating successfully, identifying measurement and data gaps, and filling these gaps to the extent possible;
- (c) exploring whether the programme, as it is being implemented, especially in distant field locations, actually conforms to the programme description in (a) above;
- (d) making some preliminary judgements of the likelihood of the programme achieving its objectives, or whether redesign and more realistic objectives are needed;
- (e) considering whether programme and performance information feedback will actually be appropriate and directly useful to programme managers;
- (f) determining what parts of the activity are ready for evaluation of progress towards agreed objectives and, for other areas, what changes in resources, work plans, or objectives could be made to produce a more effective programme.

52. The need for well-designed and effectively functioning activities will become more and more evident as the organizations expand their programming structures and monitoring and evaluation work. The workload requirements for an ongoing design support process such as that outlined above will also become much greater. Each organization needs to establish specific responsibilities, processes, and actions - preferably in the central evaluation unit - to ensure a strong commitment to good design, in part as an essential base for solid monitoring and evaluation but above all to facilitate more effective management to better achieve project and programme goals.

C. Information systems

53. The basic premise of monitoring and evaluation is that effective decision-making requires a steady flow of information on the progress and results of the organization's work. This entails logical and agreed-upon status and measurement information provided to managers in timely and well-defined ways so that it will be used to improve operations.

54. As discussed earlier, monitoring and evaluation suffer somewhat as the "laggard" components of the programming cycle, being implemented last and in an era of severe resource restraints. In the information systems area, however, evaluation benefits significantly from this lag. Recent evaluation literature notes that there have been no recent conceptual breakthroughs in methodology, but that computerized information systems create very significant possibilities for improved evaluation. Increasingly, organizations are rethinking their management information needs, and this "fresh look" can and should integrate monitoring and evaluation information more firmly into the decision-making process.

55. ACC discussions in 1981 and 1982 stressed possible system-wide co-ordinative activities to develop computer-based communication networks, in view of their

importance in revolutionizing office work methods and their value for organizations operating worldwide. A 1982 JIU report on communications in the United Nations systems 10/ noted that the organizations spend about \$US 100 million annually on communications, and urged more attention to planning common communications needs and using new technologies effectively. A technical panel of the Advisory Committee for the Co-ordination of Information Systems (ACCIS) has given "the highest priority" during 1984-1985 to reviewing present telecommunications use and considering cost-effective actions for the future.

56. A 1985 JIU report on the changing use of computers found that such use (especially personal or "micro" computers) is increasing rapidly in organizations of the United Nations system in Geneva 11/, but that management information systems are presently not well-developed and are still confined in many cases to administrative batch-processing routines. The ACC and the Economic and Social Council have cited the need for better information to meet carefully defined decision-making needs in the organizations since the mid-1970s. Only during the past few years, however, does it appear that new technologies, programming methods and software have allowed the organizations to really begin streamlining and standardizing data files, decision-making information, and overall information system structures.

57. WHO has probably moved furthest, developing a computerized programme management information system, standardized programme and project "profiles", and a uniform administrative and financial system to facilitate planning, forecasting and oversight within the total managerial process. It has found, however, that much improvement is still needed in the information base to achieve higher quality programming and evaluation. Similarly, UNICEF's 1984 analysis of its evaluative activities 12/ discussed in some detail the major challenges of gathering needed information and statistics for situation analyses and programme formulation with governments at the country level, as well as the difficulties of establishing and using efficient information systems for monitoring, evaluation, feedback and reporting purposes.

58. Other agencies, in reviewing their programming cycles and management systems, have also identified the need to streamline information systems and provide a more steady flow of information on programme implementation. Computerization thus far, however, has tended to increase the programming imbalance cited previously: some agencies have completely computerized their programme budget data on what is planned, but have made little progress in computerizing monitoring and evaluation information on progress towards expected results. The recent spread of built-in self-evaluation, with data requirements which are part of the budget formats, should eventually overcome this problem. However, much more needs to be done to make this performance information more readily and rapidly available, extend it to all types of programmes, and improve its quality.

59. There are also real problems in blending financial information systems with performance information systems. They include differing time periods, tardy reporting, and sporadic redefinitions of key variables which destroy continuity and the opportunity for performance comparisons. Funding data often lacks a "cost centre" approach or is not broken out on a performance basis at all. Several organizations, for instance, are establishing built-in self-evaluation for headquarters programmes, but find it hard to get basic status information on costs by programme element or subprogramme: this makes it very difficult, if not impossible, to make even a simple cost-effectiveness analysis of the activity.

60. New computerized systems and software should gradually help overcome many of these problems. Much information systems attention is now being given to the development of decision support systems (DSS) to aid decision-making by professionals and managers at all levels of an organization. Rather than the traditional selective management information system (MIS), the DSS approach adds much more flexible "evaluative software", which allows the user to personally select and organize relevant information, interpret or evaluate it using many different

techniques and formats, and communicate the findings to others. As computer tools and skills become more widely distributed throughout the organizations and database systems expand, they should help considerably to strengthen performance analysis and feedback.

61. In the longer run, evaluation units can help improve computerized information system development by emphasizing the fundamental need for steady, streamlined status and performance information flows to managers at all levels. This feedback and progress reporting network, which is critical for the organization's success and for effective use of evaluation, is discussed further in Chapter V.

D. Other review functions

62. Evaluation, as defined in the 1978 JIU glossary of evaluation terms ^{13/} is only one of many types of organizational review, differentiated from the others by its basic concern with systematically determining programme and project results in the light of their objectives. During the past few years, however, both evaluation and the other major review functions have been marked by greater attention to managerial efficiency and performance.

63. Evaluation has always included an implicit concern with efficiency and management systems. Problems identified during an evaluation are often due to administrative system deficiencies, and administrative processes themselves are now the topics of some evaluation studies. Recently, however, this concern has become more explicit (and in recognition of this trend, "efficiency" has been added to the definition of evaluation in the first paragraph of this report). The United Nations regulations on programme planning which were approved by the General Assembly in 1982 state that the objective of evaluation is to not only determine the relevance, effectiveness and impact of organizational activities but also their efficiency. Similarly, UNICEF and its Executive Board have emphasized the need to include cost-effectiveness analyses in evaluations. They consider that this is usually the best way to assess a programme overall in the absence of impact measures, and also that cost-effectiveness is the best way to stress wise use of programme resources in an era of economic and budgetary stringency.

64. Other basic review functions are also moving in this direction. In several organizations the external auditors have been among the strongest supporters of more comprehensive evaluation systems. The auditors' work programmes in half-a-dozen larger agencies during 1985 include a review of the application of procedures for project and programme monitoring and evaluation. In addition, the Panel of External Auditors of the organizations has been considering broader "value for money" approaches for the past several years. These approaches would move beyond the traditional audit concern with examining the extent of conformity of a financial or management activity with pre-determined standards or criteria to address the efficiency of expenditures and whether management systems are adequate to assure effective resource use.

65. Internal auditors are also expanding their efforts. In the United Nations, UNDP and UNICEF, for instance, internal audit work is shifting from pure compliance auditing to include observations on efficiency and management processes, through an upgrading of staff skills and a broadening of review scope. The internal auditors' work supports evaluation in such organizations by reviewing and ensuring that the established monitoring and evaluation procedures are actually applied in the many offices located around the world. In these organizations and several others, there is also an increasing exchange of work programmes, comments on reports, and information on relevant operational findings between evaluation and internal audit staffs.

66. Many of the organizations also have small management services units. A 1981 JIU report on this topic ^{14/} observed that the organizations need a management services function to continually examine their operations and how to make

them more effective. JIU found, however, that management service resources and achievements were quite modest, with an accent on ad hoc "problem-solving" and work that was spread thinly over many areas. JIU urged a greater commitment to better define and strengthen these functions at minimum cost. The organizations generally agreed, but cited resource limits to further progress. It nevertheless appears that co-operation and exchanges of information between these units and evaluation units are also gradually becoming more regular.

67. A relatively new addition to organizational review and assessment functions is the expanding role of computer systems units, particularly in computerized systems planning and development. The 1985 JIU report on changing computer use observed that, if carefully planned, analyzed, and developed, computer applications can provide powerful new tools to improve organizational services, help staff carry out their work, and improve overall office productivity (that is, provide a greater output of "goods" and services and higher-quality results from given resource inputs). Sound computerized system development requires analytical methods and processes to identify promising computer uses, assess their costs and benefits, and follow up on results achieved. Computer systems units should therefore be an increasingly important participant in operational assessments and productivity improvement as computer use continues to spread throughout the organizations.

68. Each of these review groups has its own responsibilities and sphere of expertise, which must be maintained for a balanced review system: it would be inappropriate, for instance, for evaluators to assess the adequacy of financial controls or for internal auditors to undertake in-depth programme or project evaluation. The significant trend, however, is that all of them are gradually devoting more and more attention to efficiency, productivity, and management system improvement matters. Each group is small, but their combined efforts should help the organizations considerably to shift attention from inputs and procedural compliance to a dominant emphasis on efficiency of operations, results attained, and higher programme and service quality.

E. Training

69. The last major element in the process of integrating evaluation into organizational decision-making is the one in which progress has been the most disappointing. The 1981 JIU status report found that very limited training had been done, and observed that training would be a continuing need even after evaluation systems were well-established. It concluded that the more relevant and clear the evaluation training and materials would be, the more rapidly staff, managers and governing bodies would come to understand, support and use evaluation efforts.

