

# UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME



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P O L I C Y

## OTHER FUNDS AND PROGRAMMES

### UNITED NATIONS FUND FOR POPULATION ACTIVITIES

#### Report of the Executive Director on intercountry activities

This report of the Executive Director on the intercountry activities funded by UNFPA is in response to decision 81/7 (paragraph 5) of the Governing Council taken at its twenty-eighth session. This paper calls for action on the part of the Council in regard to proposed UNFPA guidelines for the approval of new intercountry projects as well as other matters. Supporting material is provided in DP/1982/29/Add.1.

## I. Introduction

1. At its twenty-eighth session in June 1981, the Governing Council in decision 81/7, paragraph 5, reaffirmed its decision 79/28 (twenty-sixth session) that UNFPA support of intercountry activities should be within the level of approximately 25 per cent of total programme resources by 1982 and requested the Executive Director to submit a report on intercountry activities to the Council at its twenty-ninth session which would (a) identify types of programmes and projects that are clearly technical assistance and backstopping for country activities, (b) indicate the effects of other intercountry programmes at country level, (c) recommend activities which should be phased out and which should be given priority in maintaining the above-mentioned level, and (d) provide precise guidelines for all new projects. The addendum (DP/1982/29/Add. 1) to this document provides information on (a) and (b) above.

## II. Intercountry activities to be phased out in 1981 and 1982

2. In its review of intercountry activities, UNFPA has taken steps to terminate or phase out various intercountry projects in 1981 and 1982. (A list of all such projects is included in the Annex to DP/1982/29/Add. 1.) All intercountry projects and programmes will undergo a continuing review and reassessment, not only in order to meet the Governing Council's 25 per cent limitation on intercountry activities, but also to ensure that intercountry activities funded by UNFPA will have a continuing country impact, and will be in accordance with the guidelines provided below, as may be agreed to by the Governing Council.

## III. Intercountry activities to be funded in 1982

3. Allocations to intercountry activities in 1982 are expected to amount to \$ 32.5 million, compared to \$ 40.5 million in 1981 (both excluding infrastructure and overhead costs). These figures represent 26.23 per cent and 32.43 per cent respectively of total programme resources.\* In view of the fact that UNFPA will no longer support agency infrastructure projects, in 1982 the Fund changed the formula for calculating the proportion of intercountry activities, as described in the "Review and reassessment of the UNFPA programme for the period 1982-1985" (DP/1982/28 and DP/1982/29/Add. 1). Using this new formula, the anticipated percentage of intercountry activities in 1982 will be 28.8 per cent. Almost all of the total amount of the anticipated \$ 32.5 million represents continuing commitments to previously-funded intercountry projects; only five new intercountry projects, totalling \$ 353,110 were approved and allocated between 1 July 1981 and 1 March 1982.

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\*"Total programme resources" is defined as income, plus unexpended prior year balance, less administrative budget and budgets of the UNFPA Deputy Representatives and Senior Advisors on Population, and is the base used previously for the calculation of intercountry activities (see DP/332).

#### IV. Special considerations in regard to intercountry activities

4. In its discussion of the UNFPA intercountry programme, the Council may wish to consider several points which may have a bearing on any decisions the Council may wish to take.

5. Priorities for intercountry activities could be assigned by function rather than by Work Plan category. Conceptually, intercountry activities are more easily classifiable by type of activity rather than category of activity. Thus, technical assistance and backstopping, training, research and information exchange, regardless of the Work Plan category, are the major objectives of intercountry activities, not the Work Plan categories themselves. These functions as a percentage of all intercountry activities were in 1981: technical assistance and backstopping, 42 per cent; training, 14 per cent; research, 28 per cent; and information and exchange, 17 per cent. Because of the wide variations between and among regions in regard to country interests, concerns and capabilities in the population area, it might seem unfair to assign priorities across-the-board to Work Plan categories for all regions and under all circumstances. If priorities were assigned by functions, technical assistance and backstopping within the intercountry category would have first priority, taking into account the varying needs of the countries of the region.

6. Regional activities clearly have a country impact. However, as noted above, wide variations exist among countries within regions and between the regions themselves in regard to the absorptive capacities of countries, their level of activity in the population field, and their stages in the development of population activities and population policy. It would be difficult, for example, to set priorities by Work Plan category for all regions, when, in fact, a priority activity for the Asia and the Pacific region has been family planning, while in the sub-Saharan Africa region a priority activity has been basic data collection.

7. In regard to the executing agencies of UNFPA-funded projects, the UNFPA has sought to assist the various bodies within the United Nations to build up their own capacities to respond to national, regional, interregional and global needs in the population and family planning field. Increasingly, population activities of the executing agencies funded by UNFPA have been regularized as part of the ongoing agency programmes and it is UNFPA's belief that they should be continued as such, with the UNFPA concentrating its financial resources in other areas of activity of special interest to countries. The UNFPA is in the process of discontinuing infrastructure payments to the agencies and organizations within the United Nations system and replacing such payments with the 13 per cent agency support costs. This may create somewhat of a problem in varying degrees for the United Nations regional commissions, which have relied on UNFPA funding for their population activities and some of which have indicated their inability to continue their population activities if UNFPA funding ends. It was never the intent, of course, that UNFPA support would continue indefinitely for all projects. In the case of the regional commissions, the UNFPA has indicated that the thrust of regional activities which UNFPA may support in the future would be mainly in the following areas:

a) regional advisory services to backstop demographic and related population activities at country level;

b) promotion of awareness of population policies, integration of population factors in development planning and promotion of the utilization of population data through workshops, seminars and other training programmes, including demographic training and research centres in some regions;

c) research on demographic variables and population issues of relevance to the population problems in the region concerned, including methodological development; and

d) creation of regional population information networks as well as clearing-house activities.

