

TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION BETWEEN ORGANIZATIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM AND THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES (LDCs)

Prepared by

Ivan S. Kojić

Joint Inspection Unit



Geneva

1987

TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION BETWEEN ORGANIZATIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM
AND THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES (LDCs)

Prepared by
Ivan S. Kojić
Joint Inspection Unit

Table of Contents

	<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Page</u>
I. INTRODUCTION	1 - 16	1
II. THE FINANCING OF TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION	17 - 85	4
A. Volume of financing	18 - 24	4
B. Sources of financing	25 - 84	5
1. UNDP and the funds administered by UNDP or its Administrator	28 - 35	6
2. United Nations funds	36 - 52	7
3. The funds of the executing agencies in the United Nations system	53 - 84	11
C. Conclusions	85	18
III. THE PROGRAMMING OF TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION ACTIVITIES	86 - 152	19
A. The programming of the technical co-operation activities of the major organizations of the United Nations system	89 - 134	19
1. Medium- and long-term programmes	90 - 124	19
2. Emergency programmes	125 - 134	24
B. Project identification and formulation	135 - 142	26
C. Conclusions	143 - 152	27
1. Harmonization of the programming time frame	144 - 147	27
2. Programming that is consistent with national plans	148 - 150	27
3. Programming as an aid to gradual implementation of development objectives	151 - 152	28

Table of Contents

	<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Page</u>
IV. IMPLEMENTATION OF TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION PROJECTS	153 - 171	29
A. Execution by organizations of the United Nations system and by Governments	155 - 163	29
1. Execution by organizations of the United Nations system	155 - 158	29
2. Execution by Governments	159 - 163	30
B. Allocation according to project component	164 - 167	31
C. Conclusions	168 - 171	32
V. CO-ORDINATION OF TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION ACTIVITIES	172 - 195	33
A. Co-ordination at the secretariat level	174 - 182	33
1. Co-ordination within secretariats	174 - 179	33
2. Inter-secretariat co-ordination	180 - 182	34
B. Co-ordination in the field	183 - 192	35
1. At the national level	183 - 186	35
2. Regional co-ordination	187 - 192	35
C. Conclusions	193 - 195	36

Annexes

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Probably one of the most deplorable and disturbing features of today's world is the existence of extremely poor countries whose inhabitants are constantly fighting an uphill battle just to stay alive. These are the least developed countries (LDCs), whose number keeps increasing. These "poorest of the poor countries" not only have enormous day-to-day problems, but also face very gloomy development prospects in practically every area.

2. Anyone who wishes to have a clearer idea of the complex situation in the LDCs has only to consider three of the 16 most commonly used representative socio-economic indicators 1/ to realize that the LDCs are genuinely the most disadvantaged countries in the world. For example, their per capita gross domestic product (GDP) is four times lower than that of the developing countries and 40 times lower than that of the developed countries. In the LDCs, the adult literacy rate is no more than 32 per cent, compared with 58 per cent in the developing countries and 98 per cent in the developed countries. The share of manufacturing output in total production is only 9 per cent, as against 18 per cent in the developing countries and 29 per cent in the developed countries. 2/ These inequalities more than justify the particular concern of the United Nations system to co-operate with the LDCs and help them cope with these problems.

3. The picture is even gloomier if account is taken of other factors, such as: (a) geographical location (landlocked and island countries), which causes the LDCs additional problems (in the transport, communications and energy sectors, for example); and (b) serious natural disasters, such as drought, desertification, floods and cyclones, which affect many LDCs and make their situation even more critical.

4. One of the obstacles to the efforts being made by the LDCs themselves and by the international community to promote economic and social development is that there are major differences between the LDCs: some have a population of 20, 40 or even 100 million persons, whereas others have less than 100,000 inhabitants; some have vast and sometimes remote territories, while others are small islands set in immense oceans. The situation also varies in terms of the amount of available arable land, which may be as much as one hectare or as little as 0.2 hectare per inhabitant.

5. Over 20 years ago, the international community became aware of the LDCs' particularly difficult situation, although criteria for identifying these countries as the poorest among the poor had not yet been formulated. As early as 1968, the second session of UNCTAD adopted a resolution (24/II) on special measures to be taken in favour of the LDCs and, in 1971, the General Assembly adopted the criteria for identifying LDCs, established by the Committee for Development Planning, as well as a list of 24 countries. 3/

1/ See the table in annex 1.

2/ All data are based on 1984 figures.

3/ Resolution 2768(XXVI).

6. Since then, there have been additions to this list, which, despite the development efforts these countries and the international community have made, now includes 40 LDCs. ^{4/} Without going into a detailed analysis of this problem (the scope of this report does not allow such an undertaking), we would nevertheless like to point out that this situation reflects all the complex development problems the LDCs face and is one of the major features of modern-day international life. It therefore deserves the attention of the international community and, particularly that of the United Nations system.

7. The United Nations Conference which was held in Paris from 1 to 14 September 1981 and the Substantial New Programme of Action (SNPA) for the 1980s for the LDCs which the Conference adopted marked the start of an important phase in the activities of the United Nations system in favour of the LDCs. The global objective of the SNPA is to transform the economies of the LDCs so that they may achieve self-sustained development. The SNPA contains provisions concerning the implementation, follow-up and monitoring of the Programme and establishes appropriate arrangements at the national level (round tables, consultative groups, Club du Sahel, etc.) and at the regional and global levels (such as the mid-term review held in 1985 and the global review to be held at the end of the decade). Other provisions of the SNPA relating to the role of all organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, such as UNDP and its funds, the specialized agencies, UNCTAD and the competent United Nations regional economic commissions, are designed to encourage the mobilization and co-ordination of all activities in favour of the LDCs.

8. At its fortieth session, the General Assembly adopted a resolution on the SNPA ^{5/} which contains, inter alia, a decision to carry out a global review and appraisal of the implementation of the SNPA at a high level in 1990 and requests the Secretary-General of the United Nations to submit to the General Assembly at its forty-second session a report on the implementation of that resolution.

9. This is the general context in which the present report has been prepared; it deals with technical co-operation by the United Nations system with the LDCs as a major component of the activities which the system is carrying out in these countries.

10. The basic objective of this report is to review the main features of technical co-operation by the United Nations system with the LDCs in order to identify the problems and difficulties that arise in connection with these activities. This analysis will lead to conclusions and recommendations that are designed to help improve the effectiveness of technical co-operation and to promote better co-operation among the agencies of the United Nations system, as well as the more rational co-ordination of their activities and programmes, primarily from the viewpoint of the beneficiary countries, in order to assess the efforts being made in the field.

^{4/} See the full list in annex 2.

^{5/} General Assembly resolution 40/205.

11. The structure of the report is shown in the table of contents. Chapter I containing the introduction is followed by chapter II on financing. Since no technical co-operation activities may be carried out without guaranteed financing, we deemed it necessary to catalogue the funds that the United Nations system assigns to the LDCs, particularly in the field of technical co-operation.

12. Chapter III deals with project programming, formulation and identification. We shall review the consistency and effectiveness of the formulation of programmes, their harmonization with the LDCs' national plans and the problems involved in project formulation and identification in the light of specific conditions in the LDCs.

13. In chapter IV on the implementation of technical co-operation projects, we shall discuss implementation measures and figures (implementation rates, agency support costs in relation to resources for the LDCs, etc.), as well as various types of project implementation machinery, with emphasis on implementation.

14. Chapter V deals with co-ordination. Since the technical co-operation activities of the United Nations system in favour of the LDCs cover virtually all economic and social sectors, take place at every stage of co-operation, from fund-raising to the programming and implementation of programmes and projects, are carried out in 40 LDCs and involve all the organizations, funds and bodies of the United Nations system, it is clear that such broad activities give rise to a number of practical co-ordination problems, both at headquarters and in the field; hence the inclusion of such a chapter in this report.

15. With regard to the conclusions and recommendations, we wish to make it clear that they are grouped at the end of each chapter, thus enabling the reader easily to see how the comments and suggestions made in the chapters relate to the resulting conclusions and recommendations.

16. During the research work for this report, we have held consultations with officials of the main organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system and studied the relevant documents and reports they kindly made available to us. We also undertook field missions which involved very useful meetings with representatives of Governments, as well as with officials of agencies of the United Nations system, including UNDP Resident Representatives. All these contacts gave us a better grasp of the ideas we already had on the subject and provided us with further interesting information. It is a pleasure for us to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of the many persons with whom we met for their close co-operation, for their frankness and for the documents that were of such great assistance to us in our work. Special thanks go to the Senior Research Officer in the Joint Inspection Unit who contributed greatly to the preparation of this report.

II. THE FINANCING OF TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION

17. We shall endeavour in this chapter to assess, if only approximately, the volume of such financing and to itemize the sources.

A. Volume of financing

18. Undeniably, for anyone who wants to inquire into technical co-operation between the United Nations system and the LDCs it is no easy matter to evaluate the sums involved, for neither the volume, the distribution nor the time pattern (at least over the last five or ten years) is available in any one United Nations document.

19. Let us try, in this necessarily brief report, to give some details of the quantitative side of technical co-operation. One possible approach would be to estimate the aid from the system and pinpoint the volume that is allocated to technical co-operation.

20. Overall United Nations system aid to the LDCs in all respects (food aid, aid to compensate trade-balance deficits, emergency aid, technical assistance, and so on) is estimated to have risen over the period 1980 to 1985 from US\$ 1.5 to 2 billion per annum (see table 1).

Table 1

LDCs: United Nations system aid between 1980 and 1985
(US\$ millions)

Agencies		Annual average	
		1980-1982	1983-1985
<u>United Nations</u>		<u>690.1</u>	<u>857.5</u>
of which	UNDP	(228.0)	(213.5)
	UNHCR	(95.5)	(142.5)
	UNICEF	(66.9)	(86.2)
	WFP	(205.5)	(252.1)
	UNTA	(22.5)	(42.0)
<u>Multilateral organizations akin to the United Nations</u>		<u>869.4</u>	<u>1,149.3</u>
of which	AfDB	(83.2)	(111.5)
	AsDB	(66.4)	(113.0)
	IBRD	(10.5)	(1.1)
	IDA	(592.4)	(845.4)
	IDB	(10.5)	(13.9)
	IFAD	(21.2)	(64.4)
	IMF	(85.2)	-
<u>Total</u>		<u>1,559.5</u>	<u>2,006.8</u>

Source: UNCTAD, TD/328/Add.5, annex, p. 7.

