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MISSION REPORT

UNDP/UNFPA EXECUTIVE BOARD

FIELD VISIT TO JAMAICA,

TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS AND CUBA

23 March-6 April 1997

JAMAICA AND TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS

I. SUMMARY

1. The Mission would like to express its sincere appreciation to the Government and people of Jamaica as well as to the authorities and people of the Turks and Caicos Islands. The members of the Mission were accorded hospitality par excellence, which made their task more pleasant.
2. The Mission would also like to thank in particular Mr. Joachim Von Braunmuhl, UNDP Resident Representative in Jamaica and the Turks and Caicos, and Mr. Oyebade Ajayi, UNFPA representative, and their respective staff for the arrangements and assistance extended to members of the team. The briefing papers and meetings with Government officials, various United Nations agencies, donor/lender community and several non-governmental organizations gave the members of the Mission a good insight on the involvement of the United Nations in the development of both Jamaica and the Turks and Caicos Islands even though time was short to absorb them thoroughly.
3. The Mission paid a courtesy visit to H.E. Mr. Benjamin A.L. Clare, MP, Minister of State of Jamaica. It was a very useful dialogue, providing both parties with a better understanding of Jamaica's expectations of its cooperation with United Nations specialized agencies and institutions, in particular UNDP and UNFPA.
4. The Mission also had a dialogue with H.E. Mr. John P. Kelly, Governor of Turks and Caicos, together with key members of his administration, including H.E. Hon. Derek Taylor, Chief Minister, and other members of the cabinet in attendance.
5. A list of the members of the Mission is contained in the annex. The programme of the visit is available on request from the Executive Board Secretariat.

II. ROLE OF UNDP/UNFPA

6. In order to have a better understanding of the projects of UNDP and UNFPA in both Jamaica and Turks and Caicos Islands, each country is dealt with separately in this chapter. It must also be noted that the visit by the Mission to the region was at the conclusion of the fifth cycle programmes, when the countries were in the process of preparing for the next programming period.

A. Jamaica

7. The efforts of the Government of Jamaica in alleviating poverty, in particular among the young, are complemented by the support of UNDP and UNFPA as well as by that of United

Nations specialized agencies. UNFPA is focused on providing both functional and remedial skills for gainful employment and for re-entry into the formal education system.

8. The policies of the Government of Jamaica are influenced by its participation and commitment to the principles of the United Nations and the various outcomes of recent international conference; (such as the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), the World Summit for Social Development (WSSD), the Fourth World Conference on Women, the World Food Summit and Habitat II) as well as its dialogue and consultations with various sectors of civil society.

9. The Mission noted with appreciation that the UNDP and UNFPA country programmes for Jamaica have created a positive impact at the subregional level for all countries in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). The complementarity between the individual country cooperation framework and the activities in the rest of the region is a crucial component in the designing of programmes for Jamaica. Therefore, the subregional dimension (i.e that of the countries in the Caribbean Community) is a factor that should always be present when identifying new initiatives in that region.

10. The current UNDP thrust in linking its human and financial resources with activities at the grass-roots level to enable people to emerge from poverty and attain self-sufficiency must be encouraged, with particular emphasis in the areas of poverty alleviation, health, education, regeneration of the environment, employment creation and sustainable livelihoods, advancement of women and gender equity.

11. The Mission perceived the need to provide an adequate database and an effective information instrument that can contribute essential information for the national human development report, which in turn will be invaluable to the country's information sector.

12. The Mission noted with great interest UNDP support of the Local Government Reform Programme, which is aimed at restoring to the local government parish councils most of the functions and responsibilities that are within their areas of competence. This is based on the premise that local authorities are in a better position to identify local problems and provide for their respective solutions.

13. The Mission was impressed by UNFPA support of projects regarding maternal and child health/family planning and information, education and communication, adolescent reproductive health, teenage pregnancy, and HIV/AIDS. Those projects are conducted in collaboration with NGOs which also act as liaison agencies for various activities. The UNFPA advocacy role, especially in addressing the concerns of the youth groups, is praiseworthy.

