



# **Report on the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs**

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### Major Recommendations

1. Consideration should be given to strengthening the present steps being taken toward programme budgeting by:

(a) ensuring that each major organizational unit included in the UN budget has a strong central programming unit;

(b) arranging a joint meeting at Headquarters of programme officers of the various organizational units included in the UN budget for the purpose of achieving an integrated programme for economic and social activities; and

(c) establishing a channel for funnelling the thinking of top UN officials on future programme priorities for the United Nations into the programming process - particularly the medium-term plan.

(See Section I, pp. 3-7)

2. Discussions should be initiated between ESA, UNDP, and any other interested parties with reference to an expanded co-ordinating role by ESA, particularly with reference to:

(a) programme co-ordination at the country level by assigning a staff member to the UNDP Resident Director;

(b) project co-ordination for certain activities such as water and energy;

(c) staff assistance to ECOSOC in seeking approval of new proposals in the 1972-1976 and later medium-term plans;

(d) country profiles; and

(e) human environment activities, including assembly of key data on trends in the impact of environmental hazards, alerting Member States at an early stage to potential environmental hazards, sponsoring meetings, and helping review proposed field projects for potential impact on environment.

(See Section II, pp. 8-15)

3. The existing substantive activities of ESA should be reviewed from the standpoint of reorientation of work plans, involving a shift of emphasis from independent research to studies of the "feed back" of reports and experiences of ESA field experts to Headquarters.

(See Section IV, pp. 20-24)

### Introduction

1. An inspection of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs at UN Headquarters in New York was initiated in August 1969. Some of the issues and challenges presented by this Department (hereafter referred to as ESA), were so complex, and intertwined with other parts of the United Nations, that I have delayed finalizing this report until completing interviews with various officials in New York and Europe as well as inspecting five countries in Latin America, with special emphasis on field programmes of ESA.
2. The discussion in this report is limited to four central issues, as follows:

#### I. Integrated Programme for the United Nations

3. The preparation of programme-type budgets for 1972 opens the door to a much more positive way to co-ordinate the programmes of the ever-growing number of organizational units, commissions, advisory committees, etc., including ESA, covered by the UN budget. Should current instructions for preparing the 1972 budget and the medium-term plan for 1972-1976 take full advantage of this opportunity?

#### II. Co-ordinating Role of ESA

4. Various developments in recent years - the establishment of UNIDO and UNCTAD, the transfer of the Office for Inter-Agency Affairs from ESA to the Secretary-General's Office, the growing strength of UNDP and its Governing Council - have all tended to diminish the co-ordinating role of the Under-Secretary-General in charge of ESA. The question arises as to whether ESA still has an important co-ordinating role or whether it is destined to be just another executing agency for field projects.

#### III. Field Activities

5. Various reasons have been advanced for curtailing ESA's field activities. Are they compelling reasons for doing so?

#### IV. Research

6. The various substantive units of ESA have insufficient staff and funds to perform much original research. What should be their focus? Does the present concentration on world-wide surveys, and repackaging of interesting articles found in the library for distribution to developing countries, make sense? Should more emphasis be placed on utilization of the wealth of original information and analyses available to ESA through its many experts in the field?

I. Integrated Programme for the United Nations

7. During the year 1970 some important changes in thinking about the form of presentation of the United Nations budget and the duration of the budget cycle were crystallized, and presented by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly (A/C.5/1335). The proposals followed closely the recommendations included in the report of another member of the Joint Inspection Unit (A/7822). The Fifth Committee requested the Secretary-General to submit a report to the twenty-sixth session of the Assembly based on the suggestions in A/C.5/1335, and which "should include, in particular, a mock-up of the 1972 estimates in new form, an assessment of the possible technical difficulties and means to overcome them and a suggested detailed time-table for the preparation and review of a medium-term programme and budget presented in the new format". (A/8266).

8. During December 1970 the Under-Secretary-General in charge of ESA transmitted instructions for the preparation of a budget reflecting some of the suggestions in A/C.5/1335. I am not persuaded that the new instructions will overcome certain weaknesses inherent in the old "system". This conclusion is based on the following considerations:

(a) Programme Priorities

9. Under the old system, instructions from the Controller to the Under-Secretary-General in charge of ESA, and supplementary instructions from the latter to his unit heads, included no programme priorities. The unit heads were asked to prepare their proposed work programme and budget and try to keep its total size in line with the previous year's budget. The joint review group of the Controllers' Office and ESA attempted to review work programmes without the benefit of programme policy guidance from higher authority. The CPC also reviewed the work programmes of ESA, meeting separately with each Unit Chief, but the groundwork had not been laid for such reviews and they were not really effective.

10. The new instructions for the 1972 budget did include some very general guidelines for programming, such as "... the most important single factor having a bearing on the preparation of the 1972 budget and programme estimates .... is the strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade ... In this connexion, it will also be necessary for us to devote greater attention to the development and application of comprehensive development planning, and to the

promotion of more effective implementation of development plans through institution building and training. Other areas that deserve our special attention are: The development and application of technology geared to the needs of developing countries, and the related development of the institutional and human capacity of developing countries. The development and application of population programme. Natural resources survey programmes ....."

11. Such general statements as the one outlined above might be translated into programme priorities for the several units in ESA by a programming office, but in their present form these statements are so general as to constitute no guidance whatsoever. For example, the above statement regarding the "development and application of technology" and the "related development of institutional and human capacity" covers the totality of technical assistance.

12. The instructions for the 1972 budget include an evaluation of programme performance in 1970. This can be a very important part of the budget process if used properly. This evaluation can be most effective when it is submitted at the beginning of the budget cycle to a strong, central programming unit. This unit should review the evaluation, plus information from its independent sources on past performances, plus its own analysis of the future, and recommend to the head of the organization what programme changes should be made next year. These recommendations would then form the principal basis for instructions, including programme priorities, to the various organizational units for preparing the following year's programme budget.

13. However, the 1972 budget instructions prepared in ESA apparently intended that the 1970 evaluations would be submitted by the various units concurrently with their 1972 budget estimates, although this point is not entirely clear. In any event, there was no provision for a separate policy review and establishment of programme priorities that should precede the issuance of instructions to prepare the work programmes and budget estimates.

14. The 1972 budget instructions prepared by ESA provided for three programmes of work for 1972 on the alternative assumptions that available funds from all sources in real terms were (a) the same as the previous year, (b) five per cent higher, or (c) at the optimum level. These three possibilities are an open invitation for each unit of ESA to present a strongly defended budget proposal with a five per cent growth factor, which would make it much more difficult later to introduce programme priorities between units. I do not think that

it is reasonable to expect any unit of ESA to volunteer a reduction or no increase of any of its functions under the present competitive environment in ESA.