70. During the past several years, ILO, UNIDO and UNHCR have launched evaluation training programmes that have reached a substantial portion of their staff involved in evaluation work, both in headquarters and field locations and often including national staff as well. WHO has not only included evaluation training for all staff as part of introductory training in the WHO managerial process, but is well along in a re-training process of advanced briefing seminars on "organizational policies and strategies" for all professional staff at headquarters and some in the regional offices. IAEA and UNEP have done some training, and UNICEF and WFP have also begun evaluation training programmes as part of their training in project/programme management cycles.

71. In other organizations, however, evaluation training has only reached the planning stage or has not really begun at all. In addition to the smaller organizations, FAO, UNESCO and UNFPA have as yet done little in this area. The United Nations Secretariat has not yet established any training for the many staff who must implement built-in self-evaluation at headquarters and other offices.

UNDP has increased its efforts, but it has a very large training task ahead to reach the UNDP staff in its world-wide field network and other tripartite partners who will have critical roles in implementing its revised monitoring, evaluation and reporting system.

72. Training funds are quite modest in most of the organizations, and the worldwide scope of their operations makes it difficult to reach all staff and other officials involved with evaluation activities. Yet the importance of evaluation for improving programmes and effectiveness requires a strong training effort. As the organizations expand their built-in evaluation system coverage from field projects to headquarters programmes and administrative and support processes, this need for training will only become more acute.

73. Evaluation training can be a separate course or workshop, or part of a design and evaluation course or a course in the organization's basic programme or project management cycle. Central evaluation unit staff can provide a low-cost evaluation training "package" for headquarters staff, with the added benefits that they thereby establish direct contact with programme managers who must apply the evaluation methodologies, develop better understanding of user problems, and can adjust evaluation training to meet specific needs or changing circumstances. If funds cannot be found to train field staff alternative strategies exist, such as "training trainers" in evaluation, ensuring that it is built into introductory staff training, reaching people who visit headquarters sites or are between assignments, including it as part of regional meeting agendas, or combining it with evaluation missions to the field.

74. Staff training in evaluation and other basic elements of the management cycle goes beyond familiarizing people with routine organizational procedures. As the ACC observed in 1981, strengthened evaluation skills and institutional capacity are "critical preconditions" if evaluation is to effectively support key management processes. Evaluation training should therefore help staff to understand the principles of good design, monitoring and evaluation and recognize their value as legitimate management tools. It should help build their capacity to assess and improve their own programmes and projects, design reliable performance measures and understand and use evaluation information, rather than relying on transient outside expertise for these functions. Most importantly, it should demonstrate clearly top management's commitment to supporting and reinforcing a performance and results emphasis throughout the organization. Evaluation is an important tool to improve overall operations, but it cannot serve this purpose if staff do not know how to use it and are not encouraged to actively apply it.

IV. METHODOLOGY

75. Methodology is the particular set of selected analytical methods and techniques used to perform the evaluation of an activity. A 1979 JIU report on initial evaluation system guidelines contained a rather extensive chapter on methodological considerations 15/. It discussed the constraints and challenges to use of more precise methodologies in the United Nations system; the importance of clearly-stated objectives and the difficulties of formulating them in practice; the potential for developing good indicators; and possible levels of evaluation ranging from the most simple to the most complex.

76. The 1981 JIU status report found general agreement among the organizations on the need to work toward common evaluation principles and guidelines while recognizing differing organizational situations. They also agreed that evaluation methodology should be improved in a pragmatic manner which would strive for solid, credible evaluation work while keeping the methodology as simple and directly useful as possible. The most important problem which was then emerging was the challenge of extending evaluation from technical co-operation projects to broader programmes and to very diverse organizational activities.

77. The major methodological progress in the past few years has come through the steady expansion of built-in self-evaluation. As discussed in Chapter II, this approach is now established or being established for technical co-operation projects in three-quarters of the organizations, and in one-third of them for headquarters programmes as well.

78. Built-in self-evaluation uses a simplified methodology, but this simplicity permits standardized requirements and widespread participative use of evaluation throughout the organization. The organizations have generally developed, tested, and disseminated detailed guidelines or manuals with clear and specific evaluation formats which establish a well-documented and orderly basic evaluation process. In addition, for technical co-operation projects, most of the organizations have taken into account the procedures that other organizations have established in developing their own procedures. Further efforts are now under way, as discussed in Chapter VI.B., to attempt to more closely harmonize these basic evaluation methods and guidelines within the system.

79. As discussed in Chapter III.B., design improvement is a slow but important process involving hundreds or even thousands of individual projects and subprogrammes in each organization. Because self-evaluation is being built in to operations as a normal management process, however, it is proving very helpful to more closely and systematically consider design aspects and problems organization-wide. In addition, it provides a base for the rest of the evaluation system, since it facilitates analysis of patterns of evaluation findings, and also serves as a direct input for use in broader types of evaluation.

80. Problems and confusions still exist in differentiating between monitoring and built-in evaluation within and among the organizations and in the worldwide evaluation community in general (see the following Chapter). It is clear, however, that in-depth evaluation work is greatly facilitated, and given much more opportunity to address major underlying issues and problems, when the activities involved have been well-designed, a good monitoring process provides reliable and current status information on progress in implementation, and built-in evaluation has already identified and addressed at least some of the basic results and effectiveness elements.

81. A second recent trend has been the growth in in-depth evaluation efforts. The challenge of performing these more complex evaluations, which was only anticipated four years ago, is now being actively confronted. Almost all the organizations make selective, in-depth project evaluations as well as various types of broader evaluations of technical co-operation activities beyond the individual project level. More than half have established or are establishing some form of evaluation for headquarters activities, often including not only regular programme components but administrative, support and specialized activities as well.

82. These efforts are producing an increasing body of in-depth evaluation reports, examples of which are cited in JIU report 85/10. They are also producing new methodological reflections and guidance. The ILO, for instance, has produced guidelines on the design and evaluation of research projects 16/. United Nations evaluation staff prepared a paper for an UNCTAD working party on possible evaluation subsystems for policy and technical information and results of analytical research, and for substantive support of intergovernmental negotiations 17/. A subsequent consultants' study for UNCTAD explored ways in which evaluation tests, however limited, could be applied to all types of outputs in the UNCTAD programme budget 18/. The UNICEF study previously cited discussed the need to balance traditional approaches to "rigorous" evaluation with other programming and evaluation approaches more responsive to community involvement and to programming uncertainty 19/. And UNFPA has published guidelines and procedures for staff, governments, consultants and others using its independent, in-depth evaluation process 20/.

83. The current activities in the system, and the evaluation literature, underscore the fact that programme evaluation is a very diverse process. The methodological approach may be interpreted very rigorously to require methods of basic social science research or, more flexibly, any type of systematic inquiry. The evaluation approach chosen depends greatly on the programme context and special characteristics. The "programme" may actually be several programmes, a subprogramme, or some geographical subset. The evaluation may be "formative" (assessing programme progress to make immediate improvements), or "summative" (determining how well it works prior to major decisions on continuing, expanding, or reducing it). It may examine programme processes, outputs, or results or return years later for a retrospective, ex post assessment of impact.

84. Three basic constraints limit a rigorous and uniform approach to in-depth programme evaluation. First, a programme is defined as an organized set of activities directed towards the attainment of specific objectives. However, actual public programmes vary widely in their organization, underlying logic and strategy, and specificity of objectives: too often they may be just a loose collection of activities gathered together for administrative convenience.

85. Second, the limits on time and resources available for programme evaluation, particularly in the United Nations system organizations with their small evaluation resources and central evaluation units, require that programme evaluations be very carefully chosen and conducted as efficiently and pragmatically as possible. The third factor, closely related to the second, is that programme evaluations cannot cover all facets of a programme, particularly in international organizations where the evaluation often must somehow merge the particular decision-making concerns and needs of the secretariats and governing bodies of a financing agency, an executing agency, and perhaps co-operating agencies as well as those of recipient and often donor governments.

86. Because of these complexities and constraints, there is no "one best way" to conduct programme evaluations. Each agency, however, needs to develop its own standards for evaluation design and procedures; data collection, preparation, analysis and interpretation; and report communication, disclosure and use. These standards should enhance the fundamental characteristics of good programme evaluation: an independent, systematic and unbiased perspective; objective supporting information which is valid, reliable and credible; assessment of results, effectiveness and relevance issues in an in-depth rather than superficial way; and findings, conclusions and recommendations which aid decision-making and programme improvement.

87. Methodological standards for all the various types of evaluation which the organizations undertake should be gradually established in their evaluation system guidance, as has happened or is underway for built-in self-evaluation, and in specific terms of reference for individual evaluation studies. Evaluation reports should also state, as clearly and concisely as possible, the approach taken to allow readers to understand and assess the way in which an evaluation was conducted. The introduction to the most recent programme evaluation conducted for the ITC, for instance, summarizes the overall objectives and scope of the study: particular, agreed aspects which were to be examined; the stages of the evaluation, information gathered, and the implementation process; and the report includes the consultants' terms of reference as an annex 21/.

88. Evaluation methodology and standards should not become preoccupations which overshadow evaluation substance, but it is important to establish them as clearly and at as high a level as feasible and then to exercise firm "quality control" to maintain them. Casual references in the system to narrow, superficial, loosely-organized, input-oriented, and descriptive reviews as "evaluations" have diminished. But sound evaluation methods and understood standards are essential not merely to differentiate evaluation from other reviews and reports. They are also necessary to avoid critical errors in analysis and to build and maintain the credibility of evaluation as a sound source of objective decision-making support.

