PROGRAMME PLANNING AND PREPARATION FOR THE THIRD PROGRAMMING CYCLE, 1982-1986

Implementation of revised country programming policies and procedures for the third programming cycle, 1982-1986

Report of the Administrator

Summary

This report has been prepared to inform the Governing Council of the progress made in the implementation of the revised country programming policies and procedures for the third programming cycle. It discusses the various elements of continuous programming including continuous monitoring and review and periodic programme reviews, and the role in it of Governments, UNDP and Agencies.

The report contains proposals for simplified country programme documents and the use of short-format documents for country programmes of $20 million and less, including cost sharing. The Administrator further suggests that greater flexibility should be allowed in the timing of country programmes. He also proposes a special meeting of the Governing Council in February 1983 to facilitate the timely approval of new country programmes.

Country programmes to be approved as from June 1982 will be prepared in accordance with the policies and procedures envisaged for the third programming cycle. Instructions to that effect were issued early this year. The preparation of country programme documents to be approved by the Governing Council at the present session had advanced too far to allow a change in procedures. Meanwhile, the UNDP Policies and Procedures Manual is being revised to reflect the modified approach to country programming. The decisions of the Council at this session will be reflected in the new instructions to be issued soon after.

The Administrator is recommending that the Council adopt the draft decision contained in Section IV of this report.
INTRODUCTION

1. In his report to the twenty-seventh session of the Governing Council on the Examination of experience with country programming (DP/454), the Administrator characterized the approach to country programming adopted in 1975 as a shift from the programming of projects to programming by objectives, and by its emphasis on maintaining the relevance of UNDP technical co-operation to evolving national objectives, needs and priorities. This approach, which envisages a dynamic country programme and is referred to as "continuous programming" was not generally applied during the second programming cycle. However, it is to be consistently adhered to in future country programming. The Administrator has, therefore, decided that country programmes to be approved as of June 1982 will be prepared in accordance with the policies and procedures envisaged for the third programming cycle.

2. Document DP/454 set out the basic requirements for effective continuous programming, which include:

   (a) A clear country programme document specific in objectives to be served by UNDP assistance;

   (b) Continuing review of the implementation of ongoing activities and of progress in the initiation of planned activities;

   (c) Continuing assessment of newly arising technical co-operation needs in light of identified programme objectives, changing national priorities and resources availability;

   (d) Periodic overall review of ongoing and planned activities and confirmation of the country programme for the subsequent one-to-two year period.

3. Fundamental to the country programming process is the primacy of the role of the Government, on the one hand, and the notion of a United Nations development system, on the other. Inherent in the notion of a United Nations development system is the concept of partnership. Resident Representatives have therefore been urged to take all possible steps to ensure the participation of Agencies at the appropriate levels with a view to maximizing the utilization of the Agencies' considerable accumulated experience, and to take advantage themselves of the existence of this experience, whatever role the Government might wish Agencies to play in the interaction between it and the United Nations system.

4. A continuing dialogue both at the operational level between the United Nations system\(^1\) and the sectoral ministries, and with the central planning

\(^1\) Where this document refers to the United Nations system, all organizations of the United Nations system are meant, including UNDP. The word "Agencies" will be used to denote organizations of the United Nations system other than UNDP.
and co-ordinating authorities should be the corner-stone of the process of continuous programming and the basis for: (a) the formulation of the country programme; (b) the continuing review of its implementation; and (c) the identification of new activities. This report discusses these aspects of future country programming in some detail, with a particular view to defining the role of each of the various participants in the successive stages of the process.

I. CONTINUOUS PROGRAMMING

5. Continuous programming of UNDP resources will be based mainly upon existing processes for the monitoring and review of UNDP-supported projects and programmes, including periodic reviews of such projects and of the country programme as a whole.\(^2\) It is the intention to utilize existing processes more effectively and adapt them where necessary, rather than add to them or introduce additional exercises.