15. In other words, the provision for three different programme levels for each organizational unit is simply out of step with modern programme budgeting, which includes the issuance of programme priorities by top management to the organizational units before work programmes are prepared.

16. In summary, I think the most serious deficiency within ESA is the lack of a strong programming unit covering all of its activities, which has sufficient backing to prepare meaningful programme priorities. Unless this is established I see little prospect of fundamental improvements in the internal programming of ESA activities. I feel the same way about the regional economic commissions, UNIDO and UNCTAD. I understand that the surveys of the Administrative Management Service may include recommendations on this subject.

(b) Integrated Programme

17. Although there are important opportunities for changes within ESA to strengthen its ability to make good use of programme budgeting, it is suggested that an even more important gap in the budget procedure for 1972 is the lack of those steps which could result in a truly integrated programme for the various organizational units included in the United Nations budget. My on-the-spot inspection of the ESA, for example, indicated a lack of co-ordination of the programmes of the regional economic commissions with the programme carried out by ESA in New York. Additionally, it was clear that the future programmes of at least part of the ESA were heavily dependent upon the volume of new projects approved separately by the UNDP Headquarters for execution by ESA. How, for example, could certain parts of the ESA make a medium-term projection of four years without sitting around the table with officials from the UNDP Headquarters? Involved is the necessary relationship between ESA's regular budget and the UNDP-financed projects for which ESA is the executing agent. The overhead payments to ESA for such projects by UNDP are reported to be less than the overhead costs incurred, thus affecting projections of ESA's regular budget. I certainly do not see how all the meetings proposed by the various organizational units included in the United Nations budget could be rationalized unless their representatives sit down together and talk about the matter.



18. It is suggested that the above considerations point clearly to the conclusion that after the various organizational units included in the United Nations budget prepare tentative budgets for 1972 and a medium-term plan, members of their programming units should meet together in New York, and review each other's proposed programmes for purposes of eliminating duplication and overlapping, and developing those linkages which eventually lead to an integrated programme budget for the United Nations. This proposal reflects in fact a deep conviction that it is most difficult to achieve a high degree of co-ordination in a multilateral organization unless it is tied to money.

19. In the meeting proposed above to be held in New York, (composed of representatives of the programming units), the new planning unit being set up in UNDP Headquarters should play a very prominent role. Its thinking regarding priorities for future UNDP financed projects is of vital importance in any medium-term planning by organizational units covered by the United Nations budget. Furthermore, this UNDP planning unit is involved in the implementation of the use of trust funds, including those for population programmes, it is indirectly concerned in future programmes under discussion for the UN Division of Narcotic Drugs, and its policies governing the selection of alternative executing agents in such fields as transportation and water are of crucial importance to certain parts of ESA.

20. In those instances where the programming representatives cannot reach agreement, alternative proposals should be developed, and referred to higher authority for solution. I presume that "higher authority" in this instance would be a small group of senior officials within the UN Secretariat chaired by the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management.

21. There is another aspect of integrated programming for the United Nations, however, that also seems to present an opportunity for a major improvement. I have in mind the channelling of the ideas of senior officials into the thinking of the joint meeting of representatives of the programming units proposed above. I have in mind particularly the development of the medium-term programme for the next four years. At this time there is no orderly way to collect and channel such top-level thinking into the programming process.

22. At the present time there does not appear to be any obvious choice of a unit in the Secretary-General's Office that could co-ordinate the collection of such top-level guidance including assessment of overall priorities. One answer might be to broaden the responsibilities of the Office for Inter-Agency Affairs. Other alternatives might be the establishment of the high-level co-ordinating committee recommended some time ago by the "Committee of Seven", or the broadening of the functions of the committee that meets twice a year in New York composed of the Executive Secretaries of the regional commissions and the heads of UNIDO and UNCTAD and certain senior officials in New York. In any event, if the United Nations is to be fully responsive to the emerging opportunities to play a useful role in the world of tomorrow, there must be some way of injecting a consensus of this top thinking into the programming process. It certainly will not be reflected in a budget process that is almost entirely "built up from the bottom".

23. As suggested in the Secretary-General's Report (A/C.5/1335, paragraph 15), if the fiscal and programme aspects of the UN budget can be properly integrated, then such problems as the respective roles of ACABQ and the CPC can be clarified. Such an integration also provides an opportunity to sharpen and resolve certain relationships between the Fifth Committee, and the Second and Third Committees of the General Assembly, so that programmes will not be determined without regard to their budgetary consequences. Otherwise, quoting the Secretary-General: "no useful purpose will be served in embarking on the preparation of longer-term plans, developing improved procedures for programme formulation and evaluation or producing a budget on a programme basis".

II. Co-ordinating Role <sup>1/</sup>

24. A review of the history of the United Nations Charter, of the role of ECOSOC and related documents indicates that ESA was expected to play an important co-ordinating role in the UN family. However, for years the trend has been to reduce this role. For example, it seems very clear from an examination of the terms under which UNIDO and particularly UNCTAD were set up, that the Under-Secretary-General is not in a position to co-ordinate their activities. It is also my impression that since the Office for Inter-Agency Affairs was moved from the ESA to the Secretary-General's Office, the co-ordinating role of the Under-Secretary-General of the ESA in the ACC, for example, has diminished greatly, although it seems that arrangements might have been worked out to prevent such a sharp reduction of this role. It is also rather obvious that the growing strength of the UNDP programmes and of the UNDP Governing Council has decreased the influence of ESA, and the present trend in UNDP Headquarters to establish a strong policy and planning staff will probably further decrease the potential role that ESA might have played in co-ordinating the economic and social activities of the United Nations. It might have been expected that ESA would co-ordinate activities on population and family planning, but the central co-ordinating role was established elsewhere. Even the co-ordination of the sea-bed and ocean floor affairs was assigned to the Department of Political and Security Council Affairs. Finally, it might have been expected that ESA, with its major interest in economic research and projections, would have played a leading role in establishing the IOB and the ICC (International Computing Centre) in Geneva this year, particularly to ensure that its purposes would extend far beyond the compilation of statistical publications, but so far it has played a rather passive role.

25. These trends have also had something of an adverse effect on the role of ECOSOC and the level of attendance at its meetings. It seems clear that there is need to clarify just what co-ordinating role ESA should perform in the future.

