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UNITED NATIONS FUND FOR POPULATION ACTIVITIES

Evaluation of UNFPA projects

Report of the Executive Director

In response to the decision by the Governing Council at its twenty-seventh session (decision 80/13, paragraph 4, June 1980) which noted with appreciation the Executive Director's report on the evaluation of Fund projects (DP/493), and requested him "to supply similar reports periodically in the future", this support paper is provided for the information of the Council.

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Annex

I. Introduction

1. The present report is the third in a series of comprehensive reports by the Executive Director on the evaluation activities undertaken by UNFPA. The first report of this kind, submitted to the Council at its twenty-fifth session,^{1/} described the purpose and methodology of UNFPA in-depth evaluation and summarized and analyzed findings of eleven evaluations. The second report, submitted to the Council at its twenty-seventh session,^{2/} discussed the findings of three evaluations undertaken in the intervening time period.

2. This third report is in response to the decision of the Governing Council at its twenty-seventh session (decision 80/13, paragraph 4, June 1980) which noted with appreciation the Executive Director's report on the evaluation of the Fund's projects and the candour with which conclusions of the evaluations had been presented, and requested him "to supply similar reports periodically in the future". This report provides information on the results of nine in-depth, independent evaluations finalized during the period since the twenty-seventh session of the Council, and offers some indications regarding the anticipated future trends for UNFPA evaluations. The latter is presented in Chapter II of this report, while the more detailed reporting on findings of finalized evaluations is included in Chapter III.

II. Future trends

3. The Joint Inspection Unit (JIU)^{3/} in its report released in February 1981, entitled "Status of internal evaluation in the organizations of the United Nations system"^{4/} notes that: "Evaluation appears to have become a well-established and useful process in UNFPA which is understood by the staff, top management and the Governing Council. While the accountability function is felt to be adequately fulfilled, however, there is a demand from all these groups for more internal feedback through an increase in the number and speed of evaluation studies, improvement or development of new feedback mechanisms to provide intermediate analysis of specific problems to ensure timely corrective actions, or both. Given staff resource constraints and the desire to maintain the in-depth nature of the current independent evaluations, this will be a particular challenge."

^{1/} DP/331.

^{2/} DP/493.

^{3/} The statute by which the Joint Inspection Unit was established on a permanent basis provides that the Unit, which is located in Geneva, shall consist of not more than eleven Inspectors with special experience in administrative and financial matters serving in their personal capacity. The Unit is to satisfy itself that the activities undertaken by the organizations of the United Nations system are carried out in the most economical manner and that the optimum use is made of available resources. The Inspectors may propose reforms or recommendations aimed at improving management and achieving greater co-ordination between organizations. An Inspector from the Unit visited UNFPA in mid-1980.

^{4/} JIU/REP/81/5, page 12. The JIU summary of the status of evaluation in UNFPA is contained in the Annex to the present document.

4. UNFPA is presently taking steps to increase the number of evaluations to be undertaken in the future, mainly by reducing the time required for reporting on evaluation findings. Each evaluation mission, while in the field, will complete an evaluation report which will consist of major findings, conclusions and recommendations and which will be discussed at the time with the government concerned. Supporting evidence in the form of background papers and sector chapters, also to be finalized in the field, will be prepared in draft form only. For evaluations that might, in exceptional circumstances, be of particular interest to a wider audience, UNFPA may decide to prepare a comprehensive, edited report. However, contrary to past practice this will be done only in very selected cases. By this method, it is expected that delays previously experienced due to the need for pre-publication comments and editing can be avoided and that the Executive Director can take a position on the evaluation report about a month after the end of the mission.^{5/}

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5. The JIU also recommended that "UNFPA should further strengthen its project design processes and then consider the possibility of developing a built-in self-evaluation system. The additional feedback and coverage which such a system could provide could usefully supplement the present effective activities of its central Evaluation Branch." The JIU report was presented to the thirty-seventh session of the General Assembly which recommended "that the different organizations concerned should increase the effectiveness of their evaluation system and take the necessary steps to implement the recommendations contained in the reports of the Joint Inspection Unit, and in particular those concerning self-evaluation and the integration of evaluation in the planning and management process".^{6/}

6. UNFPA has been keenly aware of the need for a system for built-in self-evaluation. The existing manuals for project design and monitoring have been revised in order to allow for better evaluation of projects. However, after testing these manuals, it has become clear that they will have to be further revised in order to make them more explicit, inter alia, regarding built-in evaluation processes. UNFPA is now revising these manuals to include a requirement for built-in evaluation in each project. The Executive Director is also studying the feasibility of introducing other ways of improving the monitoring and evaluation of projects, such as various kinds of training of personnel at all levels to ensure that evaluation and monitoring procedures are built into different stages of project preparation and implementation.