14. The Mission noted that the Government has a major concern regarding diminishing UNDP resources from the core budget. The achievements are in jeopardy of being wasted if the momentum can not be maintained.

B. Turks and Caicos Islands

15. The largest donor to the Turks and Caicos Islands remains the British Government. The Mission noted the involvement of UNDP during the third country programme, mainly in the sectors of education, public sector management, insurance and social security and environmental management. The Mission also noted the involvement of UNDP in assisting a project that will incorporate all the ministries and create a unique integrated plan aimed at providing coherence in planning (with the involvement of the British Government, the local government and private business) to assist the country in defining and charting its own future.

16. It is the view of the Mission that a deeper involvement of UNDP in the field of agriculture should be enhanced and encouraged, considering that 90 per cent of the food requirements of its inhabitants are imported. The Mission welcomed the new orientation of UNDP policy towards the local communities.

III. COORDINATION

A. Jamaica

17. The dialogue between the Government authorities, United Nations agencies, UNDP, UNFPA, NGOs and the donor/lender community in the context of the United Nations mandate should be encouraged. The Mission was impressed by the very close working relationship between UNDP and UNFPA. The Mission was particularly impressed by the leading role given to the UNDP Resident Representative as the coordinator not only of the various United Nations agencies but also of the donor/lender community as a whole. This particular coordinating responsibility, which seems to be unique, should be strengthened to enable the UNDP Resident Representative to achieve efficiency and effectiveness in administering and allocating the resources of international organizations.

B. Turks and Caicos

18. UNDP has established a focal point linking both the governmental authorities and the United Nations system. The objective is to enhance coordination and cooperation in the formulation and implementation of local development plans and strategies.

IV. NATIONAL EXECUTION

19. The Mission was informed that the majority of the projects in Jamaica are nationally executed in accordance with General Assembly resolution 50/120.

20. The Mission noted the commitment of the Government of Jamaica to allocate its resources to the alleviation and eventual eradication of poverty. This priority is, however, meeting formidable obstacles in the form of mandated repayment of its domestic and external debts. There is focus in implementing projects addressing health, education, governance and other social issues. The participation of NGOs in the execution of projects, in particular in the field of environment and population, was welcomed and should be further encouraged.

V. RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

21. The Mission acknowledged the pledge of the Government of Jamaica to honour its cost sharing in the various projects scheduled for the next programming period, notwithstanding its difficulties in the repayment of its domestic and foreign debt.

22. The Mission notes the cooperation between UNDP and the World Bank regarding the implementation of the Local Government Reform Programme, in particular the Parish Infrastructure Development Project.

23. The Mission notes that some members of the donor/lender community are willing to accept the management of the funds by UNDP although most of them have expressed a different agenda.

24. In Turks and Caicos Islands, the assessment of the Mission is that there is a need for a more concerted effort in resource mobilization that can tap actual and potential donor/lenders, in particular the Caribbean Development Bank and the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom. The issue of project cost-sharing should be pursued by regular contacts with the CDB and the United Kingdom.

CUBA

I. SUMMARY

1. The Mission would like to express its sincere appreciation to the Government and the people of the Republic of Cuba. The members of the Mission were accorded hospitality par excellence, which made their task more pleasant.

2. The Mission would also like to thank in particular Mr. Ariel François, United Nations Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative and Mr. Rainer Rosenbaum, UNFPA representative, as well as their respective staff for the arrangements and assistance extended to the members of the team. The briefing papers and meetings with high-level Government officials, other United Nations agencies such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Food and

Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the representatives of the major donor countries, gave members an in-depth understanding of the United Nations involvement in the development of Cuba.

3. The Mission met with H.E. Mr. Roberto Robaina, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Ibrahim Ferradaz-Garcia, Ministry of Foreign Investment and Economic Cooperation, Mr. Raul Taladrid, Deputy Minister of Foreign Investment and Economic Cooperation. The group appreciated the importance given by those high-level officials to the activities of UNDP/UNFPA in Cuba.