26. It has been pointed out to me several times that if ESA would terminate most or all of its field activities, it would then be accepted by the Specialized Agencies in its historic co-ordinating role. It is said that

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<sup>1/</sup> A more general discussion of the broad alternatives in co-ordinating economic and social affairs is presented in Annex A.

a conflict of interest arises when ESA is also a very strong competitor, for example, for funds from UNDP. There may be something in this idea but I do not find it very convincing. For example, if the ESA terminated all of its field activities tomorrow, I think it would still have great difficulty in asserting a strong leading role in co-ordinating the economic and social activities of the UN family. As I see it, the more fundamental difficulty is that these autonomous Agencies are tied to the UN through loose agreements providing only for "recommendations" by the UN, and the Secretary-General has no control over their funds. However, these Agencies accept leadership from the Administrator of UNDP for his programme because he controls the funds, and they are executing agents.

27. A second reason is the uncertainty as to whether the Under-Secretary-General in charge of ESA can be accepted without reservation as the spokesman for the United Nations itself on economic and social affairs. This uncertainty stems from at least three considerations. Some of the provisions of the legislation creating UNCTAD and UNIDO certainly cast doubt on whether the Under-Secretary-General can speak for these two UN organizations. The transfer of the Office for Inter-Agency Affairs from ESA to the Office of the Secretary-General definitely weakened the role of the Under-Secretary-General as a co-ordinator. Last but not least, neither the Office of the Secretary-General nor ECOSOC have established effective machinery for determining major programme priorities which could serve as an authoritative basis for leadership by the Under-Secretary-General in charge of ESA.

28. A third reason why ESA has not taken advantage of more of the promising ideas for strengthening its operations appears to be simply a "lack of capacity for change". If ESA received approval tomorrow for a major change in its activities, it would be most difficult to carry out this change. ESA does not have a staff group to carry out the sustained staff work required. Its Under-Secretary-General, who travels at least half of each year, does not have a deputy to provide internal programme leadership and to act in his absence.

29. The picture outlined above suggests extreme caution in proposing new opportunities for ESA to play an important co-ordinating role. While recognizing that in recent years ESA has not played a very effective co-ordinating role, at least partly for reasons beyond its control, I discuss below five such opportunities where ESA should be able to make a major contribution - areas where it

has met with some success in the past.

(a) Programme co-ordination at country level <sup>2/</sup>

30. During the next two or three years the Office of the UNDP Resident Director in the developing countries will be increasingly concerned with country programming. It seems highly probable that the introduction of UNDP country programming will lead to additional requests for assistance to the Governments in preparing their total assistance programmes requiring aid from all external sources. It will be necessary to strengthen UNDP staff to carry this expanded workload. It is noted that ESA has about 141 economic planners assigned to various developing countries, and it would seem to make sense to use some of these expert planners to assist the Resident Directors. In this way not only would needed additional staff be available to the Resident Director, but also as UNDP becomes more deeply involved in planning and programming, the door would be open to achieve a desirable closer relationship between the Centre for Development Planning, Projections and Policies of ESA, and the UNDP Headquarters.

31. More specifically, I have in mind an arrangement whereby one of the economic planners of ESA in a developing country would be transferred to the Office of the UNDP Resident Director and put on his payroll. This planner would have a status similar to that of the FAO and UNIDO special advisers to the UNDP Resident Director. Initially the ESA planner might be able to carry on his regular assignment in the Central Planning Ministry as well as his new duties, but eventually he would probably have to spend full time working for the Resident Director.

32. This ESA planner could also assist the Resident Director in the latter's role as Country Representative of ESA through arranging for visits from New York Headquarters and from the UN regional economic commission in his area, as well as undertaking needed follow-up actions on such visits. In this role the ESA planner could help ensure that planning activities of the UN regional economic commission were co-ordinated with those of the Office of the Resident Director.

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<sup>2/</sup> A more general discussion of influencing planning and strategy in developing countries is presented in Annex B.

(b) Project Co-ordination

33. There are certain kinds of activity at the country level which involve several members of the UN family. In some instances it has been difficult to co-ordinate these activities as between UN Agencies. A notable example is the field of water. I reviewed this problem in several developing countries, and suggest that a major difficulty is the fact that the local Government itself has no focal point for co-ordinating its water activities.

34. It is suggested that ESA is in the best position within the UN family to help develop co-ordinating machinery within a Government for those activities such as water which cut across two or more technical ministries. For example, this may involve helping to set up a central policy commission on water, or helping to clarify which ministries have responsibilities for different kinds of water projects, or assuming responsibility for SF Projects concerned with broad supply-demand and water balance studies. I was impressed with the role that ESA was playing in some Central American countries in the water field.

35. In those countries where the UNDP Resident Director has been invited to assist the Central Planning Ministry in overall technical assistance co-ordination, the ESA economic planner assigned to the Director's office could help achieve central co-ordination of such activities as water and energy through that channel. In other cases it might take the form of a special ESA project for such purposes.

(c) Staff assistance to ECOSOC <sup>3/</sup>

36. It was proposed earlier in this report that arrangements be made for channelling the thinking of senior officials of the United Nations into the development of the 1972-1976 medium-term plan. Such ideas and proposals for moving in new directions as may be crystallized by the senior officials would, of course, have to have intergovernmental approval before inclusion in an annual United Nations budget. It is proposed that ESA assume responsibility for the staff work necessary to obtain approval by ECOSOC of such new ideas and proposals as are included in the medium-term plan. It is anticipated that such items could eventually become the key matters to be placed before the Council at its periodic meetings.

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<sup>3/</sup> A more general discussion of ESA's staff work for ECOSOC is presented in Annex C.

(d) Country Profiles

37. As the UN family becomes more oriented to a "Country approach" in its technical assistance activities, and UNDP programming is introduced at the country level, there will be a greater need for carefully prepared profiles of each developing country. It is proposed that ESA assemble such profiles, built around each country's development plans and strategy, including a discussion of their implications for future programmes. The profiles would include some summary data on past and current programmes of the UN family, but statistical details would be prepared by each member of the UN family on its field programmes for its own use, as an attachment to the profiles.

38. More specifically, the country profiles themselves would be far more than just a statistical compilation. They would include a review in depth of the country's development plans and strategy. Thus, the leadership for designing, reviewing and keeping up to date the country profiles would be assigned to the Centre for Development Planning, Projections and Policies. This activity would be closely co-ordinated with UNDP Headquarters and Resident Directors.

39. Within ESA, the Centre for Development Planning would receive assistance from the Statistical Office in compiling and reviewing statistics included in the profiles. In this connexion it is assumed that when the ICC (International Computing Centre) is established in Geneva, the Statistical Office will transfer part of its staff to ICC and play a leading role in assembling and feeding to the computer those country data that are of common interest to the UN family, and keeping such information up to date. Such information would not only be very useful to members of the UN family who would be "linked" to the ICC, but would be used by ESA in preparing country profiles.

