Annual Session 1994
6-17 June 1994
Item 7 of the provisional agenda

FIELD VISITS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Report of the field visit to West Bank and Gaza, and Jordan
(24 April-7 May 1994)
MISSION REPORT

UNDP/UNFPA EXECUTIVE BOARD

FIELD VISIT

TO

WEST BANK AND GAZA, AND JORDAN

(24 April – 7 May 1994)

New York, May 1994
UNDP/UNFPA EXECUTIVE BOARD FIELD VISIT TO WEST BANK, GAZA AND JORDAN

Introduction

1. In accordance with UNDP Governing Council decision 91/2, a team of representatives of member countries of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board (The Gambia, Italy, Lesotho, Peru, Philippines, Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Slovakia and Uruguay) accompanied by a Senior Official from UNDP Headquarters, visited West Bank and Gaza from 24th to 30th April, and Jordan from 1st to 7th May 1994, to broaden their understanding of UNDP/UNFPA field activities.

2. Annex I contains the list of participants of the field visit.

3. The draft itineraries were considered and approved with some modifications by the team during two briefing meetings given by UNDP/UNFPA officials in New York. Relevant background information as well as briefings on projects and programmes were made available to each member of the team.

PART ONE - WEST BANK AND GAZA

I. ORGANIZATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE MISSION

4. The work programme included the following:

Meetings with:
- The Special Representative of the Administrator, his staff, and UN Agencies personnel placed in his office.
- Representatives of the Palestinian Economic Council for Development and Reconstruction (PECDAR)
- Palestinian local community representatives
- Palestinian NGO's
- Israeli authorities
- Representatives of major donors and of the World Bank

Briefings by:
- Special Representative of the UNDP Administrator and his staff
- Directors of UNRWA Operations in West Bank and Gaza and their staff
- United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO)

Visits to projects connected with agriculture, water management (sewage, water treatment), industry, family planning, health and education.

5. Annex II contains the team's work programme in West Bank and Gaza.
II) GENERAL ISSUES

A) National Execution/ National Capacity Building/ and Decentralisation

6. Assessment of the impact of UNDP activities on national execution and/or national capacity building was difficult because, until recently, the UNDP field office had no central Palestinian authority to deal with in terms of project identification, formulation and implementation. Preparation of the Programme of the Assistance to Palestine People (PAPP) for West Bank and Gaza had often been done in consultation with the local community and the local NGOs. The Israeli Authorities were kept informed. With the creation of PEC DAR and the finalisation of a formal agreement between UNDP and the Palestinian authorities it is expected that a different qualitative and more representational process of preparing the PAPP would emerge. The role and experience of local NGOs will continue to be of great assistance and relevance to national execution/capacity building. It is noteworthy that, with the presence of the World Bank, the number and volume of NGO activity have increased.

7. Following the signing of the agreement for limited self-rule in the Occupied Territories between the Government of Israel and the PLO, there will be fundamental changes in the structure and nature of UNDP/UNFPA's relationship with Palestinian bodies, which should lead to a clearer identification of priorities for a future version of PAPP.

8. The work of the UNDP Office is a good example of decentralized activities in the sense that it has become concurrently the long arm of the Office for Project Services. The emphasis on employment of nationals, besides its budgetary advantages, has also the strategic advantage of penetrating the local community. The employed nationals become part of the national capacity building effort, by qualifying as potential national experts and leaders.

B) Programme approach

9. UNDP activities are based firstly on the 1992 assessment of national needs, which was the basis for a UNDP Programme framework. This is currently replacing the regular country programme. The peculiarity of the situation of West Bank and Gaza has directly influenced the programme approach. Secondly, UNDP and UNFPA have had to incorporate, until recently, the essential activities of some UN agencies (UNICEF, WHO, WB) and complement those of UNRWA to facilitate effective and realistic programming or programme framework.
10. The advent of PECDAR will also enhance the preparation of the equivalent of the country programme-PAPP. This will not take place in the immediate future, because as of now PECDAR sees UNDP as being responsible for the elaboration of the PAPP.

11. In accordance with the recommendations of the UNDP Mission in 1992 the UNDP Office has been concentrating on a reduced number of priority projects mainly by interlinking and grouping the projects. And, at the grass-roots level, the Office has intensified interaction with communities giving emphasis to rural development.

C) Comparative Advantages

12. UNDP has utilised effectively the advantages of its field network. The direct execution of projects by the Office provides flexibility and rapidity in overcoming bottlenecks. Its role as a funding agency for operational activities is also an advantage.