89. During the past four years the organizations have made significant progress in clarifying and establishing their evaluation methods for technical co-operation work, and this experience has allowed movement toward more common methods and standards. The same development process is now underway for in-depth evaluation work, as the above citations indicate. As the agencies gain experience, useful techniques, approaches and standards should emerge in this difficult area as well. The process, however, will inevitably be a gradual one.

V. PERFORMANCE FEEDBACK AND REPORTING

90. Evaluation has no value if it is not used. An efficient and effective feedback and reporting system is an essential requirement in each organization to achieve this use. The progress made and problems involved in streamlining existing decision-making systems and making them more performance- and results-oriented are discussed in the following two sections.

A. Internal feedback

91. The organizations of the United Nations system have some basic structural problems which complicate their decision-making processes, as outlined in Chapter III.A. The programming cycle applies unevenly to regular versus extra-budgetary activities, field and headquarters programmes, and to administrative and specialized functions. Decision-making must also take into account governmental and institutional partners with widely varying decision-making requirements and capabilities. The organizations have established basic programme cycle elements, but analytical linkages are not yet fully developed and there is still a bias towards inputs rather than outputs.

92. In addition, the organizations have accumulated many information, control and reporting procedures and routines over the years. These procedures are not yet satisfactory, however, as evidenced by the programming cycle reassessments cited in Chapter III and continuing governing body concern with too little performance reporting but too much documentation overall. In any public organization there is a risk that programming, reporting, and control activities will become cumbersome, bureaucratic and costly exercises. Such systems, paradoxically, can undermine the very control and accountability that they seek, because their mechanistic rigidity discourages responsive performance and innovation and gradually divorces them from actual, changing decision-maker needs.

93. During the past few years many of the organizations have been working to modernize and streamline their management processes. A first step is to recognize differing information needs at three basic decision-making levels.

(a) At the project or subprogramme level, individual managers need direct, relatively detailed, and immediate status and evaluative information on operations to facilitate corrective action during implementation and redesign.

(b) At the programme level (departments, divisions, branches), specific but consolidated status and evaluative information (both built-in and in-depth) is needed to supervise overall programme management and its components, and provide information for the tactical planning of future activities;

(c) at the top management and governing body levels, a different kind of carefully-selected status and evaluative information (from analyses and summaries of findings and from in-depth evaluations) is needed to set overall programme strategies and priorities, support policy formulation, and review and improve programme and organizational structures.

94. These three decision-making levels, unfortunately, are also widely dispersed geographically. In most of the organizations of the system, they are distributed among operational projects, field offices, and regional offices around the world as well as at headquarters and in some specialized locations. This dispersion adds to feedback difficulties because information comes from many disparate sources and situations, and can cause serious problems of understanding and interpretation when an analyst or manager is located far from the data flowing to him. In addition, the organizational information system cannot be a closed one. It must have reliable information flows to and from its clients, beneficiaries, co-operating organizations, and general surrounding environment.

95. Monitoring and evaluation provide an integrated and important structure of performance information to support and link these decision-making levels.

(a) Monitoring is a relatively continuous flow of information on implementation to ensure that input delivery, work schedules, and required actions are proceeding and targets being met as planned, and to indicate the need for any corrective actions;

(b) built-in evaluation provides information at regular intervals on the continuing relevance and likely results of projects and subprogrammes, for more significant corrective action and reorientation;

(c) in-depth evaluation, much more selectively, provides information on the relevance, results, efficiency and effectiveness of certain projects or programmes as the basis for broader policy and programme decisions and future planning.

96. A clarification of basic responsibilities, and continuing improvement actions, are needed in three broad interrelated areas in order to firmly establish this monitoring and evaluation structure and allow it to provide performance information which supports decision-making at all levels. First, while built-in self-evaluation is increasingly being established, the related monitoring systems are often weak. Cost and performance information flows during the periods between built-in evaluation exercises (or in their absence) are still a patchwork of partial and tardy data, informal feedback, and occasional progress reports (which are usually descriptive rather than results-oriented). This system makes it difficult for higher-level managers and governing bodies to assess specific and overall progress and programme performance except at widely-separated intervals. Furthermore, it is not often clear exactly who in the organizations is responsible for concerted monitoring system improvement.

97. Second, the process of upgrading and streamlining management feedback and reporting systems requires organization-wide participation to determine what performance information the managers at different levels actually need, in what forms, and when, in order to make the feedback system as simple, relevant, and uncluttered as possible. Above all, there is a need to establish indicators of performance for all types of programmes throughout the organization. They might deal only with effort (volume of work done), or with efficiency (economical conversion of inputs to outputs) or effectiveness (quantitative or qualitative measures of achievement of goals or objectives). As discussed in Chapter III.B. on design and "evaluability assessments", this involves a long-term, large-scale organizational improvement effort, in which central evaluation unit staff are well-equipped to participate. Once again, however, responsibilities, processes and actions to carry out this task are presently often unclear.

98. Third, the gradual development of computerized information systems and communications networks provides a very significant opportunity to assess information needs in a much more integrated fashion and tie them much more closely to programme structures. Rather than a record of separate events to be periodically summarized and reported on, computerized information allows a much

more continuous flow of up-to-date, interactive information. This information can be integrated for decision-making and control across and between organizational levels, and better tailored to decision-making needs at each level. While many organizations have now established information systems development units and management oversight committees, however, such reassessments are generally still at an early stage 22/.

99. A complete performance-oriented information system would eventually cover the entire organization and the full programming cycle, centered on objective information feedback for decision-making on organizational, programme, project or subprogramme, and individual performance. It would include:

(a) performance planning - targetting outcomes, determining resources, setting priorities and establishing standards;

(b) performance monitoring - tracking programmes, providing performance feedback, and making adjustments;

(c) performance evaluation - comparing performance against objectives, determining levels of performance reached, and providing performance feedback;

(d) performance reinforcement - determining and applying incentives to recognize, reward and encourage significant results achieved;

(e) performance development - analyzing and improving performance, and further developing organizational performance capacities and potential.

100. Such a system would integrate budgeting, accounting, reporting and performance measurement information by building each of them into the programming and decision-making cycle in a balanced fashion. The objective would be to replace present jumbled, incomplete information processes with a flow of reliable, timely and objective data to support at least the most important programme decision-making needs. This process requires a longer-term joint effort, with top management leadership; direct budget, financial, evaluation, programme and policy staff involvement; and ongoing participation of programme managers.

101. Many of the organizations have begun actions in this area. The WHO managerial process for WHO programme development combines a programme management information system and a reporting system of "profiles" to circulate status and evaluative information between all levels of the organization, with overall emphasis on the "integral role" of information within the unified WHO managerial process and the health activities of Member States. The United Nations, FAO, UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, and WFP have all stressed the need for improved performance information coverage and feedback, as discussed in Chapter III.A. The UNIDO self-evaluation system emphasizes structured follow-up and feedback to field locations. Other organizations, such as UNESCO, ICAO and UNEP, have also taken recent actions to improve and streamline their information, documentation and reporting processes. Significant information system restructurings are also underway: WIPO, for instance, has undertaken the design and implementation of an integrated administrative system for budgetary control, accounting and payments, using standardized systems analysis methods and close collaboration with user sections to determine administrative information flows and needs throughout WIPO.

102. The role of central evaluation units in this reorientation process is still gradually developing. Most of the units have fairly clear responsibilities for overall development, management, support and quality control of the built-in evaluation system, and for co-ordinating work plans for (and often conducting) the various types of selective in-depth evaluation. Many units have responsibility for analysing patterns of evaluation findings and summarizing them for governing bodies. Several units have established or are developing computerized "memory banks" of evaluation findings to aid in this task.

103. Most of the units have also established certain specific techniques for evaluation feedback, such as special or periodic status reports on findings to top management or to programme committees, programme guidance disseminated to staff, or staff seminars and workshops to review evaluation findings. ILO, for example, has stressed the development of an evaluation information system involving a documentalist, a computerized database, and various techniques and diverse formal and informal dissemination channels to better aid decision-making and planning at the various decision-making levels 23/. Follow-up of corrective action taken on evaluation recommendations is also very important, but while some organizations have established quite orderly processes for this purpose, others do not yet have formal procedures.

104. In the broader area of development and feedback of performance information organization-wide, unfortunately, central evaluation unit and other responsibilities and roles are still rather ambiguous. The unclear responsibilities for monitoring systems, for project and programme design improvement, and for analyzing decision-maker information needs have already been noted. And despite the importance of effectively feeding evaluation "lessons learned" into organizational operations, the small central evaluation units, on average, presently can spend only about 10 per cent of their time on internal reporting, feedback and counseling.

105. Truly effective monitoring and evaluation requires clarity as to what feedback is required, for whom and when, as well as strong and specific linkages between evaluation and project and programme formulation, implementation and review. The evaluation units can use various techniques to partly achieve these requirements, but a good overall performance information system requires top management leadership, a design process to build the information into the programming system, careful analysis and specification of responsibilities and an on-going programme of system improvement.

106. The vague nature of many of these design, monitoring, evaluation and feedback processes at present suggests that they are still, in the terms used by ACC in 1981, only a "desirable addition" to the programming cycle rather than the "essential and integral" component which is required. It is not easy to restructure long-established reporting and control routines, or to switch rapidly from an inputs to a results emphasis. Furthermore, while built-in evaluation is a big step forward, it does not yet apply to many organizational activities. In-depth evaluations are even more limited in coverage.