21. In absolute figures, these are large amounts. Nevertheless, when shared among the 300 million people who make up the population of the LDCs they are quite small: US\$ 6 per inhabitant.

22. However, these amounts do not reflect the fact that some LDCs, despite a large population, have been able to count on international aid, including the crucial aid of the United Nations system, particularly in periods of drought, famine and epidemics, in natural disasters and in afflictions of all kinds. In some instances more than one third of the population of some of these LDCs has managed to survive for many months as a result of aid from the international community and the United Nations system.

23. While the sums allocated to the LDCs by United Nations system funds (an annual average of US\$ 857 million between 1983 and 1985) can in the aggregate be viewed as sums intended chiefly to finance technical co-operation projects, the same is not true in the case of funds from multilateral organizations akin to the system. Their share of the sums allocated to technical co-operation with the LDCs in the total aid granted to these countries (an annual average of US\$ 1,149.3 million between 1983 and 1985) differs markedly from one organization to another.

24. Only a thorough scrutiny of each fund, agency and organization would provide a good approximation of the amounts actually disbursed on technical co-operation with the LDCs. Such a task would call for a great deal of further elaboration well beyond the scope of this report. The paragraphs below none the less give some indication of the input of the larger funds and agencies in the United Nations system.

B. Sources of financing

25. The United Nations system's sources of financing that are available to the LDCs, as they are to the other developing countries, are really quite numerous. We consider it helpful to list them here, classing them for the sake of convenience in three major categories: (a) UNDP and the funds administered by UNDP or its Administrator; (b) United Nations funds; and (c) the resources of the executing agencies in the United Nations system.

26. These numerous bodies are funded in different ways (voluntary contributions, budget contributions, trust funds, etc.) and the sums are allocated to the recipient countries under equally varied and sometimes very complex modalities and criteria. Nevertheless, and the point is of particular importance for the LDCs, the majority of these bodies have established rules and special measures so that the LDCs can in most cases benefit from larger shares than those to which they would be entitled if they were classed simply as developing countries.

27. A number of these bodies have special machinery whereby they can either obtain additional funds from donor countries for the developing countries in general, and for the LDCs in particular, or they can act as a catalyst and attract private or public investment to the LDCs.

1. UNDP and the funds administered by UNDP or its Administrator

28. In terms of the funds it administers, UNDP is naturally the chief source in this constellation. Some of the funds go to finance activities solely in the LDCs (Special Measures Fund for the Least Developed Countries) or in countries which largely include the least developed (United Nations Volunteers (UNV), United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office (UNSO) and United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF)).

(a) UNDP

29. As long ago as 1970, when the United Nations General Assembly first established country programming on the basis of indicative planning figures (IPFs), it recommended that UNDP should pay special attention "to the situation of the least developed countries and of newly independent countries whose lack of an adequate administrative infrastructure has prevented them from taking proper advantage of programme assistance". 6/

30. Specific measures in favour of the LDCs have since been taken by UNDP to implement this and other recommendations to help the LDCs. The latest of the measures in this regard was adopted by UNDP in 1985 (decision 85/16), whereby 80 per cent of the IPF for the fourth cycle of development co-operation (1987-1991) is allocated to the "low-income" countries. As the result of this decision, it is estimated that nearly 45 per cent of all the fourth cycle IPFs will be apportioned to the LDCs. 7/ Table 2 below shows the IPF pattern between UNDP's first and fourth cycles and the share of the LDCs.

Table 2

UNDP: Allocation of indicative planning figures
for the first, second, third and fourth cycles
(US\$ millions)

	First cycle 1972-1976	Second cycle 1977-1981	Third cycle 1982-1986	Fourth cycle 1987-1991
Total	1,282.4	2,036.1	2,164.3	2,491.1
LDCs	322.6	674.3	870.0	1,052.0
%	25	33	40	42

Source: DP/1986/11/Add.3, p. 12.

31. Apart from the funds allocated to the LDCs by UNDP under the IPFs, there are funds under regional and interregional projects, but it is very difficult with these two kinds of programmes to determine the extent to which they benefit the LDCs as distinct from the developing countries.

6/ General Assembly resolution 2688(XXV), annex, para. 16.

7/ DP/1986/11, p. 4.

(b) UNCDF

32. Voluntary contributions to UNCDF in 1986 amounted to US\$ 27 million. The Fund finances projects designed to cover basic needs (food self-sufficiency, health, habitat, irrigation), to increase production capacity and to enhance local skills of low-income groups, mainly in LDCs.

33. UNCDF charges only 3 per cent commission to cover its overheads. If the project is assigned to a co-operating agency, UNCDF passes on 5 per cent of the amount of the project to the agency.

34. UNCDF makes great efforts to secure participation by the population concerned in carrying out its projects and to combine its socially-oriented projects with profitable economic projects in order to ensure viability.

(c) UNSO

35. Although voluntary contributions average only US\$ 5 million a year, UNSO has since its inception carried out drought and desertification control projects in 22 Sudano-Sahelian countries (17 of which are LDCs) for a total of nearly US\$ 1 billion (150 million from its own resources, 100 million from supplementary resources and 700 million from bilateral funds). 8/

2. United Nations funds

36. In terms of the amounts allocated to technical co-operation and to aid in general, these funds also differ in importance. Four are much larger than the others, namely WFP, UNICEF, UNFPA and UNHCR.

(a) World Food Programme (WFP)

37. The World Food Programme is not directly concerned with technical co-operation, although for United Nations purposes WFP is often included under this heading. WFP provides food aid either as part of development assistance or for emergency purposes.

38. Development assistance commitments in 1986 accounted for nearly US\$ 630 million or 1.8 million tons of food, over half being allocated to the LDCs (including those treated by the United Nations system "as if" they were LDCs) and about 25 per cent to other low-income, food deficit countries. Development assistance is channelled to two priority sectors: (a) agricultural and rural development; and (b) human resources development (see table 3).

8/ UNSO's activities, its achievements, its operating procedures, and more particularly the procedures for collecting additional funds, have been analysed in a Joint Inspection Unit report dealing exclusively with this Organization (see JIU/REP/1983/1).

Table 3
WFP : Development commitments
(US\$ millions)

Year	Agricultural and rural development			Human resources development		Other Industrial & mining	Total WFP commitments	WFP commitment to LDCs
	Agricultural production	Rural infrastructure	Settlement	Food reserves	MCH a/ and primary schools	Secondary & higher education training		
1973	52	27	7	0	28	15	129	17
1974	48	36	5	0	13	4	106	70
1975	133	41	46	0	169	4	393	135
1976	341	98	40	0	136	27	642	250
1977	125	35	56	6	125	20	367	126
1978	162	30	36	0	139	25	392	197
1979	217	62	44	4	149	16	492	260
1980	120	58	65	6	216	14	479	232
1981	202	105	128	14	75	19	543	263
1982	326	61	70	10	139	7	613	310
1983	343	64	66	0	208	15	696	287
1984	431	80	39	5	332	25	925	436
1985	345	101	37	15	107	37	642	257
1986	348	32	80	49	83	37	629	353

Source: WFP/CFA: 23/4, p. 36.

a/ Mother Child Health.

39. The responsibility for distributing food aid lies with the Governments, and WFP monitors the distribution. In the case of LDCs, WFP pays 50 per cent of the internal transport, storage and distribution costs. WFP also assists recipient Governments with food aid management and co-ordination.

40. Emergency aid consists essentially in the supply of food commodities to meet urgent requirements of populations affected by three main categories of emergency situations: war and civil disturbances (refugees and displaced persons), drought, and natural disasters. In 1986 WFP allocated resources to 50 emergency operations with a value of US\$ 182.57 million of which 43 per cent were allocated to LDCs. The commitment of food commodities is accompanied by payment of their ocean transport costs and, in the case of LDCs, by a 50 per cent subsidy of the internal transport, storage and distribution costs. In exceptional cases WFP arranges for coverage of 100 per cent of these costs, mostly with bilateral assistance.

In serious emergency situations (such as Ethiopia, Sudan, Chad) WFP has intervened in logistics management, by operating trucking fleets, or has provided logistics equipment, materials (trucks, storage, rail) and repairs. In many cases it has placed logistic officers in the affected countries to help Governments co-ordinate shipments of emergency food.

41. WFP aid is supplied to countries free of charge in support of Governments' development projects and emergency relief operations, which often involve complementary assistance from other United Nations sources and bilateral donors, such as technical expertise and equipment. WFP food assistance can only be effective if used within a well-planned Government project, into which the Government will be contributing considerable sums of money towards logistic and other support costs. The cost to the Government in many WFP projects, even in LDCs, exceeds the WFP input. In some projects, the plan of operations allows for the generation of counterpart funds, through the sale of a portion of the WFP commodities to finance some of the non-food aspects of the projects.

(b) United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA)

42. UNFPA focuses its activities on "priority countries for population assistance" (PCPAs). At the present time, 53 countries, of which 34 are LDCs, belong to this group.

43. The amounts that UNFPA allocates to these countries show a tendency to fall off (see table 4). On the other hand, it would seem, according to UNFPA's internal statistics, that its expenditures on technical co-operation in the LDCs have continued to rise, or at least they did so up to 1984. According to these sources, between 1980 and 1984 the LDCs received US\$ 98 million, compared with US\$ 45 million between 1975 and 1979. From the same data, over the period 1980 to 1984 UNFPA financed 308 projects in the LDCs and project execution was assigned either to agencies in the United Nations system or to the recipient Governments, or again, to non-governmental organizations.