40. "Country Profiles" that are available within the UN family today are usually little more than a series of statistical tables. A notable exception are those of the IMF for developing countries, updated once a year, which go part way toward the kind of document described above. The World Bank has studies in depth in countries where it has substantial loans, but I am not sure what is available in other developing countries, particularly on an unclassified basis. There are some reports of bilateral agencies, country governments, bankers, etc., but they tend to be more descriptive than analytical.

It is concluded that the proposed country profiles will fill a very important need as country programming moves into the centre of the stage.

(e) Human Environment

41. It is not feasible to attempt to visualize the precise role of the United Nations in human environment matters ten years from now. However, an inspection of work now going forward in various parts of the UN family on critical world problems associated with the human environment indicates that there is already need for certain forms of co-ordination. There is already talk of establishing a new UN Agency for such matters. Visits to various Agencies clearly reveal that environmental matters permeate very deeply into many parts of these Agencies, and are often so intertwined with related matters that it becomes very difficult to visualize how such activities could be transferred to a new Agency without creating much confusion and eventually leading to a serious duplication of effort.

42. The practical alternatives would appear to be a small group either located in an appropriate Agency, or established as a Commission, to establish broad policy, and achieve co-ordination and control of human environment activities of the UN family through control of at least part of the funds involved. It is proposed that this group might be located in ESA, at least for a transition period, and co-ordinate the following activities:<sup>4/</sup>

(i) "Keeping Score"

43. The UN has an opportunity and a responsibility to keep its members informed as currently as practicable on trends in those human environment matters identified by the Secretary-General as important. Conversations with experts on such matters in various Specialized Agency Headquarters reveal that data measuring the seriousness of these world problems are becoming more and more available on a regular basis. For example, measurements of pollution are being compiled by WHO, WMO and UNESCO. ECE has been working in this general area since the early 1960's and could provide some very significant data about Europe. Reasonably reliable data on population trends are now available. And so on.

44. With comparatively little effort, the UN is now in a position to assemble this information in one place and give it the appropriate publicity to Member States. It is suggested that ESA might serve as this focal point,

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<sup>4/</sup> As I was finalizing this report, I learned that the preparatory group for the Stockholm meeting was already working on some of these matters.



and regularly compile and distribute such data supplied by the various parts of the UN family.

(ii) "Honest broker"

45. Some experts I have talked to, particularly on pollution matters, feel that the most important role the UN could play during the next few years would be to help determine objectively the true seriousness of these allegedly critical environmental problems, to assist in resolving differences of view among the experts in each field, and to alert Member States at a very early stage to potential dangers to the environment (e.g. DDT, mercury, man-made lakes, etc.). Because of the "vested interests" involved in all of these critical matters, it is of the utmost importance that the Member States have access to the most objective professional judgments available on these matters on a timely basis.

46. It is proposed that ESA serve as the focal point in New York Headquarters to keep in touch with the various parts of the UN family regarding matters on which appropriate parts of the UN should act as the "honest broker", alerting Member States to potential environmental hazards and attempting to resolve controversial issues. The role of ESA would be to help clear away any obstacles to progress in achieving these objectives. These might include (a) initiating a needed resolution in ECOSOC; (b) supporting requests for UNDP or UNTA funds for under-financed programmes; (c) helping to publicise such UN activities and results achieved; or (d) initiating action to resolve differences of view on environmental hazards between different parts of the UN family. It would not include building up ESA's own staff for such research, beyond perhaps an advisory panel.

(iii) Contacts with Member States

47. The experience of ECE in Europe during the past five or six years indicates the important role the UN can play in sponsoring conferences, seminars and working groups in order to bring together the various interested organizations within the UN family and in Member States to exchange experiences and discuss action programmes in the human environment area. The world-wide conference to be held in Sweden in 1972 is another example. It is suggested that the ESA could assume the leadership role in co-ordinating the programming of such meetings during the next few years as it has for the 1972 world-wide conference in Sweden, and in taking the necessary steps to ensure that adequate staff work precedes each meeting.

(iv) Environmental aspects of field projects

48. All project proposals supported by some part of the UN family, regardless of the source of financing, should be required to include statements regarding their possible impact on the environment, including proposed steps to avoid or offset potentially serious impacts in those cases where such hazards are anticipated. A panel of experts or its equivalent should be set up in New York to review these statements for projects to be financed by UNDP, UNICEF, the UN budget, and trust funds for implementation by UNDP or ESA.

Note: It is anticipated that ESA would probably require some kind of a panel of experts or its equivalent in carrying out proposals (i), (ii) and (iii) above, which could also be used in connexion with this proposal (iv).

### III. Field Activities

49. It has been suggested from time to time that ESA should curtail, or even terminate its field activities. A quick answer to such proposals is the fact that ESA is currently being selected as executing agent for a larger volume of projects than anyone else except FAO; it also implements a large number of additional projects financed from UN assessed contributions, and trust funds. Thus, there is strong prima facie evidence that ESA must be giving satisfaction in carrying out field activities.

50. Specific criticism of ESA country projects appears to revolve around three items, namely:

- (a) efficiency of ESA as an executing agent;
- (b) conflict of interest between co-ordinating responsibilities and role as competitor for UNDP funds;
- (c) duplication of field activities with those of the Specialized Agencies.

51. I have attempted to evaluate each of these criticisms through on-the-spot investigations at Headquarters and inspection of ESA activities in developing countries.

#### (a) Efficiency

52. Although ESA has not had an enviable reputation in the past from the standpoint of management of field projects from ESA Headquarters, it is my impression that the establishment within ESA of the OTC (Office of Technical Co-operation), its reorganization along geographic lines a couple of years ago, and the gradual improvement in the quality of the staff, have all been moves in the right direction. Also, from the standpoint of overhead costs per dollar spent on projects in the field, ESA may be more efficient than some other large executing agencies, because ESA has no regional or country offices concerned with country programmes other than the UNDP Resident Director who serves as ESA's country representative.

53. It would be interesting to compare even rough estimates of the total overhead costs at Headquarters and in the field related to country projects, as a per cent of the total direct costs spent in the field for such projects, for ESA, WHO, ILO, FAO and UNESCO. Since those implementing ESA projects do not seem to be particularly handicapped by the lack of ESA field offices, such a study might provide some empirical evidence as to whether all the regional and country offices of the large Agencies are fully justified.

54. At the country level it is my observation that from the standpoint of management most ESA projects compare favourably with those of the Agencies. Some are outstanding. Although the calibre of backstopping from ESA Headquarters may still be "below par" in some respects, the experts recruited for most ESA projects are definitely above average. A top flight expert knows how to get things done in spite of administrative difficulties.