6. The emphasis in the third programming cycle will be on greatly improved and efficient programme management through advance planning, in close consultation between the Resident Representative, the Government and Agencies, of reviews and programming activities, including studies at the project and sectoral, subsectoral and multisectoral levels.\(^3\) Resident Representatives and their staff will be primarily responsible for providing the necessary support to central Government authorities for the efficient management of the process, while Agencies and sectoral ministries within Governments should be fully relied upon to play their essential substantive roles.

7. The findings and recommendations emerging from the review and programming activities referred to in the previous paragraph should help to decide the use of available UNDP resources. The determination of priorities for such use should be made by the appropriate national authority(ies), in consultation with the Resident Representative, assisted by representatives of those Agencies which, based upon the preceding sectoral reviews and programming activities, are likely to be involved in the country programme.

8. Updating of a country programme thus becomes a continuing activity, the status and/or progress of which will be periodically assessed and reported on. In that context the periodic country programme review will take the form of an analysis and synthesis of the conclusions of review and programming activities carried out during a certain period, and their presentation in a structured forward-looking report, rather than that of an elaborate separate exercise.

\(^2\) While project monitoring and review are concerned with project performance, programme monitoring and review are aimed at preserving the integrity of the country programme and ensuring its effective implementation and continued responsiveness to national priorities as perceived by the Government.

\(^3\) Subsequent references to sectoral reviews and/or studies, also include subsectoral and multisectoral reviews/studies.
9. With proper application of the concept of continuous programming the need for special studies and reviews and extensive additional consultations for the formulation of a new country programme should be considerably reduced.

A. Continuous monitoring and review

(a) The UNDP country programme

10. Continuous programming of UNDP resources requires the comprehensive assessment at the appropriate time of the various activities being undertaken with UNDP assistance in a particular sector, how they affect that sector, and what additional activities may be needed to maintain the momentum and/or contribute to the further development of the sector. Such assessments or reviews may reach beyond the immediate range of influence of a project or group of related projects and in some cases assume the proportions of a full-fledged sectoral study. However, considering that in most countries UNDP resources represent a relatively minor portion of the assistance available to the Government, extensive use of comprehensive sectoral studies as a means of determining the future use of these resources is not envisaged. Nevertheless, it will be necessary for the Government concerned, UNDP and the Agencies to constantly look ahead to ensure that the most effective use is made of the assistance available from UNDP.

11. The review of ongoing UNDP-supported activities (tripartite project reviews) and the daily dialogue between Government officials and their counterparts in the United Nations system constitute a firm basis from which to proceed to determine future activities. Greater use will be made of existing methods of review towards achieving a more coherent and effective country programme. The Resident Representative has a key role to play in co-ordinating the contribution of the United Nations system to this process. Agencies should make appropriate arrangements for the active participation and consultations in those reviews of senior field office and project staff.

12. For determination of the technical co-operation requirements on which the programming of UNDP resources should be based, maximum use should be made of existing studies and earlier or planned reviews carried out by the Government and Agencies. The need for additional reviews and studies and their extent and nature should be determined by the responsible Government authorities. They should be carried out by the Government or under Government auspices. The participation of Agencies in specific studies and reviews should be agreed upon in consultation between the Government and the Agencies, the latter under the leadership of the Resident Representative.

13. The preparation of country programme management plans (CPMP), which set out the various planned activities with regard to programme development, the sectoral studies to be undertaken by or with the assistance of Agencies and project formulation and implementation, will be continued. The Administrator will further improve CPMP's and their use in support of the systematic, well-timed and phased review of the entire country programme with the full
participation of senior Government officials of the sectoral ministries concerned and of the central co-ordinating and planning authorities, UNDP, and the relevant Agencies.

14. The approach outlined in the previous paragraphs is expected to contribute to the greater responsiveness of the country programme to needs of the country as they arise. It will create a common awareness among the participants of shortfalls and new needs as well as of opportunities to meet them. It will help to bring the programmes of the various organizations of the United Nations system closer together, making them mutually supportive. In short, the systematic and close involvement of all concerned both within Government and within the United Nations system will greatly enhance the overall effectiveness of United Nations technical co-operation and capital assistance in a particular country.