107. Nevertheless, the information system restructurings now underway must strive to clarify and closely relate monitoring, design, evaluation and feedback responsibilities and actions in order to fully establish performance- and results-based information systems for decision-making. Effective performance feedback systems - used as tools to actively guide and improve operations rather than just to force compliance - are major contributing factors for responsive organizational development and improved operations and results.

B. Reporting to governing bodies

108. Reporting to governing bodies raises the same performance issues as internal feedback, but the picture is somewhat more clear because the process is more concentrated and more direct experience has been gained. While evaluation reporting often is of use to others, such as governments for technical co-operation projects, it is usually directed to the organizations' governing and subsidiary bodies. Evaluation findings are summarized for periodic decision-making purposes, rather than striving to cover all levels and locations of an organization on a continuing basis as internal systems must. In addition, the 1981 JIU status report observed that evaluation reporting to governing bodies had been growing rapidly since 1979-1980. Such reporting has now become almost universal: the Annex I table of this report shows that all but one organization with an evaluation system now has some specific form of regular evaluation reporting to its governing bodies.

109. The patterns of this reporting can be analyzed through the same performance information categories used in the preceding section - existing processes, monitoring, built-in evaluation, and in-depth evaluation - but in reverse order in light of the ways in which governing bodies presently use them. Most of the organizations now do some in-depth evaluations of field and/or headquarters programmes, and many of these in turn are reported on or presented to governing bodies, increasingly on a periodic schedule and as a regular agenda item. Governing body summary records and organizational experience indicate that response to these studies has been quite positive, with substantial discussion, follow-up discussion at later meetings, and requests for more such evaluations.

110. Alternatively or in addition, many organizations provide a periodic evaluation report which presents general evaluation findings and patterns, provides sample summaries of evaluations made, and/or discusses general progress in evaluation system development and expansion. This type of reporting is more often based on the built-in evaluation system of the organization. Although such reporting does not lend itself to the extended discussion that specific in-depth evaluations do, it also appears to be well-received, to provide useful information for governing bodies, and to produce steady support for further evaluation system expansion and strengthening.

111. In the performance monitoring and status reporting area, however, as is true for internal feedback, the situation is more complex and ambiguous. Some significant initiatives have been taken. FAO has devoted considerable effort to establishing the evaluative and in-depth content of its biennial reviews of its regular programme and field programmes. WHO's unified managerial process makes regular status, summary and subject reports to headquarters and regional management committees and through them to the respective governing bodies. The United Nations has a biennial programme performance report which presents very brief quantitative data on the implementation of its many programmes. UNESCO has prepared extensive biennial reports on impacts, achievements, difficulties and shortfalls in its programme activities since 1976. And organizations such as ILO, ITU and WHO prepare regular annual or biennial reports which provide informative general reviews of their entire range of activities.

112. The 1981 JIU status report observed that over the years the organizations had gradually accumulated a whole range of activity, status, progress and special reports, reviews, and follow-up studies. These reports risked flooding governing body delegates with documentation and tying up secretariat staff in seemingly endless reporting tasks, but still did not yield much useful specific information on programme performance and results. The evaluation reporting and improved broad programme reviews cited above are helping to close this gap. However, the impression is still of useful "pieces" of performance reporting which do not yet fit together as an integrated and streamlined reporting system. The most noticeable weakness, once again, seems to be the limited amount, quality and timeliness of specific cost and performance status reporting. It is also unclear how effectively the information which does exist is fed in to governing body deliberations on medium-term plans and programme budgets, and to on-going policy and programme formulation.

113. Governing body concern with this problem is not new. In 1973, for instance, ECOSOC emphasized the importance of good information systems in the organizations to support development programmes, the programming cycle, and the information needs of member governments to facilitate their decision-making in governing bodies. More recently, ECOSOC resolution 1981/63 reiterated the importance of timely and accurate information on organizational activities, resource use, results and findings to enable governments to participate more effectively in the programme planning and evaluation process.

114. A 1984 JIU report on policy reports, cross-organizational analyses, and programming reports to ECOSOC, and the subsequent comments thereon by the Secretary-General of the United Nations 24/, discuss these problems and some

directions for further improvement which all organizations should consider. The Secretary-General observed the tendency towards descriptive rather than analytical reports with a lack of policy recommendations and reliance on established views of complex issues, combined with repetitive requests for further reports despite a lack of new developments. He suggested that improvement would require joint efforts. The Secretariat should reorient its approach to report preparation, and Member States should endeavour to restrain documentation requests and improve decision-making procedures in governing bodies, including more effective use of the principal programming cycle documents for programme review and revision.

115. Experience to date suggests several general patterns which can help strengthen evaluation reporting to governing bodies. First, the organizations have generally found that evaluation reports are much more actively discussed and used when they go first to subsidiary programme bodies, such as executive boards or programme committees, or to specialized bodies responsible for the specific subject area covered by an in-depth evaluation. The subsidiary body can then report on its evaluation deliberations to the supreme governing body, which meets much less frequently and already has crowded agendas. (The Inspector has tried to underline the importance of this aspect of evaluation by briefly describing the governing body structures of each organization in the individual summaries in JIU report 85/10.)

116. Second, evaluation reporting is more successful when the subsidiary or governing body concerned is actively involved in establishing evaluation topics and terms of reference. This is most likely to occur when the body considers evaluation reports on a regular, continuing basis. Rather than just requesting "an evaluation of ...", the body and the Secretariat should jointly establish in advance the specific areas and issues to be addressed, what use is expected to be made of the findings, the type of evaluation to be done with a prudent estimate of its costs and potential new information value, and specific responsibilities and schedules. In addition, when evaluation reports are subsequently presented, the governing body has its own essential "quality control" responsibility to fulfill. It should identify which evaluation efforts were good and why, offer constructive criticism of efforts which were not satisfactory, and consider possible changes in evaluation approach and methodology and in underlying managerial processes.

117. Third, the small central evaluation units now devote, on average, almost half their time to actually conducting evaluations, reporting to governing bodies, and providing subsequent follow-up. The evaluations involved are usually complex in-depth studies to begin with, and preparing them for formal publication and governing body discussion requires extra time. The governing bodies concerned therefore need to recognize that demands for more in-depth evaluations must confront very real time and resource constraints on these small staffs, which limit the in-depth work they can do. Even more importantly, as discussed in Chapter II, the time spent on a specific in-depth evaluation unavoidably takes time from the units' evaluation system development and management responsibilities, which are critical if evaluation is to be expanded to systematically cover the entire organization and provide high-quality work.

118. Finally and most importantly, governing bodies must work with their secretariats to define the performance information they need for decision-making. The secretariats have generally worked hard to establish good evaluation systems with the modest resources available, and to begin reassessing and modernizing internal decision-making and external reporting systems. But governing bodies should not only encourage top management to integrate budgeting, accounting, and performance management information into an integrated programming cycle. They should also participate as end-users in identifying existing information and reports of limited value which can be eliminated, combined or modified; establishing what specific performance information they need and at what cost; and determining what measures can be taken to build more streamlined and effective internal feedback and external reporting systems.

VI. CO-OPERATIVE EFFORTS

119. During the past few years the organizations of the United Nations system have made progress in supporting the development of government evaluation capacities, co-ordinating evaluation approaches and processes (particularly for technical co-operation projects), and establishing links with evaluation units inside and outside the United Nations system. This progress is constrained by limited evaluation resources and the many remaining internal evaluation system developmental tasks, but the outlines of an international evaluation network are gradually beginning to take shape.

A. With governments

120. In 1982 JIU issued a report on United Nations system co-operation in developing evaluation by governments 25/. The report noted that evaluation had been slow to develop as an integral element of development management. However, in recent years there had been a growing recognition of its value in improving development programmes and projects as well as new intergovernmental policy initiatives stressing programme results, self-reliant national management capabilities, and a significant evaluation role. The report provided an initial inventory of actions and ideas in this "new" development field, including factors which have hampered evaluation progress and elements important for success. It summarized the activities of 16 United Nations system organizations and other organizations, outlined seven broad categories of co-operative evaluation efforts, and presented a selected annotated bibliography of recent documents relating to evaluation by governments.

121. JIU concluded that the report was only a starting point for a long, gradual and challenging joint task. It recommended that each United Nations system organization consider a set of actions, within its own evaluation system development efforts, to help develop evaluation by governments on a continuing basis, and that governments and other bilateral, non-governmental and international organizations also consider further co-operative efforts in this area. Since co-operation in developing evaluation capabilities of governments was a largely under-emphasized topic, JIU also recommended that the ACC, governing bodies of the organizations, and the United Nations (because of its general responsibilities for development research, planning and administration) consider what support and follow-up actions might be provided.

122. In its 1983 comments on this report 26/, the ACC indicated its strong support for co-operation in developing government evaluation activities. It observed that many agencies were already active in this regard and would continue this effort, although the key constraint to further action was the difficulty of obtaining funding, staff and training materials to expand evaluation support. ACC stated that it would keep the topic under continuing review; that the agencies stood ready to help, when requested, in evaluation strengthening; and that activities had begun to improve monitoring and evaluation at the country level through emphasis on full involvement of recipient governments in monitoring and evaluation of projects supported by the United Nations system.

