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Note by the Administrator

The Administrator hereby transmits to the Governing Council a report prepared by the Joint Inspection Unit entitled Field Offices of the United Nations Development Programme (JIU/REP/83/4).

Field Offices of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

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DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (UNDP)

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The primary purpose of this study is to assess the role and capacity of the field offices of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) which is the central funding and co-ordinating organization for much of the technical co-operation activities of the United Nations system.

2. UNDP field offices are a key facility for the management and co-ordination of the system's technical co-operation efforts. Their sound organization, adequate staffing, and full co-operation with them by the United Nations system are important pre-conditions if they are to perform their role effectively and promote the application of the development policies and strategies of the international community.

3. The present study examines the basic policy framework governing development co-operation by the United Nations system, reviews the main issues of inter-agency co-ordination at the country level, including the role and responsibilities of the UNDP field offices in this regard, and discusses the staffing and organization of these offices. Although it draws heavily on the provisions of General Assembly restructuring resolution 32/197, the study does not cover responsibilities of the resident co-ordinators since they have not been operational over a sufficient period of time to allow for objective analysis and firm conclusions.

4. The Inspectors therefore concentrate on resident representatives as heads of UNDP field offices while recognizing that resident representatives are normally designated as resident co-ordinators and that a distinction between the two roles cannot be hard and fast. Also, ACC is still reviewing arrangements for the exercise of the functions of resident co-ordinators, and the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation recently submitted a report on the outcome of consultations with governments on the role of resident co-ordinators 1/.

5. The present report on UNDP field offices could therefore serve as a useful basis for any future study that the JIU may decide to undertake on the resident co-ordinators and their interagency co-ordination role as well as the structure of United Nations system representation at the country level.

6. The Inspectors gratefully acknowledge the valuable support received from UNDP including many resident representatives, and from other United Nations organizations and agencies which were consulted in the course of this study.

1/ ACC/1982/OP/6 of 1 October 1982: Arrangements for the Review by ACC of the Functions of Resident Co-ordinators.

II. UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM CO-ORDINATION AND CO-OPERATION AT THE COUNTRY LEVEL

A. Policy framework

7. The Consensus adopted by the UNDP Governing Council in 1970 and by the General Assembly in resolution 2688(XXV) forms the basic framework governing the programming, co-ordination and management of UNDP-funded technical co-operation activities. The functions, role and structure of UNDP and its field office network stem largely from the provisions of the Consensus. By introducing in particular the principle of country programming the Consensus sought to achieve "the most rational and efficient" utilization of UNDP resources by means of greater co-ordination of all sources of assistance and inputs by the United Nations system, "with a view to achieving integration of the assistance at the country level".

8. These policy objectives have been reaffirmed in the most comprehensive manner in General Assembly resolution 32/197 on the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system. The relevant provisions of section V of the annex to this resolution recommend the following measures:

- operational activities of the system should serve to promote a real increase in the flow of resources for such activities on a predictable, continuous and assured basis;
- assistance provided should be in conformity with national objectives and priorities of the recipient countries;
- the orientation of these activities and the allocation of resources for them should reflect the overall strategies, policies and priorities of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council;
- the United Nations system should seek to achieve optimum efficiency and the reduction of administrative costs;
- integration measures should gradually be undertaken in respect of existing United Nations programmes and funds for development financed by extra-budgetary resources;
- measures should be taken to achieve maximum uniformity of administrative, financial, budgetary, personnel and planning procedures, including the establishment of a common procurement system; harmonized budget and programme cycles, a unified personnel system and a common recruitment and training system;
- at the country level, there should be improved coherence of action and effective integration, in accordance with the objectives and priorities of the government concerned, of the various sectoral inputs from the United Nations system;
- the UNDP country programming process should be utilized as a frame of reference for the operational activities of the United Nations system;
- overall responsibility for, and co-ordination of operational activities for development carried out by the system at the country level should be entrusted to a single official (resident co-ordinator)

who should exercise team leadership and evolve a multidisciplinary dimension in sectoral development assistance programmes;

- subject to the requirements of individual countries, steps should be taken to unify the country offices of the various United Nations organizations.

9. These guidelines emphasize the need for coherence, efficiency and effectiveness, as well as a more cohesive and integrated thrust of United Nations system's operations at the country level. As a result, they have a direct bearing on the technical co-operation leadership role of UNDP and its field offices in support of host governments' prerogatives for the co-ordination and management of all external development inputs. Subsequent intergovernmental decisions have specifically sought to enhance UNDP's team leadership and central role in the system's development co-operation effort. Thus, General Assembly resolution 34/213 provides that the UNDP resident representative "would normally be designated as the resident co-ordinator", while Economic and Social Council resolution 1981/59 reaffirms "the central funding and co-ordinating role of UNDP in the field of technical co-operation within the UNDP system" in conformity with the 1970 Consensus and General Assembly restructuring resolution.

10. Interagency co-ordination at the country level, though complex, is necessary if the system's technical co-operation activities are to produce optimal impact with scarce resources. For UNDP's field leadership and co-ordination role to be meaningful and effective, a degree of coherence and consistency is necessary at the central United Nations intergovernmental and intersecretariat levels, while at the country level the active support and participation of all the parties involved under the tripartite concept will remain an indispensable prerequisite. Therefore, the extent to which UNDP and its field offices can discharge their mandate depends largely on the co-operation of host and donor governments as well as the executing agencies in applying at the operational level the restructuring measures listed in paragraph 8 above.

B. Roles and responsibilities

1. Governments

11. The co-ordination of all forms of development assistance is the prerogative of the government of the recipient country as emphasized in the Consensus and the restructuring resolution. The role of the resident representative and the field offices over the decade has been essentially to assist governments in the exercise of that prerogative in respect of UNDP-funded operations.

12. However, developing countries differ considerably in their relative levels of socio-economic development and government changes, administrative procedures, operating capabilities, internal co-ordination policies and mechanisms and skilled manpower endowment. These variables often determine the scope and effectiveness of UNDP's central role at the country level as well as the coherence of United Nations system's operations in general. Similarly, the extent to which host governments rely on UNDP's field office network for the co-ordination and implementation of development assistance programmes can differ widely from one country to another. For example, while UNDP's central role can be expected to be minimal in some relatively advanced countries, that role in the least developed countries can in certain cases cover a broad spectrum of development programmes, including those funded by some bilateral agencies.

13. Furthermore, United Nations system policy co-ordination at the global and regional levels is not without implications for interagency co-ordination at the country level. Similar approaches to development issues by the legislative bodies of the various organizations of the United Nations system promote coherence of the system's activities at the country level and thereby facilitate the role of UNDP and the field offices. At the regional level, the restructuring resolution has conferred on the regional commissions expanded interagency co-ordination responsibilities and a more active role in support of regional co-operation programmes. The main policy organs of the regional commissions are composed of Ministers for development planning and economic affairs who in many cases are responsible for development co-ordination in their respective governments, and therefore head UNDP's liaison or "counterpart" ministries. This disposition should in principle enhance harmony and integration of United Nations system activities at the regional and country levels, provided the field offices, which also represent the commissions in their respective countries, are more closely involved in regional programmes and projects assisted by the United Nations system.

14. The multiplicity of funding channels and special purpose trust funds supported by donor governments tend to conflict with Member States' recognition of UNDP as the central funding channel for multilateral technical co-operation, and to compound host governments' and UNDP's co-ordination difficulties. The integration of these funds under the "frame of reference" of the UNDP country programming process as well as the achievement of maximum uniformity of administrative procedures, budget and programme cycles as recommended by the restructuring resolution would improve the coherence and cost-effectiveness of the system's development co-operation activities. Also, and particularly at the present time of economic crisis, host governments may find it more economical to unify the country offices of the United Nations system under common premises, as already done in some countries, and to provide adequate facilities and support to organizations of the system represented in their countries.

2. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

15. As noted above, the scope of responsibilities and activities of UNDP field offices depends very much on individual country situations and the extent to which host and donor governments rely on the offices for the co-ordination and implementation of external development assistance programmes. Additionally, as focal points of the system at the country level, the field offices are in direct working relationships with the government's central co-ordinating organs and sectoral ministries, experts and headquarters, multilateral financial institutions, the regional commissions and, informally, with bilateral programmes and non-governmental organizations.

16. In general, the nature and magnitude of work and responsibilities carried out by the field offices have evolved markedly over the last decade. Whereas resources under the first programme cycle were relatively homogeneous in that UNDP accounted for about 80 per cent of the system's grant technical co-operation funding, the situation had evolved by the end of the decade into a complex technical co-operation funding pattern involving some 13 special purpose funds, an ever-increasing volume of cost-sharing arrangements, agency funds-in-trust and regular budget expenditures, and other multilateral technical co-operation funding, notably by the World Bank and regional development banks. Although UNDP's share in this overall funding effort has declined to about 50 per cent, its service role at the country level has increased considerably over the decade (see Chapter III). The field office workload and in particular the volume of services provided by these offices to governments and the UN family can therefore no longer be viewed only in relation to the level of UNDP's programme resources.

17. While the Inspectors recognize that international economic development is at present in a state of crisis, they are nevertheless concerned about the current dramatic decline in contributions channelled through UNDP, not least because this decline may adversely affect the viability of UNDP's role and operations. For example, the present resource crisis has impelled a reduction of 45 per cent in illustrative IPFs approved by the Council, which might significantly disrupt forward planning, weaken the co-ordinating role of the resident representatives and the field offices, and diminish the significance and relevance of the UNDP country programming process. However, this may not necessarily be the case if full effect is given, at the operational level, to the concept of resident co-ordinator and that of using the UNDP country programming process as the "frame of reference" for the system's activities at the country level.

18. Notwithstanding its declining role as the central funding organization for the system's co-operation effort, UNDP can still exercise its co-ordination and leadership responsibilities on the one hand through high quality performance by its field offices and, on the other, by enhancing its analytical role and serving as a creative force linking worldwide technical co-operation and development research and concepts, and their application at the field level.

19. As the main technical co-operation organization of the system, UNDP has not been as active as it might have been in assuming leadership for the analysis, dissemination and application of innovative technical co-operation ideas and concepts, with the possible exception of technical co-operation among developing countries and integrated rural development. Other important concepts such as a unified approach to development and self-reliance have not yet been sufficiently analyzed or applied by UNDP. But such an achievement requires the collaboration of both donor and host governments and agencies of the United Nations system.

20. In their report on the United Nations system's technical co-operation activities in Sri Lanka (JIU/REP/79/16), the Inspectors found that many basic policies which had been established to guide United Nations system technical co-operation activities were not being applied effectively because of a lack of understanding of these policies and the failure to translate them into operational terms, disseminate them to the field level and assess their results. The Inspectors recommended that ACC conduct a study summarizing these principles and their key inter-relationships so as to clarify and encourage their application at the operating level. The Inspectors believe that this recommendation remains valid and that UNDP should take action to promote its implementation.

21. In this regard, WHO provides probably the best example in the United Nations system of effective support to policy application in a given sector, through its programme of "Health for All by the Year 2000". WHO has prepared excellent brochures ^{2/} to serve as implementing guidelines that can be applied by governments which wish to do so.

3. The Executing Agencies

22. Organizations of the United Nations system have a fundamental role to play in the achievement of a more equitable world order. This role is unique not so much because of the resource and technical capabilities of the system as because of its universal membership and framework of internationally agreed policies and global strategies for resolving development problems. The 1980 report on comprehensive policy review of operational activities of the United Nations system (A/35/224), stressed the need for interaction and cross-fertilization, both

^{2/} See, for example, Formulating Strategies for Health for All by the Year 2000; Managerial Process for National Health Development (guiding principles); Health Programme Evaluation, etc.

between the normative research and policy analysis functions of the organizations of the system and the operational activities supported by the same organizations and among organizations in order to promote a multidisciplinary approach to development. This should apply at the stages of programming and implementation, coupled with a rigorous process of evaluation.

23. It would appear that this linkage is not as effective as would be desirable, judging from criticisms by UNDP field offices about inadequate technical back-stopping of projects by some executing agencies of the system. The Inspectors believe that a more active UNDP performance control and evaluation role, as suggested in a JIU report on UNDP's evaluation system, would contribute to correcting this shortcoming. Naturally, UNDP's effectiveness depends on the full co-operation of organizations of the United Nations system.

24. Furthermore, while the diversity, sectoral responsibilities and technical expertise are basic strengths of the United Nations system, the restructuring reforms listed in paragraph 8 above emphasize the need for effective co-ordination to improve the coherence and integration of the United Nations system sectoral inputs. The co-operation of all organizations of the system in applying these reforms in the field should go a long way towards facilitating the roles of governments and UNDP under the tripartite concept.

III. FUNCTIONS OF UNDP FIELD OFFICES

A. Core Functions

25. The core functions of field offices are to:

(a) assume the leadership role and act as the focal point for the co-ordination of UNDP-assisted programmes and other United Nations system programmes, when called upon to do so, particularly in countries where the UNDP resident representative has been designated resident co-ordinator of the United Nations system; where appropriate, field offices also support projects financed from other sources within the area covered by the office;

(b) assist governments in preparing and reviewing their country programmes and in the formulation, approval, monitoring, evaluation and follow-up of UNDP-assisted projects;

(c) provide local programme support services in the United Nations system; and

(d) represent several entities of the United Nations and some specialized agencies having agreements with UNDP.

26. This summary description, however, does not adequately reflect the extensive workload of these offices viewed in the light of their staffing level. A more complete examination of their activities is necessary in order to determine the measures which may still be needed to ensure that they operate effectively in serving the international community. The following sections of this report are not intended to enumerate in detail all these activities, but to stress the most important tasks and their scope.

B. Substantive Support

1. The country programme

27. The country programme is a technical co-operation framework that should reflect the development priorities of the host government and guide United Nations system development operations towards those priorities. At present the serious decline in UNDP's programme resources is likely to affect the country programming process and its direct relevance to national development efforts. However, if the UNDP country programming process is effectively used as a "frame of reference" for all activities funded and assisted by the United Nations system, as recommended by the restructuring resolution, then the reduction in UNDP resources would not necessarily affect the country programming principle and its practical application. In this case, the workload of UNDP field offices is likely to increase while agency participation in the different programming stages would be more active.

28. The introduction of continuous programming by objectives may require more systematic consultative arrangements with the government and executing agencies and, equally important, more regular analysis of country development situations, sectoral trends, rigorous evaluation processes and feedback mechanisms. In brief, the UNDP field offices will have to constitute a greater programming and analytical force than heretofore in support of the system's operations at the country level. As presently operating under a flood of routine paper work, the field offices in the majority of cases cannot fully perform the strong creative and supportive role described above.

29. The Inspectors concluded in their report on United Nations system technical co-operation activities in Sri Lanka that the leadership of the resident representative, particularly if he is to be the official United Nations system resident co-ordinator in the country, must be based on his knowledge of the United Nations system programmes and not merely on his ability to provide administrative services, however important and useful, and that it was the work of the UNDP resident representative and his staff to provide the perspectives and actions that would give coherence to the programme and facilitate the teamwork called for in the restructuring resolution. Therefore, programme analysis and programme leadership should be at the top, if continuous programming is to be meaningful.

2. Support to non-IPF programmes and projects

30. The UNDP field offices provide services to many funds and programmes which are under the responsibility of the UNDP Administrator, such as the United Nations Financing System for Science and Technology, the United Nations Volunteer Programme, the Revolving Fund for Natural Resources Exploration, the United Nations Capital Development Fund, the United Nations Sahelian Office, the Energy Account and other funds and activities such as the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) and Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries (TCDC). This support involves assistance in the preparation, implementation and monitoring of the projects, including administrative backstopping.