(b) Use of the UNDP country programming process as a frame of reference for the operational activities of the organizations of the United Nations system; joint programming of resources

15. Agencies have concluded that continuous programming has potential as a frame of reference for programming non-UNDP resources and would facilitate enhanced Agency participation and support of operational activities at the country level.4/ The Administrator considers that the process of continuous programming should provide a suitable framework for the co-ordinated planning of review and programming activities at the sectoral level related to the assistance provided by the United Nations system. It will afford the Government and the organizations involved a more comprehensive insight into sectoral and multisectoral requirements and ways of meeting them, and thus facilitate more effective planning of the use of various resources available to the Government.

16. Where the programmes of the Agencies relate primarily to emergency and ad-hoc project development or, in the case of trust fund programmes, where Agencies are not entirely free to programme available resources, it is clearly not always possible for Agencies to use the UNDP country programming process as a frame of reference for their operational activities. Nevertheless, in the latter case the potential for a closer link with the process of country programming exists, particularly since multi-bilateral assistance very often stems from joint undertakings by UNDP and Agencies. If, in addition, trust funds can be used for the financing of projects jointly identified during the country programming process, the relevance of such assistance to development priorities would be further enhanced, something which is particularly important in the case of Agencies administering a sizeable funds-in-trust programme.

17. Joint programming of resources available from UNDP and Agencies, raised before as a possible practical approach to coherent programming, might also be facilitated by the process of continuous programming. Joint programming of resources should be the choice of the Government, based upon the particular circumstances of the country. It requires the full participation of UNDP, the Agencies concerned and of Government officials from the competent sectoral ministries, the central planning organization and the co-ordinating authority.

18. The Administrator believes that the Resident Co-ordinator of the United Nations system, respectively the Resident Representative of UNDP, should play a key role in promoting the co-ordination of the review and programming of assistance provided by the United Nations system. He or she should assist the various organizations as well as the Government in managing the overall review and programming activities to be undertaken, using the country programming process as the frame of reference.

B. Periodic country programme reviews

19. The continuous and structured monitoring and review of a country programme, discussed in the previous section, should be the basis for the periodic country programme review. Careful planning of individual reviews and studies and programming discussions over a period of time will allow for review of activities in sufficient depth and thus generate responsible decisions on further assistance.

20. The purpose of periodic country programme reviews should be substantive rather than financial. They should be undertaken when the state of the country programme calls for a (re)assessment of its effectiveness and response to present and future needs. The timing of periodic country programme reviews should, therefore, be made dependent on the results of study and review activities and consultations at the sectoral level and in particular on:

(a) When it is most useful for the Government to have at its disposal an up-to-date programme of UNDP technical co-operation;

(b) When the country programme has reached a stage where decisions have to be taken about new commitments which are not adequately reflected in the current country programme document or its latest update; the amount of resources left to be programmed - probably considerably larger in the first years of the country programme - will be an important factor in establishing the cycle for periodic programme reviews; and

(c) Whether the contents of the country programme have undergone significant changes due to unforeseen circumstances and new demands on the country programme's resources. Country programme reviews, therefore, should not necessarily have to be conducted annually. An important aspect of the Resident Representative's responsibility in assisting the Government in the

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5/ DP/319, Role and Activities of UNDP, paragraph 27; DP/454, Examination of the Experience with Country Programming, paragraph 72.
management of the country programming process is the determination, in consultation with the Government, of the "cycle" to be adopted for periodic country programme reviews.

21. With the emphasis in continuous programming being placed on a process of continuous monitoring and review at the sectoral level, it is expected that the periodic country programme review and the resulting preparation of a document providing a comprehensive overview of the state of the country programme and its future orientation should normally not involve more than the compilation and synthesis of the results of the preceding reviews and implementation action taken. The participation of Agencies in this exercise should be decided at the appropriate time in consultation between the Government, the Resident Representative, and the Agencies. Agencies should be given an opportunity to review the draft document and provide the Resident Representative with their comments and suggestions thereon.