Table 4

UNFPA: Distribution of expenditures in priority and other countries

Priority countries				Other countries			
1977-1981		1982-1984		1977-1981		1982-1984	
US\$ millions	%	US\$ millions	%	US\$ millions	%	US\$ millions	%
193.1	54.1	164.0	70.0	164.0	45.9	70.4	30.0

Source: DP/1986/38, p. 8.

44. Family planning programmes account for half of UNFPA's funding for the PCPAs, programmes which indeed tend to override all other UNFPA activities.

(c) United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

45. UNICEF's income each year is approximately US\$ 400 million, two thirds consisting of contributions to the general resources and one third consisting of supplementary funds. These amounts are constantly on the increase: US\$ 342 million in 1983, US\$ 445 million in 1986 (planned) and US\$ 470 million in 1988 (projected).

46. In 1984, the latest year for which figures on actual expenditures are available, US\$ 244 million went to projects (chiefly the supply of equipment and materials, personnel and training grants) that were executed by specialized agencies, Governments and non-governmental organizations, were used to finance implementation of the child survival and development strategy (primary health care, nutrition, water supply, education and urban programmes) and helped to cope with the emergency situation in Africa.

47. The share of the LDCs in the commitments between 1983 and 1990 accounts for 6.5 per cent of the general resources and 39.5 per cent of the supplementary funds.

(d) Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

48. Although UNHCR's work is intended chiefly to protect refugees, it covers other matters which are more directly linked to development: emergency aid, health and food aid, projects to find durable solutions and encourage self-sufficiency among refugees.

49. UNHCR draws no distinction between the LDCs and the other developing countries. Its activities none the less concern host countries which are, in the main, LDCs.

50. Basically, UNHCR's technical co-operation projects are executed by Governments, United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations. It also executes some projects itself, either directly or by sub-contracting them to the private sector.

51. In 1985, the latest year for which detailed figures are available, UNHCR's income amounted to US\$ 394 million, in the form of contributions from Governments (US\$ 324 million), intergovernmental organizations (US\$ 54 million) and non-governmental organizations (US\$ 16 million). 9/

52. UNHCR's expenditures in the same year totalled US\$ 421 million, two thirds going to relief and other assistance, and one third to local settlement. The share of the LDCs in UNHCR's total expenditures in 1985 was US\$ 183.8 million (see table 5).

Table 5

UNHCR expenditures in 1985 by type of assistance a/
(US\$ millions)

	Local settlement <u>b/</u>	Resettlement	Voluntary repatriation <u>c/</u>	Relief <u>d/</u> and other assistance	Total
Total	140.6	18.9	12.4	248.9	420.8
LDCs	60.5	0.4	7.6	115.3	183.8
%	43.0	2.1	61.3	46.3	43.7

Source: A/41/12.

a/ And therefore not including expenditure for programme support and administration.

b/ Including income-generating activities.

c/ Including assistance to returnees.

d/ Including donations in kind (food, etc.).

3. The funds of the executing agencies in the United Nations system

53. The major specialized agencies in the United Nations system, in terms of the size of their own resources assigned to technical co-operation, are four in number and, in descending order: WHO, FAO, UNESCO and ILO. Compared with these, the other agencies allocate relatively modest amounts of their own resources to technical co-operation.

9/ A/41/12, p. 48.

(a) World Health Organization (WHO)

54. Out of a biennial budget of more than US\$ 1 billion, the resources gathered by WHO from UNDP and other United Nations sources stand at US\$ 80 million in 1986-1987 and US\$ 45 million in 1988-1989, in other words, less than 4.5 per cent.

55. WHO's procedure for technical co-operation with the developing countries is the same everywhere; the thing that changes, depending on the country, is the programme content and the country's national health plan. However, in regard to the LDCs WHO has played a pioneering role, thereby moving ahead of most of the agencies in the system and of UNDP. For example, in 1974 it established a Special Account for Assistance to the Least Developed among Developing Countries, funded largely by the Nordic countries.

56. WHO also engaged in sectoral exercises in 17 countries to examine the use of national health resources: a kind of predecessor of the round tables and the National Technical Co-operation Assessment and Programmes (NATCAPs). In addition, it established a Revolving Fund to finance group purchases of medicines, largely by the LDCs.

57. The figures for WHO's activities in all countries on an individual basis (excluding inter-country activities) are US\$ 344 million, including US\$ 101 million for the LDCs (1986-1987), and US\$ 312 million, including US\$ 88 million for the LDCs (1988-1989) (see table 6).

Table 6

WHO country activities: Estimated obligations
(US\$ millions)

	1986-1987	1988-1989
Total	343.8	312.1
LDCs	101.3	87.9
%	29.5	28.2

Source: WHO, PB/88-89, Proposed Programme Budget for 1988-1989.

58. In 1985, when it adopted the programme budget for 1986-1987, the Health Assembly laid down the following objectives for WHO: strengthening national capacities to prepare and implement national strategies for health for all by the year 2000, inter alia, by developing health infrastructures; forming a large number of health-for-all leaders in every country; and promoting optimum co-ordinated use of resources by Governments for the implementation of national strategies.

(b) Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

59. While the funds from UNDP and other United Nations programmes to finance technical co-operation projects executed by FAO fell from US\$ 173.6 million

in 1980 to US\$ 137.8 million in 1986, FAO's technical co-operation allocations from other trust fund programmes and its own Technical Co-operation Programme (TCP) steadily increased over the same period, rising from US\$ 106.2 million to US\$ 177.3 million (see table 7).

Table 7

Yearly expenditures on FAO field programmes
(US\$ millions, by programme and programme category)

<u>FIELD PROGRAMMES</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1981</u>	<u>1982</u>	<u>1983</u>	<u>1984</u>	<u>1985</u>	<u>1986</u>
1. <u>FAO/UNDP Programme</u>	<u>167.1</u>	<u>182.5</u>	<u>141.1</u>	<u>116.5</u>	<u>109.2</u>	<u>115.9</u>	<u>128.8</u>
2. <u>Trust Fund Technical Assistance</u>							
FAO/Government Programme	32.6	38.9	44.4	43.8	56.8	65.4	73.0
Assoc. Prof. Off. Programme	14.5	14.6	13.0	12.6	13.7	13.2	12.9
Near East Co-operative Programme	4.8	3.3	3.0	1.3	0.7	0.9	0.8
Unilateral Trust Funds	10.9	13.8	24.5	33.5	38.2	42.1	34.7
Control of Food Losses Spec. Acct.	3.6	4.0	2.7	1.5	0.5	0.6	0.6
Freedom from Hunger Campaign/AD	1.6	1.7	1.0	1.1	1.0	1.1	0.9
UNFPA	3.5	2.3	1.9	0.9	1.7	2.1	1.3
UN Environment Programme	1.3	0.8	0.9	1.9	0.8	0.9	0.6
Other UN Organizations	1.7	2.9	3.1	4.7	10.5	9.4	7.1
Special Relief Operations (OSRO)	14.7	30.4	15.5	12.2	5.3	4.0	4.1
Int. Ferti. Supply. Scheme (IFS)	3.3	2.2	3.8	0.1	3.2	1.5	1.6
Emergency Centre Locust Oper. (ECLO)	-	-	-	-	-	-	7.0
Miscellaneous Trust Funds	<u>6.4</u>	<u>5.2</u>	<u>5.9</u>	<u>6.7</u>	<u>7.2</u>	<u>6.4</u>	<u>6.6</u>
Subtotal	<u>98.9</u>	<u>120.1</u>	<u>119.7</u>	<u>120.3</u>	<u>139.6</u>	<u>147.6</u>	<u>151.2</u>
<u>TOTAL EXTRABUDGETARY FIELD PROGRAMMES</u>	<u>266.0</u>	<u>302.6</u>	<u>260.8</u>	<u>236.8</u>	<u>248.8</u>	<u>263.5</u>	<u>280.0</u>
3. <u>TCP</u>	13.8	15.4	17.4	22.8	20.5	27.5	35.1
<u>TOTAL FIELD PROGRAMMES</u>	<u>279.8</u>	<u>318.0</u>	<u>278.2</u>	<u>259.6</u>	<u>269.3</u>	<u>291.0</u>	<u>315.1</u>

Source: FAO, Review of Field Programme 1986-1987 (C/87/4).

60. A large proportion of technical assistance in agriculture (60 per cent to 70 per cent) administered by FAO has been aimed directly at increasing food production. In the case of fisheries, the main focus has been to support the assessment, planning and exploitation of fisheries resources, and processing and marketing of fish, while in forestry the main efforts have been in assisting the assessment, management and conservation of forest resources, support for forest institutions, and the promotion of forest industries and trade. The LDCs have benefitted increasingly under all FAO-supported programmes.

61. During the period 1 January to 31 December 1985, a total amount of US\$ 314 million was approved for some 879 new projects, project revisions and new allocations for ongoing projects for funding by UNDP, trust fund and TCP. Out of this, the share of the LDC countries was 401 projects totalling US\$ 106 million.

62. In particular, the number of TCP projects approved for the LDCs increased from 135 in 1984 to 227 in 1985 with an increase in value from US\$ 9 million to US\$ 26 million respectively. In 1984, the LDCs accounted for 32 per cent of value of TCP projects approved, while in 1985, they accounted for 48 per cent of the value of TCP projects approved. For Africa, TCP projects approved for the LDCs increased from 89 in 1984 to 149 in 1985 with respective increase in value from US\$ 6 million to US\$ 17 million.

63. During 1984 and 1985, a total of 27 projects in the LDCs, prepared earlier with assistance from FAO's Investment Centre, was approved for financing by multilateral financing institutions. Total investments involved in these projects amount to about US\$ 431 million, of which US\$ 314 million is being provided from external sources. The projects approved aim at increasing foodcrop production through supply of inputs and other improved practices; improve agricultural research and increase livestock or fish production. All four forestry projects have fuelwood components.

64. In 1985 direct cost for various forms of FAO-supported training activities amounted to approximately US\$ 23.7 million. FAO's training activities benefitted all least developed countries.