^{5/} See DP/493, paragraph 5.

^{6/} JIU/REP/81/5, page 4.

^{7/} General Assembly Resolution 36/228, 18 December 1981.

7. As mentioned above, UNFPA plans to undertake an increased number of in-depth evaluations in the future. A two-year work plan has been established which calls for eight evaluations a year. In order to achieve a balance in the total programme of evaluations to be undertaken by UNFPA and to obtain the feedback from programmes and projects needed for decision-making, the future programme will concentrate mainly on country projects rather than intercountry projects and on family planning and information/education/communication projects rather than demography and statistics projects. Furthermore, the Fund intends to undertake a certain number of so-called "thematic" evaluations, designed to enable the Fund to make comparative studies of similar projects or project components in some selected countries. Subjects of future thematic evaluations might include workers' education projects, service statistics components of maternal and child health/family planning programmes, and training of traditional midwives. The concentration on the above-mentioned areas does not exclude evaluation of other kinds of projects when special circumstances so warrant. Furthermore, the implementation of the evaluation work programme as proposed is contingent upon approval of each government concerned.

8. As of early February 1982 three evaluations were in an advanced stage of preparations, viz., evaluations of a) family planning and communications projects in Thailand, b) the country programme of Cuba and c) the WHO/UNFPA regional programme in Africa.

III. Summaries of evaluation mission findings

9. Below are summarized the findings of nine evaluations: a) four country evaluations - Botswana National Maternal and Child Health and Family Planning Programme; Colombia Labour Migration Programme; Colombia Maternal and Child Health and Population Dynamics Programme; and Costa Rica National Family Planning and Sex Education Programme; and b) five intercountry project - African Census Programme; Economic Commission for Western Asia Regional Population Programme; International Labour Organisation Research and Action Programme concerning Population and Employment; World Fertility Survey (jointly with United States Agency for International Development); and World Health Organization/Pan American Health Organization Regional Programme in Maternal and Child Health and Family Planning.

10. In general, the results of these evaluations are encouraging. Although no project was without its problems, most of them had made considerable progress in meeting their immediate objectives. The maternal and child health/family planning projects evaluated were all successful in expanding the delivery of services. The research projects frequently produced valuable information. With a few exceptions the executing agencies provided good technical backstopping. Project design and clarity of objectives remained a problem for the undertaking of the evaluations but not as frequently as in earlier years, particularly regarding country projects. The management and administration of some of the projects were weak. The recruit-

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ment of experts and the purchase of equipment often suffered delays, which led in some cases to a recommendation for direct execution in the future. Training, supervision, monitoring and evaluation were other areas which seemed to require improvement, and the dissemination and use of research results and of service statistics were sometimes considered insufficient. Problems were often encountered at several levels in regard to the handling of project budgets: at the UNFPA level, at the executing agency level and at the field level. The evaluation missions made many recommendations, which the Executive Director accepted in most cases, and which will be of value in making decisions regarding future financing.

A. Country programmes

1. Botswana National Maternal/Child Health and Family Planning Programme

11. Between 1975 and 1979 UNFPA provided \$471,710 to Botswana's Maternal/Child Health and Family Planning (MCH/FP) Programme. For the period 1980-1982, UNFPA approved \$698,045 for this project, which is executed by the African Regional Office of the World Health Organization.

12. The Evaluation Mission which visited Botswana in March/April 1981 was undertaken at the Government's request that UNFPA conduct a thorough evaluation of the MCH/FP programme and of the UNFPA-supported component project, with a view towards improvement of administrative practices and MCH/FP services.

13. In general, the Mission was favourably impressed by the Botswana MCH/FP programme, which in a relatively short period of time has achieved higher coverage in most MCH services than those of other countries of the sub-Saharan African region and, indeed, than many of those in other countries at higher stages of economic development in other regions of the world. The Mission concluded that the UNFPA contribution to the programme had been important in the main areas of assistance (MCH/FP education, evaluation/research, and contraceptive delivery). The strengths of Botswana's MCH/FP programme were found to be its strategy, services and the Government's commitment to expand and locate health service points within easy access of the population. Weaker areas were in planning, programming, training and supervision.

14. The Mission found that since 1979 the UNFPA-assisted project has been beset by poor internal and external communication, confusion over the status of the budget, delays in transfer of funds for in-country purchasing and training, and serious delays in the planned delivery of contraceptive supplies. The Mission also found that the monitoring mechanism for the project was weak. As a result, project implementation suffered. In view of the above, the Mission recommended that when a country has an effective national administrative capability, as is the case in Botswana, the government be named executing agency for all local expenditures.

