OTHER FUNDS AND PROGRAMMES

UNITED NATIONS FUND FOR POPULATION ACTIVITIES

PROPOSED PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES

Recommendation by the Executive Director

Assistance to the Government of Tunisia

Comprehensive population programme

Estimated UNFPA contribution: $5 000 000

Estimated value of the Government's contribution: $57 000 000

Duration: Four and one-half years

Estimated starting date: July 1981

Assisting Agencies:
United Nations Department of Technical Co-operation for Development (UNTCD)
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
World Health Organization (WHO)

Government Co-operating Agency: Ministry of Foreign Affairs
I. Summary

1. UNFPA proposes supporting a comprehensive population programme in Tunisia from mid-1981 to 1985 in the amount of $5,000,000. The proposed programme has been based on the findings and recommendations of the needs assessment mission that visited the country in 1980. It would include projects in data collection and analysis, population dynamics, maternal and child health and family planning, and population information, education, and communication. Some of the proposed projects would be extensions and expansions of activities already assisted by UNFPA in previous years. UNFPA assistance would cover technical assistance; equipment; training, workshops, and seminars; training materials; and some local expenses and operating costs.

II. Background

2. Tunisia covers an area of 163,610 square kilometres and, according to United Nations estimates, had a population of about 6,350,000 in 1980. Population density is estimated at 39 persons per square kilometre, and about half of the people live in urban areas.

3. During the period 1975-1980, the population grew at an estimated average annual rate of 2.5 per cent. The crude birth rate for this period is estimated by the United Nations at 36 per thousand (down from an estimated 44.2 for the period 1965-1970). The crude death rate for 1975-1980 is estimated at 11.1 per thousand. Infant mortality rates vary from 80 per thousand to 110 per thousand, with the higher rates prevailing in rural areas. Life expectancy is estimated at almost 58 years. Women of reproductive age (15-49) account for about 47 per cent of the female population.

4. According to the 1975 census, slightly under 55 per cent of the population is illiterate. The World Bank estimates 1978 per capita income at $950.

5. The Tunisian Government has long recognized the importance of moderating population growth; it considers the present rate of natural increase to be too high, and maintains a policy of lowering the fertility and population growth rates. Because family planning programmes are viewed as a basis for improving family welfare, the Government's strategies call for population education and improved public health services which include family planning.

6. The National Office of Population and Family Planning (ONPFP), established within the Ministry of Public Health by law in 1973, is responsible for organizing the delivery of family planning services throughout Tunisia, and for conducting and co-ordinating research relating to population. Since its inception, the proportion of women of reproductive age using contraception has risen from 10 per cent to 21.3 per cent in 1979. Early, unofficial World Fertility Survey reports suggest coverage may have reached 30 per cent in 1980. The fertility rate had fallen from 160 per thousand to 140 per thousand by 1978, and according to current projections should fall to 120 per thousand by 1986.

7. Unemployment is an ever-growing problem, and creation of new employment possibilities is a primary planning goal. To stem the flow of migrants to urban areas and improve the spatial distribution of the population, the Government has initiated rural development programmes and incentives to re-group highly dispersed population into new village communities. The five year-plan now being drawn up for 1982-1986 is expected to give even higher priority to regional and social development along with provision of increased job opportunities.
8. Full-scale UNFPA assistance to Tunisia began with the signing of an agreement in 1975 under which UNFPA committed $4,000,000 in assistance to the Tunisian Family Planning Programme developed by the ONPFP over a three and one-half year period (which included pre-project activities begun in 1974). Assistance was provided for equipping and operating family planning clinics, and 19 family planning referral centres were opened as a step towards providing uniformity of service delivery throughout the country. Family planning services were made available in all existing maternal and child health centres and clinics, and equipment and training were provided to 71 maternal and child health centres to enable them to integrate family planning into the other services they offered. In addition, population and family planning information and services were provided to members of trade unions and other employees, and population education courses were introduced into 33 secondary schools.

9. A second comprehensive programme of assistance under the country agreement, amounting to $4,000,000, was approved by the Governing Council at its twenty-fifth session in June 1978; this assistance was designed to ensure continuation of activities initiated under the earlier programme. In addition, under this programme a structured training programme for physicians in family planning techniques was offered, and provisions for research and evaluation of all aspects of the family planning programme were made. Although a plateau in the rate of new acceptors was reached in 1979, in 1980 the rate increased again, particularly that for IUDs, acceptance of which was nearly 24 per cent higher for the first nine months of 1980 than for the same period in 1979.