3. Promotional activities

31. Besides their participation in technical conferences sponsored by United Nations organizations and NGOs, and support to visiting technical missions, the field offices are also expected to promote the application of the system's development policy strategies, such as the Plan of Action on TCDC, the Action Plan on Water Development and Administration, the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade, etc. This supportive role is extremely useful even though in many cases it does add significantly to the field office workload.

C. Administrative Support

32. Administrative support services are provided to country and inter-country programmes and projects as well as to other similar activities of the organizations of the system, including technical missions, humanitarian relief, public information, headquarters visitors and support for bilateral development co-operation inquiries. This "service function" is undertaken in the interest of the programme and in the context of the respective responsibilities of the government, UNDP and the participating organizations.

33. In all cases, and particularly in the least developed countries, the UNDP field office administrative workload is extremely heavy and varied. The volume of services provided and the consequent overwhelming demand on office staff is a serious cause for concern, especially as this service function tends to weaken the capacity of the field office to attend properly to substantive matters. However, these services seem to be necessary for the daily conduct of programme activities.

34. The tasks involved range from the simple front-desk information function to advisory opinions; administrative or representational duties; briefing of experts, missions from headquarters and potential investors, security arrangements; medical or evacuation services for sick or injured staff; monitoring of non-UNDP funded projects; arrangements for equipment delivery and customs clearance; duty-free imports; housing and travel; support to conferences, seminars and workshops; interviews for United Nations system job applicants; library and documentation, etc.

35. The Administrator's 1980 report to the UNDP Governing Council states that, on the average, one-third of the field staff is devoted to administrative activities not directly related to UNDP as a funding source, including advisory work and representational services on behalf of other organizations of the United Nations family 3/.

36. The central service function has proved to be valuable in expanding and strengthening the framework of the country programme: by ensuring the necessary linkages through an integrated approach; reducing the total administrative costs of the system's development operations; solving bottlenecks; filling gaps, and facilitating the programming and delivery of inputs in accordance with the needs and priorities in each case established by the host government. Table I of this report shows the extent and variety of these functions.

D. Representational functions and public relations

37. Besides the normal and full representation of UNDP and the funds and programmes under the aegis of UNDP, the field offices provide support to many organizations, agencies, programmes and funds active at the country level, including the regional commissions and other regional organizations, financial institutions and entities involved in the development process and relying on UNDP services. Hence, the total gamut of their working relationships with the UNDP field offices should be taken into account in the organization and staffing of these offices in order to equip them to play fully the central role expected of them.

38. Also, considerable time of the resident representative and his deputy must be devoted to representational, quasi-diplomatic activities and social gatherings. These functions are unavoidable. They are a useful and important aspect of the resident representative's promotional and leadership functions and can contribute to practical results.

39. The special case of the United Nations Information Centres was thoroughly examined by the Joint Inspection Unit in several reports (see JIU/REP/76/10, 79/10 and 81/2). Special steps are now being taken to strengthen the relationship between United Nations Information centres and resident representatives.

E. Bilateral programmes and non-governmental organizations

40. There is a potential role that the field offices could play, when the host government so requests, in facilitating effective utilization of both multi-lateral and bilateral resources. Although informal, this could have an important promotional value by enlarging the support for development assistance efforts and supporting the absorptive capacity of developing countries. The experience of project financing by a mix of resources has already been tried, and the general benefits of the experience are worth exploring further. This is particularly true in countries which decide to include in their UNDP country programmes provisions and plans for the use of external assistance from all sources, including bilateral programmes.

3/ This estimate was confirmed by the UNDP field office workload survey completed in February 1982. "Some 34 per cent of the time expended by the UNDP field staff related to such services: 13 per cent on totally non-UNDP related business and 21 per cent on doing things for the agencies. In terms of costs, as distinct from time spent, this extra effort represents some 25 per cent of field office costs". (DP/1982/INF.5)

SUMMARY OF UNDP FIELD OFFICE FUNCTIONS

| I General Functions | II Specific Programme Management Functions | III Programme & Project Support Services to non-IPF activities | IV Administrative and Logistical Support |
|--|--|--|--|
| <p>A. <u>Representational Role</u></p> <p>The Resident Representative (RR) represents the following in country of assignment</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. UNDP Administrator. 2. UN organs and funds, including in particular, WFP, UNFPA, UNHCR (where no office exists), Regional Economic Commissions, DTCD, UNEP, HABITAT, UNCTAD/ITC, UNIDO, UNFIDAC. 3. Special Funds & Programmes administered by UNDP: UNCDF, UNRFFRE, Interim Fund for Science & Tech. for Dev., UNSO, UNV, TCDC Unit & Fund, Office for Projects Execution (OPE). 4. Small UN specialized agencies in general (ICAO, IMO, ITU, WIPO), & other agencies which specifically designate RR as their country representative. 5. In many cases the RR is also director of the UN Information Centre in the country of assignment. <p>B. <u>Team Leadership & Promotional Functions</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. As principal UN system team leader in country of assignment, the RR organizes and chairs periodic inter-agency meetings. 2. Resource mobilization and fund raising activities. 3. Promotional campaigns connected with UN Decades and Plans of Action adopted at special global and regional conferences sponsored by the UN, such as the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade, International Year of Disabled Persons, etc. <p>C. <u>Co-ordination Functions</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Principal channel of communication between the host Government and UN system. 2. Assisting the host government, when requested, in the co-ordination of operational development activities carried out by the system at country level. 3. Evolving a multidisciplinary dimension in sectoral development assistance programmes of the UN system at the country level. 4. Central source of information on assistance available through the UN system and on the development programmes of the system. 5. Point of contact between UN system and bilateral, multilateral and non-governmental assistance programmes. | <p>A. <u>Country IPF Programme</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assistance to the host Govt. in the formulation of the country programme; 2. Preparation of periodic country programming reviews; 3. Support to Govt. agencies in the preparation of project proposals within approved programme; 4. Collection and analysis of sectoral development data; 5. Appraisal of project proposals; 6. Preparation of project fact sheets; 7. Liaison with UN system country representation on programme and project issues; 8. Application of UN system policy directives in operational development activities (unified approach to development, new dimensions, TCDC, etc); 9. Visits to project sites and Govt. implementing agencies; 10. Correspondence and coordination with executing agencies and project managers on project activities; 11. Participation in tripartite review meetings and preparation of reports; 12. Briefing and debriefing of experts; 13. Preparation of technical assessment reports; 14. Processing of expert clearance, fellowship placement and monitoring of equipment ordering and delivery; 15. Assistance to and association with project evaluation missions; 16. Maintenance of control system for annualized budgetary commitments through IPF ledgers, including project expenditure monitoring mechanism; 17. Revision of project documents and budgets; 18. Periodic reporting to HQs. <p>B. <u>Inter-country IPF Programme</u></p> <p>Although most of the substantive work connected with inter-country programming and projects is at present done at UNDP HQs, field offices are nevertheless usually involved, in varying degrees, in the planning, implementation, monitoring evaluation and follow-up activities in respect of inter-country projects based in their host countries. This involvement will certainly increase, and add to field office workload, as management responsibility for subregional & regional projects is increasingly decentralized to govts. in accordance with new policy guidelines.</p> | <p>A. <u>Special Funds and programmes administered by UNDP (UNCDF, UNRFFRE, Interim Fund for Sc. and Tech., TCDC, UNSO, UNV, etc)</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Analysis of sectoral studies leading to project identification; 2. Assistance in the formulation of project documents and budgets; 3. Project revisions; 4. Consultation with govts., executing & bilateral agencies; 5. Assistance in project appraisal and preparation of project fact sheets; 6. Monitoring of project activities including: correspondence, project visits, consultation with govts & agencies, tripartite reviews & evaluation & preparation of reports thereon. 7. Project follow-up activities. <p>B. <u>Regular activities, programmes & Funds-in-Trust of organizations of the UN system</u></p> <p>When requested:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assistance in project identification and formulation; 2. Support for the preparation and circulation of project documents as well as for the appraisal and approval of projects; 3. Implementation and monitoring, including correspondence, project visits, consultation with govts & executing agencies, tripartite reviews, mid-term evaluations, project revisions, follow-up activities, etc. 4. Support to seminars, study tours & conferences sponsored by UN system organizations. | <p>A. <u>Administrative Support to the IPF Programme</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Personnel administration, including locally recruited staff; 2. Orientation and staff training including on-the-job training; 3. Preparation, administration and control of office budget; 4. Administration of imprest account, operation of bank accounts, payments and submission of monthly accounts and statements; 5. Administration and coordination of common system matters, including: UN system personnel security issues, protection of UN system property in host country, local salary surveys, cost of living surveys, surveys for purposes of daily subsistence allowance and fellowship stipend rates, housing surveys and administration of housing subsidies, preparation and distribution of reports on living conditions. 6. General services: registry and communications, travel arrangements, customs clearance of equipment, goods and personnel effects, management of special facilities including office and transportation equipment. <p>B. <u>Administrative Support to Non-IPF Activities (UNDP-administered funds and programmes; Agency regular budget activities and funds-in-trust, special services to the UN system)</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assistance to project personnel in housing, travel arrangements, visas, ID cards and extension and renewal of various permits. 2. Delivery of personnel effects. 3. Payment of salaries, travel advances and claims. 4. Transportation, especially to and from the airport arrival and departure. 5. Interviewing candidates and assistance in the recruitment of personnel for agency employment. 6. Induction, orientation, briefing and training of project personnel. 7. Assistance in the selection, placement and administration of fellowships. 8. Preparation of data and information, and especially completion of questionnaires at the request of organizations of the system. 9. Support to UN system visiting officials and special technical missions. 10. External relations and protocol functions. |