123. Various governing bodies, in their reviews of this report, have also supported further efforts. In December 1983 the General Assembly reaffirmed the need to enhance the impact and relevance of the system's operational activities to the national development process and programmes of recipient countries, and the integral role of evaluation to achieve rational and optimal use of resources available. It further emphasized the important role of the United Nations system in assisting developing countries, upon request, in developing their evaluation capacities, and requested the Secretary-General of the United Nations, in consultation with other system organizations, to elaborate proposals to this end 27/.

124. Subsequently, many of the organizations have added further co-operative activities beyond basic governmental participation in their evaluation activities and those activities discussed in the 1982 JIU report.

(a) FAO has undertaken monitoring and evaluation activities at the project or national level in 14 countries, workshops in a dozen countries, and pilot studies for development of socio-economic indicators for monitoring and evaluation of rural development in some 50 countries.

(b) WHO has established common frameworks and formats to aid countries to monitor and evaluate their national strategies for health for all, and numerous courses, seminars, and meetings are being held on this process in all WHO regions.

(c) ILO has conducted design and evaluation seminars for both recipient and donor countries and field seminars which include national officials; UNIDO has included about 250 government officials in its field training seminars; the World Bank has conducted regional seminars and has introduced monitoring and evaluation in courses given by its Economic Development Institute; and UNESCO is also organizing training courses in programming and evaluation in its areas of competence.

(d) As part of its effort to develop built-in monitoring and evaluation systems, WFP is currently assisting 15 countries to design and install project monitoring and evaluation capacities, with the active participation of national institutions and government agencies.

(e) The United Nations Department of Technical Co-operation for Development has held four interregional planning workshops which have given particular attention to the monitoring and evaluation of progress in plan implementation, and has other activities underway relating to performance evaluation and implementation of public sector programmes.

(f) Recent annual reports of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation on operational activities of the United Nations system have included brief follow-up sections on actions being taken.

(g) IFAD and FAO have led significant joint activities in the rural development field (see following section).

(h) UNICEF is strengthening collaborative information development, monitoring and evaluation processes with countries within its basic "country programming" approach, and has reported to its Executive Board on alternative co-operative programme approaches at the local, subnational and national levels, in different socio-economic contexts, and in the various UNICEF regions.

125. UNDP has a strong potential leadership role in fostering and strengthening evaluation by governments because of the thousands of projects which it finances, its country programming process, and its 115 field offices serving 150 governments around the world. One of the specific functions of the Central Evaluation Office established in late 1983 is to assist UNDP operational units in this task. UNDP has issued a directory of central evaluation authorities worldwide 28/, has worked through the CEO and its Regional Bureaux to review and develop appropriate technical assistance projects and meet several requests, and is working to establish inter-agency approaches.

126. Although the importance of adequate national administrative capacity has been acknowledged in development for years, the severe resource constraints and development difficulties of the past few years have brought much more direct attention to the need to build self-reliant national management capabilities, including an integral role for evaluation. Among the many recent documents along these lines are the following.

(a) The Substantial New Programme of Action for the least-developed countries, adopted in 1981, called for increased expert services and in-service training in development management areas including evaluation. An intergovernmental follow-up meeting in 1982 agreed further on the need for the least-developed countries to establish project/programme preparation, selection and evaluation units in each of their major ministries and organizations 29/.

(b) The 1983 World Development Report of the World Bank 30/ contained a special section on Management in Development which identified common problems and possible actions involved in building the quality of public sector management despite shortages and very difficult conditions in developing countries. Several chapters stressed inter alia the importance of performance evaluation and accountability for resources, improving planning-budgeting-evaluation links, building managerial skills and capacities, and reorienting governments to manage administrative change.

(c) The World Bank's 1984 review of project performance audit results 31/ reviewed the "sustainability" of success of 25 agricultural projects several years after project completion. The report found that the strength and flexibility of the institutional organization in the project were dominant factors in determining project sustainability, that built-in monitoring and evaluation are important to adjust a project during implementation, and that in virtually every project which was not sustained the need to build institutional capacity for the post-implementation period was not adequately addressed.

(d) A 1984 United Nations expert meeting on public administration and finance reviewed constraints, needs, and appropriate actions at the national and international levels 32/. The experts concluded that public administrative systems should serve as prime agents for improving performance, productivity and accountability in the public sector, and should give precedence to improving existing institutions rather than to the creation of new ones or system expansion.

(e) Two 1985 World Food Council reports analyzed the implementation of food plans and strategies in Africa. The first report 33/ highlighted the need to "persistently and systematically" attack the weaknesses in trained manpower and data available for policy analysis and formulation, project management, and monitoring and evaluation. The second report 34/ stressed the need for both African governments and assistance agencies to examine key issues and differing perceptions and better co-ordinate their actions to enhance aid effectiveness to meet the unprecedented African food crisis.

127. There are of course many obstacles to United Nations system efforts to support evaluation by governments and strengthen development management overall. The 1982 JIU report identified a long list of factors important to success, beginning with firm political commitment and support. Some developing countries already have some sophisticated evaluation systems in operation, but others have very fragile evaluation activities and still others have scarcely begun. Little status or analytical information has yet been published on evaluation efforts worldwide. Evaluation development must be adapted to many different socio-economic and cultural contexts and operate at many different governmental levels. The United Nations system evaluation units already have much work to do to expand and improve their own internal systems, and only very modest specific resources for evaluation work with governments. In addition, as the 1983 ACC comments observed, for United Nations system assistance to be purposeful and effective, the organizations must build up their own institutional capacities for providing knowledgeable and appropriate advice, institution-building and training, and avoid unco-ordinated, inconsistent and counter-productive assistance activities which might further encumber the already strained managerial capacity of many developing countries.

128. Despite these problems, the heightened recent attention to strengthening administrative capacity and self-reliant problem-solving in development administration underlines the importance of further work in this area. Governments

worldwide are struggling to overcome many severe constraints to further economic and social development. Efforts to support evaluation help the United Nations system organizations themselves by making developing country governments stronger partners in technical co-operation activities. Most importantly, however, support to evaluation by governments is essential to the longer-run objective of all United Nations system operational activities: to help governments better formulate, manage, analyze and improve the performance and results of their own programmes.

B. With other organizations

129. An important way to help strengthen evaluation by governments is to better harmonize and co-ordinate evaluation approaches and processes within the United Nations system and outside it. This is particularly true in technical co-operation activities, where the evaluation efforts of the system organizations and others are most directly and closely inter-related. Once again, progress has been made during the past few years.

130. The 1982 JIU report on supporting evaluation by governments observed that rural development was the most dynamic - and crowded - area for assisting evaluation by governments, as well as a high-priority technical co-operation area in general. In late 1984 the Panel on Monitoring and Evaluation of the ACC Task Force on Rural Development published guiding principles for the design and use of monitoring and evaluation in rural development activities 35/. The principles are intended to assist rural development officials in the developing countries to set up simple but effective monitoring and evaluation systems at the project, sectoral or national levels.

131. IFAD, as the convenor of the Panel, prepared the guiding principles in co-operation with FAO and the World Bank, with contributions from various United Nations system agencies and organizations outside the system. The principles were approved by the ACC Task Force in 1984 for use in all United Nations system-supported projects. They supplement the agencies' own sectoral guidelines and represent their common understandings and joint effort to provide a conceptual and practical framework within which national monitoring and evaluation systems can be developed and flexibly applied. IFAD also plans to publish a glossary of concepts and terminology and a compilation of the organizations' principles and practices in this field.

132. In addition, the ACC Task Force requested FAO in 1983 to gather and disseminate training materials and information on training activities in the field of monitoring and evaluation of rural development projects. The objective is to assist training institutions of developing countries, and also international organizations and developed country organizations working in this field, through a periodic exchange of information. The Development Policy Studies and Training Service of FAO has begun to build a computerized documentation and retrieval system for such training materials, based on initial inputs from 19 organizations, and to keep track of seminars, workshops and meetings on monitoring and evaluation being held worldwide.

133. Inter-organizational co-ordination is also being addressed at several broader levels. Since 1978 the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination has undertaken cross-organizational programme analyses (COPAs) of system activities in a particular sector. Cross-organizational reviews of selected sectors in the organizations' medium-term plans have also begun, as well as reviews of joint planning activities in several key areas 36/. The United Nations has developed a computerized data base including all substantive programme activities in the published work programmes and budgets of the system. In 1984 the Secretary-General of the United Nations reported on areas for future COPAs and how they could best be aligned with related evaluation reports and planning reviews 37/. Within these processes, and in the JIU report and Secretary-General's comments on reporting to ECOSOC 38/, consideration is being given to the cost-effectiveness of these studies and ways in which their use might be improved.

134. The reports of the Director-General, DIEC on operational activities for development have given expanding emphasis during the past few years to measures to enhance overall efficiency and effectiveness of United Nations system programmes and projects, including the steady strengthening of evaluation and practical measures to improve co-ordination at the country level 39/. These reports stress the importance of close aid co-ordination among aid agencies to integrate their individual aid programmes in a concerted fashion into the country's overall development efforts, and to simplify and harmonize procedures insofar as possible to reduce administrative burdens on governments.

135. An ad hoc inter-agency task force composed of UNIDO, UNDP, FAO and IAEA has been considering common design elements in project documents, and particularly the data needed for subsequent monitoring and evaluation. The agencies have also recognized that future improvements in project reporting should consider the growing management involvement of governments and the renewed emphasis on evaluation elements, and that the major system funding agencies - UNDP, UNFPA, IFAD, WFP and UNICEF - need to explore possibilities for further simplification of their specific aid procedures and information requirements.