(c) United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

65. For 1986-1987, UNESCO's resources to finance its technical co-operation activities are made up equally of UNDP and United Nations funds and UNESCO's own funds: US\$ 109.4 million and US\$ 108.0 million respectively. These amounts are for the developing countries as a whole and it is difficult to quantify the share allocated to the LDCs.

66. UNESCO's activities cover 14 major programmes. The priority is on co-operation in the formulation of education policies, the environment, the sciences and their application, education for all, etc.

(d) International Labour Organisation (ILO)

67. The same tendency, namely a drop in funds from UNDP and the United Nations and an increase in the agency's own resources, the share from both sources being roughly the same, can be found in ILO. For example, between 1982 and 1985, ILO mobilized resources of its own (regular programme and trust funds for technical co-operation) of US\$ 45.7 to 46 million, compared with US\$ 44.5 to 57.3 million from the United Nations (see table 8).

Table 8

ILO: Technical co-operation expenditures, 1982-1985
(US\$ millions)

	1982	1983	1984	1985
UNDP + UNFPA	57.3	49.1	42.5	44.5
Trust funds + Regular programme	45.7	45.5	40.8	46.0
<u>Total</u> of which:	103.0	94.6	83.3	90.5
LDCs	28.2	25.0	25.5	29.5

Source: ILO, Reports of the Director-General to the 71st and 72nd sessions (1985 and 1986).

68. Since the beginning of the 1980s, the LDCs' share has remained at about 28 to 29 per cent of ILO's total expenditures on technical co-operation activities, despite the fall in funds from the United Nations.

69. At its 70th session (1984), the ILO Conference adopted a resolution concerning the strengthening of action for the LDCs and, at its 71st session (1985), a resolution concerning the most urgent problems of Africa, particularly food security. Under these two resolutions, ILO has endeavoured to help the Governments of the LDCs to develop their human resources, to promote employment and the campaign against poverty, to encourage women to participate in development activities, to establish co-operatives and to support action for rural development.

(e) Other agencies or bodies in the system

70. Other organizations in the United Nations system mobilize resources of their own (in addition to funds received from UNDP and the United Nations) to finance technical co-operation with the LDCs.

(i) United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)

71. Out of UNIDO's expenditures of about US\$ 100 million on technical co-operation activities in 1986, slightly more than 17 per cent related to technical co-operation activities in LDCs. Of this amount, US\$ 12.6 million was financed from UNDP/IPF resources and US\$ 0.9 million from UNDP/SIS resources; the remainder was financed from UNIDO resources - the regular budget, the Industrial Development Fund and other trust funds.

72. For the period of the third UNDP programming cycle (1982-1986), LDC project expenditures came to a total of US\$ 86.2 million (about 19 per cent of the total expenditures of about US\$ 451.2 million from all sources of funds). It should be noted that these figures relate to projects for specific LDCs and do not include training provided to participants from LDCs in training activities which were not limited to LDCs; the figures therefore understate the level of assistance provided to LDCs.

(ii) International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

73. For the LDCs, ITU grants fellowships, covers travel costs and living allowances for meetings and seminars, supplies training manuals free of charge, second engineers from headquarters and supplies some equipment, all of which is financed under the Union's regular budget.

(iii) Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator (UNDRO)

74. UNDRO's co-operation activities in pre-disaster planning and prevention are on the increase, although only few Governments agree to finance pre-disaster planning and prevention projects out of their IPF, and UNDP and other organizations in the system often consider this kind of activity as relating more to humanitarian issues than to development action.

As UNDRO does not have the status of a specialized agency, the Office of the Co-ordinator has concluded an agreement with the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development (DTCO) and the Office for Project Execution (OPE/UNDP) to act as sub-contractor.

(iv) World Meteorological Organization (WMO)

75. In addition to technical co-operation financing from UNDP (an average of US\$ 11 to 13 million a year), WMO has allocated US\$ 2 to 5 million from its own resources, i.e. the voluntary co-operation programme and trust fund arrangements. 10/

76. Although it has no projects or programmes intended specifically for the LDCs, WMO has succeeded in helping some of them by establishing regional or subregional centres, for example AGRHYMET for the Sahelian countries.

77. WMO organizes the training of meteorologists and hydrologists and the strengthening of national meteorology services for all countries submitting requests, including the LDCs.

(v) United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

78. The Programme being global yet modest in funds does not have a separate budget for the least developed countries. Yet most of the Programme activities benefit the least developed countries which are, generally, under great environmental stress. UNEP's work also seeks to ensure that the technical co-operation activities of the United Nations system contribute to environmentally sound and sustainable development.

79. UNEP's Clearinghouse relates the needs of developing countries for environmental assistance to available resources for technical and development co-operation. This role involves assisting recipients in assessing their major environmental problems, identifying the most serious of those problems, preparing and formulating programmes and projects which can alleviate them, and work with recipient Governments to present such programmes and projects to development co-operation institutions. By the end of 1986 some 17 least developed countries had benefitted from Clearinghouse financing. Total resources mobilized through the Clearinghouse mechanism for all developing countries were about US\$ 15 million.

10/ WMO Annual Report, 1985, p. 127.

80. In the field of desertification control, the efforts of UNSO, as a joint UNEP/UNDP venture, are mainly addressed to re-afforestation, range management, water resources management, renewable sources of energy, sand dune fixation, planning, co-ordination and training. The LDCs of the Sudano-Sahelian region benefit from these efforts. Further, the Consultative Group for Desertification Control (DESCON) is a global mechanism convened by UNEP to assist in mobilizing additional finance to implement the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification. The resources mobilized for the LDCs through this mechanism are so far very modest.

(vi) International Maritime Organization (IMO)

81. In the period from 1983 to mid-1987, IMO has executed projects costing a total of over US\$ 13 million in coastal States falling under the SNPA as well as in several landlocked least developed countries.

(vii) Universal Postal Union (UPU)

82. Pursuant to resolution C 66 of the 19th Universal Postal Congress (Hamburg, June-July 1984), a special programme of postal training and operational activities has been implemented on behalf of the LDCs since 1986. The countries in this category are regarded as having priority in respect of all the activities undertaken by the Union. The LDCs' share in the total volume of technical assistance delivered by the UPU from 1980 to 1986 went up from 27 per cent to 47 per cent.

(viii) International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

83. Out of the US\$ 40 million expenditure on technical co-operation in 1986 only US\$ 3 million came from UNDP. The bulk of the technical co-operation resources of the IAEA (US\$ 29.7 million in 1986) are derived from its own Technical Assistance and Co-operation Fund to which Member States contribute annually on a voluntary basis. In addition US\$ 7.3 million of the technical assistance delivered in 1986 was made possible through additional extrabudgetary and in-kind contributions. The Agency can only use its non-UNDP TC funds for technical co-operation to its Member States. Of the 40 LDCs only ten are members of the Agency. These ten amongst the 81 recipient Member States received US\$ 2.5 million in technical co-operation in 1986.

(ix) International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)

84. Though its technical assistance activities are wholly funded from external sources, principally from UNDP, ICAO has a direct interest in the LDCs, on two counts: because the international nature of civil aviation makes it imperative to avoid gaps in the world-wide infrastructure on which safety and regularity of international air transport depends, and because one of the prerequisites of social and economic development is an effective transportation system, which, in LDCs in particular, often puts air services at a premium. These complementary motivations have led to many LDCs giving a higher priority to civil aviation development than some of their more developed neighbours, when measured in terms of the proportion of IPF devoted to this subsector.

C. Conclusions

85. Further to this inventory of sources for financing technical co-operation between the United Nations system and the LDCs, it is possible to draw the following conclusions:

(a) The volume of the sums mobilized, although short of the LDCs' needs, is quite substantial. The system must obviously ensure that recipient countries do actually receive larger amounts, yet it is apparent from our discussions with persons in charge in the countries concerned and at the headquarters of the organizations that the solution is to seek and implement measures to stimulate absorption capacity, as well as increase programme amounts in absolute terms;

(b) The obstacles to an appreciable increase in the capacity of the LDCs to absorb technical co-operation funds are numerous and they will be discussed in detail in the following chapters. According to the senior executives interviewed in the countries concerned, the obstacles amount largely to the difficulties and the lengthy periods of time involved in providing counterpart personnel at all levels. The host of modalities and methods of technical co-operation project programming and implementation, which often vary from agency to agency, is another major obstacle;

(c) In any event, the inventory of resources outlined in this chapter shows how difficult it is to gain an accurate idea of the volume of technical co-operation funds allocated to the LDCs, the way they have developed over the years and the way they are distributed by sector. Such data are none the less an essential tool for any quantified analysis of this kind of co-operation.

Recommendation No 1

(a) UNCTAD and the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation should make an exhaustive inventory of all the sources for financing the United Nations system's technical co-operation with the LDCs, keep watch on their evolution and proceed to update them so as to provide the various bodies within the United Nations system with tools whereby they can make a concrete quantified analysis of the development of such co-operation. This exercise should be undertaken by UNCTAD and the Director-General without allocation of special funds to that end, in the framework of their periodic reports on the implementation of the Substantial New Programme of Action (SNPA);

(b) The various funding and executing agencies of the United Nations system should make additional efforts and devise supplementary ways and means to enhance the absorptive capacity of the LDCs.

III. THE PROGRAMMING OF TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION ACTIVITIES

86. While the mobilization of substantial financial resources is the prerequisite for stepping up technical co-operation with the LDCs, programming is essential if technical co-operation is to be rational, co-ordinated and effective.

87. Yet technical co-operation programming should be closely tied in with the recipient country's development strategy and make it possible to ascertain whether, in the last analysis, the country has gradually fulfilled the conditions for a shift from LDC status to a higher level. Nearly 20 years of technical co-operation with some LDCs should in principle be a factor in helping them, not to stay in that category, but to leave it behind and achieve development.

88. In this chapter, we shall review programming by the United Nations system's major funds and agencies to see whether it responds to this definition (section A). We shall then discuss the formulation and identification of projects implemented in the context of such programming (section B), and lastly, go on to examine the possibility of harmonizing the various sectoral programming procedures so that they will all help to achieve the LDCs' development objectives (section C).

