GOVERNING COUNCIL

Special meeting

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 2nd MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 14 February 1983, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. SLIM (Tunisia)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

OPENING OF THE MEETING

1. The President declared open the 2nd meeting of the Governing Council for 1983, which was the first meeting of the Council's special meeting devoted to the consideration of country and intercountry programmes.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS (DP/1983/1 and DP/1983/I/Add.1 and 2; DP/1983/L.2)

2. The President drew attention to the note by the Secretariat in document DP/1983/L.2 and said he took it that the Council wished to adopt the agenda as contained in annex I. The annotated agenda was contained in document DP/1983/I.

3. The agenda was adopted.

4. The President said that annex II to document DP/1983/L.2 contained a tentative work schedule proposed by the Secretariat for the consideration of the various items on the agenda throughout the week. He then announced certain adjustments to the work schedule decided on by the Bureau of the Governing Council and said that, if there was no objection, he would take it that the Council agreed to the schedule.

5. It was so decided.

COUNTRY AND INTERCOUNTRY PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS

(a) RESOURCES TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT FOR PROGRAMMING (DP/1983/59)

6. Mr. Brown (Deputy Administrator), introducing the note by the Administrator in document DP/1983/59, said that it indicated the general problems which the Governing Council was asked to note. By decision 80/30, the Governing Council had decided that if mobilization of resources fell short of the target for the third IPF cycle, there would be a flat across-the-board percentage reduction in the IPFs of all countries in supersession of any criteria that might interfere with the share of respective countries. The Administrator had been asked to make a realistic forecast of available resources and, in June 1981, the resident representatives had been told that 80 per cent of the illustrative IPFs should be taken into account for programming. The Administrator was now forecasting that only 55 per cent of the illustrative IPFs would be available. However, the programmes now before the Council were based on the earlier forecast of 80 per cent. Accordingly, he requested the Council to note that, in approving the programmes before it, it would be authorizing implementation of only up to 55 per cent of illustrative IPFs. It was also quite possible that a similar adjustment would have to be made in respect of the programmes presented at the May-June 1983 session, which were also being prepared on the basis of the 80 per cent forecast.
7. The President said that, if there were no comments, he would take it that the Council took note of the statement by the Deputy Administrator and the contents of the note by the Administrator (DP/1983/59).

8. It was so decided.

(b) TRENDS AND PROBLEMS IN THE COUNTRY PROGRAMMES (DP/1983/2 and Add.1)

9. Mr. WIESEBACH (Assistant Administrator and Director, Bureau for Programme Policy and Evaluation) said that the 25 country programmes currently before the Governing Council, together with the 74 country programmes submitted at the May 1982 special meeting and those expected to be presented at the thirteenth session of the Council, covered the bulk of UNDP-financed activities in the third programming cycle.

10. Document DP/1983/2 contained an analysis of the trends and problems in the country programmes proposed for approval at the current session. Twenty-three of the 25 programmes analysed had been formulated within the framework of a national plan or other economic programmes and the remaining two were based on national development objectives. The trend discerned in earlier years whereby Governments tended to align their country programmes to the IPF cycle rather than to their national plans was confirmed by the present analysis. Thus, the time-frames for some 90 per cent of the country programmes coincided with the IPF cycle. Governments had shown an obvious preference for synchronizing their country programmes with the programming cycle of UNDP. Moreover, 18 of the 25 countries had adopted continuous country programming, which would seem to indicate that the principle of continuous programming was beginning to take hold.

11. The trend towards increased co-ordination with other funds and programmes, multilateral as well as bilateral, had continued. In the past, such co-ordination had been aimed mainly at avoiding overlapping with and duplication of activities financed by other sources. Now Governments and resident representatives were also trying to ensure complementarity between UNDP-financed activities and those financed by other sources. The country programming exercise had aided in directing resources from other sources of external assistance to meet the needs of Governments. In the majority of the country programmes analysed, assistance from other sources would be co-ordinated with or complemented by other multilateral and bilateral assistance.