136. Most directly, UNDP, in conjunction with its executing agencies, has undertaken a revision and updating of its procedures for project monitoring, evaluation and reporting. An Inter-Agency Working Group on Evaluation has met three times to discuss the new draft procedures. They are now being applied to all UNDP activities worldwide at the operational level, in a test which will continue until May 1986. In mid-1986 the Inter-Agency Working Group will review and analyze the experience gained and consider modifications needed before the procedures are finalized, probably at the end of 1986.

137. The current trial period provides a very significant opportunity to further improve, harmonize and streamline project monitoring and evaluation processes and approaches in the United Nations system. For the test, UNDP is stressing greater staff training efforts in design and evaluation; inclusion of the views of UNDP field staff, executing agencies and government officials; and their assessments of whether the revised monitoring, evaluation and reporting system (a) provides the information required by the implementing partners in the field and at headquarters, (b) facilitates necessary decision-making, and (c) does so at reasonable manpower, time and financial cost.

138. This critical assessment is very important to ensure that the revised UNDP procedures are the best possible ones and to firmly integrate them into improved overall programme and project management. Hopefully it will include the reconsideration of project design and project document formats also underway. The key phase will be careful and thoughtful assessment by the Inter-Agency Group, and subsequently ACC, of the experience gained in the trial period in combination with the agencies' own experiences. If sound, jointly-agreed procedures are established for UNDP-supported projects, the agencies might then consider how and to what extent these procedures could be commonly applied to their projects and programmes financed from other sources.

139. Co-operative evaluation activities of individual agencies, while still modest, are also expanding. Beyond the programme of thematic evaluations which UNDP has already established, various agencies occasionally do joint evaluations in particular sectors with other agencies, government evaluation units from both developed and developing countries, private research institutes worldwide, universities, and other international and non-governmental organizations. Particular co-operative potential appears to exist with regional development management and training institutes around the world, with the regional development banks which have been expanding their evaluation activities in recent years, and with organizations such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), which has had a group of evaluation correspondents reviewing past evaluation work. In addition, the several ACC Task Forces, the UNDP Inter-Agency Working Group, and JIU informal inter-agency evaluation meetings have provided ongoing fora for evaluation contacts and exchange of views.

140. Co-operative and harmonization efforts do present certain hazards, particularly since the organizations' central evaluation units are so small and face so many pressing tasks to further improve and expand their own evaluation systems. Joint efforts within the system have proven very useful for some organizations, but they are invariably more time consuming because of the different requirements, routines, and clearance procedures involved. Co-operation with organizations outside the system can be burdensome because there are so many possible partners and because the most enthusiastic organizations might have dozens of staff available for evaluation work, which can overwhelm the capacity of the one or two evaluation staff in the corresponding United Nations system organization. In addition, co-ordination and harmonization should not be pursued as ends in themselves, but as well-chosen, pragmatic, action-oriented and mutually beneficial activities.

141. Overall, however, several positive patterns emerge. First, as the organizations have established and expanded their own evaluation systems, they have built a base of experience which greatly facilitates practical information exchange and co-operation. Second, as the above co-operative activities indicate, evaluation, particularly in the technical co-operation area, is at least moving forward in tangible ways towards more harmonized and streamlined approaches and procedures, even though much remains to be done. Third, these underlying trends are gradually beginning to establish an international network of evaluation experience, activities, and people which should prove very useful to expand and strengthen evaluation and improve programmes in the future.

VII. USE AND VALUE OF EVALUATION

142. The growing experience in applying evaluation in the organizations was summarized in Chapter II, and the related issues of evaluation integration, methodologies, performance feedback and reporting, and co-operative efforts were discussed in Chapters III through VI. This chapter addresses the critical underlying questions of how well evaluation is being used and its value.

143. When JIU prepared its initial status report in 1977, evaluation was a loosely-organized mix of ideas and activities which had experienced fluctuating interest in the United Nations system for over two decades. In 1981, when the second reports were prepared, most organizations had progressed to the evaluation system development stage, but were still awaiting the "critical phase" of wide-spread implementation. In 1985, however, the Inspector believes that where evaluation systems have been actively applied, they have demonstrated their practical value in improving the organizations' operations.

144. The organizations cited many patterns of substantive use of built-in and in-depth evaluation. The increasing application of programme budgets and built-in evaluation processes has helped considerably to clarify and streamline programme and project objectives, strategies and work programmes, which has helped in turn to shorten lengthy design and approval processes, improve project document and programme budget quality, and force reformulation or deletion of proposed activities which cannot be coherently and realistically formulated. Evaluations have helped identify bottlenecks, problems, confusions, and inadequacies in implementation and to recommend prompt corrective actions. More significantly, evaluations have helped to re-orient projects and programmes to better achieve their established objectives, identify changing circumstances which necessitate re-adjusting strategies, provide needed information on results being achieved to facilitate decision-making at key points, identify successful elements and approaches for wider application, point out overlaps and co-ordination needs, and initiate policy reviews of improvements needed in underlying management processes, methods of determining results, and implementation patterns.

145. The value of evaluation is accentuated by the difficult international economic situation, scarce resources for international development, and zero-growth budgetary policies in many of the organizations. These trends necessitate the closest possible attention to results in order to derive maximum benefit from all available programme resources. The 1982 ACC evaluation comments observed that the modest level of resources devoted to evaluation could yield far greater programme benefits than its cost, through direct cost savings, increased effectiveness, and judicious use of available resources among areas of greater or lesser effectiveness. The organizations cited a number of instances of significant cost savings achieved through evaluation, particularly in larger commodity or equipment programmes or support and administrative processes. Such identification of inefficiency, waste or duplication is an increasingly important evaluation component, but it is only part of the larger evaluation "cost-effectiveness" effort to aid effective implementation and policy and programme management and help ensure continuing relevance and progress towards objectives.

146. "Evaluations of evaluation" have also begun. Several organizations have used consultants or internal working groups to assess the performance of their internal evaluation systems. These studies have endorsed the general directions being taken, encouraged further strengthening, and/or suggested specific steps to more solidly integrate evaluation into the programming cycle and improve its usefulness. Although follow-up systems are not yet very well-developed, several organizations have also made reviews which determined that evaluation findings were being used in continuing operations by managers and co-operating agencies, and that a majority of the evaluation recommendations made were implemented. In addition, the external auditors have examined the functioning of evaluation processes in several agencies, commended its use or suggested areas for strengthening, and encouraged expanded evaluation activity.

147. The value of evaluation is demonstrated most directly by steadily increasing demand from users. Based on work done to date, many subsidiary and governing bodies have encouraged continued system expansion, called for more in-depth and special studies in particular areas of interest, and requested continuing status reporting on system development and patterns of findings. Almost all organizations now have some form of regular evaluation reporting to governing bodies. An active and continuing evaluative dialogue is emerging with programme or technical co-operation committees, and evaluation is increasingly placed on their agendas as a regular item. In organizations which have not yet installed their systems, there are also a growing number of requests for more vigorous evaluation action and improved performance reporting.

148. Top management in the organizations has also become more active in suggesting topics for in-depth evaluation studies, reconsidering basic management and decision-making processes, and requesting internal status reporting on evaluation findings and patterns. In-depth and built-in evaluation efforts have been growing steadily in both field and headquarters programmes, and evaluation work plans, reporting and guidelines have also been largely institutionalized. In addition to the organizations only beginning evaluation activities, most of the organizations which had established initial systems in 1981 have continued to actively expand them into new areas, and the organizations with the "oldest" evaluation systems - UNDP, FAO, and WFP, which established their systems in the late 1960s - have been among the most active of all in further refining, expanding, and integrating their evaluation work.

149. While in-depth evaluations have been the most visible activity, built-in self-evaluation systems have had the major impact organization-wide. In-depth evaluations are relatively complex and costly, and therefore must be highly selective as to the few programmes or areas that they can address over time. The "built-in" feature of built-in self-evaluation, however, underscores its systematic use throughout an organization. The structured, standardized evaluation format and periodically-scheduled reporting under this approach require managers to make regular, documented assessments of progress and results, whether

successful or unsuccessful. Built-in self-evaluation therefore establishes a mechanism for performance accountability throughout the organization, and an orderly process of reporting on operational results for higher-level review and analysis.

150. The "self-" component of built-in self-evaluation is also very significant. Sceptics have doubted that managers can objectively assess success or problems in their own activities, but this objectivity is facilitated by the standardized, required, documented format of such evaluation. Its fundamental justification, however, is the need to build evaluation capacity and a results orientation throughout the organization in a participative process.

151. The relatively few organizations which have so far combined built-in self-evaluation with an extensive staff training programme feel that this process has laid a solid foundation for further evaluation system development. A gradual change of consciousness has occurred in these organizations. Staff members are becoming familiar with good design principles and understand the meaning of evaluation and its role as an important and legitimate management tool. Their responses to built-in self-evaluation requirements have often been very positive and frank, as they recognize the need for, and even encourage, prompt support and attention from higher management to deal with problems as they arise, rather than being held responsible later for a project or programme that has gone hopelessly off track. As a result of these attitudes and understandings, evaluations are being conducted much more routinely and more frequently than in the past.