22. The preparation of a periodic country programme review offers a particularly convenient opportunity for the Government and the Resident Representative to involve Agencies without a presence in the country in the programming process, especially if for lack of such a presence they did not participate in earlier sectoral reviews and studies carried out by or with the Government.

23. For the purpose of informing the Governing Council, on a selective basis, of the results of periodic reviews of individual country programmes (decision 80/7),7/ the Administrator considers it desirable to adopt a common format for reports on periodic country programme reviews. The document should report achievements and shortfalls in the implementation of activities approved before the period under review and new ones started since, and it should identify future activities. The emphasis should be on analysis and synthesis of the findings of prior reviews and studies undertaken in the course of continuous programming. Information contained in the country programme document should not be repeated, but changes in objectives, priorities and plans for the use of UNDP resources should be reported. For the purpose of comparability, the adoption of a format which resembles that of the country programme document (see section II) would be the most appropriate.

24. Typically, a periodic country programme review report would include the following:

(a) Cover page;
(b) Introduction, including brief summary of the process followed for the continuous and periodic review of the country programme;

(ii) Projects identified in the country programme document; assistance completed or terminated; unforeseen extensions of planned assistance, subsequent phases; significant changes in design or content;

(iii) New projects identified (and being implemented) within "earmarkings" for selected activities or programmes;

(iv) New projects identified outside such "earmarkings"; and

(v) Changes in "earmarkings"; and

(e) Annex; Updated financial summary.

25. Periodic country programme review reports should be reviewed by the Regional Bureaux. For the information of the Governing Council, the Regional Bureaux would each prepare, annually, a progress report on country programme implementation in the region, highlighting significant developments in selected individual programmes which will enable the Council to form an overall picture of progress and trends in UNDP's country activities.

C. The formulation of new country programmes

26. In the context of continuous programming, the formulation of a new country programme of UNDP technical co-operation essentially constitutes a new phase in a continuing process. Country programme formulation is the responsibility of the Government concerned and should be carried out in co-operation with the United Nations system, the latter under the leadership of the Resident Representative.

27. The formulation of a country programme should be based upon the identification of technical co-operation requirements which may be met by UNDP and the determination of how UNDP and Agencies might effectively respond to these requirements. Such planning and programming activities as are being undertaken by the Government before or during the formulation of a new country programme, the reviews and studies carried out at the sectoral level in the process of continuous programming, and the periodic country programme reviews should be important sources for the information required. Where necessary, this information could be supplemented by carrying out such additional reviews or studies as would be agreed to in consultation between the Government, UNDP and the respective Agencies.

28. Resident Representatives should therefore consult the respective Governments and agencies with a view to establishing whether the need exists for additional reviews and/or studies to be carried out by the Government concerned or under its auspices for the formulation of a new country programme. The extent and nature of such activities should be determined by the responsible Government authorities. The participation of agencies in specific studies and reviews should be decided in consultation between the Government and the Agencies, the latter under the leadership of the Resident Representative.
II. THE COUNTRY PROGRAMME DOCUMENT

29. The country programme document, which provides the framework of UNDP technical co-operation in a particular country, fulfils the dual purpose of (a) serving as an information document for the Governing Council upon which the Council can base its approval decision, and (b) providing the basis for activities during the period covered, including the implementation of previously agreed activities and the programming of new activities within the given framework. The approved country programme document delineates the authority delegated to the Administrator by the Council for the approval of UNDP assistance to projects.

30. In order to facilitate the process of review and approval by the Governing Council of a large number of country programmes,7/ and in general to reduce the inordinate amount of work usually involved in the processing of country programme documents, the Administrator proposes the use of different formats for country programmes of $20 million or less8/ and for those in which resources exceed that amount. The adoption of different formats according to the size of country programmes should not affect the quality of the process leading to their formulation.