12. Finally, 11 of the 25 Governments presenting their country programmes for approval had augmented their IPF resources with government cost-sharing and, in Kuwait, all activities in the country programme would again be financed in that manner. In times of world-wide recession, with developing countries facing severe balance-of-payments and other financial constraints, Governments of those countries had chosen to channel a growing share of their own scarce resources through UNDP. That was a very heartening expression of confidence in the important role UNDP technical co-operation played in the developing world.
13. **Mr. SCHMID** (Austria) said that his delegation was heartened to hear that continuous country programming was beginning to take hold and that co-ordination of programmes had improved. He hoped those trends would continue in the future. It was interesting to note from document DP/1983/2/Add.1, annex VI, the extent to which global priorities were reflected in individual country programmes. His delegation felt that a number of Governments should take those global priorities more seriously than they seemed to be doing at present and, where appropriate, should reflect them fully in their country programmes.

14. **Mr. TAKASU** (Japan) emphasized the importance of co-ordinating UNDP-assisted activities with those carried out with assistance from bilateral and multilateral sources. Paragraph 14 of document DP/1983/2 gave examples of co-ordination efforts and his delegation would encourage both UNDP and Governments to seek to improve them. He wished to ask the Administrator why a similar examination had not been carried out with respect to other country programmes. Did that mean that there was no similar co-ordination? With regard to cost-sharing as reflected in, for example, paragraphs 20 and 21 of the same document, his delegation was encouraged by developments and wished merely to ask the Administrator why cost-sharing had been studied in only 11 of the 25 country programmes under consideration. He was pleased to learn from paragraph 25 that 17 of the country programmes being submitted to the Council comprised projects of a pre-investment nature or projects with a clearly identifiable pre-investment component. His delegation fully supported that development. With regard to the financial difficulties outlined in paragraph 17, his delegation agreed that Governments and the Administrator had to match the programmes with available resources and believed that more emphasis should be placed on ongoing activities in priority areas for development.

15. **Mr. ALBORNOZ** (Ecuador) said that the percentage in paragraph 21 of document DP/1983/2 representing Latin American cost-sharing was misleading because the country programme of only one Latin American country, Uruguay, had been examined. Cost-sharing was very important to Latin America because it was one way for countries to become donors, and his delegation proposed that statistics on contributions should reflect Government cost-sharing resources. In that regard, there were other inputs such as trust funds, administrative expenditures and office maintenance costs.

16. The role played by the resident representative in co-ordinating the UNDP-assisted programme with projects financed by bilateral and multilateral sources was most beneficial. With regard to pre-investment, the aim of UNDP was the transfer of technology to promote development, and his delegation was pleased to note that progress had been made in that regard. UNDP now not only identified possible projects but considered their feasibility and even provided advice on possible sources of financing, including the World Bank. That was an indication that UNDP was fulfilling its mandate.

17. **Mr. BOHNET** (Federal Republic of Germany) said that there seemed to be a correlation between the resources made available by Governments for cost-sharing and gross national product per capita. His delegation favoured efforts to increase the proportion of resources provided by national Governments.
18. The country programmes submitted for consideration fitted well into the development plans of the countries concerned. The concentration of UNDP aid in priority sectors would be the most effective way to use the Programme's scarce resources. The principal sector receiving UNDP assistance was transport and communications, followed by agriculture, planning and administration, and industry. It was important for UNDP to develop a clear view of sectoral priorities. That would facilitate UNDP's project work and strengthen its position in dealing with executing agencies. Country programmes would be improved as a result. The country programmes before the Governing Council reflected increased attention to global priorities, a development welcomed by his Government.

19. Co-operation between UNDP and bilateral donors in the preparation of country programmes could be improved in many cases, which would make the provision of aid more effective and thus benefit the recipient country. UNDP should also intensify its co-operation with the World Bank in the field of technical aid.