F. Reporting

41. The reporting function of the offices is also extensive, and covers programme and project monitoring and review processes, evaluation and follow-up, in addition to reports concerning the office management, finance, personnel and general administration, security matters, etc.
42. This is an important function which the UNDP field offices must carry out, in most cases on a priority and timely basis. Routine administrative work, statistical and other factual information may be handled by assistants, but reporting on programme and project development processes, or matters related to international co-operation, policy implementation, effectiveness, etc., require a resident representative's personal judgement.
43. The focal role of the field office and its central services to the system as a whole have substantially increased reporting responsibility. In particular, the field office is responsible to the Administrator on matters connected with the management of the programme; to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, through the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation; and to the heads of the organizations that utilize the office as their representative, on matters concerning their activities at the country and inter-country levels.
44. The timing and quality of these reports should be carefully reviewed as they are related to the efficacy of the support provided by the system and constitute a basic tool for the sound management of scarce resources. The number of required reports, however, places a considerable burden on the field offices and needs to be reviewed.

IV. STAFFING, ORGANIZATION, DIRECTION AND STRENGTHENING

A. Staffing

1. Staffing trends

45. Table II illustrates UNDP's overall staffing levels and trends between 1972 and 1982, which appear to reflect cyclical changes in UNDP's programme resources. Thus, while total core posts (those for the UNDP central programme) increased during the first and second cycles by 7 and 8 per cent respectively, they declined markedly at the beginning of the third cycle by 14 per cent, mainly as a result of UNDP's present resource constraints.

46. The field office core posts increased by 10 per cent and 16 per cent in the first and second cycles respectively, but dropped by 8 per cent in the 1982-1983 biennium, reflecting the general reduction in UNDP-budgeted staff posts announced by the Administrator in DP/1982/52. In 1982, each UNDP field office had on average virtually the same number of budgeted professional posts (3.6) as ten years ago, notwithstanding the dramatic expansion in recent years of field level operations supported by these offices, as seen in the preceding chapters, and the consequent need for increased programming and management efforts.

47. Furthermore, although the proportion of total field office posts to headquarters posts increased moderately in the first and second cycles, that proportion has remained virtually unchanged in the recent past, which happens to coincide with the period in which UNDP headquarters has undertaken extensive decentralization of administrative functions and management responsibilities to the country level, over and above the onerous field office workload already noted above.

48. The actual situation may be worse than these trends indicate because of the long field vacancies noted in the course of this study, the high field staff turnover rate, and protracted assignment and recruitment processes, particularly in the so-called difficult duty stations. The fact that UNDP has been operating under a recruitment freeze since July 1981 has reduced the number of staff available to fill all the vacancies. UNDP believes, however, that its reassignment policy, with its built-in forward planning element, will alleviate to a large extent the problem of protracted vacancies in the field offices (see paragraph 53).

49. The increase in field office posts, especially in the second cycle, occurred mainly in the general service category, which may be attributed to efforts by the UNDP administration to hold down administrative and programme support costs by relying increasingly on locally-recruited staff. But the trend may also indicate an orientation of the field office role towards administrative and service functions, which can be to the detriment of substantive work. Although some of the local staff, especially the Local National Officers (LNOs), perform programme support functions at the para-professional level, the average number of LNOs per field office in 1982 was 1.5 compared with a total average of 25.3 general service staff posts per field office.

50. This trend may be reinforced in the third programming cycle if an additional layer of logistic and administrative support functions is placed on these offices, as suggested in DP/1982/35 entitled "Additional and alternative ways of financing and providing development assistance through UNDP and the funds administered by UNDP" notwithstanding the reduction of field staff posts by 8 per cent. However, this does not necessarily mean that the service function would be exclusively in the field of logistic and administrative support. Such services could include assistance in project formulation for example and document DP/1982/35 states that organizations and governments who wish to use the field office structure should reimburse UNDP fully for the services provided.

Table II

UNDP Staffing Trends

| Total Core Posts | 1972 | | | | 1976 | | | | 1981 | | | | 1982/83 | | | |
|---|------|-----|------|-----------------|------|-----|------|-----------------|------|-----|------|-----------------|---------|-----|------|-----------------|
| | FSL | P | G | Total | FSL | P | G | Total | FSL | P | G | Total | FSL | P | G | Total |
| | 3394 | | | | 3647 | | | | 4143 | | | | 3816 | | | |
| Headquarters Core % Total * | - | 236 | 338 | 574 (16.9%) | 241 | 311 | | 522 (15.1%) | - | 221 | 351 | 572 (13.8%) | - | 202 | 316 | 518 (13.6%) |
| Field Office Core % Total | 135 | 374 | 2311 | 2820 (83.1%) | 136 | 440 | 2519 | 3095 (84.9%) | 97 | 403 | 3071 | 3571 (86.2%) | 52 | 412 | 2834 | 3298 (86.4%) |
| Total Professional % Total | | | | 610 (18%) | | | | 681 (18.7%) | | | | 624 (15.1%) | | | | 614 (16.1%) |
| Headquarters Professional as % of Total Professional | | | | 38.7% | | | | 35.4% | | | | 35.4% | | | | 32.9% |
| Field Professional as % of Total Field | | | | 13.2% | | | | 12.1% | | | | 9.7% | | | | 10.8% |
| International Office Assistants as % Total Field | | | | 4.8% | | | | 4.4% | | | | 2.7% | | | | 1.6% |
| Number Field Offices | 100 | | | | 105 | | | | 114 | | | | 114 | | | |
| Average Number Professional per Field Office | 3.7 | | | | 4.2 | | | | 3.5 | | | | 3.6 | | | |
| Average Number GS/Local per Field Office | 24.5 | | | | 25.3 | | | | 27.8 | | | | 25.3 | | | |
| Non-Core Total (including UNV, CDF, IAPSU, UNRPNRE, UNSO, OPE, Energy Account and Headquarters Extra-Budgetary) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | - | 51 | 54 | 105 | - | 112 | 126 | 238 | - | 115 | 143 | 258 | - | 115 | 143 | 258 |