D) Coordination

13. Following the recommendations of the 1992 Mission the UNDP Office has improved its coordination with UNRWA, the other important UN agency acting in the area, through regular monthly meetings, exchanges of information, projects harmonisation, etc. UNDP initiated the creation of an Information Exchange Group (IEG) (composed of donors, European Union and UN system representatives). Through its sectoral working groups, the IEG has provided useful data for the establishment of a data base for projects.

14. The new authority, PECDAR, will be responsible for coordination at the national level. The local communities and the NGOs will be submitting their project proposals to PECDAR, which will prioritize them. UNDP Office has provided PECDAR with software to assist in the rationalisation and selection of projects. Meanwhile, the donors appear to be of the view that UNDP could continue to facilitate coordination among the donor community at the local level.

III. SPECIFIC ISSUES

15. While some UN agencies showed concern about the security situation prevailing in the West Bank and Gaza, this has not deterred them from discharging their responsibilities effectively.

IV. UNFPA SPECIFIC ISSUES

16. UNFPA started its activities in the region through UNRWA, because UNRWA has a larger coverage of the general population and longer presence in the region. Nowadays, there is one demographically oriented project which is executed through UNDP.
Office and two other projects covering family planning through UNRWA. The local community manifests a reasonable tolerance towards various family planning methods, but the choice of participation seems to depend mainly on women.

17. UNFPA programme with UNRWA seems to have bypassed the UNDP Special Representative who, serving also as UNFPA Representative, should have had the coordinating and monitoring role over all UNFPA activities at the local level.

V. CONCLUSIONS

18. The following conclusions emerged from the team's field visit to West Bank and Gaza:

1. UNDP Office has managed to adapt itself to the complexities of the situation prevailing in West Bank and Gaza and produced constructive results. Its active presence in the local community has resulted in a strategic advantage for the future.

2. In order to ensure continuity of UNDP's effective role, the conclusion of a formal agreement between UNDP and the Palestinian authorities would be necessary.

3. It is perceived that the Special Representative's role vis-a-vis projects funded by UNFPA and executed by UNRWA or other agencies, be recognized and operationalized as soon as possible.

4. The well prepared documentation, in particular the fact sheets on the different projects, facilitated a better understanding and appreciation of UNDP/UNFPA activities.

5. The team recognized the high level of professional competence and commitment of the UNDP staff given the difficult circumstances under which they are operating.
PART TWO: JORDAN

I. ORGANIZATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE MISSION

19. The work programme included the following:

a) Meetings with:
   - UNDP/UNFPA Resident Coordinator and his team
   - Government officials
   - Representatives of Major donors
   - Representatives of Local NGOs
   - Representatives of UN Agencies (UNICEF, UNESCO, UNRWA, ESCWA, WHO, UNTSO, WFP, UNHCR, UNIFEM)

b) Briefing by UNDP/UNFPA

c) Visits to projects in the areas of water management, planning, Geographic Information System, education (vocational training), health (maternal child care/family planning) and women in development.


II. GENERAL ISSUES

A) Programme Approach

21. The Government and UNDP and UNFPA have been making effort to use programme approach in the formulation and implementation of their development programmes, presently concentrating on four main areas: human resources development, macro-economic management, natural resources management and support to productive sectors.

22. Although most of the UNDP and UNFPA projects have, in the final analysis, contributed to development at the grass-roots level, the UNDP and UNFPA field office adopted the strategy of reaching the rural community directly through projects implemented by NGOs. The efforts of UNDP and UNFPA are encouraging the involvement of other partners in this process.

23. The NGOs expressed general satisfaction over their cooperation with UNDP and UNFPA resulting in speedy implementation of projects. They nevertheless pointed out the lack of uniformity in project formats, which are usually cumbersome, when they could be simplified and unified.

B) Comparative Advantage

24. In discussions with Government Officials, UNDP and UNFPA's comparative advantages were seen in their flexibility, neutrality, and ability to attract funding from multiple sources, thereby enhancing the overall development initiatives in Jordan.
and proven professionalism in supporting national and regional development efforts. It is generally recognized by the donor community that the UNDP and UNFPA have found a special "niche" when they filled a vacuum in the mobilisation of development efforts at the local level.

25. Through its many years of operation in Jordan, UNDP and UNFPA have been able to acquire rich experience in and familiarity with the local conditions. The currently shrinking IPF resources have been offset by UNDP/UNFPA's acquired local expertise which has had a catalytic effect in attracting additional resources from other aid agencies.

c) National Execution

26. It is commendable that the Government has succeeded in prioritizing education and human resource development. The investment in human resource through education has resulted in the availability of a pool of highly skilled personnel to facilitate national execution. Government projects are generally deploying national experts. The reduction in IPF funds has also entailed the acquisition of comparable alternative resources in sustaining national execution.