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15. In addition, the Mission made a series of recommendations addressed to the Government, covering most aspects of the MCH/FP programme. However, none were aimed at changing the substance of the programme, but were rather in the nature of improving the areas of planning, programming, training and supervision. The Government has accepted most of the recommendations. It disagreed with some of the Mission's conclusions, including for example, that promotion of family planning during the period under review had been limited.

16. The Executive Director accepted in principle all the recommendations made by the Mission. In making funding decisions for 1982, UNFPA took these recommendations into account but due to the current resource situation, most of the recommendations relevant to UNFPA involving budgetary allocations have not yet been implemented.

2. Colombia Labour Migration Programme

17. Since 1975, the Ministry of Labour of Colombia has been carrying out a labour migration programme with the technical assistance of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the financial assistance of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The programme's objectives were to produce statistical studies on labour migration within Colombia and on out-migration of Colombians to neighbouring countries, to support the establishment of an institutional service for migrants, and to advise the authorities on the formulation of a labour migration policy. In 1978, UNFPA approved support to two new projects complementary to that programme: a) a 15-month project in the amount of \$98,000 to establish rural centres in order to provide integrated social services (i.e. health, recreation, training) to the migrant workers (Centros rurales de servicios integrados, CERSI project), and b) a 10-month pilot project in the amount of \$104,000 to design a migration policy for the country (Regulación de flujos migratorios, REFLUMI project).

18. In mid-1979, the Government of Colombia requested UNFPA to urgently conduct an evaluation of both projects because of difficulties and misunderstandings concerning their implementation. An Evaluation Officer undertook a two-week mission to Colombia in August 1979. The findings and recommendations were submitted to and discussed in Colombia with the Government, ILO experts, and UNDP and UNFPA local staff. A general conclusion was that both of the UNFPA-assisted projects had in fact been conceived to support the larger UNDP programme and that over-all responsibility lay with the project manager of this programme. The lack of preciseness in the project documents regarding the relationship between the larger programme and the two component projects and the delay on the part of the executing agency to clarify these matters were seen as the main reasons behind various leadership problems.

19. As for the CERSI project, the Mission concluded that while it was too early to make any definitive judgement on its effectiveness, it appeared to be a worthwhile endeavour which had been able to mobilize in a very short time, and with little resources, a number of institutions to provide social services to the

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migrant workers. The delays in implementing the work plan were found to be due largely to the innovative nature of the programme and to poor project design, in which there was a failure to foresee some difficulties and which was unrealistic in its schedule of activities. On the other hand, the Ministry and project personnel were found to be very supportive of the project. The Mission made some recommendations, mainly of a managerial and administrative nature, to the Government and ILO field personnel. The Government accepted all recommendations. UNFPA's assistance to the project came to an end as scheduled, and no extension was requested by the Government, which has now taken over the project.

20. In regard to the REFLUMI project, the Mission concluded that, given the short period of time for implementation of the project, it had not achieved the objective of formulating a migration policy. However, it had produced valuable studies which can be utilized in formulating a future policy. The studies had been discussed not only among the participating universities and the Ministry and project staff, but also with other institutions sharing common areas of interest. The result had been to disseminate analytical information on the conditions that generate out-migration among public institutions and to establish co-ordination mechanisms to modify these conditions. The Mission also concluded, however, that the planning and monitoring of activities could have been improved and that more attention should have been paid to cost factors. Again, the Government accepted the recommendations made. UNFPA assistance to the project came to an end as planned and no extension was requested by the Government, which has now taken over the project.

21. The results of the evaluation of these two migration projects have been useful for the appraisal of requests for assistance for similar projects in other countries, such as Peru.

3. Colombia Maternal and Child Health and Population Dynamics Programme

22. From 1974 to mid-1980, UNFPA allocated \$6.7 million to support the expansion of the Colombia Maternal and Child Health and Population Dynamics (MCH/PD) Programme, under the execution of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO). The rate of implementation in the period was over 90 per cent. For the period mid-1980 to mid-1983, the Governing Council at its twenty-seventh session in June 1980 approved an additional \$2.9 million, subject to the availability of resources.^{8/}

23. In February 1980, a UNFPA Evaluation Mission visited Colombia for three weeks in order to evaluate the past performance of the programme, and to make recommendations in regard to the project proposal submitted by the Government for assistance from 1980 to 1983.

24. The Mission concluded that the programme had been particularly effective in extending services through the national health system to previously unserved rural areas, and in contributing to fertility decline. Its impact on maternal and child morbidity and mortality could not be measured because of lack of data. The strengths of the programme were found to be in its general strategy, services,

^{8/} DP/FPA/11/Add.17 and decision 80/13, June 1980.

training and community education. Weaker areas were programming, administration, supervision and evaluation.