20. MR. GOMPERTZ (France) agreed that co-operation between UNDP and other sources of aid could be improved. His delegation wished to know whether the regional economic commissions played an important role in the preparation of country programmes. It appeared that projects varied considerably in size. It would be of interest to know whether there were any guidelines on the matter.

21. Mr. MI Guojun (China) said that the salient feature of the country programmes before the Council was the high level of Government cost-sharing. That reflected the efforts made by developing countries to overcome their economic problems. The programmes themselves reflected the development aims of the countries concerned.

22. Approximately one third of the funds requested under the country programmes before the Council were for agricultural development, with infrastructure forming the next largest sector. The development of administration, industry and natural resources also accounted for substantial amounts. The recipient countries regarded the development of their human resources as important, and wished to strengthen their economies through self-reliance and the promotion of technical co-operation.

23. An evaluation of earlier country programmes would facilitate the preparation of new country programmes and enable the executing agencies and UNDP to improve programme implementation. Such evaluations should be made use of systematically.

24. Mr. HARE (Canada) said that his country supported the aims of UNDP, its mandate, to provide aid, and its central funding role. The country programme system provided a valuable planning tool; nevertheless, its effectiveness could be improved by closer co-operation between UNDP and Governments, joint programming, increased government involvement in UNDP activities and greater participation by executing agencies in the approval of projects. The content and quality of country programmes varied considerably. It would be better if country programme documents could be standardized and contain more information on the aims and nature of each project contained in the programme and of any other projects being carried out in...
the country concerned. The approval procedure had to be improved so that country programmes were not merely presented as faits accomplis. Rather, country programmes should make a case for specific projects, and the Governing Council should take the appropriate decision. Country programme documents should also provide explanations of any drastic changes in comparison with earlier programmes. If such information and evaluations of past country programmes were provided to the Governing Council, it would be able to take more enlightened decisions.

25. Mr. KAABACHI (Tunisia) said that the information in document DP/1983/2 on cost-sharing demonstrated the importance attached by developing countries to UNDP. In particular, the four Arab States of Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Algeria and Yemen had provided high percentages of the total resources available for programming in their respective countries. It was clear that developing countries had responded very energetically to the appeal made by the developed countries to provide more funds themselves.

26. Mr. HUSAIN (Pakistan) said that he hoped that, as the resources available to UNDP increased, it would be possible for the Programme to raise the level of programme delivery. His delegation welcomed the close co-ordination between the Programme and other sources of aid, and trusted that it would be further increased. Although there had been a number of references in the Council to the desirability of reflecting global priorities in country programmes, ultimate responsibility for determining priorities lay with national Governments. His delegation agreed that the high level of Government cost-sharing indicated the importance which developing countries attached to UNDP.

27. Mr. WIESEBACH (Assistant Administrator and Director, Bureau for Programme Policy and Evaluation), replying to questions raised by members of the Council, said that instances of co-ordination of UNDP-assisted activities with those financed from other sources were listed in annex IV of document DP/1983/2/Add.1, in addition to paragraph 14 of document DP/1983/2. With regard to cost-sharing, all country programmes had been considered to see whether cost-sharing was possible, but certain countries with a relatively low per capita gross national product were not in a position to make significant contributions. In the case of Africa, for example, cost-sharing accounted for only 3 per cent of the total resources available for programming.

28. Concerning improved co-ordination between UNDP and other sources of aid, he said that the Council would appreciate that the Administrator could not oblige other donors to undertake joint programming; nevertheless, the comments on the subject by several members of the Council were welcome. Talks on co-ordination between UNDP and the World Bank had been held, and a joint committee would be established to consider the question in detail. The role of the regional economic commissions was limited by their regional perspective, although efforts were made to link national and regional programmes.
29. There was no specific size for projects, which could range from an individual grant amounting to a few thousand dollars to major undertakings involving millions of dollars. With respect to the evaluation of country programmes, the matter had been considered in the Intersessional Committee of the Whole. A central evaluation unit was to be established, which would enable country programmes to be evaluated systematically. Evaluations had, in fact, been carried out in the past, but without the benefit of formal machinery. It was clear that earlier evaluations had not been rigorous enough. Delegations should, however, bear in mind that it was difficult to assess the impact of country programmes, since they involved the interaction of many inputs. Dramatic progress in that area should not be expected.