4. The government officials underscored the importance of development projects with short-term impact, taking into consideration the progress and achievements of Cuba in spite of the current constraints, as evidenced by the severe contraction of its economy from 1990 to 1994 and the obstacles that had been imposed on their country. While they highlighted the achievements in certain sectors of their economy, cooperation and understanding is sought, in particular in the fields of food, capacity-building, education, health and other areas in the context of technical cooperation among developing countries.

5. A list of the members of the Mission is contained in the annex. The programme of the visit is available on request from the Executive Board Secretariat.

6. The Mission was accompanied by Mr. Carlos Sersale di Cerisano, UNDP Special Adviser on Intergovernmental Affairs, Bureau for Resources and External Affairs. His cooperation and familiarity with the country were indispensable, enabling the members of the Mission to put in perspective the projects and programmes currently implemented by the host country.

II. ROLES OF UNDP AND UNFPA

7. To understand the importance and roles of UNDP and UNFPA in Cuba, the Mission was informed that Cuba is facing serious economic difficulties since the disruption of former trading relations. The situation has been aggravated by a commercial embargo.

8. The Mission appreciated the efforts of the Government in effecting a severe structural adjustment process to enable them to resume growth and reinsert the country's economy into the world markets while preserving the social achievements of the past three decades, including free education and universal health care. Furthermore, the authorities emphasized that the situation in Cuba differed from that of the majority of developing countries since the high level of social development and equity could be sustained if the economy was restructured, while the social systems adapted to the new economic, social and institutional environment.

9. The Government's policies are influenced by its participation and commitments to the principles of the United Nations and the various outcomes of recent international conferences, such as the International Conference on Population and Development, the World Summit for

Social Development, the Fourth World Conference on Women, the World Food Summit and Habitat II.

A. UNDP

10. The group used the following instruments as a general framework for reviewing all programmes and projects: letter of intent (between the Government and UNDP, signed in 1994) and the proposed country cooperation framework (CCF) for the programming period 1997-2001. Several points emerged during the review of the programmes and specific projects:

11. First, the letter of intent is an excellent instrument for formulating the programme activities in the country to attain sustainable human development (SHD) in accordance with the national priorities identified by the Government. That instrument is particularly appreciated in the case of Cuba, which has a policy of reserving the right not to submit a country strategy note (CSN) for the reasons expressed in General Assembly resolution 50/120. In practical terms and for UNDP purposes, the letter of intent replaces the CSN. In addition, the Mission noted that research on national human development indicators for Cuba has been initiated by UNDP.

12. Second, the areas of concentration of UNDP activities for the period 1997-2001 (consolidation and development of social sectors, restructuring and consolidation of productive sectors, recovery of the economy, environmental issues and rational use of resources) are in line with the United Nations integrated follow-up of the conferences in general and the UNDP sustainable human development strategy in particular while supporting the national efforts in three different yet interrelated dimensions:

(a) Support to the basic social sectors, in particular education, health and environment, as part of the effort to palliate the negative impact of the current economic situation, which has affected the achievements of Cuba from 1960 up to the present;

(b) Support to the efforts and measures of the Government to introduce transformations and improvements of the national economy (it should be noted that UNDP is working actively with other potential bilateral donors in this dimensions); and

(c) Support to the efforts to facilitate a better insertion of Cuba into the world economy.

13. In the above context, the Mission noted that all programmes and projects reviewed were in line with the instruments mentioned; delivery was in accordance with the deadlines previously established; national execution was the modality used in accordance with General Assembly resolution 50/120; there had been evaluation and internalization by UNDP of lessons learned; and the level of resources available for satisfying technical cooperation requirements, in the context of the CCF and to make full use of the potentials of national institutions for implementing SHD at country level is insufficient.

B. UNFPA

14. The Mission used the ICPD Programme of Action, UNFPA Mission Statement and the UNFPA assistance for the programme period for 1997-2001 as a general framework for reviewing the different programmes and projects in the country. The following points emerged:

(a) All programme objectives were being met satisfactorily and future programme activities were in line with these objectives;

(b) The support of the activities and UNFPA role in the reproductive health sector were totally adequate for the specific needs of the country and its present stage of development in the sector;

(c) Delivery was in accordance with all the deadlines previously established;

(d) There was adequate evaluation and internalization by UNFPA of lessons learned;

(e) All programmes and projects reviewed were in line with the instruments mentioned above and were nationally executed.