25. The Mission found the funding and monitoring mechanism inefficient and concluded that it constrained programming and programme operations. As a result, the recommendation was made that UNFPA establish more direct links with the programme by making the Government the executing agency. UNFPA considered this recommendation when appraising the proposal for 1980-1983, but the Executive Director decided to keep PAHO as executing agency, in view of the time constraints which made impossible the necessary negotiations with both PAHO and the Government.

26. The Mission made a long series of recommendations in regard to improving the substantive and managerial areas of the programme, mainly addressed to the Government. The recommendations were accepted by the Government, which also agreed to general circulation of the evaluation report.

27. In light of the findings regarding past performance of the project and future needs, the Mission made eleven recommendations specifically addressed at modifying the 1980-1983 proposal within the available funds. Most of these recommendations were accepted by the Executive Director and incorporated into the proposal which was approved by the Governing Council at its twenty-seventh session. Because of the UNFPA resource situation, some of the recommendations to include new components in the programme (e.g., improvement of the management information system, training in supervision, research and evaluation) could not be acted upon in their entirety.

4. Costa Rica National Family Planning and Sex Education Programme

28. Between 1974 and 1980, UNFPA provided assistance to the Costa Rica Family Planning and Sex Education Programme in the amount of \$2.9 million, to support the expansion of the programme and to assist in the formulation of a population policy. When UNFPA assistance was approved initially, the programme had already been active for five years, administered by the Costa Rican Demographic Association (Asociación Demográfica Costarricense, ADC), a private association, on behalf of the National Population Council (Consejo Nacional de Población), a group of seven governmental, public and private institutions, including the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education. In view of the managerial capabilities already shown and the support of the Ministry of Health in Costa Rica, the approved project was the first in UNFPA's history to be directly executed by a government.

29. In accordance with a provision of the original project agreement signed by the Government of Costa Rica and UNFPA, a UNFPA Evaluation Mission visited Costa Rica in early 1979. Since UNFPA's contribution, covering 25 per cent of the cost of the programme, supported all programme components, the evaluation referred to the programme as a whole rather than to the specific UNFPA inputs.

30. The Mission concluded that the programme had been particularly effective in making family planning services known and available to large sectors of the population, in motivating the population to use them and in achieving a high prevalence of contraceptive use.

31. The key factors in the success were the establishment of a large number of new health facilities where family planning services, including contraceptives, were made available, the universalization of the social security system, and an effective public campaign of education and information through talks in clinics and other fora and radio programmes.

32. The following points are relevant to show the programme's success:

a) It was estimated that about 65 per cent of the women in the country had received information on family planning and sex education from talks or radio programmes.

b) The number of health facilities more than trebled between 1973 and 1977, from 117 to 431. This was achieved mainly through the creation of 263 rural health posts by the Programme of Extension of Services in the rural areas, where family planning services began to be provided in 1975.

c) About 64 per cent of women in union and about 76 per cent of those actually at risk of pregnancy were using contraceptives in 1977. The recruitment of new users appeared to have reached a plateau but the continuation rates by users was high; the prevalence of use attributable to the programme increased from 96 per 1,000 women aged 15-49 in 1972 to 171.5 per 1,000 by 1977.

33. The Mission also noted some shortcomings: a) training of paramedics and supervision were found lacking and this may have prevented an even greater expansion of services; b) the sex education programme in the schools was inadequate; teachers were trained, but personnel policies and the lack of active support on the part of the Ministry of Education hampered its implementation; c) other weak areas were evaluation and research.

34. The Mission noted that the programme had been largely initiated and oriented by the private administrator, ADC, and that the programme depended heavily upon external donors since the Government's funds were given only to the part of the programme carried out by the Ministry of Health. On the other hand, the new administration which took office in Costa Rica in 1978 expressed its intent to have a more direct control of all population-related activities and the role of the private institutions in the future was being studied. Under these circumstances, the Mission concluded that the future of the programme and the convenience or not of continuing UNFPA assistance was less related to past performance than to the reappraisal of the situation by the Government. The Mission, therefore, recommended that support to the programme in the present form be discontinued, and that a programming mission be sent to Costa Rica to discuss with the Government its views on any future population programme.

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35. Since the evaluation, UNFPA support to the programme has been discontinued. In late 1980, UNFPA received a comprehensive project request from the Government of Costa Rica, which includes proposed activities in MCH/FP, sex education and demographic research. Many of the activities in this project are an extension of those in the programme evaluated. Resource constraints have prevented the Fund from supporting any components of this project, though multi-bilateral funding possibilities have been discussed with donors.

B. Intercountry programmes

1. African Census Programme

36. To assist Member States of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in conducting national censuses, the African Census Programme (ACP) was formulated in 1971 with the United Nations designated as the executing agency and with ECA being responsible for regional activities. The need for international assistance was well-recognized. Many of the newly-independent African countries had never taken a full census. The need for solid demographic data as an aid in economic and social development planning was a priority. By December 1977, when the 1970 round of censuses ended, UNFPA had contributed \$16.3 million directly to the 22 participating countries; 18 of which had completed their population censuses.