(b) Conflict of Interest

55. As pointed out earlier, a number of officials have volunteered the opinion that ESA has not been very effective in a leadership and co-ordination role within the UN family because it competes for project funds as the second largest executing agent for UNDP and thus raises a "conflict of interest" issue in the eyes of the Specialized Agencies. The alleged result is a reluctance by the rest of the UN family to accept ESA's leadership and co-ordination role.

56. However, since ESA has been much more successful implementing field projects than co-ordinating the economic and social affairs of the UN family, if something has to be given up because of an inherent conflict between these two roles, it presumably should be the co-ordinating role. As explained earlier in this report, ESA has already sharply reduced its co-ordinating role, and I question whether, in practice, any important "conflict of interest" remains. Furthermore, when the country programming approach supported by the UNDP Governing Council is put into practice, I would think the opportunities for ESA to use its co-ordinating role to strengthen its competitive position in seeking technical assistance funds would be limited.

57. It will be noted that the recommendations included in Section II above for an expanded co-ordinating role were largely in the planning and programming area, and were tied closely to UNDP Headquarters which controls the money. I do not think an expansion of such activities necessarily involves a conflict of interest.

58. To summarize, I am not persuaded that an attempt should be made to strengthen the co-ordinating role of ESA through sharply curtailing its field activities, because of an alleged conflict of interest.

(c) Duplication

59. I have heard a number of complaints that ESA is carrying out field activities - both projects and meetings - which duplicate activities of other members of the UN family. My principal answer to these criticisms is that

they are not based on any firm or agreed criteria as to who does what within the UN family. The authorities for the various parts of the UN family are so broad and often are in such general terms that they do not provide a firm basis for determining to whom a given action should be assigned. In other words, until there are some more precise criteria agreed to with reference to the division of labour between the various UN executing agencies for field projects and various kinds of intergovernmental meetings, I do not think anyone is in a position to state firmly whether the particular field activities now carried out by ESA should be continued as is, curtailed or expanded.

60. In practice, the Agency that helps a Government prepare a given project proposal seems to thereby acquire a prior claim to implement the project, even though historic precedent in some cases might indicate that another Agency should have been selected. I would think, however, that in carrying out his future responsibilities for preparing and implementing a country programme the UNDP Resident Director should have available a more precise set of criteria than now exist for recommending executing agents for projects. Similarly, such criteria are needed in preparing an integrated programme for the United Nations as discussed earlier in this report.

61. To illustrate, the criteria that make sense to me for ESA are as follows:

(a) Non-sectoral

62. If a project does not fit neatly into one of the regular sectoral frameworks around which a Government is organized, it probably should be assigned to ESA. A good example is Public Administration. This "non-sectoral" activity cuts across the various activities of a government, and is not the special responsibility of one of the technical ministries. If the developing country's government has a focal point for handling this activity, it is usually located somewhere around the Ministry of Planning or the Prime Minister's office. Thus, it makes sense to assign these non-sectoral activities to the UN organization that is not one of the Specialized Agencies linked to a particular ministry, that has the UNDP Resident Director with his official contacts at the senior levels of government as its country representative, and that has as its legislative body an organization with "general" country representatives speaking for their whole Government, not for one technical ministry. The ESA is the only part of the UN family meeting all of these tests.

(b) Co-ordination

63. In Section II above it was suggested that ESA should be assigned those projects providing a Government-wide policy or planning framework within which ministries can carry out sectoral projects. Water and energy are good examples of matters requiring such co-ordination. ESA is already carrying out such projects in a number of countries.

(c) Historic precedent

64. There are several activities such as the development of natural resources tied to certain technical ministries in which ESA dominates the field and is regularly accepted by UNDP Headquarters as the executing agent. I did not find justification for moving these activities at this time.

65. It is my view that most of the field operations and related research now carried on by ESA meet the criteria presented above. It is suggested that the remaining activities be gradually dropped as projects are terminated in favour of new types of programmes and activities proposed in this report.

#### IV. Research

66. There is so much research taking place in the world today on almost every conceivable subject in the economic and social fields, that it becomes particularly important to determine if the research carried on today in ESA is justified. The many sections and branches of ESA, each dealing with a different subject, have too limited resources to attempt any fundamental research. Because of these limitations, one staff member stated that they were engaged, not in "research" but in "search". He went on to explain that he spent much of his time looking through publications for interesting information and experiences to repackage and pass on to the developing countries through meetings and publications. Others compile information on a global basis and issue it in the form of world-wide surveys.

67. Let us first examine what was referred to above as "search". It is my view that the regional economic commissions are in a much better position to carry out such work. They have much closer connexions with technical ministries from the standpoint of finding out what sort of research the ministries want, and in getting careful consideration of the results of this research.

68. I have reviewed, for example, the minutes of the annual meetings of the ECE and its technical committees. It is clear that top officials of the member governments attend these meetings, they have read the principal studies and can comment on them in depth, and they play a very active role in determining the future work programme of ECE. ESA is simply not in a position to get this close to member governments and have such a direct impact through the results of its studies.

69. It is suggested however that ESA has an opportunity and an obligation to create a "memory" through reviews, analyses and synthesis of reports and communication from experts in the field. There has been a tendency in the past to recruit and send an expert to a country without any detailed briefing as to the ESA experience in other countries with similar projects, because such experience has never been properly recorded and analyzed for future reference. In other words, it is largely true that ESA "does not have a memory" and thus is unable to pass on its field experience to experts in an effective way.

70. This proposal is much more than just a programme of "storage and retrieval" of field reports. The principal task is to make comparative studies of project reports, Government reaction and follow-up action on a given subject in a number of countries, summarizing the lessons learned for future guidance of experts assigned to new projects on the same subject. Such digests and evaluation of previous field experience should be particularly useful to regional and inter-regional experts.

71. World-wide surveys raise a different set of questions. It seems perfectly logical that the United Nations - a world-wide body - would produce world-wide surveys. However, just what is the value of a table listing 130 countries and their GNP or total exports, for example, for the past two years? The world-wide average is a rather meaningless figure. We have no optimum figures for each of these countries against which to compare actual figures. Year to year changes in measures such as the GNP may provide some indication of economic progress as influenced by such short and medium-term factors as capital investment and the weather (as it affects crops). Such data as GNP however do not measure the impact of most forms of technical assistance of the UN family which are designed to expand the "capacity of a country to develop" over a long period of time.