III. NATIONAL EXECUTION AND CAPACITY-BUILDING

15. The Mission noted that the modality of national execution was utilized in almost all UNDP/UNFPA projects. The main contributions of the programmes were in the areas of project feasibility (acting as a catalyst and using their comparative advantages), seed money and capacity-building through human resources training.

16. In relation to non-governmental organizations (NGOs), participation in the different phases of the project cycle, the Government demonstrated its openness to work with NGOs that had proposed concrete activities and were subsequently accepted by the Government. At the same time, examples were given by the authorities about domestic NGOs working in the execution of some governmental projects such as the Cuban Women's Federation.

IV. COORDINATION AND RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

17. The Mission was impressed by the very close working relationship between UNDP and UNFPA.

18. The Mission noticed that the visit of the representatives of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board to Cuba was an occasion for the United Nations Resident Coordinator to convene a meeting attended by all the various United Nations agencies, as well as the representatives of some major donor countries. The Mission encouraged the initiative and expressed the wish that

such meetings under the Chairmanship of the United Nations Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative be strengthened to enable him to achieve efficiency and effectiveness and at the same time identify financial and technical resources to support Cuba's efforts in implement its development plan and strategies.

19. The Mission noted an enormous potential for resource mobilization through the resident coordinator system in the meeting held at the UNDP country office with bilateral donors and encouraged interested parties to continue those close contacts.

20. The authorities were concerned that mobilization of external resources was limited, owing to lack of access to Bretton Woods institutions. They further expressed the need for more involvement of multilateral and bilateral donors in the implementation of their development plans and strategies. An example of successful external resource mobilization was the participation of various sectors during Hurricane Lili.

V. TECHNICAL COOPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

21. The high literacy rate and successful health programmes for the whole Cuban population enabled it to share its experiences with other developing countries. For example, it was stated that approximately 2,500 health workers (physicians, technicians and researchers) are presently working in more than 50 countries. In addition, some projects supported by UNDP visited by the group, such as the Transfer of Embryos (CUB/91/006) and the New Technological System in Integrated Processing of Organic Waste for Non-Conventional Pig Feed (CUB/91/011), are excellent initiatives for sharing their experiences at regional and subregional levels.

22. However, the potential for TCDC is limited by the lack of resources to share technology and the experiences of Cuba. The Mission supported the possibility of resource mobilization through triangular financial transactions in order to fully utilize those achievements and maintain the momentum of development cooperation.

Annex

PARTICIPANTS IN THE UNDP/UNFPA EXECUTIVE BOARD
FIELD VISIT TO JAMAICA AND CUBA

(3 March-6 April 1997)

- Ms. Livia LEU
First Secretary
Permanent Observer Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations
- Mr. Ileka ATOKI
Second Counsellor
Permanent Mission of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the United Nations
- Mr. Aboubacar DIONE
First Counsellor
Permanent Mission of Guinea to the United Nations
- Mr. Jimmy BLAS
Second Secretary
Permanent Mission of the Philippines to the United Nations
- Mr. Prayono ATIYANTO
First Secretary
Permanent Mission of Indonesia to the United Nations
- Ms. Dornela SETH
First Secretary
Permanent Mission of Antigua and Barbuda to the United Nations
- Mr. Horacio FERNANDEZ-PALACIO
Second Secretary
Permanent Mission of Argentina to the United Nations
- Mr. Nikolai V. TCHOULKOV
Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary
Deputy Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations
- Mr. Volodymyr RESHETNYAK
First Secretary
Permanent Mission of Ukraine to the United Nations

The group was accompanied by Mr. Carlos SERSALE DI CERISANO, Special Adviser on Inter-governmental Affairs, Bureau for Resources and External Affairs.