37. The evaluation of the African Census Programme was a considerable undertaking since the programme covered 22 countries and because a large number of United Nations divisions were involved in its execution. In view of this, UNFPA decided that eight countries selected from among the 18 that had completed their censuses, would be chosen, taking into account the status of the project and the interest of the government and with a view to achieving a balance between francophone and anglophone countries, and including at least one country in which the project was implemented without foreign experts for most of the duration of the project. The countries selected were the Congo, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Senegal, Somalia, Sudan, United Republic of Cameroon and Upper Volta.

38. The Evaluation Mission visited each country as well as the United Nations headquarters and the ECA headquarters in Addis Ababa. The Mission concluded that the ACP had in sum achieved its primary objective of assisting participating governments in taking their national censuses and utilizing the results. All eight countries visited by the Mission have achieved this objective to varying degrees. While Somalia and Sudan have not officially released the census figures, data from the Sudan and from the censuses of the Congo, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Senegal, United Republic of Cameroon and Upper Volta are being utilized in national development planning.

39. As far as the secondary objective of the ACP is concerned - to build up technical infrastructure in basic data collection and analysis to the point of self-reliance, the Mission felt that three countries - Sudan, Senegal and the United Republic of Cameroon - are likely to be capable of undertaking the major portion of the technical work for the next census themselves, while the five

other countries visited will continue to require technical guidance in varying degrees. Taking into account the achievements and the conditions given at the beginning of the programme, the Evaluation Mission felt that the ACP, as represented by these eight countries, had made a solid contribution to basic data collection activities in Africa.

40. The Mission examined in detail the United Nations system inputs and monitoring of the programme. The overall level of assistance provided by UNFPA was, in the Mission's opinion, adequate, although in some cases costs were either not foreseen or underestimated and currency fluctuations and inflation required upward revisions of some of the original budgets.

41. The provision of experts to the various country projects, which was the responsibility of the United Nations Department of Technical Co-operation for Development (DTCO), was not adequate in all cases. It appeared that in Liberia, Somalia and Sudan the original specifications for experts' services were complete while in the other countries important omissions were noted. The delay in the expert arrival in some countries was considered a major problem. Also, the quality of the performance of individual experts varied. In the countries visited, few of the experts performed to the full satisfaction of the government concerned. A frequently reported problem was the lack of continuity of service of individual experts. In general, while technical backstopping by ECA and its regional advisors, particularly in cartography and data processing, was considered by most countries to be of great value, considerable reservations were voiced with respect to the implementation performance by the United Nations headquarters.

42. The specifications for equipment were found to be appropriate as to type, amount and timing, but delays in delivery were a frequent source of concern. The Mission felt that while such difficulties could never be avoided completely, greater attention to details, a better appreciation of variations in local conditions, the avoidance of tight time schedules and more frequent contacts between project personnel and officers responsible for procurement in DTCO could in the future help to rectify such situations.

43. The training needs of the programme were not accurately perceived from the beginning and those training opportunities particularly through fellowships and study tours that were available were not sufficiently utilized. The Mission noted, however, that the training appeared to have been well-managed in Senegal. Also the training workshops and seminars of ECA in basic data collection and analysis were of benefit to participating countries and would be needed also for the next round of censuses.

44. Incentive payments were a major budgetary outlay of UNFPA assistance. The Mission felt that the payments did not necessarily contribute to improving the

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quality of work and that they should not be provided in the future except under exceptional circumstances.

45. Substantive monitoring of the programme was based on expert reports, ECA and United Nations headquarters missions and tripartite reviews. The Mission noted that the ECA monitoring was done well. The expert reports and the monitoring by DTCD were less useful. However, special monitoring procedures were eventually instituted by the United Nations Statistical Office in co-operation with DTCD, which facilitated the assessment of progress and provided remedial solutions of problems encountered. The tripartite reviews were useful, but their scheduling was not always appropriate, thus lessening the benefits which could have been derived from them. Financial monitoring was not done well, which in some cases led to friction between the executing agency and individual governments.

46. The Mission formulated a series of overall recommendations based on evaluations in the eight countries, for consideration by UNFPA of support of future census operations. In addition, it made specific recommendations relating to each country. The governments have received the Mission's country reports and recommendations and have communicated their comments to UNFPA.

47. The Executive Director agreed with all of the recommendations except one which emphasized census-taking rather than capacity-building in cases where resources are limited. The recommendations have been taken into account in decision-making regarding funding of projects for the 1980 census round.