72. It is suggested that the annual surveys of the regional economic commissions each covering a relatively homogeneous part of the world (except ECAFE) do have some meaning and can be action oriented. If ESA restricted its world-wide surveys to, in effect, a summary of the regional surveys of the commissions, the resulting documents might be of sufficient general interest to ECOSOC and others to justify their preparation.

73. The above points can be illustrated by discussion of several examples of work programmes picked at random from the 1970 Budget Estimates. Consider for example the work programme for the Centre for Development Planning, Projections and Policies. Nearly a third of the professional man-months financed by the regular budget are for the annual World Economic Survey. I read the 1969 edition, which includes a thirty-page resumé of current economic development that is responsive to such authorities as ECOSOC resolutions 26 (IV), 64 (XXII), and 654 (XXIV); and GA resolution 118 (II). These authorities provide for initiating regular reports to the Council on world economic conditions and trends, plus selected long-term problems of general interest.



74. However, the 1969 World Economic Survey also included 236 pages devoted to: "The Developing Countries in the 1960's: The Problems of Appraising Progress". This is a technical discussion, not of "long-term problems of general interest", but of methodology which could be fully understood only by economists with special knowledge of such matters. I question whether many persons attending Council meetings would fully understand or have an interest in statements in this document such as the following:

- "Such a measure has two principal defects: it is too broad an aggregate, containing irrelevant components, and as a simple average it ignores the question of distribution which lies at the heart of the concept of level of living."

- "Given the dual nature of many developing countries - with profound differences between the exchange and subsistence sectors and the modern and traditional forms of organization - it is probably unrealistic to seek a unitary measure of levels of living such as a frequency distribution of income around a poverty datum line."

- "At the sectoral level the connexion between one year's investment and the next year's output is generally more clearly discernible than it is at the more aggregative level. A capital/output ratio by sector is therefore a potentially more helpful measuring rod of performance: in some respects it is equivalent to the ex post counterpart of the cost-budget analyses that are carried out before the investment is undertaken."

75. It is suggested that the resumé of current economic developments in the World Economic Survey and the summary surveys of economic development for 1969 of the regional economic commissions, which are also presented to ECOSOC at the same time, should be combined in one document. This is one example of the many opportunities for integrated programming referred to earlier in this report.

76. Assuming that integrated programming of world and regional economic surveys were achieved, just what is the purpose of this expensive exercise? Is it purely for general information? Or can such surveys be action oriented to provide a starting point in (for example) helping UNDP Headquarters set priorities by countries or subject matter, or assisting in the preparation of the 1972-1976 medium-term plan for the UN budget, or providing rather specific guidance to planners in developing countries in shaping their development plans?

77. There are no clear indications so far that the World Economic Survey is or will become action oriented. It is suggested that serious consideration be given to limiting this survey to the Summary (Part II of the 1969 Survey), and spend any funds thereby released on such matters as helping UNDP Headquarters make country programming work.

78. Turning to the Resources and Transport Division, it is noted that a study on natural gas transportation technique was to be published in 1969. Who was this written for? Surely not the oil companies, from whom most of the material for the study was probably obtained. Government officials of oil producing countries? Is it reasonable to expect them to accept such a study for guidance when they have such ready access to oil experts and their technical publications? Or would it have been better to give wider distribution to studies in depth of ECE on this subject?

79. The Population Division has a number of statistical studies in its work programme including surveys of the relationships of infant mortality to fertility levels, the levels and trends of infant and childhood mortality, estimates of data on age and sex structure of population, and so on. I have talked to some of the programme population officers in the field, and am informed that the lack of such broad statistical surveys is not a bottleneck today in getting family planning under way and coming to grips with the population explosion. The compilation of statistics is already ahead of many other aspects of the population problem, and is receiving continuing attention by many population research groups. The ESA population officers in the field are looking for solid, practical guidance, based particularly on the experiences of other developing countries in trying to solve operating problems and policy issues on population and family planning. The world programme of the Population Division is designed primarily for independent research, not for backstopping an operation in the field.

80. In summary, it is suggested that research activities in ESA should be focused largely on a feed-back of reports and information from the field through UN experts; they should be action oriented, particularly for guidance of ESA experts assigned to field projects. I would think the key ultimate objective of such research would be a contribution to building up a cadre of truly professional ESA experts at the country level. It becomes clearer every day that the ultimate success of the economic and social activities of

the United Nations family depends primarily upon the recruitment and retention of such top quality field experts.

\* \* \* \* \*

81. To sum up, my conclusions are as follows:

ESA has been playing and should continue to play an important role as executing agent for technical assistance projects in developing countries, but its work programme at Headquarters should place much more emphasis on the analysis of results of field activities for future guidance of country programmes. In the co-ordination field its role has been declining, often for reasons beyond its control. It is suggested that more reliance be placed on integrated programming within the UN budget process as a means of achieving better co-ordination of the UN organizational units in the economic and social affairs field. There are important opportunities for ESA to play a more active co-ordinating role jointly with the UNDP in connexion with the new emphasis on country programming, and also in the field of human environment, but it remains to be seen whether ESA can strengthen its effectiveness in carrying out such a role.

Alternatives for co-ordinating economic and social activities  
of the UN family

1. Many discussions with informed persons indicate that there are three different approaches within the UN family as follows:

A. Co-ordination by developing countries. The developing countries, acting collectively, will continue to try to gain more influence and control over multilateral sources of assistance; and, acting individually, will try to deal with their various sources of assistance separately and at "arms length", thereby retaining maximum control over the policies and priorities in their development programmes and strengthening their ability to co-ordinate various sources of external assistance.

B. Co-ordination by UNDP. An expanded and strengthened UNDP will assume full leadership for programming UNDP funds and implementing projects in partnership with local governments. It is hoped that other parts of the UN family such as WFP, UNICEF, and the World Bank, would also agree to participate.

C. Co-ordination by World Bank. During the next few years the World Bank will assume full leadership for reviewing the overall plans and operating programme of the developing countries, and advising them on priorities in the use of all kinds of external assistance for development.

2. In the paragraphs which follow each of these possibilities is examined in the light of its probable implications for the future role of ESA.

A. Co-ordination by Developing Countries  
Major development priorities

3. There is no "scientific" way to determine if a developing country should concentrate on primary schools, high-yield seeds for cereals, or eradication of malaria. These are of necessity political decisions by governments of developing countries - it does not make sense to assume that either the UNDP or the World Bank should play an active role in such decision making. However, once the major development goals have been identified, outside experts can be helpful in translating them into specific programmes and policies, and reviewing the results periodically.