31. For the purpose of Governing Council approval and to serve as a basis for continuous programming, future country programme documents would include information on:

(a) Development priorities selected for UNDP assistance and how this assistance relates to the Government's own efforts and to the use of other external resources to achieve the related objectives;

(b) Specific assistance from UNDP, including: (i) the commitments of UNDP continuing from the previous country programme, in terms of objectives to be attained, actions under way (projects assisted) and their anticipated duration, the nature of the assistance, and the resources involved; and (ii) the proposed use of resources left to be programmed (excluding the reserve), in two categories: a) assistance to new projects, including new phases of assistance to ongoing projects, and b) earmarkings for specific programmes or activities for which projects are to be identified at the appropriate time; and

(c) Resources to be held in reserve for unforeseen activities arising from changes in the national plan or strategy, or from new priorities perceived by the Government, with appropriate justification.

32. The use of programmable UNDP resources (paragraph 31, b, ii) would be planned in accordance with the requirements of Governments' own planning processes, leaving sufficient room for the adjustment of the UNDP country programme to changing priorities arising, for example, in the course of the preparation of a Government's annual development budget.

7/ See Chapter III, below.
8/ The figure relates to the combined resources available from UNDP and those provided under Government and third-party cost sharing.
This, however, should not lead to significant portions (more than 10 per cent) of the available resources being left unprogrammed by holding them in reserve. The objectives to be met with the assistance of UNDP and which would have to be reflected in the earmarkings for specific programmes and activities (paragraph 31, b, ii, b)), should be clear from the outset.

33. In addition to the information set out in paragraph 31, country programme documents would mention succinctly: (a) how Governments relate UNDP technical co-operation to decisions taken in international fora setting global objectives and targets for development and encouraging individual Governments to contribute to their achievement; (b) linkages between UNDP assistance at the country level and intercountry activities supported by UNDP, and to support from other United Nations or bilateral sources; (c) relationships between UNDP technical co-operation and assistance from other multilateral and bilateral sources and plans for the co-ordination of assistance from various United Nations sources in the future; and (d) actions envisaged to promote self-reliance in development at the country and intercountry levels (New Dimensions, Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries (TCDC), Economic Co-operation among Developing Countries (ECDC) etc.).

34. Information referred to in paragraph 33 would be provided only in relation to concrete proposals for UNDP technical co-operation and be kept factual and brief. It would be included selectively, in the appropriate sections of the country programme document as indicated below. A discussion of the country's development perspective would no longer be required, while the inclusion in country programme documents of background information, a discussion of economic conditions, and detailed tables listing projects and annualized figures for the allocation of resources, all relics of the first programming cycle, would be discontinued.

35. The contents of country programme documents for country programmes larger than $20 million would be kept to the minimum required to convey the information outlined in the previous paragraphs. The documents would include:

(a) Cover page (existing format - one page);
(b) Index (one page);
(c) Introduction, including information on the time frame adopted for the country programme, anticipated resources and highlights of the programme, including investment orientation, fostering of national self-reliance, TCDC/ECDC, relation to global objectives such as the New International Economic Order (NIEO), participation of women in development, etc. (one to two pages);
(d) National development objectives and programmes to be supported by UNDP, and the assistance envisaged in terms of support to projects (ongoing and new) and support for selected activities or programmes for which projects are still to be developed by the Government; the section should include an indication of relationships, if any with other country and intercountry activities of the United Nations system and, as appropriate, other donors in the same area of activity (number of pages depending on size of programme);
(e) Annex: financial summary (existing format - one page).
The length of the country programme document should be determined by the volume of resources to be programmed and, consequently, by the diversity of activities to be supported by UNDP (d); under no circumstances should it exceed 32 pages including cover page and Annex.

36. Country programme documents for country programmes of $20 million or less would contain in summary form the information mentioned in paragraphs 31 and 33, and a financial summary. They would not exceed eight pages, including the cover page.

37. The following contents are envisaged for the short-format country programme document:

(a) **Cover page** (new format— one page);
(b) **Introduction**; including a brief description of the process followed in formulation, time frame, anticipated resources, and highlights of the country programme (one page);
(c) **UNDP technical co-operation envisaged in support of national development priorities**: a summary of national objectives/priorities selected for UNDP assistance, related assistance from other sources, and UNDP's own contribution (up to five pages); and
(d) **Annex**: financial summary (existing format— one page).