2. Economic Commission for Western Asia Regional Population Programme

48. In 1969, the United Nations Economic and Social Office of Beirut (UNESOB) initiated a series of regional population activities. When the Economic Commission for Western Asia (ECWA) was established in 1973, these activities were taken over mainly by the ECWA Population Division. They form the Regional Population Programme which has been carried out through 28 separate projects. The programme has been financed jointly through the regular budget of ECWA and through extra-budgetary resources provided by UNFPA. UNFPA provided around \$3.2 million for the period 1969-1979, while ECWA's contribution was in the area of \$0.7 million.

49. The evaluation of the ECWA Regional Population Programme was conducted in early 1980 in order to assess the extent to which the objectives of the projects had been achieved, as well as the relevance and contribution of the programme as perceived by the governments of the region. The Evaluation Mission visited ECWA headquarters as well as government officials and social scientists in four countries (Jordan, Lebanon, Oman and Syrian Arab Republic), and United Nations agencies with regional population programmes in the area.

50. The general objectives of the programme have been to promote awareness and understanding of population facts and issues and to assist governments in collecting and analyzing demographic data and in assessing the relationships between

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population and development with a view to designing appropriate population policies.

51. The programme has developed in three major phases. During Phase I (1969-1974), emphasis was placed on stimulating awareness by the governments of the region of population issues. Phase II (1975-1979) focused primarily on basic population data collection, while Phase III (1980-1983) stresses demographic analysis. The population variables and issues that are of particular concern to governments in the ECWA region are internal and international migration, differential mortality, and the socio-economic determinants of fertility.

52. The Evaluation Mission observed that the progress in meeting the objectives of the programme has been uneven. The major strengths of the programme have been: a) organization of meetings in the region with wide scope and the participation of personnel of high quality; b) successful promotional activities and prompt backstopping in population data collection; c) useful publications, mainly the Population Bulletin which is the major population journal in the ECWA region. The activities related to demographic analysis are still in a process of expansion and are presently receiving major emphasis in Phase III. The activities in the areas of the relationship between population and development and population policy are still very weak but are expected to expand in the future. Clearing-house activities are non-existent.

53. The Mission identified some major difficulties encountered by the programme, mostly of an administrative and procedural character: a) project documents are poorly formulated and the information on the execution of project activities is very limited; b) mechanisms of communication and co-ordination both within ECWA and between UNFPA and ECWA are deficient; c) insufficient understanding of UNFPA administrative guidelines has resulted in some confusion; d) monitoring of the programme by UNFPA has not been undertaken; e) while the current staff is outstanding, delays in the recruitment of professionals have been a serious problem since the beginning of the programme; f) working conditions of ECWA have been adversely affected by the political situation of the region.

54. The Mission concluded that the programme of work, the strategy of its activities, specification, phasing, and budgeting of the components of the programme had been well designed and executed in general, and were highly compatible with the mandate given to ECWA, as well as with the resources available, and the perception that the countries of the region have concerning the relevance of these activities. The Mission considered that the socio-economic and political characteristics of the ECWA region are indeed unusual, and that within this context the programme has been able to make a relevant contribution to increasing awareness of the population dimension of the problems of the region. The Mission observed that the ECWA region is rapidly becoming more demographically sophisticated and that the programme has contributed significantly to this development.

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55. The Mission recommended, in general, a continuation and gradual expansion of the programme and suggested more emphasis on the areas of the relationship between population and development and population policies, as well as on clearinghouse activities.

56. Both the Executive Director of UNFPA and ECWA agreed in principle with the Mission's recommendations. However, given the instructions of the Governing Council to UNFPA to reduce intercountry activities, the Executive Director is negotiating with ECWA concerning the continuation of the programme beyond 1982 taking into consideration the recommendations of the Evaluation Mission as well as the availability of funds, and the modification of the work plan of the programme to be presented to UNFPA.

3. International Labour Organisation Research and Action Programme concerning Population and Employment

57. The Research and Action Programme concerning Population and Employment, executed by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) from 1972-1979 aimed to assist governments in developing countries in formulating population and economic policy in such a way that the interrelationships among population, employment and income distribution are adequately taken into account. The immediate objectives were to develop a methodology for policy formulation, namely the development of the "Bachue" model,^{9/} and to increase the capacity of research institutes in developing countries. The UNFPA contribution to this intercountry programme was about \$3.5 million.

58. The Evaluation Mission, which took place in late 1979 and early 1980 at ILO headquarters in Geneva and at United Nations headquarters in New York attempted to measure the direct usefulness of the programme for policy purposes. The Mission did not visit any countries in which research or meetings had taken place and, therefore, its report considered primarily the extent to which the ILO publications in this area were made available to governments of developing countries and the extent to which representatives of such countries participated in various research meetings.