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* Includes 7 Ps and 7 Gs for 1981/82,
4 Ps and 5 Gs for 1982/83 for Special Unit
for TCDC mandated by Governing Council

Source: UNDP

51. While the central administrative and service functions performed by the field staff are important and appreciated by the system at the country level, the Inspectors are concerned that the present trend is increasingly diverting field office activities away from their substantive programme and management functions. The findings of this study confirm the conclusion reached by the Inspectors in the 1979 JIU report on the Evaluation of Technical Co-operation Activities of the United Nations System in Sri Lanka (JIU/REP/79/16), namely, that the heavy administrative burden of the UNDP office was a serious obstacle to effective country programming and hampered substantive analytical work, and that the flood of current work had led to the neglect of such important functions as forward planning, current situation analysis, and assessment of past programme trends and performance. As a result, the field staff tend to be confined to a piecemeal project approach at the expense of interdisciplinary programme analysis and effective application of technical co-operation concepts and approaches. It was found in most cases that the field staff, especially the Junior Professional Officers (JPOs), did not fully comprehend the details of such basic policy concepts as self-reliance, new dimensions or a unified approach to development. A training programme has been initiated and may correct some of these weaknesses.

52. The Inspectors commend the Administrator's efforts to hold down staff costs in accordance with Governing Council decision 80/44, which established 12 per cent of total programme costs as an initial policy objective for the UNDP administrative and programme support costs budget. But they also believe that the application of this decision need not necessarily be detrimental to the adequate staffing and capacity of the field office network to scrutinize programme quality, for which the Administrator is also accountable to Member States. It is recognized that several factors at present influence the staffing of these offices, such as programme size and mix, internal country practice, extent of government management and staff quality. Whatever criteria are employed, however, it is essential that UNDP staffing reflect its primary field vocation and orientation, and in particular its programming and analytical leadership role at the country level, including assistance in project formulation, appraisal, monitoring and evaluation. Another JIU study entitled "United Nations System Co-operation in Developing Evaluation by Governments" (JIU/REP/82/12) discusses in detail what is expected of UNDP in this crucial area. The Inspectors suggest later in this study some measures for strengthening the field offices.

2. Assignment of staff

53. The long vacancies that too often occur in field office posts have already been noted and fully documented in the UNDP field survey study. Improved planning is needed in order to limit as much as possible the duration of such vacancies. UNDP's reassignment policy should lead to more structured moves in line with the need for improved planning. It is unavoidable, however, that certain vacancies will always occur, in particular at the level of resident representative, in view of the required clearances, and factors beyond the control of UNDP may not make it possible to always adequately plan and fill vacancies in time. Headquarters staff are being assigned temporarily to help offices, particularly the small ones, but headquarters staff cannot be drawn away from their regular functions for too long a period of time, as the headquarters service function vis-à-vis the field offices would otherwise suffer. The re-deployment of four posts to Roving Officers should prove helpful, although they were not intended as backstop officers in cases where vacancies occurred.

54. There is at present a tendency to fill posts in LDCs and other countries considered "difficult" with new, untrained staff, including JPOs, perhaps because of the difficulty of attracting staff to these countries. The need for administrative and technical backstopping is more extensive in the LDCs, and the Inspectors welcome the Administrator's intention to give priority to

the staffing needs of these countries. The establishment of Roving Officer posts is evidence of this commitment. More efforts are nevertheless required to ensure that offices in LDCs are adequately staffed and that qualified, competent and experienced staff are assigned to them. The classification of duty stations by the ICSC has already led to the introduction of a number of incentives which should make it more attractive for staff to work in the truly hardship duty stations. UNDP is attempting, but with only limited success, to convince the rest of the "common system" to more effectively tailor the conditions of service to the requirements of staff in the field. It should be realized, however, that even if conditions of service in these duty stations were brought in line with the conditions offered by the foreign services of certain governments, or even the private sector, the Administrator would still be faced with a number of constraints in terms of assigning staff. These constraints include the schooling of children of staff members, medical reasons, language ability, the careers of spouses and various personal reasons. Although none of these constraints is, or need be, an overriding factor in the assignment of staff to field offices, good personnel policy dictates that, to the extent possible, they should all be taken into account, if only to avoid a too high turnover in staff. The reassignment policy which provides for rotation between the headquarters, field offices with normal conditions, and hardship duty stations, should also improve the calibre of staff being assigned to hardship duty stations.

55. UNDP statistics indicate that in 1981 there were 106 reassignments: 26 per cent headquarters to field, 23 per cent field to headquarters, and 51 per cent field to field. In the latter case, only about 20 per cent moved from one region to another. It would be desirable to ensure a higher rotation of staff among geographic regions, and to avoid assigning staff to a succession of difficult duty stations. On the whole, the Inspectors endorse the new UNDP reassignment policy and particularly urge a greater rotation of staff between headquarters and the field in order to redress the present situation whereby a large number of headquarters staff (48 per cent) has never served in a UNDP field office. This figure is quite high for an organization whose actual business is in the field.

56. The Inspectors recognize that not all UNDP staff are required by function to serve in the field. The job classification exercise scheduled for 1983/84 will determine which posts in the organization should be classified as generalist, subject to rotation, and which posts specialist. UNDP also believes that while staff serving in the Division for Programme Development Support and Evaluation, who are primarily Technical Advisers, should have "field" experience in their area of specialization, this does not necessarily have to be in a UNDP field office, as such experience would be only marginally related to their present functions. Thus, according to UNDP, if one excludes all staff labelled "specialists" and Technical Advisers, the ratio of headquarters staff who have never been to the field would be around 20 per cent. However, the Inspectors consider that it would be beneficial for the great majority of professional staff to have field experience.

3. Office staff mix

57. For an organization like UNDP with a global network of 114 offices serving some 153 countries and territories, it would be difficult to recommend a standard detailed mix of staff skills, experience, background, grades, international and local staff, etc., that would be needed for the field offices to function efficiently and achieve better results. The appropriate combination of the above elements would be dictated by the conditions and factors prevailing in each country.

58. It is vital, nevertheless, to ensure that each country office has a certain combination of skills, experience, background, and international and local development perspectives, with a concomitant clear distribution of responsibilities and tasks among the officers so that full and continuous attention is paid to substantive programme and analytical functions on the one hand, and to administrative work on the other. The question of how best to staff the field offices concerns the broader management question of how best to deploy and utilize presently diminishing UNDP staff resources so that the Administrator's accountability for the quality of the programme and management of resources can continue to be fully discharged. The Inspectors believe that this is a critical question deserving UNDP's priority attention in the years ahead, not least because overall resources are now declining whereas UNDP's field responsibilities and services to the international community are expanding.

59. Field offices have at present, on the average, four international officers, namely, the resident representative, the deputy and two assistant resident representatives (ARR) - one for programme and the other for administration - or one ARR and a junior professional officer. This international team is assisted by a complement of local staff, usually concentrated in administrative areas, but which increasingly includes national programme officers with qualifications and experience very similar to those of the international staff. The Inspectors have found that although the distribution of work among these staff categories still leaves a lot of room for improvement, the field offices have generally been successful in developing a cohesive team spirit and a dedicated commitment to their work. Management responsibility for the field office lies with the resident representative, whose functions have been discussed in the preceding chapter. Some selected staff categories are further treated below.

60. Deputy Resident Representatives (DRR) Where field offices have deputy resident representatives, they give broad overall assistance to the resident representative. This experience permits the deputy resident representative to serve in place of the resident representative when necessary. The resident representative, of course, remains in charge and is responsible for the work of his deputy. However, the deputy can assist the resident representative in his broad overall functions and serve as a major element of co-ordination among the various functions and activities of the field office. In smaller field offices, the deputy could take charge of one function, programme matters or administration in addition to his broader responsibilities as a deputy representative. The position of deputy resident representative is essential only where the magnitude of the programme is considerable and the complexity apparent. In every case, an experienced deputy resident representative should be selected to assist resident representatives who are appointed without UNDP field office experience.