38. For very small country programmes— e.g. those for less than $5 million, including cost sharing, and covering only a few development activities— section (c) might be reduced to a brief statement of the assistance to be provided by UNDP and its justification in the light of priorities of the Government. The document, including cover page, need not exceed four to six pages.

39. Elsewhere (DP/562, Further consideration of the organization of the sessions of the Council), the Administrator is proposing to the Governing Council that future country programme documents be submitted to the Council in their original language and that only the accompanying note by the Administrator be translated. Should, however, the Council decide that the present practice of translation of country programme documents is to continue, it may wish to consider for the short-format country programme documents, in view of their summary nature, discontinuance of the Administrator's note and acceptance of their presentation to the Council with his recommendation only.

### III. THE TIME FRAME OF THE COUNTRY PROGRAMME

40. In his report to the Governing Council (DP/454), the Administrator recommended that the synchronization of UNDP country programmes with the national development plan of the country concerned should continue to be the preferred approach. Further review of country programmes approved for the second IPF cycle has shown that the majority of them (66) were timed to
coincide with the IPF cycle and that very few country programmes were actually co-terminus with the country's national plan. In view of this experience and since the purpose of continuous programming as conceived for the third programming cycle is to ensure continued relevance of technical co-operation activities to a country's development requirements as they evolve, the Administrator is of the opinion that greater flexibility should be allowed in the timing of country programmes in order to meet the different requirements of individual Governments.

41. About two-thirds of all UNDP country programmes (88) will terminate at the end of 1981. In those cases new country programmes should preferably commence in January 1982, which coincides with the beginning of the third IPF cycle. Consequently, and in the interest of improved overall management of country programmes and programme resources for the third programming cycle, the Administrator's aim is the approval of the large majority of country programmes for the third programming cycle within the first one to two years of that cycle. In order to facilitate the timely approval of new country programme documents for the third programming cycle the Administrator recommends a special meeting of the Governing Council for February 1983.

IV. RECOMMENDATION OF THE ADMINISTRATOR

42. The Governing Council, following consideration of this report and having reviewed the recommendations put forward by the Administrator, may wish to adopt the following decision:

The Governing Council,

Having considered the Administrator's report on the implementation of revised country programming procedures for the third programming cycle, 1982-1986,

Noting the recommendations of the Administrator for procedural changes in the country programming process,

Recognizing the need to make the UNDP country programming process more responsive to the requirements of individual Governments, and to simplify the preparation of country programme documents without affecting the quality of the programming of UNDP resources for development, or the information on which the Council has to base its assessment of individual country programmes,

Taking into consideration General Assembly resolution 2688(XXV) of 22 December 1970 (Consensus), and decision 80/7 of the Governing Council,

1. Requests the Administrator to ensure that the timing of individual country programmes is decided in full agreement between the Government and the
Resident Representative, bearing in mind (a) the provisions of paragraph 7 of the Consensus; (b) the need to avoid hiatuses between successive country programmes; and (c) the desirability of timely submission for the Council's approval of new country programmes;

2. **Endorses** the Administrator's proposals for continuous programming contained in paragraphs 5 through 28 of his report (DP/518);

3. **Requests** the Administrator to submit to the Governing Council annual progress reports on programme implementation in each region, highlighting significant developments in selected individual programmes;

4. **Endorses** the Administrator's proposals for the simplification of country programme documents, including the use of short-format documents for country programmes of $20 million and less, including cost sharing;

5. **Approves** the Administrator's recommendation to discontinue, for country programmes for $20 million or less, including cost sharing, the submission of an accompanying Note by the Administrator and to accept their presentation with the Administrator's recommendation only; 

6. **Endorses** the Administrator's proposal to convene a special meeting of the Governing Council in February 1983 to facilitate the timely approval of new country programmes for the third programming cycle.

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9/ Inclusion of this paragraph would depend on the Governing Council's decision on the proposal made in DP/562 to submit country programme documents in their original language (see paragraph 39 above).