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PROGRAMME PLANNING

REVIEW OF PRESENT PRACTICES AND PROPOSALS FOR ENHANCING THE COLLECTIVE INVOLVEMENT OF THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES IN THE DETERMINATION OF PRIORITIES FOR INTERCOUNTRY PROGRAMMES AND IN THE IDENTIFICATION AND INITIATION OF REGIONAL PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

Report of the Administrator

Summary

This report responds to Governing Council decision 79/10, paragraphs 17-18, which requested the Administrator to prepare a report to assist the Governing Council, at its twenty-seventh session, to review current practice in determining priorities for intercountry programmes in order to enhance the collective involvement of developing countries of each region. In its decision, the Council referred to setting priorities for the regional programmes, and the report, accordingly, is restricted to regional and subregional programmes. The report also responds to General Assembly Resolution 34/206.

It is recognized that, despite intensive and close consultations with Governments and intergovernmental groups, current practices for ensuring the collective involvement of the Governments of the region could be further strengthened. Consequently, the Administrator, after consultations with Agencies and regional commissions, is proposing a new consultative process which would enhance the collective involvement of the developing countries in the setting of regional priorities for the regional programmes for the third cycle and in the identification and initiation of regional projects and activities.

I. BACKGROUND

1. The Governing Council, at its twenty-sixth session, decided "to review present practices for determining the priorities for the inter-country programmes in order to enhance the collective involvement of developing countries of each region in setting priorities for the regional programmes of the third cycle and to include this review as an item on the agenda of its twenty-seventh session" and requested "the Administrator to prepare a report for this review, in consultation, when feasible, with the executive heads of the Specialized Agencies of the United Nations system, with the executive secretaries of the regional commissions, and with the heads of other appropriate regional and subregional organizations of developing countries". 1/
2. Subsequently, the Economic and Social Council, at its thirty-fourth session, adopted inter alia, resolution 1979/64, Regional Co-operation and Development, in which it welcomed "the considerations being given by the Governing Council of UNDP and the regional commissions to measures for enhancing the collective involvement of the developing countries of each region in determining the priorities for intercountry programmes". The resolution further requested the Secretary-General to report to the Council at its regular session in 1980 on the "results of consultations on the role of the regional commissions in the determination of priorities for intercountry programmes".
3. In its resolution 34/206 on implementation of section IV of the Annex to the restructuring resolution, the General Assembly, inter alia, requested the Administrator ... "to prepare, in co-operation with the Executive Secretaries of the regional commissions, proposals for enhancing the collective involvement of the countries of each region, in the identification and the initiation of regional projects and activities as well as in the determination of priorities for inter-country programmes." At the UNDP Interagency Consultative Meeting (IACM) held in Geneva, 17-19 December 1979 - to which Executing Agencies, including the regional commissions, were invited - relevant draft proposals were reviewed, which had originated at the earlier IACM (October, 1979, Rome) in consultation with the regional commissions. Further consultations were carried out with the Executive Secretaries of the regional commissions at the meeting of the Executive Secretaries held in Santiago, Chile, from 23 to 25 February 1980. The Executive Secretaries have endorsed the recommendations contained in part IV below.

1/ See Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1979, Supplement No.10 (E/1979/40), Chapter XXI, decision 79/10, paragraphs 17-18.

II. INTERCOUNTRY PROGRAMMES COVERING REGIONAL AND SUBREGIONAL GROUPINGS OF COUNTRIES

4. Consultative mechanisms and procedures for determining the views of Governments must of necessity differ from region to region. Countries in subregional groupings have varying forms of relationships - from close integration movements and other forms of co-operation to loose associations of groups of countries. The UNDP Arab region overlaps with two regional commissions and continents. Additionally, the consultative mechanisms with Governments which are required for global and interregional programmes differ from those which may be used in respect of regional and subregional programmes.

5. The Governing Council decision deals with the setting of priorities for the regional programmes; accordingly, what follows is restricted to regional programmes and their subregions. While the Council's decision did not cover interregional and global programmes, the Administrator is providing in an annex to this report, a description of the consultative process for interregional programmes, which includes recommendations formulated in conjunction with those contained in paragraph 9. A separate report will be submitted to the Council on global programmes in accordance with Council decision 79/10, section II, paragraph 6.