D) Coordination

27. The agencies appear to prefer to maintain the portrayal of their identity and specificity of their operations by maintaining separate office premises. This practice has been aided by the assumption that it will be practically impossible to accommodate all UN agencies in the existing UNDP/UNFPA Office building.

28. The donors expressed the view that given the trend of declining donor contributions there will be greater need in the future for a more focused and effective coordination. A possible local consultative group (comprising donors and UN agencies) could be set up to carry out this function.

29. Coordination at the national level is executed by the Ministry of Planning which coordinates both donors (including UNDP and UNFPA) activities and sectoral ministries such as the Ministry of Water and Irrigation.

30. The Ministry of Planning's view of coordination of NGOs role and activities appeared focused on the evaluation of the actual capacity of each organization to implement specific projects. In effect, the Ministry of Planning prefers maintaining overall supervision of all foreign assistance, including projects allocated to NGOs.
31. It is evident that among the almost 700 NGOs operating in Jordan only a few play a leading role. These major NGOs are instrumental in assisting the government elaborate a comprehensive strategy in social and economic sectors.

E) Technical Cooperation Among Developing Countries (TCDC)

32. Jordan has developed a unique position vis-a-vis the acquisition of desirable skills and facilities that could be marketed in the region. In this connection, a great effort has been made by the Government to develop facilities for regional cooperation in various fields. Some of these are in the areas of mapping, water management and related issues and vocational training.

III. UNFPA SPECIFIC ISSUES

33. Jordan is a country with one of the highest population rates (estimated at 3.2%), but with limited natural resources. Family planning (FP) is gradually receiving greater attention and acceptance in the development context. UNFPA, in constructive cooperation with both government and the NGOs, developed innovative FP strategies with an integrative programme approach. It is based on community (both men and women) involvement, using income generation incentives to improve self-reliance and strengthen independent decision-making. Within this comprehensive approach, commonly referred to as "Quality of Life", the FP component including birth spacing, maternal and child care and safe child delivery, is incorporated.

CONCLUSIONS

34. The following conclusions emerged from the team's field visit to Jordan:

1. The situation in Jordan, in contrast to that in the West Bank and Gaza, is to some extent a classic case where most aspects of UNDP and UNFPA activities are evident. In consideration of the current shrinkage of funds among UN agencies, as well as among the donor community, and in relation to the great availability of highly skilled professionals locally, the UNDP field office could consider a revision of its strategies and role. Such a process should focus on the enhancement of efficient coordination and integration of activities, by the optimization of available resources as well as the consolidation of its traditional role as catalyst and vacuum filler.

2. The team noted with appreciation the efforts made by the UNDP/UNFPA Resident Coordinator and his staff to ensure a successful visit.
ANNEX I

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

1. H.E. Mr. Eduard V. Kudryavstev, Leader of the team
   Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
   Deputy Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to
   the United Nations, New York

2. H.E. Mrs. Narcisa L. Escaler
   Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
   Permanent Representative of the Republic of the Philippines to
   the United Nations, New York

3. Mr. Momodou K. Jallow
   Acting Permanent Representative
   of Gambia to the United Nations, New York and
   Vice President, UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board

4. Mr. Miroslav Musil, Rapporteur of the team
   Director-General, Multilateral Cooperation Division
   Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Slovak Republic

5. Mr. Jae Hong Yuh
   Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Korea

6. Mr. Ntai Makoetje
   Economic Counsellor
   Permanent Mission of Lesotho
   to the United Nations, New York

7. Mr. Andrea Sertoli
   Acting Head, North African Bureau
   Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Italy

8. Mr. Diego Pelufo, Rapporteur of the team
   Third Secretary
   Permanent Mission of Uruguay
   to the United Nations

9. Mr. Italo Acha
   Third Secretary
   Permanent Mission of Peru
   to the United Nations

The team was accompanied by Mr. S. Shahid Hussain, Special Adviser,
Division of External Relations and Executive Board Secretariat,
UNDP, New York.
ANNEX II

Work Programme of UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board

Field Visit to West Bank and Gaza
from 24 to 30 April 1994

24 April 1994

Arrival: Ben Gurion Airport
Transport to American Colony Hotel, Jerusalem

25 April 1994

8:30
UNDP Office. Briefing by Mr. Roger Guarda, Special Representative of the Administrator and senior UNDP staff on:
- Overall presentation of PAPP's activities with special emphasis on:
  * Infrastructure projects
  * Institutional development
  * Gender in Development
- Project execution
- UN System coordination

10:30
Orient House. Meeting with Mr. Faisal Husseini, Head of the Palestinian Team to the Peace Conference.