10. In 1978-1979, 75 physicians were trained in techniques of family planning, and in the first nine months of 1980, 94 physicians, as well as 380 paramedical personnel, received training. To systematize the training of physicians and paramedical personnel, a centre with a full-time teaching staff was consolidated in Tunis in 1979 with UNFPA support. Salary support was provided to physicians and paramedical personnel were trained to perform tubal ligations and IUD insertions and to work in maternal and child health and family planning service delivery programmes in remote areas of the country. By September 1980, 131 additional health centres were offering family planning services involving 89 physicians and almost a thousand paramedical personnel, bringing the number of these centres to 720. In addition, 50 mobile units were operating in rural areas to provide these services. During 1978-1980, UNFPA funded the establishment of five new regional family planning referral centres, which provide a full range of services. UNFPA assistance also provided the family planning programme with medical supplies, clinical equipment, audio-visual and office equipment, and vehicles to enable distribution of services and supplies to its various outlets, including 1,300,000 cycles of pills and over 200,000 IUDs. Because of unexpected demand for IUDs, an additional $90,000 was allocated for their purchase.

11. UNFPA also supported a pilot project designed to provide maternal and child health services within the framework of an integrated family health system including family planning. The project also ran an outreach programme to serve remote areas. In 1978-1979 this project provided more than 53,700 family planning and 12,000 paediatric consultations and some 12,100 pre- and post-natal examinations. During the same period there were more than 8,450 new acceptors. UNFPA funds covered the salaries of one gynaecologist, two family health physicians, and two nurse-midwives from the Royal Dutch Institute of Tropical Medicine, who provided services and trained Tunisian staff in family planning methods. The project is expected to be run entirely by Tunisians by mid-1981, and should be replicable in other rural areas of Tunisia.
12. The Tunisian Government has made a particularly strong effort to provide population education to various sectors of the public. As for secondary schools, UNFPA assistance under the second programme made it possible to hold 34 motivational seminars and workshops that were attended by 18 high school inspectors (41 per cent of the total), 123 principals (70 per cent of the total), and 1,154 teachers (25 per cent of the total). One hundred twenty-two out of the 250 secondary schools in Tunisia now include population education as an integral component of the curriculum. The introduction of population education into elementary schools is now being planned and is scheduled to begin before the end of 1981. UNFPA assistance had provided audio-visual equipment and vehicles. Under another UNFPA-assisted project, family planning information and services have been provided to workers in Government as well as all sectors of organized labour (for example, agriculture, and textile industry), involving unions and workers' associations, such as those for women, in population matters. From 1978 through 1980, 1,500 information and motivation seminars and working sessions, attended by approximately 7,000 persons, were organized for regional officials, union staff, and personnel of relevant ministries. Over 12,500 agricultural and industrial workers attended about 385 education sessions.

13. Total UNFPA assistance to Tunisia at the end of 1980 amounted to $8.5 million.

14. Between 1970 and 1980, the World Bank financed in the amount of $33 million, a project designed to improve MCH/FP programme performance and relieve a shortage of accommodations in maternity hospitals by strengthening administration and organization, training additional staff, and providing new facilities and equipment. Financing covered: a) the construction of four new maternity hospitals with about 500 beds, 29 MCH centres, and the extension of the Avicenne Paramedical Training School in Tunis; b) assistance in teaching medical personnel; and c) external review missions to study progress of the national family planning programme.

15. The United States Agency for International Development (U.S. AID) has been assisting the Government in developing and expanding an effective, low-cost family planning delivery system, with emphasis on community-based distribution, including the poorest and most rural areas. Household distribution of contraceptives is being extended to central and southern Tunisia. Assistance is also supporting training programmes to upgrade the skills of medical and paramedical personnel, an intensified information programme concentrating on rural areas, and research and evaluation activities. Total U.S. AID expenditures for 1978-1980 are estimated at $6,487,000.

16. The Association for Voluntary Sterilization (AVS) International Project has provided assistance since 1977 to establish a major family planning/voluntary sterilization clinic at El Ariana, which serves as a national headquarters for training medical and non-medical personnel in family planning/voluntary sterilization techniques and provides services for the rural population. By 1980, AVS had provided assistance in the amount of approximately $1.6 million for this project and for the installation of voluntary sterilization services in maternity hospitals and regional health centres. Family Planning International Assistance (FPIA) has supplied funds for four mobile clinics in four governorates which provide family planning information, education, and counselling services through field workers to the rural population. FPIA funding totalled $364,662 during 1978-1980. The Association Tunisienne du Planning Familial, the affiliate of International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), maintains a branch network of volunteers and is extending its work into areas not yet covered by Government facilities. Youth programmes and projects for improving the status of women are important features of its work. IPPF assistance to its affiliate amounted to about $500,000 during the period 1978-1980.
17. The major findings and recommendations of the needs assessment mission that visited Tunisia in 1980 can be summarized as follows:

a) basic data collection and analysis - assistance is required by the National Institute of Statistics to improve its cartographic and publications programmes as well as its ability to process and analyse data;

b) population dynamics - assistance is needed to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the family planning programme and to plan future directions, including analysis of cost-benefit ratios of the family planning programme and of continuation rates, socio-demographic exploration of the reproductive behaviour of Tunisian men and women, particularly in relation to mortality and morbidity as well as help in establishing a planning capability within the Government in the area of human resources that would gear social, economic and demographic studies to population projections, and forecasting, leading to more objective formulation and implementation of governmental policies on population;

c) maternal and child health and family planning - continuing assistance is required in this area with emphasis on promoting higher quality and more comprehensive family planning services, on extending service delivery to rural areas, and on training various categories of health personnel;

d) information, education, communication - assistance is needed so that i) population education programmes for secondary school students can be expanded; ii) population education can be extended to the primary school level, particularly in rural areas; iii) other groups that are not so systematically organized, such as seasonal farm labour can be reached; iv) population education can be institutionalized in the curriculum of the advanced teacher training institution, and v) the study of population issues at the University of Tunis can be strengthened.

III. The programme

18. The proposed four-and-one-half year programme is based on the findings and recommendations of the 1980 needs assessment mission and subsequent discussions with the Government. Some of the projects proposed would be continuations and extensions of projects assisted previously. The programme includes projects in the following areas:

Data collection and analysis

19. Support to the National Institute of Statistics. UNFPA proposes assistance in the amount of $300,000 to support the National Institute of Statistics (INS), which is responsible for conducting censuses. The Institute also collects, processes, and analyses data for other agencies, such as the Institute of Quantitative Economics, the Ministry of Health, and the ONPFP. The proposed assistance would be divided between two projects now under preparation. The first calls for assisting the INS in preparing for the next census (scheduled for 1985) by improving cartographic and publication capabilities. UNFPA support would provide the services of a cartographer plus equipment needed to modernize these functions. The second project would aim at strengthening the Institute's capacity for collecting, processing, and analysis of data from vital statistics. UNFPA assistance would mainly provide consultants. It is expected that these two projects would be executed by the Government with assistance of the United Nations Department of Technical Co-operation for Development (UNTCD).

Population dynamics

20. Study of the socio-economic determinants of fertility. The ONPFP lacks important information required to assess progress in the family planning programme as well as to
plan future expansion. UNFPA proposes assistance of approximately $300,000 to aid this institution in carrying out a comprehensive socio-economic study designed to relate contraceptive behaviour to determinants of fertility. The study would examine continuation rates, mortality, morbidity, and the cost-benefit aspects of child raising. UNFPA assistance would mainly support the costs of field work. The project would be executed by the Government with the assistance of UNTCD.

21. Tunisia intends to extend provision of family planning services from an urban-based programme (at present two-thirds of all acceptors are urban) to one covering the entire country uniformly by 1985. The intended result would be a drop in the fertility rate from 135 per thousand to 120 per thousand by 1986. UNFPA proposes supporting the following four projects with assistance in the amount of $3,000,000 to aid the ONPF in achieving these goals:

22. Strengthening and expanding family planning services. UNFPA proposes providing approximately $1,575,000 to assist the ONPF in building on its existing infrastructure to expand family planning services coverage. UNFPA assistance would supply equipment and contribute to operational costs of the regional family planning centres on a declining scale over the four and one-half years of the programme. These centres form a nucleus in each region from which communication programmes are implemented and also act as referral centres for clients requiring special services. At the end of the programme period, it is expected that Tunisia would be self-sufficient in providing family planning services throughout the country, with coverage of rural areas virtually complete. The project would be directly executed by the Government.

23. Training in MCH/FP. The remaining $1,425,000 would be distributed among three projects now under preparation: a) One would be designed to improve training techniques used in the Family Planning Training for medical and paramedical personnel. While techniques used up to now have been adequate for increasing the supply of family planning workers, the quality of services provided has not been such as to maintain acceptability, particularly in public facilities. UNFPA assistance would provide consultants to assist with improving training techniques and development of materials. The project would be executed by the Government with technical assistance from the World Health Organization (WHO). b) A second project would concentrate on training rural social workers in basic health and family planning techniques. The experience of the pilot project already assisted by UNFPA using personnel from the Royal Dutch Institute of Tropical Medicine shows that rural social workers trained in basic health and family planning techniques can contribute significantly to reducing malnutrition and other common childhood illnesses as well as increasing the acceptance rate of contraceptive use among mothers. UNFPA assistance would enable the ONPF to replicate this experience in other rural areas using the large cadre of social workers already operating in these areas. It would mainly provide the costs of holding workshops and seminars. The project would be executed by the Government with technical assistance probably coming from WHO. c) The third project would be designed to introduce family planning techniques into the curricula of at least three departments of community medicine in selected medical schools. UNFPA assistance would support training costs and materials, and a consultant would adapt family planning training techniques used in other countries to the Tunisian experience. The project would be directly executed by the Government.
Population information, education, and communication

24. UNFPA proposes allocating a total of $1,700,000 to four projects in this category, one of which is an extension of a project previously assisted by UNFPA.