Current practice in formulating regional programmes

6. The Consensus lays down broad guidelines for regional programming which are followed by the Administrator; the central aim is to prepare regional programmes which reflect the development priorities of the countries concerned. In ascertaining these priorities, there are available to and used by the Administrator a variety of forums, recommendations and decisions of national Governments, regional and subregional groupings of countries and sectoral groupings. The following sets out the main procedures which have been used in preparing the regional programmes:

- (a) Regional Bureaux have maintained constant formal and informal contacts with national Governments, subregional groups and regional groupings such as the regional commissions, and ascertained thereby the views of the Governments individually and collectively regarding regional and subregional priorities in broad economic and social fields;
- (b) The Specialized Agencies convene intergovernmental, regional and subregional meetings in their particular sectoral fields where priority programmes in these sectors are discussed at the recommendations made. Regional Bureaux either are represented at these meetings or the conclusions of the meetings are made available to them;

- (c) Resolutions of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and other global intergovernmental bodies dealing with regional integration and other specific matters of regional interest, as for example, transport and communications, are taken into account;
- (d) The Regional Bureaux consult at various levels with all the Participating and Executing Agencies on regional and sub-regional programmes.

7. The Administrator, using the above as inputs, prepares for each region a regional programme constituting a broad framework of priority areas and makes a submission to the Governing Council for the approval of these programmes at the beginning of the programming cycle. Regional and subregional projects are thereafter identified and formulated with the endorsement of at least two Governments in the region. In close consultations with Governments, the Specialized Agencies and the regional commissions, the Administrator seeks to ensure a balanced distribution of regional resources among subregions within each regional programme and to emphasize innovative approaches to the solution of development problems faced by the countries concerned. UNDP's intercountry programme resources represent less than one-half of the regional and interregional resources of the United Nations system available to Governments, but in many instances these resources serve as a catalyst for attracting other sources of funding for regional activities and projects.

III. REVIEW OF CURRENT PRACTICE

8. The above procedures indicate that intensive and close consultations are held with governments and intergovernmental groups and that Governments are closely involved at the programme level and are the final authority at the project level. While these consultations ensure that the views of governments on sectoral, regional and subregional priorities are known, they do not adequately provide a mechanism for ensuring the collective involvement of the Governments of the region in the setting of priorities of the regional UNDP programme. Sectoral priorities collectively set by separate intergovernmental bodies in the fields, for example, of agriculture, health, education and transport, must in turn have a priority determination as between themselves. Similarly, priorities set by regional and subregional bodies which are not directly related to UNDP programmes may not automatically reflect the priorities which would have been selected specifically for the UNDP regional programme.

IV. RECOMMENDATION - REGIONAL PROGRAMMES

9. To remedy the above situation and enhance the collective involvement of the developing countries in the setting of regional priorities for the regional programmes for the third cycle and in response to General Assembly Resolution 34/206 the Administrator, after consultations with Agencies and regional commissions, proposes the following consultative process for regional programmes:

- (a) Each Regional Bureau will review the on-going regional programmes to determine their effectiveness and to draw lessons which can be used for the benefit of the programmes for the third cycle. The Executing Agencies will be invited to associate themselves with the exercises;
- (b) Governments, regional commissions, intergovernmental regional and subregional groupings, and Agencies will be advised of the proposed programming cycle for drafting the third cycle regional programmes, and requested to provide views on priorities for the programmes;
- (c) Agencies which normally convene regional and subregional sectoral meetings of Governments will be requested to seek the views of these sectoral meetings, specifically on programme priorities for the UNDP regional programmes; UNDP will be represented at such meetings. In addition, the Agencies will be requested to provide sectoral analyses of regional trends and requirements in their areas of competence. Agencies with multisectoral responsibilities such as the United Nations and UNCTAD, as well as regional commissions should be invited to attend regional and subregional meetings of other Agencies, as appropriate;
- (d) Using the above as inputs, the Administrator will prepare draft regional programmes taking into account also pertinent decisions of the General Assembly and other global and regional United Nations system conferences and meetings;
- (e) In order to ensure the collective involvement of Governments in the final determination of priorities among the various inputs specified above, the Administrator will convene, in collaboration with the Executive Secretaries of the regional commissions, a special meeting of the Governments in each of the areas covered by the regional programmes to discuss and review the draft programme prepared by the Administrator referred to in (d) above. Each Government will decide on its appropriate representation, the only

requirement being that the representatives should be fully briefed and empowered to speak on behalf of the Government regarding the priorities for the regional UNDP programme. The meeting will elect its own Chairman from one of the Government representatives. In this respect, the Administrator would like to suggest that Governments might agree to elect as Chairman, the Vice-President or a member of the Governing Council from the region concerned. All Agencies will be invited to participate in these meetings;