A. The programming of the technical co-operation activities of the major organizations of the United Nations system

89. The United Nations system co-operates with the LDCs, not only in carrying out technical co-operation programmes over the medium term (four to five years) and the long term (up to the year 2000), but also in emergency programmes. Although these programmes all help the LDCs to find solutions to their problems, they differ in nature. Accordingly, a distinction will be drawn between emergency programmes and medium- and long-term programmes.

1. Medium- and long-term programmes

90. The objectives of the technical co-operation programming of the organizations of the United Nations system differ in the case of the financing organizations, i.e. the various funds, and of the executing agencies. The object of the former, "in principle", is to provide themselves with instruments for financial management, and of the latter, to establish organic programming machinery. We use the term "in principle" only because the financing bodies tend to cover areas of competence of the executing agencies and vice versa. Consequently, these two kinds of bodies, although they carry out different tasks, all perform financing, programming, execution and evaluation functions. For the sake of clarity, in this report we shall none the less maintain the distinction between executing agencies and financing organizations.

(a) Programming by the financing organizations

91. In terms of procedures and mechanisms, the most elaborate programming, and one which is specifically concerned with the LDCs as a category, is UNDP programming.

(i) UNDP

92. UNDP-financed technical co-operation is now programmed in all LDCs under the procedure of country programming, which is the same for both the LDCs and the developing countries, with one slight difference (the LDCs benefit from special measures and favourable conditions so that, proportionally, they are granted more funds and under more flexible terms).

93. Country programmes, planned within UNDP's programming cycles on the basis of the IPFs, have unquestionably constituted a major attempt at harmonizing the various actions of the organizations and bodies of the United Nations system and adapting United Nations system programming to the development plans of the recipient countries.

94. This mechanism has proved particularly effective in countries with well-established human and physical resource structures capable of absorbing such co-operation. On the other hand, country programmes in the LDCs have not produced the results anticipated, particularly where the lack of national personnel has been sorely felt.

95. The absence of sufficient numbers of well-qualified national executives has to some extent justified this evolution. Nevertheless, the United Nations system faces the great risk of being compelled to take over other downstream tasks (execution, monitoring, evaluation, etc.), since the local authorities, when they have been only very loosely connected with the programming, tend to feel less involved. This is not a purely theoretical view but a phenomenon with very important implications that has been noted in more than one LDC.

96. Mindful, in all likelihood, of these difficulties, UNDP has been placing more and more emphasis on an additional process for LDCs, namely, the round tables, which should in principle take better account of each LDC's development strategy.

97. The first round tables were organized before the Paris Conference on the Least Developed Countries (1981). However, the Conference gave a new impetus to the process. At the present time the round table process functions with different degrees of activities in 23 LDCs.

98. Since the early 1980s, the round tables have gradually been refined in the light of experience, more particularly in Africa. ^{11/} UNDP has prepared a round table policies and procedures manual and the Administrator has been instructed by the UNDP Council to conduct a periodic review of the round table mechanism "with a view to ensuring that it responds to the needs of the least developed countries" (decision 85/11).

99. Round table programming is currently viewed as "a recurrent cycle and an ongoing process of consultation, information and negotiation with donor countries". ^{12/}

^{11/} UNDP: Evaluation of Round Table Experience in the Africa Region, Final Report, April 1985.

^{12/} Seventh Inter-Agency Consultation Meeting, 22-23 September 1986. Note by UNDP on UNDP's Experience with the New Round Table Format.

100. Although the mechanism is a recent one, it is already quite complex and, for each LDC, means (a) a round table conference, preceded by intensive preparation (basic documentation, consultations, missions in the country, definition of the role of the Government, the donor countries, the other participants, etc.), and held preferably in a European capital; (b) periodic follow-up meetings arranged in the country concerned; and (c) special sectoral meetings and consultations.

101. This procedure has in no sense run out of steam, yet it is open to some criticism. Recipient countries find that the time needed to prepare a round table cycle is lengthy and costly and that, so far, no United Nations body has been in a position to come forward with a quantified estimate of the additional amounts that have been mobilized by the round tables.

(ii) WFP

102. In 1985 WFP introduced new programming procedures for development projects called the WFP Project Cycle. ^{13/} The new Project Cycle represents an improved system for identification, preparation, appraisal, monitoring and evaluation of projects. The object of this focus on improved programming is to secure for WFP's action a general framework, rather than regular multiannual cycles with guaranteed funding. Nevertheless, as a result of this new procedure WFP hopes to be able to select projects that are promising in terms of feasibility, effectiveness and consistency with the development plans of the recipient countries. To this end, WFP has also instituted "Country Food Aid Planning Reviews", designed to assist in establishing long-term projections and commitments for food aid, country priorities, and to improve targetting of recipient groups. It should also be noted that WFP is an active participant in the UNDP-chaired Round Table System.

(iii) UNFPA

103. UNFPA's programming procedure is also under review and is slowly taking shape. It is similar to WFP's in that it does not yet fix any time frame, periodicity or mechanism for guaranteed financing.

104. This programming procedure is none the less interesting in that it is designed as an instrument whereby clearly defined population policy objectives, particularly in the "priority countries for population assistance", can be steadily pursued over a long period. ^{14/}

105. UNFPA has, in co-operation with a large number of LDCs, engaged in needs assessment exercises in the light of their strategies in the population and development fields and thereby afforded bilateral and multilateral donors a suitable framework for effective co-ordinated assistance. This approach has become the main instrument for programming UNFPA assistance to the LDCs. By the end of 1984, UNFPA had completed needs assessment exercises in 30 LDCs and so shifted from a project approach to a programme approach.

^{13/} WFP/CFA: 21/4: Annual Report of the Executive Director (1985), 25 April 1986, WFP/CFA: 22/5: A Blueprint for Organizational Change: Improving Operational Effectiveness and Managerial Efficiency and WFP/CFA: 21/19: Progress Report on Improvement of WFP's Project Cycle, 27 March 1986.

^{14/} Report of UNFPA's Executive Director regarding the experience gained by the Fund in using the present set of criteria for selecting priority countries, DP/1986/38.

(iv) UNEP

106. UNEP's work promotes awareness of environmental problems and trends, makes available information and guidance on appropriate policies and technologies and, through the advancement of environmental education, training, legislation, methodologies and strengthening of institutional capabilities in the developing countries, facilitates efforts for environmental rehabilitation and improvement and environmentally sound and sustainable development. It also helps bring about agreements among Governments at global, regional and subregional levels for environmental management of natural resources and human activities.

107. The principal instrument of programming is the Systemwide Medium Term Environment Programme which is prepared in six-year cycles (1984-1989, 1990-1995) and which provides the basis for biennial programmes. There is no separate programme for the least developed countries, but they are increasingly receiving the benefit of the Programme in view of its growing emphasis on strengthening the capacities of countries to deal with their environmental problems.

(b) Programming by the executing agencies

108. In their major fields of activity the principal executing agencies have devised programmes that extend in some instances up to the year 2000 and are intended particularly for the most disadvantaged countries, including the LDCs. These programmes establish precise objectives for the agencies concerned and enable them to ascertain from time to time the progress achieved and the distance travelled on the road that has been mapped out.

(i) WHO

109. One of WHO's most important fields of activity in regard to the developing countries in general and the LDCs in particular is still the organization of health systems based on primary health care and consisting more particularly in the strengthening of national health systems, supporting intermediate-level health care action and promoting the development of primary health care at the local level.

110. The ultimate objective of this and other WHO programmes is obviously to ensure "health for all by the year 2000" ^{15/}, which is a world-wide programme.

111. In other fields, WHO's programmes are on a regional or national scale. National programmes and activities are strictly programmed to establish precise time frames for implementation and provide guaranteed financing, and are thus akin to formal programming, whereas regional or world activities are more indicative than real.

(ii) UNESCO

112. Under its major programmes in education, science and culture, UNESCO engages in activities extending over a number of years, or even decades. However, the financing allocated to these activities is available for only one or two years.

^{15/} The work of WHO 1984-1985, Biennial Report of the Director-General.

113. In the field of education, earlier emphasis on the quantitative expansion of education systems has been overridden by austerity measures imposed under structural adjustment programmes. Support from UNESCO now concentrates mainly upon the qualitative improvement of education systems, especially the training of planners, managers and other education personnel, including teachers.

114. In the fields of science and technology, high priority is given to the training of LDC personnel in such fields as water resources, engineering, earth sciences and environmental studies.

115. In cultural matters, UNESCO helps the LDCs to preserve their historical sites and develop their museums from funds under the IPF, the regular programme, the participation programme and international campaigns. However, to many LDCs themselves culture is not viewed as a priority sector, given the magnitude of the other problems they face, and hence the amounts set aside for it are negligible. By their very nature, cultural activities call for long-term planning and programming.

116. The communication sector, particularly in the LDCs and in the rural areas, is still the poor relation, though UNESCO considers it of primary importance that necessitates sustained long-lasting action. If community communication is to develop in the LDCs, UNESCO should encourage these countries to use the vernacular languages and a vocabulary that is understandable to rural populations and make sure that projects incorporate communication.

(iii) ILO

117. ILO co-operates closely with UNDP and WFP in carrying out activities to assist the LDCs in the preparation, supervision and implementation of UNDP country programmes.

118. In the case of Africa, ILO established a programme which preceded the rehabilitation programme adopted by the General Assembly and, at the present time, it contributes to both of these programmes.

119. In each region, ILO's operational activities are programmed along two main lines: specific programmes are worked out for each country in the region and major regional programmes are established in terms of the profile of each region. Here too, it is more of a conceptual framework than one with a time schedule and precise financing timetable. 16/

(iv) FAO

120. A number of FAO's programmes, though they relate to all of the developing countries, are of crucial importance for the LDCs. These programmes are formulated in accordance with the frameworks provided by, for example, the Tropical Forestry Action Plan, the recommendations of the World Fisheries Conference, the recommendations in the Study of agricultural and food problems in Africa over the next 25 years, the Agricultural Rehabilitation Programme for Africa (ARPA) and the Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (WCARRD).