Full use of UN machinery

4. There is the implication in this approach that use will be made of all of the Agencies, Councils, etc., of the UN family. The considerable support that exists for each piece of "machinery", and the extreme difficulties involved in terminating any multilateral organizational unit, suggest that such a built-in assumption is realistic, and points to the conclusion that we should concentrate on finding the best uses to be made of each part of the UN family. In contrast, the other approaches assume that it is feasible to streamline the whole system.

Lack of success stories

5. Neither the UNDP, the World Bank, nor any other external assistance organization can point to a brilliant series of successes in hastening development. Several countries have done very well because they struck oil. Two or three have done unusually well because of the energy and intelligence of their people. There is nothing in the record so far, however, to suggest that the developing countries are in the mood to put their faith and hopes in the advice and guidance of any one organization. On the contrary, there is much evidence that they continue to be dissatisfied with the quality and quantity of assistance now available to them, and there is a continuing deep-seated mistrust of many assistance organizations. They will go along with almost any assistance organization that offers some help, but they are not going to "put all their eggs in one basket", particularly one over which they have very little control.

Support by major powers

6. The first approach puts the least amount of pressure on the UN for change. The UN "capacity for change" is very small, not only because of built-in rigidities, but because the major powers have exhibited far more concern over the level of UN assistance than over the quality of that assistance. So long as this attitude prevails, it is particularly dubious if the second approach can be taken too seriously.

B. Co-ordination by UNDP

UN image

7. The United Nations family (excluding the World Bank and IMF) has a reputation for inefficiency, duplication and scatteration of functions and Agencies, plus a lack of capacity for growth on an efficient basis, which

cast a considerable cloud over its future. The time has come to rationalize and streamline its organization and clarify its objectives.

Need for sound development advice

8. The task of determining sound development policies and strategies for developing countries is so complex, and the decisions reached are of such importance to others, that the United Nations must accept responsibility for providing sophisticated advice and information on a fully co-ordinated basis. The UN must also accept responsibility to police itself in terms of utilizing the activities of well-meaning but sometimes over-zealous "salesmen" of the various executing agencies. The UNDP is in the best position to provide the necessary leadership to achieve these objectives.

UNDP efficiency

9. There is widespread recognition that the UNDP has operated in the past with reasonable effectiveness, and, in spite of the autonomy of the various parts of the UN family, that it is in a position to achieve co-ordination through "control of the purse" and the existence of its field offices in ninety-three countries. There is really no choice but to use the UNDP as the core of a strengthened UN development effort.

C. Co-ordination by World Bank

Complexity

10. The programming problems associated with development are not only too complex for developing countries to handle by themselves, but they are also too complex for the UNDP to handle at the country level as proposed by the Capacity Study. Only the World Bank has the know-how and capacity to assume the leadership for such matters.

Decision taken

11. The World Bank has decided that it is going to assume this leadership, and its reputation for good management and its independent source of funds suggest that Member States will not try to block this decision.

Long term needs

12. Whereas the need for technical assistance for human resources development is for a comparatively short period, and has probably already been largely satisfied for some developing countries, the need for development capital will probably continue for the next 100 to 150 years for most developing countries. Thus it is inevitable that over time the World Bank will move into the centre of the stage.

Note: Although the Bank does not have in mind drawing up national plans for developing countries, it does visualize reviewing them in great detail once a year, and becoming deeply involved in proposing priorities for major development projects and helping to determine the proper strategy for developing the different sectors of the economy.

13. The assumed future relationships between the Bank and the rest of the UN family are not clear to me. There have been preliminary discussions between the Bank and the Fund regarding possibilities for co-ordination of the annual reviews of the Fund with those now contemplated by the Bank in about thirty countries. The UNDP has discussed with the Bank the possibility of the UNDP handling the pre-investment aspects of the Bank's thirty-odd surveys each year.

14. It is apparently assumed that the Specialized Agencies will carry on their specialized planning in preparation of project proposals after the Bank has completed its reviews and worked out priorities and policies with local government officials. It also seems to be assumed that the UNDP does not have the necessary muscle and flexibility to implement the programming recommendations at the country level of the Capacity Study, and will not be able to provide an alternative to the Bank's leadership at the country level.

Comments on the various approaches

15. At the moment it appears possible that the Capacity Study has stirred up so much controversy and lengthy discussion, that by the time the smoke clears away the World Bank will have already established many new beachheads in the developing world. The Capacity Study plus the aggressiveness of the World Bank, is really shaking the complacency and feeling of security of the UNDP complex for the first time.

16. I am not fully satisfied with any of the three approaches discussed above. My preference would go to another approach stressing three objectives, as follows:

(a) Major world problems. I don't think the UN itself should concentrate almost entirely on problems of developing countries. It is in a unique position to tackle certain major world problems such as pollution of the air and sea, use of space vehicles, control and exploitation of sea-beds, etc. Most of these problems are more important in developed than in developing countries. This is not a new idea, but I think it is usually played in much too low a key in discussions about the future of the UN.

(b) Semi-developed countries. There are perhaps eight or ten developing countries today that have reached or are approaching the point where they no longer need external technical assistance for human resources development on an organized basis, but have a long-term need for capital assistance preceded by pre-investment surveys. I feel strongly that the World Bank should take over leadership for UN assistance in those countries in the very near future. The Bank would work through UNDP for the time being to conduct pre-investment surveys; and deal direct with the Specialized Agencies for any residual needs for other kinds of technical assistance, but would encourage such residual needs to be assumed by bilateral programmes to the extent feasible. Offices of UNDP Resident Representatives would be phased out as soon as feasible, and the Bank would assume any residual co-ordination functions with the WFP and UNICEF. Over the years the number of countries in the semi-developed class would gradually increase and their external assistance from the UN family would be co-ordinated by the Bank.

(c) Other developing countries. I don't think either the UNDP or the World Bank has thought through what should be done in the least developed countries to avoid many of them "going back to the bush" during the next two or three decades. Attention has been focused far too much on the semi-developed countries. I favour strengthening the UNDP and participating organizations to tackle this problem area, drawing on some of the ideas in the Capacity Study. The Bank and Fund can certainly help in this matter, but the UNDP should continue its leading role in those many countries which have a continuing need for external assistance for human resources development on a substantial scale.