30. Reference had been made to the format of country programmes, the information contained in them and the relationship between country programmes and their component elements. In the past UNDP had endeavoured to make country programmes as concise as possible, which precluded the provision of comprehensive information. If more detailed information was to be provided, there would obviously be a concomitant increase in the volume of documentation, and it might be necessary for the Governing Council to change its methods of work. The question was one for the Council itself to decide, but there would be no point in providing additional information if that merely provoked complaints about increased documentation.

(c) IMPLEMENTATION OF SELECTED COUNTRY PROGRAMMES

(d) CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL OF COUNTRY PROGRAMMES (INCLUDING REQUESTS FOR EXTENSIONS)

31. The PRESIDENT said that at the current session the Council had before it 25 country programmes and one regional programme. He drew attention to the tentative schedule of work for the special meeting (document DP/1983/L.2, annex II) in that connection and suggested that the Council should proceed region by region.

32. With respect to Africa, the Council had before it the 12 country programmes and one extension of a country programme (Benin) listed in document DP/1983/I. He invited the Acting Assistant Administrator of the Regional Bureau for Africa to introduce the various country programmes for the African countries that the Council had before it for approval and to report to the Council on the implementation of selected country programmes in Africa.

33. Mr. OLCESE (Acting Assistant Administrator, Regional Bureau for Africa) said that the Council had before it seven country programmes for Sahelian countries. For reasons beyond the control of UNDP, the country programme for Chad would not be submitted until the Governing Council's following session. At a meeting at Dakar in January 1981 attended by the resident representatives of the Sahelian countries and the Director of the Regional Bureau for Africa it had been decided that an endeavour should be made to submit the country programmes for all the countries of the Sahelian region to the Governing Council simultaneously and that five common
themes should be developed for those programmes. All the country programmes before
the Council covered the period 1983-1986. In the case of Cape Verde and Mauritania
it was the second country programme that was being submitted, and in the case of
the five remaining countries it was the third country programme. All the countries
in question were either least developed countries or, as in the case of Senegal and
Mauritania, countries that were regarded as such.

34. In accordance with the mandate given to it at the United Nations Conference on
the Least Developed Countries that had taken place at Paris in September 1981, UNDP
had assumed a major role in helping the Governments of the countries in question to
arrange donor conferences. The first donor conference held following the Paris
Conference had been the one for Cape Verde, which had been extremely successful.
The information provided in the reports on the sectoral missions sent to Cape Verde
to prepare for that donors conference had been used to some extent in formulating
that country's First National Development Plan (1982-1985) and in preparing the
country programme before the Council. As a result of a donors conference for Mali
held in December 1982 the Government of Mali had mobilized 50 per cent of the funds
required for financing new projects under its development plan. In the Niger the
situation had been complicated by the fact that the country's income from uranium
had declined, while costs had risen. A donor conference for the Niger was to take
place at the end of the current year or early in 1984. Gambia was also in the
process of preparing a round-table conference for potential donors, the date of
which had yet to be set.

35. The first of the five common themes selected for the country programmes of the
countries of the Sahelian region was self-sufficiency in food production. The
country programmes dealt with a number of projects in a wide range of areas in the
agriculture and fisheries sector. The second theme, water management, covered
projects on surface and groundwater development, irrigation, drinking-water supply,
hydrometeorological services development and rural water supply. The third theme,
improved utilization of the Sahelian environment, covered projects focusing on
anti-desertification measures, reforestation, dune fixation, construction of small
dams, physical planning and wildlife management. In the area of diversification of
the Sahelian economies, which was the fourth theme, emphasis had been placed on the
development of handicrafts, minerals exploration and industrial development
projects. The last of the five themes, human resources, concentrated on projects
in the fields of vocational training, the integration of women in development,
literacy programmes, assistance to the handicapped and reform of the educational
systems of the region. In the programming of all the projects to which he had just
referred, account had been taken of the contributions made by other funds
administered by UNDP, as well as of the assistance provided by the entire United
Nations system and through bilateral-aid programmes.