61. National officers In 1975, UNDP took the initiative of restructuring its existing extended general service level in field offices by separating those functions which were essentially clerical from those that were professional in nature. It was agreed that qualified local staff performing functions at the professional level would be entitled to the functional title of National Programme Officer or National Administrative Officer while still retaining their local recruitment status. The number of national officer posts increased from 22 in 1975 to 192 in 1982/83. They are paid on the basis of the best prevailing local rates.

62. The use of Local National Officers can promote self-reliance and upgrade the efficiency of the office. In a least developed country, fewer National Officers may be available but even in such countries it should be possible to recruit and train the few persons required. In a country that has a planning

and co-ordinating mechanism in the government and has available qualified national staff, the UNDP international staff presence could be reduced somewhat since the government could be expected to do a greater part of the work and within the UNDP office itself more use could be made of national staff. Thus, as the government developed its capacity to plan, formulate and utilize external co-operation, the workload of the UNDP office would correspondingly be reduced or modified.

63. The Inspectors received positive comments about the high performance of Local National Officers and fully endorse the expansion of this scheme as it is consistent with the goal of self-reliance. However, it is important to maintain in each office a good mix of international and local staff capable of providing balanced advice to the government. The senior international staff, particularly at the level of the deputy resident representative, should be fully involved in programme and analytical work, because they usually have more experience in international development assistance.

64. Junior Professional Officers (JPOs) now represent 20-25 per cent of the total professional staff in field offices, increasing from 87 in 1980/81 to 134 in 1982/83. This programme first had its emphasis on the training aspect, but has moved more and more to regular assignments because of the pressure of work which has also led to some decline in formal training. In general, the programme has been a good one and certainly has been helpful to the field by attenuating budgetary constraints and workload increases.

65. In several cases, JPOs have joined the programme without prior briefing and orientation regarding their job and the UN system, in spite of the fact that in some field offices they are heavily involved in programme support work. Some resident representatives are concerned about the long time necessary to train them on-the-job. UNDP headquarters has started a training programme for JPOs. The JPO programme should not, however, prevent the expansion of the LNO scheme.

4. Staff secondments and exchanges

66. There can be several sources of personnel in addition to the established career service. These could include secondments from national governments, donor governments under the JPO programme, executing agencies and national establishments, such as universities. These sources would offer UNDP an outside, and probably a different perspective, which could be very useful. Undoubtedly, secondees would require some orientation through training, depending upon the backgrounds of the individuals. The training section of UNDP has the resources and plans to take care of these factors. Although UNDP is pursuing a policy of secondments and exchanges, such secondments and exchanges are not cost-effective if they are for a short period of time. Secondments or exchanges should preferably be for a minimum period of two to four years.

67. When secondees returned to their establishments, they would probably take with them knowledge and support for UNDP activities, which might be useful in their new assignments. In some cases, these secondments could be paid for by the national or donor governments. This would be a useful contribution to UNDP in its present period of declining resources.

68. Exchanges between UNDP and executing agencies would bring substantive benefit and serve both UNDP and the executing agencies with better mutual understanding. DTCD and UNDP are contemplating such exchanges.

5. Recruitment

69. UNDP personnel policies stipulate that "UNDP is committed to the development of an international career service" and that "outside recruitment is concentrated as far as possible at the junior level". Individual vacancies open for recruitment are identified after an exhaustive review of internal candidates.

70. Although UNDP does not have a geographical quota system, it does attempt to maintain a broad geographical balance and ensures an adequate spread of nationalities. UNDP has also taken significant action to recruit women in the professional category. In 1979, for example, half of the appointments at the P.1 through P.3 levels which were approved by the Appointment and Promotion Board were female.

71. In general UNDP attempts to recruit staff who have qualities that will allow them to progress to the top of the career system. Therefore, special attention is paid to the potential of the person in management and supervisory areas. Heavy stress is placed on leadership qualities, growth potential, adaptability, broad intellectual abilities, maturity, judgement, and language skills, all of which suggest high academic recruitment standards and various backgrounds, mostly "development related". It is increasingly recognized that some field office functions, such as project planning and evaluation, cost accounting, financial management, etc., will require the training of some staff who have general background in order to meet the needed technical requirements.

72. UNDP has not yet completely recouped some of the young talent it lost in the aftermath of the 1975 liquidity crisis. There is consequently a need to recruit young staff and build them up systematically through proper career planning as discussed below. In this regard, UNDP should examine the possibility of utilizing the competitive examinations organized by the United Nations Office of Personnel Services as a recruitment source for some categories of junior officers. Also, more vigorous efforts are required to avoid politically-induced recruitment.

73. In the last two or three years UNDP has recruited 23 resident representatives: 13 from the agencies, five from government counterpart national planning or related offices and five from donor countries' bilateral programmes. In addition, 31 career UNDP staff were appointed as resident representatives during the same period. It should also be noted that no less than 60 career staff members rose to the rank of resident representative during the last five years. The relatively high number of recruitments of resident representatives from the agencies - 13 - can be seen in the light of UNDP's policy to have an active exchange with the agencies. Of the total number of UNDP resident representatives more than one half worked with organizations of the United Nations system in one capacity or another before joining UNDP. The exchange programme works, of course, both ways and currently there are 40 UNDP staff members on secondment to the agencies.

6. Career development

74. Undoubtedly, it will not be possible to develop the ideal plan which will satisfy all staff members. UNDP is committed to the development of an international career service, based primarily on merit. Although UNDP has a medium-term career development plan, it has tended to emphasize more the short-term reassignment plan, as it responds to the immediate needs of the staff members and those of the Organization.

75. The Division of Personnel is aware of the importance of identifying and planning future staff requirements. In developing an internal plan Personnel takes into account various factors, including qualifications, preferences, schooling, health, etc. The identification of staffing needs requires constant monitoring and adjustment.

76. The Inspectors recognize the progress being made on career development and the fact that this is a sensitive issue. Although the effort has been commendable, there should be more counselling of individual staff members so that they may have a more realistic indication of what their future might be. Early identification of those who might serve in senior positions is important. Once this is done a series of assignments and training activities will move the person in the most desirable direction. More should be done in developing long-term career possibilities for all staff members.

77. As resources decline and there is a logical shift to local staff as at present, career development may have problems. There is also concern that career development in UNDP is hampered by limited possibilities for upward staff movement as the number of positions is reduced, but active staff exchanges with the rest of the system do offer a promising avenue. The local professional officers who have acquired a certain number of years of field office experience could form a valuable source of recruitment for the entire United Nations system.

78. Finally, the importance of periodic training and re-training of staff cannot be over-emphasized in order to avoid intellectual stagnation and build up professionalism.

B. Organization

79. In 1973 a Management Inspection Service (MIS) circulated general guidelines for the organization and management of UNDP field offices, recognizing that considerable flexibility had to be allowed. The guidelines outlined a model field office structure:

- (a) an integrated programme section, including programme support functions;
- (b) administrative section, including personnel, finance, general services and communications units;
- (c) necessary linkage between the two sections.

Although there were other elements, such as delegation of authority, "on-the-job" training, planning, advisory panels, etc., most of the field offices still follow the basic model with necessary local adaptation. Field office organization should be kept as simple as possible with flexible sharing of workloads whenever necessary. UNDP is currently undertaking the proper organization of each office on the basis of the approved 1982-83 staffing levels in order to streamline and improve the operation of the field office network.

80. Managerial style is an important element in field offices and this, of course, varies considerably depending on the background interests of the resident representatives. Open communications and sharing of problems usually bring better organizational production as well as higher staff morale. When units function in a somewhat isolated fashion, which is sometimes the case, confusion, duplication, and other failures are usually the result. Gaps between programme and administration need to be narrowed and this can often be done through regular staff meetings. These two activities are intimately linked and complementary, and cannot be set against each other, although as noted earlier in this report, the administrative function has tended to expand to the detriment of substantive programme matters.