11:30
PECDAR offices. Meeting with representatives of the Palestinian Economic Council for Development and Reconstruction (PECDAR).

13:00
Luncheon hosted by Mr. Roger Guarda at the National Palace Hotel, Jerusalem.

15:00
Meeting with Palestinian NGO's at the Seven Arches Hotel.

17:00
Visit of the Old City of Jerusalem.

16 April 1994

9:00
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Jerusalem. Meeting with Ambassador Bein.

11:00

15:00
16:30 Meeting with representatives of leading donors and the World Bank. Pasha Room, American Colony

27 April 1994

9:00 Visit of UNDP project sites in the Gaza Strip:
- Sewage Collection Schemes
- Vegetable Packing and Grading Facility
- Fisheries
- Citrus Processing Plant

10:00 UNRWA Gaza. Meeting with Mr. Klaus Worm, Director of UNRWA Operations, and visit of UNRWA installations.

13:00 Lunch hosted by Mr. Klaus Worm.
Return to Jerusalem.

28 April 1994

7:45 am Ministry of Defence, Tel Aviv. Meeting with Brigadier General Arye Ramot Schiffman.

12:00 Visit to Mayor Elias Freij in Bethlehem and visit of the Church of the Nativity.

13:00 Lunch hosted by Mayor Freij.

17:00 UNDP Reception in honour of the Delegation at the National Palace Hotel.

29 April 1994

Visit to Hebron

10:00 Visit to Mr. Mustafa Natcheh, Mayor of Hebron Municipality.

11:00 Visit to the Princess Alia Hospital, Hebron

13:00 Luncheon hosted by UNDP Staff Association in UNDP office.

30 April 1994

9:30 Visit UNDP project sites in the north of the West Bank.
Nablus
- Casbah Water Project
- Light Industrial Zone and Cold Storage
- Zafer Al-Masri School

13:00
ANNEX III

Work Programme of UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board

Field Visit to Jordan

from 1 to 7 May 1994

1 May 1994 Official holiday, Easter and Labour Day

2 May 1994

8:30 - 10:30 UNDP Resident Representative and Senior staff UNDP/UNFPA programme matters

10:30 - 12:30 Inter-agency meeting, UNDP, UNFPA, CST, UNICEF, UNRWA, ESCWA, WHO, UNTSO, UNESCO, WFP, UNHCR, UNIFEM. + Projects Managers.

13:30 - 16:00 Trip to Jerash.
Lunch in Jerash hosted by Mr. Osman Hashim. (Transportation provided by UNDP office).

3 May 1994

8:30 - 9:30 Meeting with Dr. Mohamed Bani Hani, Secretary-General, Ministry of Water & Irrigation, visit to project site JOR/92/007 - Strengthening of the national capacity in water resources planning.

9:45 - 10:45 Visit to project site JOR/93/001 - Implementation of development policies and programmes, Ministry of planning (project coordinator Dr. Nabil Ammari).

11:00 - 12:00 Meeting with H.E. Dr. Ziad Fariz, Minister of Planning. Tel: 644466.

12:15 - 14:00 Visit to MCH/FP Centre, Hashimi Shamali/Ministry of Health, UNFPA-supported project JOR/93/PO3: strengthening and expansion of MCH/FP services.

4 May 1994

9:30 - 11:30 Group meeting with major donors in Jordan, GTZ (Germany), Italy, China, EEC, USAID (USA), ODA (UK), CIDA (Canada), and JICA (Japan).

11:45 - 12:45 Royal Jordanian Geographic Centre - Digital mapping project. Tel: 845188.

13:00 - 14:00 Vocational training corporation, visit to project JOR/92/001 - Development of vocational training and industrial extension services. Tel: 820353.
5 May 1994

8:30 - 9:30 Civil aviation authority, visit to project site JOR/92/003 - Trainair programme consolidation at Queen Noor civil aviation technical centre (QNCATC). Tel: 892282.

9:45 - 10:45 Visit to department of statistics, UNFPA-supported project "1994 Population and Housing Census".

11:00 - 12:30 Queen Alia social welfare fund, briefing on NGO following UNDP projects: NGO, PALM DATE, Poverty Alleviation, and UNFPA-supported projects: support to National Committee for Women and National Population Commission/ general secretariat. Tel: 825241/2.

12:45 - 14:00 Visit to Noor Al-Hussein Foundation/ UNFPA supported projects - JOR/86/P13: Women-in-Development and JOR/94/P01: Population Programme for the Grassroots.

6 May 1994 Free: Joint drafting of mission report.

7 May 1994 Departure from Amman.

NOTE: Government working hours 8:00 to 14:00 hrs Saturday through Thursday.