16/ ILO Operational Activities in 1985, GB 234/OP/11, November 1986.

121. FAO's programmes for developing countries, including LDCs, are designated to meet their specific requirements in varying time perspectives, bearing in mind various factors, such as national development plans, strategies and priorities, mobilization of domestic resources, and the availability of counterpart funds and human resources.

122. Furthermore, FAO has developed a number of Special Action Programmes, including, for example, International Fertilizer Supply Scheme, Food Security Assistance Scheme, Seed Improvement and Development Programme, Control of African Animal Trypanosomiasis and Related Development, Fisheries in Exclusive Economic Zones, and Forestry for Local Community Development. The importance of these Special Action Programmes lies in the fact that they represent priorities established by the governing bodies, focus on the resolution of pressing problems, and enable donors to direct their assistance through FAO in specific areas of activity. There are no fixed time limits on these programmes and the financing depends on allocations from various sources. They are intended for the developing countries as a whole, including LDCs.

(v) IAEA

123. The Agency has its own criteria for classification of LDCs whereby the LDC concept is guided predominantly by the level of development of a country in the field of atomic energy and its applications. In addition to those official LDCs which are Member States of the Agency, there are several other developing countries which fall within this category for the purposes of the Agency's technical assistance.

124. Atomic energy can make a significant contribution to the development of the LDCs in many vital areas related to food and agriculture, water resources and human health. The Agency is prepared to participate in various country programming exercises, in co-operation with other agencies, in order to ensure that its projects are truly rooted in the development priorities of the country and that the assistance given by the Agency is well balanced in terms of the requirements of the specific context.

2. Emergency programmes

125. Emergency programmes are designed to assist populations in countries affected by natural or man-made disasters or refugees/displaced persons fleeing countries for political, economic or climatic reasons. The essential element of such programmes is the correct assessment of needs and timely delivery of the assistance with a well-defined phase-out and rehabilitation stages to ensure that steps to redress the situation are taken on a longer-term basis.

(a) Special programmes of economic assistance

126. At its fortieth session, the United Nations General Assembly discussed, as it has done at each session for a number of years, the needs of countries which require special assistance of all kinds on account of difficulties caused by natural disasters, weak economic infrastructure, internal and external problems and obstacles of all sorts.

127. Further to these discussions, 19 resolutions and one decision concerning 20 countries, including 16 which are LDCs, were adopted. Under these resolutions, the General Assembly launched an appeal to Member States, intergovernmental institutions and the organizations and specialized agencies

of the United Nations system: (a) to increase their assistance to these countries through various channels, including United Nations trust funds for special programmes of economic assistance; and (b) to take an active part in donor country conferences organized in order to help in the reconstruction and development of the recipient countries.

128. The Secretary-General was requested by the General Assembly (resolution 40/236) to submit a report on the follow-up to these resolutions, including the amount of the resources mobilized, and to suggest ways and means of enhancing the programmes for the countries in question.

(b) Emergency programmes in the Sudan and in Ethiopia

129. From what we have been able to observe and to find out, particularly in Ethiopia and Sudan, the United Nations has succeeded to mobilize international assistance and co-ordinate the aid effort in an effective manner. Although much suffering occurred, such aid did help Ethiopia to overcome the famine crisis and gave rise to improvements in the emergency planning and prevention for the future.

130. In the early phases of the crisis in Ethiopia in 1984, the UNDP Resident Representative's role was insufficiently decisive to cope with the situation and upon the initiative of the Executive Directors of UNICEF and WFP, a Special Representative of the Secretary-General was appointed to Addis Ababa. His co-ordinating role and the solid support furnished the United Nations system agencies, bilateral donors and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) provided a firm basis for an energetic and efficient aid programme in conjunction with the countries Relief and Rehabilitation Commission.

131. An information system, established under the responsibility of the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Representative in Ethiopia by the United Nations Office for Emergency Operations Ethiopia (UNOEOE) and United Nations New York Headquarters Office for Emergency Operations Africa (UNOEOA), to which contributions from the main United Nations agencies were made (particularly important from WFP on food assistance and shipment programme and from UNICEF on nutritional situation), helped the Government, donors and NGOs to programme assistance in a co-ordinated manner. Assistance provided to RRC for its data information system by the United Nations system proved also very valuable.

132. Regular co-ordinating meetings between the Government, United Nations agencies, donors and NGOs were chaired by the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Representative in Ethiopia to deal with problems encountered and to seek solutions. The system has continued when the crisis was decreed to be over and presently the stress is on rehabilitation and development.

133. In general the United Nations system of agencies, including UNDP and IBRD, has shifted its attention from short-term emergency work to setting up emergency prevention and early warning machinery (UNICEF, WFP and FAO), rehabilitation programmes (UNDP, FAO, WFP and IFAD) and development.

134. Regarding emergency programmes we would like to stress the key co-ordinating role which can be played by the United Nations system in any future crisis; furthermore it is felt that adequate response requires that United Nations agencies review their own methods and procedures to ensure that each one, in its field, is prepared to react promptly to future crises.

B. Project identification and formulation

135. In the identification and formulation of technical co-operation projects for the purpose of implementing the major programmes, programmes and subprogrammes of the organizations of the United Nations system, there is a tendency to take fuller account of the special situation of the LDCs and, on the basis of the general procedure for all of the developing countries, to work out modalities and criteria specific to the LDCs.

136. UNIDO, for example, bearing in mind the similarity in the situations and problems of some LDCs that closely resemble one another, has prepared in their case projects identified and formulated by other LDCs, and they have produced very satisfying results. The advantage of these projects is that they call for only a few adjustments and minor modifications from one LDC to another. The savings in time, financial and human resources achieved in this way are obvious. In addition, UNIDO relies heavily upon its network of Senior Industrial Development Field Advisers (SIDFAs) assisted by Junior Professional Officers (JPOs) and upon project preparation missions by Headquarters substantive staff and interregional advisers to prepare projects in close consultation with the appropriate counterpart officials to ensure that the project meets the specific requirements of the country concerned.

137. UNCDF, to remedy the difficulty experienced by some LDCs in moving rapidly and effectively towards project identification and project formulation, sends out headquarters staff to perform both of these tasks in collaboration with the authorities concerned. Here too, the savings in time and resources have proved quite substantial.

138. UNSO, right from the identification and formulation phase, endeavours to bring in donor countries that are interested in some projects and to take account of donors' conditions or suggestions so as to avoid having to reformulate projects which have already been finalized.

139. To offset the difficulties of all kinds encountered at the identification and the formulation stages, WFP is in the process of establishing lists of pipeline projects through, inter alia, the instigation of Country Food Aid Planning Reviews (CFAPRs). WFP is convinced that greater effort should go into project identification and formulation and, in this regard, it has embarked on major work ^{17/} for better definition of identification and formulation procedures, objectives, impact and criteria. WFP is also endeavouring to train national personnel, and this includes training in identification and formulation techniques.

140. FAO has adopted a systematic approach for the management and monitoring of pipeline projects including, inter alia, a thorough pre-appraisal of project ideas at the field level and the establishment of a computerized information system. TCP projects follow simplified procedures, allowing flexibility, speed and economy. FAO currently maintains a full representation in 29 LDCs and further nine LDCs are covered through double or multiple accreditation. This network of representation in LDCs is found useful particularly in providing LDC Governments with readily available assistance in the formulation, modification and implementation of projects in a timely manner.

^{17/} See the documents concerning WFP's Project Cycle: WFP/CFA: 17/10; WFP/CFA: 21/4; WFP/CFA: 21/9.

141. UNDP, too, has strengthened the offices of the Resident Representatives in the LDCs so that they can, inter alia, provide help in project identification and formulation.

142. Obviously, all these measures are in the right direction. It is none the less regrettable that, generally speaking, UNDP and the agencies have no criteria for streamlined formulation and simplified procedures intended especially for the LDCs. They should examine the possibility of working out such criteria and procedures, more particularly to shorten project formulation process.

C. Conclusions

143. This examination of programming mechanisms and procedures has revealed the diversity in the approaches and aims of the various United Nations funds, programmes and agencies. It would appear that an effort to arrive at uniform concepts, harmonized procedures and synchronization is indispensable if this special category of countries is to be meaningful and is to lead to operations properly designed for these countries.

1. Harmonization of the programming time frame

144. To begin with, programming should have a definite time frame that would gradually become the same for all of the agencies. The work on standardizing concepts and periods, undertaken within the context of United Nations medium-term plans, could single out, among the major programmes, special action for the LDCs.

145. Projections of financing facilities, adjusted to such a time frame, would then prove necessary. This, depending on the agency, programme and source of financing, would mean preparing forecasts based on firm commitments from donors, or at least an indication by them of financial packages for the entire duration of the programme.

146. Such a procedure, consisting as it does of time limits and financial commitments, would provide the organizations in the system with an effective method of forecasting, administering and monitoring their programmes in multiannual stages and ensure that they steadily move ahead towards full implementation of their programmes.

147. Clearly, this harmonization of the time frame of the agencies' programmes should be such that, as is now the case, each agency is wholly free to determine the content and total time span of its programmes. The difference would be that programmes would consist of multiannual phases of uniform cycles throughout the system.

2. Programming that is consistent with national plans

148. For each and every LDC, all of the system's technical co-operation programmes and activities should, ultimately, be wholly in keeping with the conceptual framework and the global and sectoral strategy of the country's economic and social development plans. This would make for internal consistency in the system's technical co-operation and aid activities.

149. Discussions in the field, particularly with senior executives in some of the African LDCs, reveal only too well the difficulty of the LDCs' task, for they must, if they wish to benefit from the system's programmes and take

maximum advantage of them, bring their planning into line with the UNDP programme, the round table and related work; the rehabilitation programme for Africa, (1986-1990), the emergency programme, the special programme of economic assistance, and the numerous national, regional and interregional sectoral programmes of the specialized agencies. All of these programmes have a different time frame and only rarely do they tally with the national development plan.

150. To reconcile all of these factors, the only course open to the recipient country is either to act within a time frame confined to a calendar year or completely lose any opportunity of imparting consistency and cohesion to all these programmes, some of which end up by overlapping one another.