59. The Evaluation Mission considered that the administrative responsibilities of the programme were handled carefully, and that the quality of ILO staff, despite recruitment difficulties, was high. The Mission felt that research output had been impressive: 34 out of 43 subcontracted studies were completed, 32 of them to ILO's own satisfaction. Between 1972 and March 1980, 150 separate titles had been issued under the programme. Distribution of these documents, however, was seriously deficient. The Mission found that only a few governments in developing countries had received all programme materials. The Mission urged that in the

^{9/} A demographic and socio-economic model, named after a Colombian fertility goddess.

future, both the executing agency and UNFPA should be more explicit about the expectations for the number and timing of publications, and the intended audience for distribution. Staff of the programme also sponsored or participated in meetings at which it disseminated information on both the Bachue model research and other related research topics.

60. The Mission report included one chapter on the use of modelling for development planning. The model-related research has been used in designing surveys and in sensitizing those concerned with the issues involved. However, at this time only the Bachue model developed in Yugoslavia may permit actual policy use.

61. The Mission concluded that the programme did not make a significant impact through the publication of its research findings in making available a usable methodology for policy formulation and analysis regarding population and employment for use by national planners and policy-makers in governments of developing countries. It also felt that future UNFPA-sponsored research should be less ambitious and more specific. According to the report, if a major impact is expected, the particular means whereby that impact is to be achieved should be articulated from the start.

62. The Mission addressed recommendations to both the ILO and UNFPA to help increase the impact of the population and employment research programme as well as other similar research projects funded by UNFPA. The Executive Director agreed with the majority of the recommendations. Continued discussions with the ILO and other agencies concerned have led to more emphasis on activities that are designed to improve the utilization of research results. ^{10/}

4. World Fertility Survey

63. The Executive Director, in his request for approval of UNFPA assistance to the continuation of Phase III of the World Fertility Survey (WFS) being executed by the International Statistical Institute (ISI), reported to the Governing Council at its twenty-eighth session on the progress of the WFS programme and informed the Council about the evaluation of the WFS programme.^{11/} UNFPA and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) jointly conducted the evaluation in mid-1980. In the past, there have been two joint assessments of the programme (1975 and 1977) and the Executive Director has reported to the Governing Council on the results of both.^{12/}

^{10/} See DP/FPA/12/Add.17, paragraph 51.

^{11/} DP/FPA/12/Add. 16.

^{12/} DP/189, paragraphs 65-82, and DP/331, paragraph 40.

64. The Evaluation Mission was requested to assess the accomplishments of the programme with a particular emphasis on the actual and potential use of the generated data in and by the participating countries and with minor attention to be paid to the performance by WFS headquarters in London, which had been studied in previous assessments.

65. The Evaluation Mission attended the WFS Conference (London, July 1980), and visited ISI/WFS headquarters, six countries (Dominican Republic, Jordan, Kenya, Mexico, Nepal and the Philippines), and the Population Division of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. The report of the Mission was distributed to the delegations to the Governing Council at its twenty-eighth session.

66. The Mission concluded that the programme has been successful in attaining its initial objectives, namely, to assist particularly the developing countries to collect high-quality fertility data for use in interpreting reproductive patterns and trends in their own countries; to ensure international comparability of the data collected; and to build the national institutional capability for fertility research and analysis by means of survey methods. Achievements in regard to the latter were found to vary from country to country.

67. With regard to the recommendations, UNFPA accepted or endorsed most of them, except those concerned with the future of the programme. As reported to the Governing Council at its twenty-eighth session, the Executive Director reserved his position on this matter, and indicated his intention to submit a new proposal to the Council at its twenty-ninth session.^{13/}

5. World Health Organization/Pan American Health Organization Regional Programme in Maternal and Child Health and Family Planning

68. Between October 1980 and April 1981 UNFPA conducted an evaluation of the World Health Organization (WHO)/Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) Regional Programme in Maternal and Child Health and Family Planning (MCH/FP), to which UNFPA contributed over \$7 million between 1974 and 1981. The Evaluation Mission visited PAHO headquarters, and some countries in the region to appraise the contribution of the programme as perceived by the recipient governments.

69. The programme's goal has been to assist governments of the region to achieve the permanent institutionalization of family planning services within their national health care systems, and its immediate objectives have been to assist governments in establishing family planning policies and programmes, and in increasing the availability and quality of family planning services. The

^{13/} See DP/FPA/PROJECTS/REC/1.

programme's strategy has focused on the provision of technical assistance to help countries design, implement and evaluate projects and on the promotion of knowledge of the health effects of family planning. The activities of the programme have been in four areas: a) synthesis of knowledge and information exchange; b) family planning education and motivation; c) technical support to country projects; and d) manpower development.

70. The Mission pointed out that the project documents were usually very general and could have been more precise in specifying objectives and in linking them to activities and inputs, a deficiency that made the evaluation difficult.

