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## ARRANGEMENTS TO IMPROVE WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF ITS EXISTING STRUCTURE, THE WORKING METHODS OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL FOR CONSIDERATION OF PROGRAMME MATTERS

Note by the Administrator

### Summary

At the request of the Intersessional Committee of the Whole at its second session, the Administrator reviews, within the existing structure of the Governing Council, the type of arrangements which might improve the Council's consideration of programme matters. These include greater feedback to the Council of programme and project implementation and evaluation, and more detailed and specific information on individual projects in country programmes.

Various formats for the meetings of the Governing Council are reviewed, ranging from briefing meetings and informal consultations through subject-oriented sessions to a programme committee. Whatever the format, documentation should be concise and distributed well in advance of meetings. Supplementary information can be requested from the Administrator either before or during meetings.

1. At the conclusion of the second session of the Intersessional Committee of the Whole, the Administrator was requested to prepare for the third session a review, within the existing structure of the Council, of the type of arrangements which might improve its working methods for the consideration of programme matters, including the implications of and possible method of work of a programme committee set up along the lines of the Budgetary and Finance Committee (BFC).
2. The views expressed during the second session of the Committee on the governance of UNDP ranged widely, from maintaining the present arrangements to establishing an executive committee with restricted membership. In its detailed examination of document DP/1983/ICW/8, the Committee supported a number of points and suggestions contained therein.
3. First, even if no changes were to be made in the present arrangements for dealing with programme matters, the continuation of the practice of arranging briefing meetings and informal consultations with delegations was generally supported. It was felt, in particular, that the type of briefing which had taken place before the second session of the Committee and the twenty-ninth session of the Governing Council had considerably facilitated preparations by delegations of their positions on the complex issues involved.
4. Second, during consideration by the Council of the programmes presented to it, account should be taken of the conclusions which the Council may have drawn from reports on programme implementation and on the results of evaluation studies. Thus, the relationship between current programme planning and programme implementation could be better articulated towards a more meaningful consideration of programme matters by the Council and, in particular, the feedback from evaluations into programme planning could be enhanced. It was noted that continuous programming had facilitated this desirable interaction and the Council's comments and suggestions should be brought to the attention of the Governments concerned and taken into account by the Administrator when consulting with Governments during the country programming process as well as in programme implementation.
5. In connection with the Council's consideration of country programmes, a further step which could be envisaged within the present arrangements would be to have Governments include in country programme documents more detailed and specific information on individual projects, especially large-scale projects, where their formulation is sufficiently advanced. In this way, the Council would continue to review the rationale and total framework of the programme, but would also be able to focus better on major individual components.
6. Third, it was generally felt that the Council should allocate a specific set portion of its time to programme matters. Whenever consideration of these matters required more time, such as at the beginning of programming cycle, when a great number of country programmes needed timely approval, the Council could decide to hold subject-oriented sessions. In conformity with paragraph 3 (b) of decision 81/37, delegations stressed the need for these special sessions to be held in conjunction with regular sessions of the Council.

Thus, the special meeting to consider country programmes in 1982, which was convened immediately prior to the twenty-ninth session, and the special meeting in February 1983, which was held in conjunction with the organizational meeting of the Council for 1983, provided an opportunity to the Council to examine programme matters more thoroughly. The meetings of the Intersessional Committee itself are another example of the utility of subject-oriented sessions which permit the Council to examine specific issues in greater depth. This practice could be continued with the Council convening a meeting when necessary one week prior to the opening of its regular session to discuss programme matters, as is the case with BFC. In this context, it has been noted that from 1983 onwards the Council will have to consider certain funds and programmes under its supervision on a biennial basis only, and thus will have more time at its disposal, which could be devoted to programme matters.

7. A fourth point was that, whatever the format of the meeting, the documentation should be distributed well in advance and provide information in a concise form, well adapted to the needs of the Council members in order for them to present substantive comments and to provide the necessary policy guidance. The difficulty of providing such documentation, in view of the necessity of limiting the length and number of documents so that delegations could more easily study the Administrator's comments and proposals contained thereon, was recognized. In this connection, it was noted that more detailed information was available in the UNDP secretariat which could be provided to Council members at their request, either before or during the meetings. This would help enhance the visibility of the work performed by the UNDP secretariat, an important factor for the support of the Programme by recipients and donor countries alike.

8. The main points made in favour of establishing a programme committee, included the following: the Council's setting is too formal for a substantive consideration of programme matters and unavoidably leads to statements for the record rather than to a constructive dialogue to help clarify and resolve the issues under examination. The desirable exchange of ideas and information could more easily take place at the committee level and such exchange would have a positive influence on the way in which the Council discharged its important responsibilities for programme matters.

9. While a few delegations referred to a committee with restricted membership, this suggestion did not meet with wide support. It was generally felt that, should a programme committee be established by the Council, it should be a committee of the whole, open to observer delegations, as is the case with the BFC and the Intersessional Committee. It was further suggested that the Council would refer country programmes to the Committee, but retain responsibility for their approval. For the reasons given in paragraph 4 above, it could also refer to the committee other programme matters on its agenda, such as those relating to programme implementation and evaluation. On the basis of the report of a programme committee, the Council would take its final decisions in plenary meetings. In order to avoid a time lag between consideration of programme matters by the committee and action by

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the Council, the programme committee should meet at the time of the Council's regular session, possibly simultaneously with BFC a week before the Council or in part during the session, provided there was not more than one other meeting being held at the same time. Since the Council normally meets for three weeks, one could also envisage the Council meeting in plenary for two weeks for the general policy debate and to consider UNDP-administered funds, the programme committee meeting for the remaining week, and the Council reconvening in plenary at the end of the session to approve the BFC and programme committee reports. This focusing of the Council's attention on major policy issues within a short period of time, would also facilitate delegations' participation in the Council's deliberations at an appropriately high level.

10. It is to be noted that, whether the Committee favours only the measures reviewed in paragraph 1 to 6 or also wishes to establish a programme committee along the lines described in paragraph 8 above, the proposals would remain well within the provisions of the Consensus relating to programme matters as well as in accordance with rule 30 of the Council's rules of procedures concerning the establishment of committees by the Governing Council.

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