Influencing planning and strategy in developing countries

1. Everyone you talk to in the United Nations agrees that there are too many meetings and far too many documents. It has reached the point where only the large, affluent countries can fully participate in UN economic and social affairs activities. I believe there are practical steps that can be taken to ease the situation and bring the least developed countries more fully into the picture.
2. What we are talking about is influencing planning and strategy in developing countries. Generally speaking, there are two ways for the UN family to influence such planning, as follows:
  - (a) Indirect. Representatives of developing countries are invited to UN conferences, seminars, and symposia to discuss economic and social matters, both for the purpose of harmonizing economic relations between countries, and for helpful information in determining their own country development strategy and the scope and content of their future country plans. Such information is also made available in the form of published documents.
  - (b) Direct. Instead of asking country representatives to come to a meeting to receive advice and information, and published documents, and then go back home and translate all that they heard and read into implications for their own development activities, the UN family converts its general advice and information into specific advice and information for individual countries and communicates them to these countries in the form of assigning experts under contract, visits of UN officials, missions, etc. Similarly, documents would be prepared on a country basis.
3. At the present time the UN family is concentrating on the indirect approach, through conducting a fantastic number of meetings for Member States, and literally swamping the delegates with documents. At the same time, comparatively little use is made of the direct approach, an important exception being the International Monetary Fund.
4. Even a brief review of the merits of the direct and indirect approaches to influencing Member States in their overall development activities raises some disturbing questions and observations as follows:

(a) Effectiveness. Even a superficial look at the attendance at meetings held by ESA and others indicates that the indirect approach is reaching only part of the developing countries. Also, it is a common observation that none of the developing countries are staffed to read all of the documents issued at most meetings. The further question can be raised as to what per cent of the advice and information received can be translated by the developing countries, without outside help, into its implications for their own development activities.

(b) Manpower utilization. The shortage of qualified representatives of developing countries to attend all of the UN meetings and read all of the documents is well known. The way the UN family now operates, however, i.e. the indirect approach, maximizes the number of country officials required to take full advantage of advice and information of the UN family in economic and social affairs.

5. For example, at one end of the spectrum each part of the UN family could be organized with sections and branches for every function, and each of these sections and branches hold meetings with developing countries on their particular subject. Similarly, they would write documents on each subject. In this way the number of meetings for country representatives, and the number of documents for them to read, would be maximized. In addition, the full burden of translating all the representatives heard and read into implications for their country rests with them. This arrangement maximizes the number of meetings and documents, and maximizes the pressure on the very inadequate number of qualified country representatives and planning officials.

6. At the other end of the spectrum, the various parts of the UN family concerned with economic and social affairs would themselves convert various kinds of advice and information plus documents from a functional to a country basis, and would communicate directly with individual countries with an oral and written presentation all in one package. This approach would put the least pressure on manpower of the developing countries, and the maximum pressure on manpower and co-ordination within the UN family.

7. Common sense tells us that it would be impractical to try to move all the way to this latter end of the spectrum. On the other hand, experience shows that the other end of the spectrum (where we are now) has serious shortcomings. We must seek a position somewhere between the extremes.

Country attitude

8. It is difficult to anticipate how many developing countries would be receptive to a major effort by the UN family to provide direct assistance in thinking through the various parts of their overall development programme. The UN image (excluding the IMF and the World Bank) has probably not included special competence in this field.

9. The above analysis indicates to me that there are important reasons for placing more reliance on the direct approach to influencing the development process, particularly of the least developed countries, and reducing as far as practical the number of general meetings and documents associated with the indirect approach. The ACC may be the most appropriate forum for encouraging various parts of the UN to move in this direction.

10. The IMF has undoubtedly developed the most effective use of the direct approach, and is rapidly reaching the point where its officials will visit each developing country once a year. Its experience deserves close examination in any serious attempt to cut down on meetings and documents.

11. Although confronted with many administrative difficulties, the present efforts of ESA to place multidisciplinary teams in the field may eventually prove to be an important step toward the direct approach in the least developed countries. Similarly, the preparation of country profiles may prove to be an important means of packaging information by country.

Expanded staff work for ECOSOC

1. Several very experienced UN officials have emphasized the need for ESA to become the secretariat for ECOSOC. This same point is made in the Capacity Study (paragraph 151, page 333, Vol. II), and by Professor Walter Sharp in his recent book on The United Nations Economic and Social Council (pp. 274-5). ESA provides considerable staff work to ECOSOC now, and it is not clear just what additional help the individuals referred to above have in mind. Apparently they are impressed with the contrast, for example, between conferences of Specialized Agencies where the Director-General prepares a carefully worked out agenda, presents papers and documents usually reflecting "completed staff work", and provides rather firm guidance in steering papers and proposals through the various sessions; and the meetings of ECOSOC where matters proceed on a more ad hoc basis without as much "discipline". Presumably, if ESA played a role more nearly comparable to that of a Specialized Agency, vis-a-vis its conference, it is anticipated that ECOSOC would be a more effective intergovernmental body.
2. It is difficult to visualize in what ways ESA can help restore ECOSOC to that status and role visualized by the framers of the Charter, under present circumstances. The Under-Secretary-General in charge of ESA is not fully recognized today as the spokesman for the UN as a whole on economic and social affairs because of the legislative provisions involved in the establishment of UNIDO and UNCTAD. His position, vis-a-vis the Specialized Agencies is even weaker, partly because of the recent transfer of the Office for Inter-Agency Affairs from ESA to the Office of the Secretary-General. Thus it would be difficult for him to operate vis-a-vis ECOSOC as a Director-General does vis-a-vis his Conference. Also, the status of ECOSOC itself has been diluted through the establishment of competing but more specialized intergovernmental bodies. In particular, the establishment of the UNDP and its Governing Council largely separate from the UN itself, and financed from voluntary contributions, has certainly helped to divert attention of Member States away from ECOSOC.
3. The Capacity Study includes recommendations which, in effect, reverse some of these trends. I have not sensed any strong pressures to move in this direction.

4. I explored the possibility that ESA might strengthen ECOSOC's role through an examination of the work programmes of the various Agencies. Each year ECOSOC receives, in accordance with written agreements provided for by the Charter, annual reports of current and planned activities of all of the Specialized Agencies and the regional economic commissions. These reports are duly noted and filed. According to Article 63 of the Charter, ECOSOC is supposed to co-ordinate these activities. Should ESA be staffed to cover all of the functions of the Specialized Agencies, and in the capacity of ECOSOC's secretariat, help "co-ordinate" all of their activities based on the Agencies' annual submissions?

5. I obtained copies of these annual reports, and tried to visualize just what ESA could do with them that would be constructive and worth the cost involved. ESA has no recognized lists of priorities with which to challenge the work programme included in these annual reports. The reports are not in a form that clearly reveals duplication of effort, nor benefits actually realized by developing countries from the work programme. Last but not least, it can be questioned whether ECOSOC, even with ESA support, is in a strong position to challenge, or even "recommend", changes in future work programmes which have already been approved by the autonomous Agency legislatures comprising representatives of some 120 countries.