152. The organizations which have gained evaluation experience recognize that their evaluation successes, while significant, are not cause for complacency or self-congratulation. First of all, much more work needs to be done. Second, evaluation is only one management tool: its successes and its shortcomings are closely tied to the quality and extent of top management leadership, governing body support, the programming system, information for decision-making, and other management and review processes within the organization. These observations lead to the two major long-term efforts required to increase the value of evaluation in the future.

153. Evaluation in most of the organizations can now be applied, at least in theory, to all activities. The Annex table shows that much progress has been made, but overall even more remains to be done. Some organizations are still only starting to apply evaluation. Others have only partial coverage of various areas. Some very significant programmes and activities have scarcely been touched by evaluation at all.

154. Coverage of field programmes and most projects by built-in self-evaluation and selective in-depth evaluations is becoming fairly systematic in the organizations. For headquarters programmes and activities, however, built-in evaluation has not yet caught up with programme budget coverage, and in-depth evaluations are usually highly selective. Within their tight resource limitations, the organizations need to gradually but steadily expand evaluation coverage and the appropriate methodologies to obtain some form of systematic assessment of progress and results in all their activities. FAO and WHO have gone furthest towards achieving this organization-wide scope. They recognize, however, the continuing substantial effort which is then required to effectively maintain, consolidate, revise and improve the quality of the evaluation activities established.

155. Second, the ACC and General Assembly policy statements mentioned at the beginning of this report viewed evaluation as "essential and integral" to organizational decision-making processes, and cited the need to build evaluation capabilities within "an overall management development effort". Chapters III and V discussed the elements, links and problems involved in this integration and the reassessments which many organizations are now making to provide more balanced, responsive, and streamlined decision-making systems. WHO officials, from the

perspective of their "unified managerial process", stated that it is now difficult for WHO to consider evaluation as a topic separate from the programming and budgeting framework, managerial information flows, and support to the managerial process and effective health programmes in Member States.

156. Evaluation should therefore not be considered as individual assessments of specific successes or failures or as a preoccupation in itself, but as an essential element in an ongoing organizational learning system. The objective is to make programmes work better and improve their results, to recognize and encourage good performance and promptly correct problems, and to respond alertly to changing circumstances and user needs.

157. A healthy organization has clear goals and objectives, appropriate resource deployments and structures for achieving them, two-way communication and feedback on performance, and an active, analytical problem-solving, evaluative and programming capacity. Well co-ordinated processes should determine who needs information, when and where throughout the organization, and then provide it. As managers and policy-makers become more and more adept at using the information available, this performance management system should lead to a steady increase in management capacity, programme quality, and responsiveness. The organizations of the system are now launched on this management development path, and should continue to actively pursue it.

VIII. SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

158. During the past several years the organizations of the United Nations system have moved into the "critical stage" of evaluation system implementation. Although the United Nations and UNESCO have lagged behind, and a few smaller agencies have little evaluation activity, evaluation is being used more widely and more systematically than ever before.

159. Built-in and in-depth evaluation are being applied to most projects or broader programmes in technical co-operation activities, and they are gradually being established for headquarters programmes and activities as well. Central evaluation units and basic evaluation system functions have become more clearly established. Most importantly, where evaluation is being applied it is proving its value by providing analytical data to aid operational improvement, achievement of established objectives, and the formulation of improved policies and programmes based on lessons learned.

160. In its 1982 overview report 40/, the ACC reviewed the economic and social crisis in development and international economic co-operation, and the erosion of the structure of multilateralism. It concluded that the United Nations system had a proven record of effectiveness and efficiency, but that the growing gap between expectations of system performance and modest resources provided posed "serious problems of credibility and effectiveness". The ACC concluded that it would be necessary to refute criticisms by clear evidence, and that more systematic evaluation procedures could help meet this challenge. The Inspector believes that, three years later, evaluation use is demonstrating its value, and that continuing evaluation expansion and strengthening can provide solid support to the long-term effort to further improve the system's operational performance and quality. He offers the following general conclusions and recommendations for consideration by all the organizations, in conjunction with the individual assessments of their evaluation activities and progress provided in JIU/REP/85/10.

161. Performance information The evaluation experience which most organizations have now gained has proven useful to improve programmes and projects and has laid a base for continuing evaluation system expansion. Furthermore, the basic evaluation concerns with effectiveness are reflected in initiatives which many organiza-

tions have undertaken to improve their decision-making processes. System-wide, however, there is still a greater emphasis on programme input routines than on actual outputs and results, unclear responsibilities for actions to improve other key decision-making components, and an insufficient flow of programme status and performance information (Chapters II.A, III, V and VII).

RECOMMENDATION 1 Each organization should take action to firmly integrate evaluation and other basic processes into a streamlined, responsive, performance-oriented information system, which is reassessed and further improved in a longer-term management development process.

As part of this process, each organization should gradually but steadily expand its evaluation system to provide at least some form of regular evaluative assessment of all of its activities, particularly by establishing "built-in" evaluation requirements, statements of objectives, and targets and indicators in its programme budgets or work programmes (paragraphs 99-107, 152-157).

In addition, to ensure a strong, integrated system, each organization should establish specific, co-ordinated responsibilities and actions, in the central evaluation unit or elsewhere, to:

(a) help improve and oversee the quality of project and programme designs, statements of objectives, and progress and performance indicators (paragraphs 46-52);

(b) provide a streamlined but relatively continuous and up-to-date flow of cost and performance status information from operations, integrated where possible with computerized information systems development, to meet the monitoring needs of operating and programme managers and facilitate policy-making by top management and governing bodies (paragraphs 57-61, 95-98, 111-116);

(c) provide management training for staff, including design, monitoring and evaluation components, to build organizational understanding and management capacity in these areas throughout the organization (paragraphs 71-74).

162. Evaluation standards and quality The increasing use of built-in self-evaluation has helped considerably to standardize basic evaluation processes within the organizations, particularly for technical co-operation projects, and to facilitate efforts to harmonize evaluation approaches. Increasing in-depth evaluation work is also slowly creating a body of experience for the difficult task of in-depth evaluation of very diverse types of programmes and projects, which should eventually facilitate more common methods and approaches. Although the evaluation label is not being used as loosely as in the past, maintaining evaluation quality remains an important shared responsibility (Chapters IV, V.B).

RECOMMENDATION 2 Each organization should gradually establish clear standards and terms of reference for the various types of evaluation which it regularly employs, to build the credibility of evaluation and maintain it as a sound, objective source of decision-making support. Evaluation units should oversee the quality of evaluation work, and management and governing bodies should provide continuing feedback on evaluation reporting in order to steadily improve its quality and relevance to their decision-making needs (paragraphs 84-89, 116-118).

163. Co-operative efforts Support to governments in developing their own evaluation capacity has made progress in the past few years. However, the resources available for this purpose are still very modest relative to pressing development needs and growing recognition of the importance of strengthening national administrative capacities. The organizations have also worked towards common evaluation approaches in certain areas, with a particularly significant effort now underway on an inter-agency basis to revise UNDP's procedures for monitoring, evaluation and reporting of the thousands of projects it supports.

The increasing evaluation activities of governments and other organizations world-wide provide new opportunities for exchanging evaluation experience and knowledge, and the outlines of an international evaluation network are beginning to take shape (Chapter VI).

RECOMMENDATION 3 Each organization should continue to actively seek out specific co-operative and co-ordinative activities, where possible, to help strengthen the overall management capacities of governments, share evaluation experience, and harmonize and simplify evaluation approaches (paragraphs 128, 137-141).

164. Central evaluation unit workloads Adequate central evaluation unit resources are essential to help develop, support, manage, and expand overall evaluation capacity and systems in the organizations, and to derive full evaluation benefits. The units, however, remain quite small and have hardly grown at all in the past few years despite increasing workloads. Many system development tasks and oversight functions still remain to be addressed, but a considerable part of the central unit efforts are now devoted to conducting in-depth evaluations. If the cost side of the "cost-benefit" relationship is suppressed for too long, evaluation quality and further system development will suffer (Chapter II.B).

RECOMMENDATION 4 Each organization should keep the professional staffing needs of its central evaluation units under close and continuing review, particularly in the light of in-depth evaluation workloads, to ensure that resources match responsibilities and do not jeopardize basic evaluation system quality and expansion (paragraph 27).