36. As a result of the fact that Sierra Leone had been included in the category of
least developed countries, an additional amount of $157,000 was available for the
financing of projects. The country programme for Sierra Leone placed emphasis on
the priorities of that country's five-year Economic and Social Development Plan
(1981-1985), and UNDP assistance had been concentrated in the area of agriculture.
An integrated agricultural development project aimed at increasing agricultural production in the northern province. The second major area upon which UNDP was focusing in Sierra Leone was that of development and public administration. Furthermore, UNDP would assist Sierra Leone in preparing a donor conference with a view to mobilizing resources for urgent development requirements.

37. He wished to draw to the Council's attention the fact that the Government of Nigeria was making a cost-sharing contribution of $9,150,000 in the context of its country programme.

38. The country programme for Ethiopia followed the Government's established priorities in agriculture and industry, emphasizing such essential areas as food production, power generation, mineral resources development, practical applications of science and technology, education and manpower training. While in the previous two country programmes UNDP had been requested to contribute to the development of as many sectors as possible, the Government had now decided to direct resources for new projects to the five priority sectors just mentioned in order to build a self-sustaining economy. The country programme devoted the largest single allocation of programmed resources - $23.6 million, or more than 32 per cent, covering nine ongoing and four new projects - to the agriculture, forestry and fisheries sector, the objective being to promote food self-sufficiency through increased productivity, the reduction of post-harvest losses, the development of irrigated agriculture and the development of new areas.

39. Industry was the second most important sector, with nearly 22 per cent of all allocated resources. The sectoral objectives were to increase industrial production, supply industrial inputs mainly to agriculture and create employment, through two ongoing and five new products which in the medium term would satisfy some basic needs and strengthen the link between industry and agriculture; UNDP would focus mainly on strengthening existing industrial plants, developing handicrafts and small- and medium-scale industry and preparing for future expansion of the sector. The education and employment sectors came under the broader category of human resources development; UNDP assistance would be geared to building up a corps of skilled manpower, promoting technical and vocational education and building an institutional capacity for assessing the country's manpower resources. The total allocation for the human resources development sector was $18.1 million, or nearly 25 per cent of programmed resources. The chief aim of projects in that sector was to render the educational system responsive to the country's development needs, prepare nationals for productive employment and improve productivity.

40. An important feature of the country programme for Ethiopia was the emphasis it placed on investment-oriented activities, and its implementation would stress new dimensions such as the use of national co-ordinators and institutions and government execution of projects.

41. UNDP had endeavoured throughout to co-ordinate its assistance with other multilateral and bilateral assistance in the region, notably with the World Bank.
42. Mr. TRAORE (Mali) said that the Acting Assistant Administrator of the Regional Bureau for Africa had rightly highlighted the points that were fundamental in the case of the Sahelian countries, including their precarious economic situation as least developed countries.

43. Mali and UNDP had established close co-operation, and pledges had been made that would cover 100 per cent of the needs outlined in the Mali country programme. It should be noted, however, that some projects could be implemented only if UNDP provided the necessary training. The resources available for programming had been reduced drastically, a particularly unfortunate development for the Sahelian economies. In the past some projects had been carried out in the Sahel thanks to UNDP pre-investment. If such investment was reduced, some projects would have to be deferred or abandoned altogether. Yet all of them were urgent. The Sahelian countries were anxious not only to have the proposed UNDP country programmes adopted in toto by the Governing Council but also to see provision made for further action as needed, so as not to jeopardize the implementation of any project.

44. Mali valued its close and frank co-operation with UNDP and the entire United Nations system, and admired the UNDP Administrator’s valiant efforts to convince those in the prosperous countries of their responsibilities towards their less fortunate brethren.

The meeting rose at 5.40 p.m.