3. Programming as an aid to gradual implementation of development objectives

151. The assessment of the volume of financial resources made available to the LDCs and the analysis of their sectoral distribution and of the programmes of the major United Nations agencies financing organizations and agencies have shown that the United Nations system engages in thorough co-operation with the LDCs in virtually all fields: food, health care, education, industrialization, transport, communications, natural disasters, and so on, within the framework of multiannual programmes, some of which have lasted for several decades.

152. It would seem high time for programming to incorporate a mechanism to measure after each cycle (five to ten years) the progress that has been achieved and determine whether United Nations technical co-operation does make a genuine contribution to the LDCs' development efforts. Plainly, technical co-operation from the United Nations system is not the only factor involved (some are even more important, more particularly the efforts of the LDCs themselves and bilateral co-operation) and hence it alone should not be regarded as responsible for progress by the LDCs, but it is no less obvious that the system cannot continue to programme such wide-ranging activities without measuring their impact and without paying heed to the distance travelled stage by stage. In this context, it might be noted that, as its contribution to the monitoring and implementation of the SNPA, UNIDO has issued studies in its Industrial Development Review series covering six LDCs in 1986. Six additional studies are planned for publication in 1987.

Recommendation No. 2

Taking into account the modalities and mechanisms suggested in this chapter and, in particular, in the conclusions, the organizations of the United Nations system should, so as to make the programming of technical co-operation with the LDCs more consistent and effective:

(a) Gradually harmonize the programming time frame, on the basis of foreseeable financing;

(b) Bring programming into line with the objectives and strategy of each LDC's development plan; and

(c) Ensure that programming is an effective aid to the LDCs in moving ahead, cycle by cycle, along the path of rehabilitation and development.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION OF TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION PROJECTS

153. Once sources of financing for technical co-operation have been identified, the programmes they make it possible to carry out have been formulated and the projects for the implementation of these programmes have been identified and formulated, the projects then have to be executed. However, the execution of technical co-operation projects in the LDCs is dependent on the fact that these countries, more than other developing countries, suffer from the lack of counterparts, weak institutional infrastructures and difficult physical and human conditions.

154. In this chapter, we will deal separately with the problems involved in the implementation of technical co-operation projects according to type of executing agency: organizations of the United Nations system or beneficiary Governments (section A) and according to project component (experts, equipment, training and sub-contracting (section B)). Like others, this chapter will end with conclusions and recommendations (section C).

A. Execution by organizations of the United Nations system and by Governments

1. Execution by organizations of the United Nations system

155. For United Nations agencies the execution of technical co-operation projects in LDCs involves a number of problems that have to be elucidated so that appropriate solutions may be found. We shall refer here only to a few of these problems: (a) the low implementation rate, which means that actual expenditure is well below the amounts budgeted; and (b) the high percentage share of support costs, which further reduce the amounts actually channelled to beneficiary countries.

(a) Implementation rate

156. The agency implementation rate is between 70 and 75 per cent in developing countries as a whole. This average conceals the fact that there are considerable differences between countries. In some developing countries, the implementation rate is close to or over 100 per cent, while, in the LDCs, it is usually well below average, although there are substantial differences within this group. One explanation for this situation is that there are many small projects in the LDCs, whereas the other developing countries attract larger and more costly projects that do not involve more work for executing agencies. Another reason is that implementation takes longer in LDCs because of poor communications, transport and conditions in general. Whatever the reasons might be, a more detailed analysis of obstacles to the improvement of the implementation rate in the LDCs is lacking and should be undertaken by the agencies. It should be noted in this respect that UNDP is regularly monitoring the implementation rate.

(b) Support costs

157. In comparison with total technical co-operation project costs, agency support costs in the developing countries and for all the organizations of the

United Nations system amount, on average, to about 18 per cent. The percentage share in the case of some organizations (8 per cent) can be up to four times higher in the case of other organizations (32 per cent). ^{18/}

158. What little information is available suggests that this average is based on figures that differ depending on whether the support costs in question are for projects in the LDCs or in other developing countries. Since projects executed in the LDCs require the highest support costs, the share of the amounts actually spent in the field is lower in these countries. The reasons for this situation are apparently the same as those which explain the low implementation rate in the LDCs. A detailed quantified analysis of these reasons needs to be carried out, especially by UNDP, so that a satisfactory solution may be found.

2. Execution by Governments

159. To varying degrees, technical co-operation projects are executed directly in the LDCs. In some of these countries, the Government executes over half of such projects, thereby making considerable savings. This procedure enables the LDCs in question to centralize information and the monitoring of technical co-operation projects and to rationalize purchases, recruitment and training. They are gradually strengthening their technical co-operation management services with all the agencies of the United Nations system, as well as with bilateral sources and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.

160. According to UNDP Resident Representatives, some of the LDCs involved in large-scale Government project execution have achieved quite remarkable results. Of course, the situation varies from one LDC to another and one of the main tasks of the United Nations system should be to help the LDCs which need such assistance to strengthen their capacity to execute technical co-operation projects themselves.

161. To this end, the United Nations system should initially have an opportunity to recruit international experts, import equipment and train managers abroad by applying United Nations standards and procedures under the supervision of an associated agency. In the second phase, or in the case of other types of projects, the beneficiary LDCs should be able to recruit national experts or regional experts on the basis of special service agreements, to purchase local equipment and to train managers in the country or in the region by applying local rates, which are, in most cases, lower than international rates. The executing agencies concerned would continue to be responsible for overall project budget management, but would not be involved in the details of implementation. During the third phase, the LDCs with the best administrative and institutional infrastructure would have greater freedom for project implementation. The rules governing the relationship between such countries and the United Nations system would be similar to those applicable to sub-contracting.

162. In general, the LDCs are able to increase the share of the projects which they execute directly and successfully whenever they can count either on co-operation with another advanced developing country to which they are linked by geographical proximity, a common language and civilization and close

^{18/} See DP/1984/62, annex II.

political ties or on the assistance of a developed country with which they have a special relationship. In such cases, the developing or developed country greatly helps the LDCs in question to be able rapidly to execute bilateral and multilateral technical co-operation projects by relying more and more on their own resources.

163. The advantages of such co-operation are obvious. Most beneficiary LDCs manage, with the developing or developed country concerned, to work out coherent, pluriannual programmes which cover broad sectors and include technical co-operation projects. Plans are also formulated for the training of managers in the developing or developed country concerned or in the region and for the recruitment of experts and co-operative workers who are familiar with the region's problems and who may be hired at lower cost.

B. Allocation according to project component

164. Generally the share of expert salaries is larger than that of training and equipment. This situation is probably quite normal at the present time, since the LDCs need experts. In future, however, the United Nations system should adopt a policy to promote the training of managers and the installation of equipment in order to help the LDCs gradually become self-reliant.

165. In any event, we have found that, in the case of the equipment component, the LDCs have special problems. Since conditions in these countries are, as is well known, more difficult than in other developing countries, problems with regard to maintenance and spare parts are extremely serious.

166. In order to find a solution to these problems, we suggest that the United Nations system should make every effort to: (a) provide standardized equipment, thereby making fewer spare parts necessary; (b) train repair workers and assign them to regional centres to visit ongoing projects in neighbouring LDCs; and (c) establish stocks of spare parts in regional centres for use by the LDCs.

167. In some LDCs, expensive equipment has been delivered and installed and after a short time it has not been used because of a lack of spare parts or consumables. The reason for this, of course, is a lack of funds and especially foreign currency. It is suggested that UNDP finance spare parts and other recurring costs for equipment that has been donated to LDCs. In practice this could be done in a combination of ways: (a) UNDP could require that a certain percentage, such as 20 per cent, of the cost of equipment be set aside for purchase of spares; (b) dollars spent by the United Nations agencies in LDCs to meet local expenses could be set aside for purchase of spare parts and consumables; (c) UNDP could use IPF funds from future years' allocations if necessary and if (a) and (b) above are not adequate; and (d) agreements between neighbouring countries ensuring the free flow of spares from the central point to the other countries should be worked out with the assistance of UNDP if required.

C. Conclusions

168. In conclusion, we would like to draw attention to some of the project execution problems which we encountered during our visits to the least developed countries and which should be carefully considered by the organizations of the United Nations system.

169. The first problem is that an unusually large number of projects have to be extended because of implementation delays. Some go on interminably and become open-ended projects.

170. The second is that project execution is often preceded by too many preliminary studies (statistical, sociological and economic surveys) and lengthy experiments with methods that have, in some cases, already been tried and tested (improved charcoal burners in the Sahelian countries), with the result that time and valuable financial and human resources are wasted.

171. Thirdly, many projects executed in the LDCs have a definite social aspect and are not paying propositions. If such projects are to continue, they should be tied in with productive projects that are economically profitable.

Recommendation No. 3

In the light of the comments and suggestions made in this chapter, the organizations of the United Nations system should:

(a) Help LDCs directly to execute more technical co-operation projects, either individually, thereby promoting self-reliant development, or in co-operation with other countries, thereby strengthening ties of economic co-operation;

(b) Find appropriate solutions for implementation delays and, in particular, for problems relating to the purchase and maintenance of equipment; and

(c) Gradually attach greater importance to the training of national managers.

V. CO-ORDINATION OF TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION ACTIVITIES

172. An analysis of the human and financial resources which the organizations devote to the co-ordination of technical co-operation with LDCs shows that co-ordination itself gives rise to some problems. Beyond a certain threshold, there is a real danger that co-ordination might become an end in itself and lead to the establishment of more machinery, the holding of more meetings and the preparation of more documents than are necessary.

173. For the sake of clarity, we shall consider the co-ordination of the technical co-operation activities of the organizations of the United Nations system in favour of the LDCs at the agency level (within and among agencies (section A)) and in the field (for the benefit of one LDC or several LDCs belonging to the same region (section B)). The conclusions and recommendations will be grouped at the end of the chapter (section C).