81. The programme support function needs greater attention in field offices in the LDCs, especially as it relates to programme management. There is a need to have available current status of country programmes and accurate estimates on actual delivery of projects.

82. A field office must function as a team, under the leadership of the resident representative. The Inspectors found merit in the basic guidelines on the organization of field offices and urge that they be applied throughout all UNDP field offices. The guidelines include a useful suggestion regarding "on-the-job" training, including the expansion of skills of office staff by sharing experiences in the various parts of a field office.

83. It could be argued that the division between "administrative" and "programme" staff is not necessary in the field and merely creates problems. However, specialized support functions such as finance, accounting, travel, etc., should be handled almost entirely by qualified national staff, even though the resident representative remains responsible. The international staff should have some awareness of administrative functions, but should concentrate on the substantive programme management functions described in columns II and III of table I.

C. Direction and review

84. At present, UNDP headquarters is the strong directive force of UNDP but there has been considerable decentralization to the field over the past two years. Headquarters has the responsibility for providing policy direction, but the field offices are the ones which will maintain the activity, direction and prestige of UNDP itself. Therefore, the field offices must be adequately equipped in order to meet the many requirements placed upon them. The Inspectors have concluded that there might be some additional decentralization to the field from headquarters. The question is dealt with in section D below.

85. As decentralization continues to take place, there should be careful monitoring by headquarters of the effectiveness of field office performance at their current staffing level. At present, there is no special evaluation of field offices from the standpoint of cost effectiveness but the audit and management reviews appear to have partially filled this gap.

86. Headquarters direction of field offices should include active support for the articulation and implementation of United Nations system technical co-operation policy concepts and approaches, periodic visits by Area officers whenever feasible and prompt responses to the field offices when they need support to solve specific problems with the government and agencies. For example, many field offices have reported lack of directives and guidance from headquarters on how to reflect policy concepts such as self-reliance, unified approach, new dimensions, etc. in the programming process and project strategies.

D. Strengthening measures

87. The preceding chapters have reviewed the increasing responsibilities of the UNDP field offices as well as the growing variety and complexity of technical co-operation programmes that have to be supported by these offices. Moreover, the UNDP field office survey has revealed that these offices perform - and will continue to do so in the foreseeable future - much of the work, particularly administrative, generally assumed to be the responsibility of host governments and the executing agencies.

88. This problem arises from the need to review and re-define the tripartite responsibility for the system's technical co-operation efforts at the country

level, and drastically improve the system's present country representational structure in the light of new trends and such policy directives as the restructuring resolution and the principles of government management and execution of projects.

89. In the meantime, the Inspectors have come to the conclusion that, although the situation varies from one country to another, the field offices in the majority of cases are unable to give adequate attention to the quality of programmes because of their extensive workload, which is heavily administrative. They therefore consider that the strengthening of many field offices should be a question of priority if programmes are to be executed effectively, although it goes without saying that effective implementation of projects by the agencies and government support are equally important factors.

90. However, the Inspectors are reluctant to make any recommendations that might increase costs, and they note in this connection that the UNDP Governing Council at its twenty-ninth session endorsed, by decision 82/32, the Administrator's action to reduce staff in the light of current resources as proposed in the revised biennium budget 1982-83 (DP/1982/52). They have therefore sought means of strengthening the field offices without detracting from the decision of Member States to hold down programme support and administrative costs.

91. One: In DP/1982/52, the Administrator mentions the possibility of negotiating with host governments in connection with their obligations under agreements with UNDP to provide specified services and facilities as well as cash contributions towards local field costs and to seek governments' contributions to defray the extra costs arising from cost-sharing where this mode of funding exceeds 25 per cent of the country IPF. By decision 82/18 the Governing Council authorized both courses of action which, if successful, would enable the field offices to perform their functions more effectively. It is recognized, however, that these negotiations will take some time to produce results that can be reflected in the budget.

92. It is also important for host governments to provide adequate support to the various organizations which may be represented in their countries in order that the office space, equipment, staff salaries, etc., which they make available do not give any one organization disproportionate advantage vis-à-vis another.

93. Two: The Administrator also stated in DP/1982/52 his intention to undertake negotiations with individual executing agencies regarding activities such as funds-in-trust programmes which the field offices carry out on the agencies' behalf, and for which, under present arrangements, UNDP is not reimbursed. However, the executing agencies take the view that these activities, which are mainly administrative, are duties of the UNDP field offices. The Governing Council, by its decision 82/33, authorized the Administrator "to continue to provide at the present levels those services which are in accordance with the aims and responsibilities of UNDP and are currently provided without charge to the agencies". The decision, however, left room open for possible "adequate arrangements" with agencies which require field offices to perform additional tasks that "significantly increased" field office workloads 4/.

4/ The issue of reimbursement by agencies for the cost of services provided by UNDP field offices has been settled following interagency consultations in the light of UNDP Governing Council decision 82/33. See UNDP/ADM/636 of 20 January 1983.

94. The Inspectors believe that more effective agency implementation and backstopping of projects financed by UNDP would contribute substantially to a reduction of UNDP field workload and increase the effectiveness of technical co-operation. The UNDP field survey has found that improved agency backstopping of projects is needed in many cases, thus confirming the findings of a 1977 JIU report on Some Aspects of Backstopping of Technical Co-operation Activities of the UN System (JIU/REP/77/6).

95. Three: In describing the status of decentralization from UNDP headquarters to the field, document DP/1982/52 states that while the process will be pursued whenever a possibility is identified, the scope for further decentralization "is now limited since the Administrator's accountability must be fully respected".

96. The Inspectors concur in the need to maintain the Administrator's accountability, but believe that one of the most effective means to that end would be to decentralize some staff from headquarters in order to reinforce the field office network, where the mandate of UNDP is essentially discharged. It should be noted, moreover, that the expansion of UNDP responsibilities over the last decade, as described in the preceding chapters, has occurred mainly at the field office level, whose staffing ratio to headquarters has by and large remained stable in the recent past as shown in table II. The Inspectors therefore conclude that redeployment of some headquarters staff to the field, particularly to the least developed countries, is both feasible and necessary, even though UNDP maintains that its current resource difficulties do not allow for an expansion of field office staffing strength.

97. In conjunction with the above, a trimming or even elimination of some field administrative functions, especially periodic reporting requirements, would be desirable in order to enable the field staff to devote sufficient attention to programme quality and results. The rationalization and simplification of administrative processes recently undertaken at headquarters should be extended to the field office network as well. A careful review of reporting should be undertaken in order to determine what is required and what would best serve the essential needs of UNDP.

98. Four: Yet another option would be to encourage selected host governments to make available to their UNDP field offices a number of persons to serve as programme officers. The Inspectors have found that nationals of the host country when employed in UNDP field offices have made excellent contributions. Their knowledge of the social and economic systems and practices of the country and of local languages effectively complements the experience and background of the internationally recruited staff. While the resident representative and the deputy should always be recruited internationally, many of the remaining professional staff of the field offices should be nationals of the host country and preferably persons with governmental experience in such areas as development planning, research or in sectoral areas. It would be in the interest of both the host government and UNDP to have such persons in each office performing the functions of programme officer for a sector or group of related sectors corresponding to the main fields of activity of the governmental ministries and the organizations of the United Nations system.

99. Such persons could be seconded by the host governments to the UNDP field office for periods of three to five years. At the end of their periods of secondment, they would return to government service, or they could be considered for assignments with the UNDP or other organizations of the United Nations system in other countries. The experience they gained while working in the UNDP field office would be useful for both types of assignment.

100. The salaries of the seconded government officials should be paid by UNDP to make it clear that as long as they serve in the field these officials are staff members of the United Nations, who receive their instructions and professional guidance from the resident representative. Each host government should pay the UNDP field office as "local costs" an amount equal to the salary and allowance they were paying the seconded officials when they were in government service. However, UNDP would pay the seconded officials according to its own salary scale in the light of the duties and responsibilities, provided that the salary should never be less than that earned as a government official. Some exceptions might be made for the least developed countries under which UNDP would require less than full payment under local costs.