EVALUATION SYSTEM ACTIVITIES IN ORGANIZATIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM, 1984-1985

Annex 1
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Organization	Total, 1984-85		Central Evaluation Unit				Types of Evaluation					Other Evaluation System Functions				
	Estimated Expenditures (\$US m.) b/	Total Professional Staff d/	Unit Title and Location	Year Established f/	Total Resources, 1984-85		Technical Co-operation (Field programmes)			Headquarters Programmes and Activities		Formal Work Plan	Staff Training Programme	Evaluation Guidelines l/	UNDP Guidelines l/	Regular Reporting to Governing Bodies
					Estimated Expenditures (\$US m.) g/	Professional Staff Posts h/	Built-in Project Self-Evaluation	In-depth Project Evaluation	Broader Evaluations i/	Built-in Self-Evaluation	In-depth Programme Evaluation					
UNITED NATIONS Secretariat a/	2,940.5	5,236	Central Evaluation Unit, Department of International Economic and Social Affairs	1974 (1980) (1985)	1.3	4	1/2	○	○	●	○	●	—	○	●	●
UNICEF	761.0	1,010	Planning and Evaluation Section, Programme Development and Planning Division	1976	(1.5)	(2)	1.1/2	●	●	●	—	—	●	●	—	●
UNCHS (HABITAT)	50.2	98	Senior Evaluation Officer, Office of the Executive Director	1984	.1	(1)	-	●	●	—	●	○	—	○	●	—
UNCTAD	80.1	260	Programme Co-ordination and Evaluation Unit, Office of the Secretary-General	1985	.1	(2)	-	○	○	○	○	○	—	○	●	○
ITC	55.3	146	Senior Officer on Evaluation, Office of the Executive Director	1975	.2	1	1/2	—	●	●	—	●	●	○	●	●
UNDP	192.6 c/	987	Central Evaluation Office, Bureau for Programme Policy and Evaluation	1967 (1983)	1.3	3	6	○	●	●	—	—	●	●	●	●
UNEP	120.4	153	Evaluation Section, Office of the Executive Director	1975 (1985)	.1	2	1/2	—	●	●	—	●	—	○	—	●
UNFPA	271.1	153	Evaluation Branch, Policy and Evaluation Division	1974	(1.9)	6	1.1/2	○	●	●	—	—	—	●	—	●
UNHCR	832.7	496	Evaluation Unit, Office of Director, Assistance Division	1980	.4	2	1/2	●	●	●	—	—	—	●	—	●
FAO	1,074.6	3,244	Evaluation Service, Office of Programme, Budget and Evaluation	1968	1.5	(6.1/2)	-	●	●	●	●	●	—	●	●	●
IAEA	275.8	582	e/	1980	.6	3	2.1/2	●	●	●	—	●	—	●	●	●
ICAO	180.6	650	Evaluation Office, Technical Assistance Bureau	1982	.2	-	1/2	—	●	—	—	—	—	—	●	●

Continued page 2

Organization	Central Evaluation Unit				Types of Evaluation										Other Evaluation System Functions				
	Total, 1984-85		Unit Title and Location	Total Resources, 1984-85			Technical Co-operation (Field programmes)			Headquarters Programmes and Activities			Formal Work Plan	Staff Training Programme	Evaluation Guidelines 1/	UNDP Guidelines 1/	Regular Reporting to Governing Bodies		
				Year Established f/	Estimated Expenditures (\$US m.) g/	Professional Staff Posts h/	Consultant Years i/	Built-in Project Self-Evaluation	In-depth Project Evaluation	Broader Evaluations j/	Built-in Self-Evaluation	In-depth Programme Evaluation						External Evaluation k/	
	Estimated Expenditures (\$US m.) b/	Total Professional Staff d/																	
IFAD	50.0 c/	74	Monitoring and Evaluation Division, Economic and Planning Department	1979	2.0	2	5	●	●	●	—	—	●	○	●	—	●		
ILO	492.1	1,388	Evaluation Unit, Bureau of Programming and Management	1978	.7	3.1/2	-	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
IMO	41.2	121	Evaluation Unit, Office of the Secretary-General	1984	.1	(1/2)	-	—	—	○	—	—	—	●	—	○	○		
ITU	178.0	425	-	-	-	-	-	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—		
UNESCO	638.1	1,382	Central Evaluation Unit, General Directorate	1978 (1984)	.1	4	1/2	○	●	●	○	—	—	—	○	●	●		
UNIDO	265.3	472	Evaluation Unit, Deputy Executive Director	1976	.7	4	-	●	●	●	●	○	—	●	●	●	●		
UPU	22.1	78	-	-	-	-	-	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—		
WFP	1,473.7	1,140	Evaluation Service, Office of the Executive Director	1966 (1969)	2.5	11	2.1/2	○	●	●	—	—	●	●	—	—	—		
WHO	979.8	1,854	Responsible Officer, Managerial Process for WHO Programme Development	1973 (1982)	(.2)	(1/2)	-	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
WIPO	44.6	91	-	-	-	-	-	●	—	●	—	—	—	—	—	—	—		
WMO	83.2	197	-	-	-	-	-	—	—	●	—	—	—	—	—	—	—		
WORLD BANK	1,375.0 c/	2,855	Director General, Operations Evaluation, under Executive Directors	1970	13.7 c/	60	5	●	●	●	—	—	—	—	—	—	—		
Totals:	12,478.0	23,092			29.2	118	27	● = 11 ○ = 6 - = 7	● = 17 ○ = 2 - = 5	● = 18 ○ = 2 - = 4	● = 6 ○ = 3 - = 15	● = 10 ○ = 3 - = 11	● = 9 ○ = 0 - = 15	● = 16 ○ = 1 - = 7	● = 9 ○ = 4 - = 11	● = 12 ○ = 6 - = 6	● = 17 ○ = 0 - = 7	● = 19 ○ = 2 - = 3	

a/ "Secretariat" is used here to include United Nations headquarters departments, the regional economic commissions, and all other United Nations offices, centres, funds and other organs except for the eight United Nations entities which are summarized separately as in previous JIU evaluation status reports. The Central Evaluation Unit in DIESA plays a leading evaluation role throughout the Organization and has evaluation responsibilities which encompass all activities included in the United Nations medium-term plan and the programme budget.

b/ Total estimated expenditures for 1984-85 include both regular budget and extrabudgetary expenditures, and are taken from Table I of the ACC report on United Nations system expenditures of 6 July 1984 (E/1984/70) except as follows. Figures for UNCHS, UNCTAD, UNEP, UNHCR and UNIDO were not shown separately in the ACC table: they are taken from total direct cost figures (both regular and extrabudgetary) shown in the United Nations proposed programme budget for 1984-85 (A/38/6) and are therefore also deducted from the ACC total figure for the United Nations (US\$ 3,836.8 million). The ITC figure is taken from the ACC table footnotes and also deducted from the ACC total for the United Nations, while UNRWA, shown separately in the ACC table, is added back in to this total. For UNDP, IFAD and the World Bank, see footnote c/.

c/ The UNDP expenditures figure, from the ACC table, represents only programmes for which UNDP has management responsibility and those which are financed by UNDP but executed by organizations not included in the ACC report: other UNDP-financed activities are shown in the ACC table under the United Nations system agency which executes them. UNDP's total estimated programme expenditures for 1984-85 are US\$ 1,635 million. IFAD administrative expenditures for 1984-85 are approximately US\$ 50 million: total IFAD commitments are US\$ 1,800 million. World Bank estimated administrative expenditures for fiscal years 1984-86 (ending 30 June) are US\$ 1,375 million: its estimated central evaluation unit expenditures (Operations Evaluation Staff) are for the same two-fiscal-year period. World Bank total commitments for fiscal year 1984-85 only, including those of the International Development Association (IDA), were US\$ 13,800 million.

d/ Total professional staff figures are taken from Table I of the ACC report on personnel statistics of the United Nations common system as of 31 December 1983 (ACC/1984/PER/37 of 13 August 1984) except as follows. Figures for UNCHS, UNCTAD, UNEP and UNIDO were not shown separately in the ACC table: they are taken from total professional staff posts (i.e. somewhat overstated relative to actual staff figures) from the United Nations proposed programme budget for 1984-85 (A/38/6) and are therefore also deducted from the ACC total figure for the United Nations (6,141). However, UNRWA staff, shown separately in the ACC table, are added back to the United Nations total. UNFPA staff, included under UNDP in the ACC table, are shown separately here and deducted from the ACC figure for UNDP of 1,140. The WHO figure includes staff of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), while the ILO figure includes the International Centre for Advanced Technical and Vocational Training (ICAT) staff. World Bank figure is as of 30 June 1984.



e/ IAEA has a "Coordination of Evaluation" function in its Office of Internal Audit and Management Services, an Evaluation Unit in the Department of Technical Co-operation, and a Division of Safeguards Evaluation (with 21 professional posts). The central evaluation unit data in this table refer to the first two units, but not to the Safeguards unit, whose work is of a highly specialized and technical nature, much different from that of other central evaluation units in the United Nations system.

f/ The dates shown in parentheses for some organizations indicate a subsequent significant re-organization of the central unit.

g/ Estimated central unit expenditures or professional staff posts shown in parentheses indicate the proportion of the total resources devoted to evaluation where the unit has other responsibilities as well, i.e. a unit with a 1984-85 cost of US\$ 600,000 and three professional staff posts, which spends only half its time on evaluation, would be shown as "(.3)" and "(1.1/2)".

h/ Consultant years are adjusted to make them comparable to the professional staff post figures shown, i.e. 48 months of consultancies for evaluation work during 1984-85 would be shown as "2", meaning two consultant years per year.

i/ Symbols in the following columns are:

-  - established for all or part of the organization's activities
-  - being established
- - not done

j/ "Broader evaluations" refers to evaluations of groups of projects, projects in a region or a country, projects under a "theme" or in a sector, a country programme, or technical co-operation processes.

k/ "External evaluation" is used here in a double sense. It refers to formal evaluation studies done by, or including major participation by, external consultants, member state officials, or governing body representatives, which are also published as reports for governing body consideration. It thus deals primarily with broader programme and policy evaluations, rather than, for example, with the frequent use of consultants or participation of host governments and/or donor governments in internal, individual project evaluations.

l/ "Evaluation guidelines" refers to the organization's own guidelines for all or part of its programmes and projects. "UNDP guidelines" refers to the guidelines which the organization is subject to when it serves as an executing agency for technical co-operation projects financed by UNDP. The organization's own evaluation guidelines may supplement the UNDP guidelines in certain respects.

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