- (f) The Administrator will thereafter review the draft programmes in the light of the conclusions reached at these meetings and prepare a final programme for each region which would be submitted to the Governing Council together with a report of the main conclusions of the respective intergovernmental meetings.
- (g) The Administrator will, as in the past, undertake the necessary consultations to ensure that subregional interests are equitably dealt with. The practices which have been developed in some subregions of identifying projects by having special programming missions and collective consultations with Governments in the subregion will be continued and extended.

10. The totality of the consultative processes to be followed for setting regional priorities for regional UNDP programmes as described above can also provide an opportunity to the Governments of countries of each region for their collective involvement in the identification and initiation of potential regional projects and activities. Once the intercountry programmes for each region are approved by the Governing Council for the third cycle, the regional and subregional projects thereafter would be formulated according to established procedures, with the endorsement of at least two Governments in the region.

11. The Administrator recommends that the Governing Council endorse the consultative process, described above, aimed at enhancing the collective involvement of the developing countries in the setting of regional priorities for the regional programmes for the third cycle and in the identification and initiation of regional projects and activities.

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ANNEX

Interregional Programmes

Current practices in formulating interregional programmes

1. For the 1977-81 cycle, the following steps were taken in preparing the interregional programme:

- (a) Study of recommendations of the General Assembly and other important inter-governmental bodies and conferences relating to international development problems;
- (b) Consultations with Agencies, in the course of which resolutions and directives of their governing bodies were given close attention;
- (c) Review of major programme areas that had been initiated during the first cycle, in consultation with collaborating inter-governmental bodies such as interregional and regional fisheries commissions, as well as participating individual governments to determine what priority they should be assigned during the current cycle; and
- (d) On the basis of the above inputs, the Administrator prepares a programme which is submitted to the Governing Council.

Review of current practices

2. The Administrator has utilized inputs from inter-governmental meetings and consultations with Governments and Agencies in drafting the inter-regional programme. The question, however, is whether it is possible to enhance the collective involvement of developing countries in setting priorities. It would not appear possible to establish the identical mechanisms for the interregional programme as are proposed for the regional programmes.

- (a) The programme is world-wide in scope and the type of meetings envisaged in paragraph 9(e) of DP/435 would not be feasible on a global basis;
- (b) The global sectoral meetings of Agencies establish global sectoral priorities. However, since there is no global inter-governmental mechanism for distilling these sectoral global priorities into the narrower programme priorities which can be financed by UNDP, there is a need for UNDP to place the various sectoral priorities into priority relationships with one another.

3. Furthermore, the interregional programme often acts as a catalyst to develop new ideas for technical co-operation at the regional and national levels. It provides possibilities for looking ahead into new areas which Governments themselves may wish to take up after a period of experimentation has demonstrated the value of such activities. The programme can provide the most important opportunity to give effect to those global decisions of inter-governmental meetings held under the aegis of the United Nations system, where technical assistance elements are involved and where individual Governments may not wish to have national or regional IPF's used. .

4. Experience has shown for example, that the interregional IPF has been an important source of financing for certain of the global objectives of the NIEO such as ECDC. The interregional programme absorbs 1.3 per cent of UNDP's IPF's.

Recommendations

5. In the light of the above, the Administrator recommends the following procedures for the determination of priorities of the interregional programme:

- (a) The division for Global and Interregional Projects will review the ongoing programme on the same basis as in paragraph 9(a) of DP/435;
- (b) Action will be taken to solicit views on the interregional programme as in paragraph 9(b) of DP/435;
- (c) At the meetings mentioned in paragraph 9(c) of DP/435, views will be canvassed specifically on the content of the interregional programme;
- (d) The Administrator, using the above as inputs, but paying special attention to the decisions of the General Assembly and other United Nations system conferences and meetings, will draft the interregional programme;
- (e) The Governing Council would consider the programme and decide on it. The Council in this instance would be regarded as a representative intergovernmental meeting on a global basis, having regard to the fact that observer delegations are able to participate freely in discussions;
- (f) A report will be made to the Council each year on the projects approved and their relationship to the approved programme.