8. The UNFPA has also indicated that every project funded for implementation by a regional commission should have a specific objective or purpose, a work plan, periodic progress reports and a termination date.

9. The Council may wish to endorse these UNFPA guidelines for assistance to the United Nations regional commissions.

10. In connexion with the above, it is clear that technical assistance and backstopping would probably have to continue until every country in every region has achieved a degree of self-reliance in population activities which would make technical assistance and backstopping no longer necessary. This is clearly a long way in the future. The same is somewhat true of training at the inter-country level. Much of UNFPA support in this area has been provided to a variety of demographic training and research centres and regional seminars and workshops. A shortage of trained personnel at the country level continues in most regions. In order to assist countries in becoming self-reliant, national personnel must be trained not only in conducting censuses and analyzing census data but also in such subjects as studying the effects of family planning programmes on demographic trends, the effects of migration on development, integration of population factors into development planning, family decision-making, attitudes towards family planning, service delivery and evaluation and so on.

11. UNFPA assistance to demographic training and research centres is justified and will continue, both at the regional and interregional levels. However, in some regions, - Asia and the Pacific and Latin America and Caribbean - UNFPA support has already been decreased. In other regions, Africa, for example, UNFPA assistance will be continued to the Institut de Formation and de Recherche Démographiques (IFORD) in the United Republic of Cameroon and the Regional Institute for Population Studies (RIPS) in Ghana. Steps have been taken to obtain regional funding for both IFORD and RIPS. As a result of decisions taken and action programmes proposed by the Conference of African Ministers, efforts are underway to encourage: a) the regionalization of institutes to involve all the countries served by them in their affairs; b) Member States to provide adequate financial support towards the running of the institutes and to participate fully

to their Governing bodies; and c) Member States to make more effective use of the facilities at the institutes.

12. In the matter of interregional and global institutions, namely, the Centre Démographique ONU-Roumanie (CEDOR) and the Cairo Demographic Centre (Egypt), UNFPA assistance is currently scheduled through 1983. UNFPA support to these institutions appears justified and will be continued, if the Council agrees.

13. In the matter of population information exchange through clearinghouses, publications, the establishment of population information networks, seminars and workshops, and so on, this programme falls within the purview of TCDC (Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries) and operates under the principle that what may be good for one region may be good for another. Information and experience-sharing can provide invaluable insights into population project and programme planning, design, implementation and evaluation and can be helpful in eliminating duplication of effort and expense.

#### V. Guidelines for the approval of new and continuing intercountry projects

14. In light of the above, the Executive Director proposes for the consideration of the Council, the following guidelines on UNFPA support for new or continuing intercountry projects:

1) UNFPA will continue to support technical assistance and backstopping at the intercountry level to meet the varying needs of the various regions, and particularly the countries of the region;

2) UNFPA will continue to provide assistance for interregional and regional training programmes in those areas in which needs at the country level have been clearly demonstrated;

3) UNFPA will continue to fund research in demographic and socio-economic issues and various aspects of family planning programmes, concentrating its assistance on research which responds to demonstrated needs at the country level, where such research is confined to a definite time-frame, and where attention is directed not only to producing a final product but also to ensuring its utilization by countries of the region. At the global level, emphasis will be on conceptual and methodological issues of value to a wide range of countries in the different regions.

4) UNFPA will continue to assist information exchange activities, although at a lower level than in the past, particularly where the sharing of information and experience would benefit individual countries.

#### VI. Action required by the Council

15. In its consideration and discussion of UNFPA's intercountry programme and taking into account various other reports presented to the Council at its

twenty-ninth session by UNFPA, the Council may wish to:

- . endorse the guidelines for the approval of new and continuing intercountry projects noted above in section V;

- . consider some of the points noted in section IV above concerning 1) the assignment of priorities for intercountry activities by functions rather than by Work Plan categories, 2) the problems of agencies and organizations within the United Nations system, particularly the regional commissions, in continuing population activities if UNFPA funding ceases and how continuation of such activities might be ensured, 3) continued UNFPA assistance to demographic training and research centres, and 4) the matter of population information exchange through clearinghouses, publications, the establishment of population information networks, seminars and workshops and so on.

16. The Council may also wish to consider the possibility of UNFPA's treating its contributions to contraceptive research and development as discussed in DP/1982/36 and DP/1982/36/Add. 1 as separate and distinct from intercountry activities. UNFPA assistance to this area of activity has been classified as a global project and therefore has been included in the calculation of the percentage of assistance going to intercountry activities.