25. Population education in the secondary schools. This project would aim at introducing a curriculum in population education into the secondary schools still without it, or about 50 per cent of the total. Some 2,000 educators would receive training in population education and in teaching methodology. The previously assisted UNFPA project in this area has suffered from a lack of teaching materials, and this project would provide for designing and producing such materials, which would contribute towards making population education a recognized and continuing component of secondary school instruction. In addition, the project would integrate population education into the programmes of secondary school clubs; by 1984, 600 secondary schools would, it is expected, be participating in this particular aspect of the programme. UNFPA assistance, totalling $171,000, would provide training and materials. The project would be executed by the Government with technical assistance from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

26. Population education in the primary schools. This project is designed to provide instruction to students in the cultural, nutritional, health and demographic aspects of population issues in the four final years of primary school. By the end of the four years, students should have received an awareness and understanding of population issues in Tunisia, and instructors should possess the capability, and be supplied with the teaching materials required, to continue instruction on this subject. During the project's three years, approximately 2,400 instructors would be trained by about 210 regional teams. The teams would themselves be trained during twelve-day sessions. Instructional materials, both printed and audio-visual, would be designed and tested before being distributed to all primary schools. UNFPA assistance, amounting to $250,000, would cover the expenses of holding workshops and seminars, teaching materials, and audio-visual equipment. The project would be executed by the Government with technical assistance provided by UNESCO.

27. Teaching population education. Each year 1,000 teachers are graduated by the advanced normal school in Tunis and take up teaching responsibilities. The main purpose of this project would be to institutionalize the study of population in this school so that future teachers, who receive four years of instruction, would enter the educational system already equipped to teach this subject at all levels. To train professors at the school, twelve seminars on population issues would be held during the four and one-half years of the project. A reference book on Tunisia's population policy and programme would be produced for use by the professors, and each graduating student would receive a copy as well as teaching materials. UNFPA assistance to the project, amounting to $179,000, would provide the costs of the seminars, teaching materials, and documents and journals for the library of the University of Tunis. The project would be implemented by the Ministry of Higher Learning and Scientific Research with technical assistance from UNESCO.
28. Population education for organized groups. Having successfully provided population education and family planning services to organized groups such as trade unions and employees in entrepreneurial establishments, the ONPFP now wishes to reach out to groups that are less systematically organized but easily reached, such as seasonal farm labour, including women, and village women already organized into groups for various purposes such as preparing and processing grains and other foods. To reach the wide range of groups envisaged, particularly in rural areas, the ONPFP would need to collaborate with the Ministries of Social Welfare, Culture, and Youth and Sports as well as the National Union of Tunisian Women, the National Union of Tunisian Workers, the National Union of Tunisian Farmers, etc. The project calls for holding training courses and seminars for officials of these various organizations to enable them to develop the capability of their field workers to communicate with target groups. UNFPA assistance, amounting to $800,000, would cover the costs of scheduling project activities and reviewing progress annually, holding the training sessions, and supplying some audio-visual equipment and materials. The project would be executed by the Government with technical assistance from consultants and UNESCO.

29. Although the Tunisian Government's specific contributions to the proposed UNFPA-supported projects have not been identified, its commitment to health and family and population projects for the next five years can be estimated on the basis of the current budget, to be about $55 million. Those projects formulated in the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Learning and Scientific Research are expected to receive financial support from the Government totalling $2,040,416 in the form of personnel, administrative services, and the use of equipment, buildings and materials.

30. The proposed UNFPA contribution for the four and one-half year period, subject to availability of funds, is as follows:

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<th>Programme area</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Data collection and analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Population dynamics</td>
<td>300,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maternal and child health and family planning</td>
<td>3,000,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Information, education, communication</td>
<td>1,400,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5,000,000</td>
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31. The status of programme and project development as of February 1981 is as follows:

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approved</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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IV. Recommendation

32. The Executive Director recommends that the Governing Council:

(a) Approve the Tunisian population programme in the amount of $5,000,000 over four and one-half years; and

(b) Authorize the Executive Director to make the appropriate arrangements with the Government of Tunisia and with the Assisting Agencies.