71. The Mission found that the programme had been most effective in developing and/or strengthening country projects, in particular MCH/FP projects in Latin America and family life projects in the Caribbean. Achievements have varied - more noteworthy in such areas as administrative support and development of service norms and less noteworthy in such areas as project design, management, management information and training. The most effective inputs were considered to be the family health team in the Caribbean, the administrative staff at headquarters, and literature forwarded to the field. The contribution by headquarters technical staff and by short-term consultants appeared less valuable.

72. The programme was unable to reach its original goal of institutionalizing family planning everywhere in the region. However, at the start of the regional programme, most countries were already providing family planning services and governments' decisions regarding such institutionalization were not usually of the kind that could be influenced by activities such as those undertaken by the programme. The same is true for the objective of developing family planning policies. As mentioned above, the objective of developing and strengthening family planning programmes received more attention from the programme and more success was achieved in reaching it.

73. In terms of a future programme, the Mission recommended that UNFPA and PAHO identify country needs in the field of population and family planning, relate those needs to the UNFPA mandate and PAHO capabilities, and then set priorities for assistance that could best be provided through a regional programme or, alternatively, through special regional projects. The UNFPA population needs assessment methodology and available needs assessment reports for the countries of the region could allow for an easy identification of needs, and PAHO's mechanism for programming its technical assistance to countries (AMPES: Americas Planning and Evaluation System) could be adapted to regional programming.

74. The Mission made a total of over forty recommendations addressed to both UNFPA and PAHO. UNFPA took most of these recommendations into account when appraising PAHO's proposal for the 1982-1983 extension of the regional programme, and the proposal is being revised accordingly.

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VIII. UNITED NATIONS FUND FOR POPULATION ACTIVITIES (UNFPA) 14/

Total expenditures: \$US 131,600,000 Total staff: 197
Evaluation unit: Evaluation Branch
Year established: 1972 Number of staff: 5
Organizational location: Under Deputy Executive Director
Evaluation approach: Centralized, independent evaluation by evaluation staff and consultants

Evaluation in UNFPA is a relatively mature process. Current interest focuses on how to extend evaluation coverage and further improve internal feedback.

UNFPA is a subsidiary organ of the General Assembly with the purpose of assisting developing countries in solving their population problems. It works closely with governments, UN system organizations, regional groups and non-governmental organizations. The Governing Council of UNDP serves as its governing body.

The UNFPA Evaluation Branch is an independent, centralized unit with five professional staff who report to the Deputy Executive Director. Its objectives are to help provide accountability to the Governing Council for funds entrusted to UNFPA and to provide a basis for future management decision-making. The Branch performs about six evaluations a year, using its own staff and consultants to study the performance and effects of selected activities in-depth. Because of the emphasis on independence, other UNFPA, executing agency, and recipient government staff are considered important resource persons for the evaluations, but are not members of evaluation missions.

Individual evaluation reports are considered to be reports to UNFPA with comments by governments and executing agencies. These reports are normally not published. However, summaries of these reports and of UNFPA's evaluation work are submitted regularly to the Governing Council, most recently in 1978 and 1980, in what will become a biennial reporting process. Both reports were well-received and were credited for their objectivity and frankness, with recognition that problems as well as successes were addressed and that actions were being taken thereon to ensure that future operations run smoothly. Another recent development is a gradual shift away from evaluations of global and regional programmes towards more evaluation of country programmes, as the overall UNFPA emphasis also shifts that way.

UNFPA evaluation appears to have good general support by staff, leadership and the Governing Body. They have all, however, expressed a need for more evaluations to cover the 1,500 UNFPA-assisted projects which exist, and for shorter time-spans than the year or more which the average study now requires. Since UNFPA is concerned with weaknesses in project design and unclear objectives, based inter alia on UNFPA evaluations, it has issued revised project preparation instructions to improve this situation. In addition, while the overall UNFPA programming, review and monitoring process and structure is considered fairly adequate, there is interest in more effective and timely internal feedback processes to ensure improved future project management. The Executive Director has told the Governing Council that evaluations will be carried out with increased emphasis in the future, but it seems that in the near future the Evaluation Branch will not increase its present size very much, relying instead on more use of consultants.

SUMMARY ASSESSMENT: Evaluation appears to have become a well-established and useful process in UNFPA, which is understood by the staff, top management, and the Governing Council. While the accountability function is felt to be adequately fulfilled, however, there is a demand from all these groups for more internal feedback through an increase in the number and speed of evaluation studies, improvement or development of new feedback mechanisms to provide intermediate analysis of specific problems to ensure timely corrective actions, or both. Given staff resource constraints and the desire to maintain the in-depth nature of the current independent evaluations, this will be a particular challenge.