101. Since the seconded officials would be staff members of UNDP, they should be selected and appointed by the resident representative from among candidates proposed by the host government. The staff regulations and rules of the United Nations would apply to the seconded officials during their terms of service with UNDP. The number of seconded officials required by each UNDP field office would vary considerably depending on the country and field office needs.

102. Five: Another alternative would consist of a "core" budget, financed from the United Nations regular budget, for certain field activities. This "core" budget would be justified in the sense that it would finance activities relating to the United Nations system and therefore not strictly related to UNDP responsibilities. This would not include all of the costs now resulting from UNDP services to the system and governments. If this alternative were adopted, UNDP would naturally continue to finance all other international field costs directly related to its responsibilities, in addition to secondments from host governments as suggested above. A logical possibility would be to add to the United Nations regular budget charges for certain functions of the resident co-ordinator which had added considerable work to field offices.

103. Six: The last option relates to the concept of resident co-ordinator under whom the UNDP field offices will more and more be serving the entire United Nations system. These offices are now an important feature of the structure of the United Nations system. It would seem reasonable that some consideration be given to financing certain aspects of their work from the regular budgets with some contribution being made by all the organizations they serve. However, the Inspectors are aware that such a proposal is not likely at present to meet with the approval of governments or the organizations. Therefore, they suggest that its practical applicability be studied for consideration when the financial situation is more propitious.

104. All the above options are not mutually exclusive. On the contrary, their combined application would be more effective in achieving the objective of strengthening these field offices without which the Administrator's accountability for the quality and effectiveness of the programme would be seriously impaired.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Conclusions

105. UNDP field offices have become the centre-piece of the technical co-operation efforts of the United Nations system at the country level. The significant role played by these offices is demonstrated by the expanding range of services they provide at the operational level to host governments, organizations of the United Nations system, some bilateral development programmes and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). For UNDP in particular the field offices constitute its main resource and strength, especially in the exercise of its technical co-operation leadership functions in the United Nations system. The Inspectors therefore consider it to be of the utmost importance to ensure that UNDP field offices are adequately staffed, organized and supported so that they can serve the international community with optimal efficiency and effectiveness.

106. The Inspectors, however, recognize that multilateral technical co-operation is currently in a state of crisis as is evident by the sharp decline in real terms of resources channelled through the United Nations system, and especially through UNDP. As a result of UNDP's critical resource situation the field office staffing level has been reduced by 8 per cent and recruitment frozen at a time when these offices are barely able to cope with their extensive range of services on behalf of governments and the United Nations system. A good deal of these services are not specifically related to the IPF programme but to a variety of funds and activities of the United Nations system, besides cost-sharing arrangements which are emerging rapidly as a dominant mode of funding technical co-operation as IPF resources decline. Therefore, until full reimbursement for the costs of these services can be obtained by UNDP, its field offices will face the crucial challenge of doing more with far less staff capacity than has ever been the case in the history of UNDP.

107. The Inspectors believe that this challenge can be met in large measure if governments and UN system organizations co-operate and actively support the application of the restructuring directives in respect of the operational activities of the system. These directives emphasize increased co-ordination and integration of administrative, budget and programming procedures with a view to reducing costs and achieving coherence, efficiency and effectiveness of the system's operations at the country level.

108. Improved co-ordination arrangements at the central policy and inter-secretariat levels as well as at the regional level are essential prerequisites for coherent programming and interagency cohesion at the country level. More significant, however, is the co-ordination role of the host government and the quality of support of UNDP field offices in the co-ordination and programming of the system's inputs.

109. The core functions of UNDP field offices include support to the host governments in the preparation, implementation, evaluation and day-to-day management of IPF-funded projects and programmes; co-ordination of the sectoral activities of the system; and the provision of central administrative support and logistical services to the system at the country level. The rapid expansion of these services as noted above has outstripped the staffing level of the field office network, and the decentralization of functions from UNDP headquarters to the field has not been accompanied by a corresponding redeployment of posts. Because the field staff is hardpressed by routine administrative tasks, substantive programme management, analytical and evaluation functions tend to be neglected, and new technical co-operation techniques and concepts are inadequately articulated in the development co-operation process. The

Inspectors conclude that these offices should be strengthened, first by means of more systematic field staff assignment, career development and recruitment policies, including the increased use of local professional officers and system-wide staff secondments and exchanges, and second through a careful review and selection of some or all of the specific policy options. These include increased government contributions to local field costs; redeployment of more posts from UNDP headquarters to the field, especially to the LDCs; secondment of government officials to the field offices for specific periods; the financing of some field office functions from a "core" budget supported by the United Nations regular budget, and finally, the eventual merging of the system's country representation to form field offices of the United Nations system, financed through proportional contributions of United Nations organizations and agencies.

B. Recommendations

110. The following principal recommendations relate primarily to the role and functions of the resident representative and the UNDP field offices, the central purpose being to suggest specific ways of strengthening the UNDP field establishment so that UNDP can more effectively discharge its expanding field responsibilities. If the JIU undertakes a study on the resident co-ordinator in the future, the broader aspects of the functions attached to that office will be covered by such a study.

RECOMMENDATION 1: Strengthening field offices

The Governing Council decision 82/18 on increased host government contributions to local office costs should be implemented in order to reduce the burden of the UNDP field establishment on UNDP's administrative and programme support budget. In addition, the practical feasibility of the following options should be examined with a view to strengthening the field office network:

(a) Host governments should, for cost-effective reasons, consider the possibility of unifying the country offices of the United Nations system under common premises, and should provide adequate support and facilities to the various organizations which may be represented in their countries (paragraphs 14 and 91);

(b) Governments should be encouraged to second officials to the field offices in their countries for specific periods in the context of UNDP's National Officer scheme (paragraphs 97-100);

(c) Redeployment of some posts from UNDP headquarters to the field, especially to the LDCs (paragraphs 94-95 and 110);

(d) The financing of a "core" of field office central functions from the United Nations regular budget, especially in cases where the resident co-ordinator position has clearly increased field office workload (paragraph 101);

(e) Although it is recognized that the financing of field offices from the regular budgets of the various organizations served by UNDP might not be acceptable at the present time of economic crisis, the possibility should be carefully considered of gradually integrating the existing country representations of United Nations organizations and agencies into field offices of the United Nations system financed, when economically appropriate, through proportional contributions of United Nations system organizations (paragraph 102).

RECOMMENDATION 2: Policy implementation

In exercising its responsibility for co-ordination of the system's technical co-operation activities at the country level, UNDP should give special attention

to the application and articulation of the system's development strategies and operational policy concepts. To this end, the co-operation of all organizations and agencies would be needed. Specific guidelines should be developed for the implementation of and compliance with these policy concepts within the context of the country programming process (paragraphs 19-22).

RECOMMENDATION 3: Substantive programme functions

UNDP should maintain as a priority the rationalization of field office administrative functions in order to permit field offices to devote more time to substantive programme management, analytical work, forward planning and evaluation (paragraphs 27-29, 48-51).

RECOMMENDATION 4: Personnel questions

UNDP should consider the implementation of the following measures:

(a) The reassignment policy should be actively pursued and staff rotation between geographic regions and between the field and headquarters should be increased (paragraph 54);

(b) The competitive examinations organized by the United Nations Office of Personnel Services for external recruitment of young professionals should be utilized by UNDP as a source for recruiting young competent staff into the UNDP career system (paragraph 71);

(c) United Nations system organizations should be encouraged to recruit staff from the pool of local professional officers who have had some years of experience in UNDP field offices (paragraph 76);

(d) Career planning for UNDP staff should include the possibility of increased staff secondments and exchanges with United Nations system organizations (paragraphs 65-67).