A. Co-ordination at the secretariat level

1. Co-ordination within secretariats

174. The SNPA recommended that "The system of focal points in each United Nations agency, used in the preparations for the present Conference (1981, on the LDCs), should be kept active also for the implementation tasks over the decade (1980-1990)". ^{19/}

175. In actual fact, the system of focal points exists only in some organizations of the United Nations system: UNDP, UNIDO, UNCTAD, FAO, ECA and ESCAP.

176. In some cases, the focal point is a rather large central service that plays an important role in all phases, from programming to execution. In other cases, the focal point's functions are of a purely formal nature and consist in making available to the other departments of the organization concerned information on the activities undertaken by the other agencies of the system and in performing representative tasks. Small and medium-sized agencies usually assign one official the task of following the LDC question.

177. However, a few agencies, like UNIDO especially after becoming a specialized agency, have decided to regard the LDCs as a separate group requiring particular attention and, for this purpose, have set up specialized units for which they make considerable human resources available on a permanent basis. This is quite an interesting situation.

178. Regardless of the situation, we are of the opinion that as little time and as few human and financial resources as possible should be spent on co-ordination activities. The best solution would be to hold ad hoc inter-departmental meetings whenever necessary for co-ordination purposes.

^{19/} Paragraph 123 of the SNPA, page 155 of document TAD/INF/PUB/84.2 on the LDCs.

179. We would also like to draw attention to the need to limit resources for the documentation required for co-ordination within each agency. In this connection, a distinction should be made between (a) reports prepared by organizations in support of technical co-operation projects; (b) reports of a more general nature intended to mobilize more resources and assistance for the LDCs; and (c) reports which do not serve any specific purpose and whose readership is difficult to determine. Only reports belonging to the first two categories should continue to be prepared following rationalization and reduction.

2. Inter-secretariat co-ordination

180. The co-ordination of activities of the agencies of the United Nations system in the LDCs, including technical co-operation, involves many meetings and consultations; some have been institutionalized, but others are held on an ad hoc basis.

181. Inter-agency consultations on the follow-up of the SNPA are organized regularly (one per year, except in 1985, when three meetings of this kind were organized). 20/ Agency secretariats also take part in the work of the meetings of the Intergovernmental Group of the Least Developed Countries, which is composed of representatives of donor countries, multilateral and bilateral financial and technical assistance institutions and the LDCs. Seven meetings on this kind have been held so far. 21/

182. We would like to make a few comments concerning these meetings:

(a) Although their work is necessary, useful and covers large fields of activities that go beyond technical co-operation, such meetings should be held less frequently, harmonized and rationalized;

(b) In order to reduce the cost of these meetings, particularly those held in Geneva, New York and other cities where major organizations of the United Nations system in which most of the organizations of the system are represented have their headquarters, it would be necessary, in so far as possible, to avoid sending participants from the various secretariats and, instead, to have officials from liaison offices in the cities in question represent their respective organizations;

(c) The gathering of information and the preparation of reports, as well as impact of the decisions taken by these meetings, should be given careful consideration. The number and length of the documents and reports required for such meetings have to be reduced. Consideration should also be given to the possibility of centralizing and standardizing the collection of all types of quantified data relating to the LDCs. At present, each organization collects its own data - and this can be justified in the case of specific data. However, data and statistics of a general and similar nature may be collected and requested by several organizations. Ways of ensuring better inter-agency co-ordination in the collection of general statistics and data should be studied. It should be mentioned in this regard that the UNCTAD Special Programme for LDCs has developed and maintained a comprehensive socio-economic data basis for the LDCs which could be tapped by the specialized agencies.

20/ See ACC/1985/8 and ACC/1985/25.

21/ See A/40/826 and A/40/827.

(d) As a result of the proliferation of such meetings and co-ordinating bodies, only large agencies have enough staff to be represented everywhere. Small agencies and bodies which do not have this possibility are then left out and their programmes are, by the force of circumstances, relegated to second place.

B. Co-ordination in the field

1. At the national level

183. In the field and at the national level, the Resident Representative or Resident Co-ordinator is, in principle, responsible for playing a key role in co-ordinating agency activities in the LDCs. Most of the UNDP offices in the LDCs have been strengthened for this purpose. However, Resident Representatives and Resident Co-ordinators find it very difficult to carry out co-ordination activities, since many missions arrive and leave without informing them of the purpose and results of their visit. In order to fill this gap, every mission should prepare a one- or two-page report for the other agencies and UNDP indicating contacts in the country and their purpose.

184. We are of the opinion that broad freedom of action should be given to agencies in the field, but there should be at least some exchanges of information in order to avoid waste and duplication.

185. Remote and isolated LDCs, particularly island LDCs, find it very difficult to communicate with the headquarters of the organizations of the system. Some of these countries have urged that the main agencies should be represented in the field and that their representatives should be authorized to sign and revise project documents, thereby reducing formulation and execution time.

186. If the agencies were properly represented in the LDCs, it would also be possible to reduce the number of inquiry, information and consultation missions of all kinds. In this connection, we were told of the case of one LDC which receives an average of 350 missions from the United Nations system every year.

2. Regional co-ordination

187. The LDCs are, with the exception of one country, as is well known, located in Africa, Asia and the Pacific. However, the operational activities of the agencies and of the regional commissions in particular are practically never intended for the LDCs at the regional level. Instead, they are based on the subregional approach or on the geographical areas covered by inter-governmental co-operation agencies, such as CILSS 22/ and IGADD 23/, most of whose members are LDCs.

188. ECA, which has the largest number of LDCs, has an interdepartmental committee which deals with activities relating to the LDCs, but, in terms of programmes, it makes no distinction between least developed and other African countries.

22/ Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel.

23/ Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development in Eastern Africa.

189. ECA has been entrusted with the task of following the implementation of the SNPA in Africa. To this end, it organizes a yearly ministerial meeting for the African LDCs and an intergovernmental meeting of experts from these countries. ECA prepares meeting documents on economic and social conditions in the African LDCs, as well as other documents on the implementation of the SNPA and on ad hoc subjects, such as the mobilization of domestic resources, agricultural tariff policy, the under-utilization of industrial output capacities and food policies.

190. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) have programmes, within their respective regions, and operational activities in favour of the LDCs. The annual meetings of both commissions have LDCs as special item of their agenda.

191. Organizations such as UNCTAD, FAO, ILO, WFP, UNDP, ITU, WHO and WMO attend these meetings and submit documents. In turn, ECA attends UNCTAD meetings on the SNPA, UNDP round tables and meetings of other agencies on the LDCs.

192. We would like to suggest that a detailed study should be carried out to make sure that all these meetings are really useful and necessary. It might be more advisable to reduce the number of such meetings, rationalize their activities, limit the documentation submitted to them and cut back on the number of participants in order to economize and use the expenditure they entail for specific projects.

C. Conclusions

193. The general feeling in the agencies and the LDCs is that there are too many repetitive consultation and co-ordination meetings and bodies which involve the preparation of far too much documentation, as well as costly and lengthy travel.

194. Because of the lack of time, resources and staff, many LDCs find that it is becoming increasingly difficult to follow all these meetings, which are held in addition to programming meetings (country programming, round tables, NATCAPs, evaluations, etc.). Officials from LDCs have the feeling that the system requires them to provide too much information and too many statistics and to follow procedures and methods which change according to the content of each co-ordination meeting or body.

195. The cost of these meetings in terms of documentation, travel costs, subsistence allowances and interpretation is too high and accounts for a large share of the resources that are intended to help the LDCs.

Recommendation No 4

The Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation should carry out a study of the number of meetings for the co-ordination of the activities of the organizations of the United Nations system in favour of the LDCs, of the cost of the documentation submitted to them and of representation costs and suggest ways and means of reducing the number of such meetings, avoiding duplication and making substantial savings in terms of human and financial resources so that they might be earmarked for the implementation of operational activities in the LDCs.

LDCs: Selected economic and social indicators as compared to
all developing countries and all developed countries

Indicator	Year	LDCs	All developing countries	Developed countries
1. GDP per capita (in 1984 US\$)	1960 1984	184 206	501 886	3,940 7,943
2. Exports per capita (in US\$)	1985	23	186	1,241
3. Share of primary commodities in total exports	1984	75	21	16
4. Imports per capita (in US\$)	1985	46	169	1,343
5. Percentage of arable land and land under permanent crops	1984	6	11	12
6. Output per worker in agriculture (in US\$)	1984	309	747	10,838
7. Percentage share of manufacturing in GDP	1984	9	18	29
8. Percentage of labour force in industry	1980-1982	9	16	37
9. Energy consumption per capita (in kg of coal equivalent)	1984	54	513	5,803
10. Telephones per 1,000 population	1984	3	25	372
11. Percentage of population with access to safe water	1983	37	51	99
12. Physicians per 100,000 population	1980	8	36	246
13. Average life expectancy at birth (years)	1980-1985	46	56	73
14. Infant mortality rate (per thousand)	1980-1985	138	96	16
15. Adult literacy rate	1985	32	58	98
16. Primary school enrolment	1984	54	89	100

Source: UNCTAD, TD/328/Add.5, p. 2.

List of Least Developed Countries

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Afghanistan | 21. Lao People's Democratic Republic |
| 2. Bangladesh | 22. Lesotho |
| 3. Benin | 23. Malawi |
| 4. Bhutan | 24. Maldives |
| 5. Botswana | 25. Mali |
| 6. Burkina Faso | 26. Mauritania |
| 7. Burundi | 27. Nepal |
| 8. Cape Verde | 28. Niger |
| 9. Central African Republic | 29. Rwanda |
| 10. Chad | 30. Samoa |
| 11. Comoros | 31. Sao Tome and Principe |
| 12. Democratic Yemen | 32. Sierra Leone |
| 13. Djibouti | 33. Somalia |
| 14. Equatorial Guinea | 34. Sudan |
| 15. Ethiopia | 35. Togo |
| 16. Gambia | 36. Tuvalu |
| 17. Guinea | 37. Uganda |
| 18. Guinea-Bissau | 38. United Republic of Tanzania |
| 19. Haïti | 39. Vanuatu |
| 20. Kiribati | 40. Yemen Arab Republic |

