GOVERNING COUNCIL

Special meeting

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 8th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 18 February 1983, at 10.30 a.m.

President: Mr. SLIM (Tunisia)

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The meeting was called to order at 10:45 a.m.

COUNTRY AND INTERCOUNTRY PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS (continued)

(b) TRENDS AND PROBLEMS IN THE COUNTRY PROGRAMMES (continued)

(c) IMPLEMENTATION OF SELECTED COUNTRY PROGRAMMES (continued)

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

(e) CONSIDERATION OF REGIONAL PROGRAMME (continued)

1. Mrs. BALLESTER (Observer for Cuba) thanked the Government of Canada for its offer to UNDP, which exceeded the target and set a good example to other countries to increase contributions in order to achieve the target of a 14 per cent annual growth rate. UNDP currently provided the best image of the United Nations and was the most important multilateral tool for development.

2. Cuba felt that, since UNDP resources were modest, results should be focused more on quality than on quantity. Country programmes should bear in mind the needs of the countries themselves and close co-ordination between UNDP and Governments was therefore required. Her delegation supported all the country programmes presented, including requests for extensions. Her delegation also supported the draft decision in document DP/1983/L.5, which was timely and humanitarian in nature.

3. The regional programme for Latin America and the Caribbean suffered from a lack of resources. It had been designed on the basis of resolutions by the General Assembly and the Governing Council and had been supplemented by proposals from an ECLA meeting which had set global targets. Unfortunately, despite its potential multiplier effect, both within and outside the region, the programme could not be fully implemented. However, her delegation remained optimistic and hoped that resources would become available. Latin America and the Caribbean were currently facing the severe economic crisis with courage and with concrete action. For example, the region had taken great strides with respect to cost-sharing, economic and technical co-operation among developing countries and the use of multilateral resources for pre-investment projects. Her delegation agreed that there must be coherence among the programmes for the various countries of the region. Peoples should be able to live in a world in which extreme poverty was eradicated.

4. Mr. MEYER (Mexico) said that the regional programme for Latin America and the Caribbean fully reflected the concerns of the region and was a pioneer programme for co-operation for development. It was regrettable, however, that limited resources meant that there would not be much leeway for implementation. As a result, the projects for regional and subregional integration should be given high priority and his delegation hoped that those for Central America and the Caribbean would not be reduced.
5. The programme for Uruguay was well structured and in line with that country’s priorities, and his delegation supported it.

6. Mr. GLAZER (United States of America) said, with respect to the country programmes submitted to the Governing Council, that his delegation was especially gratified that some of the countries were responding appropriately to the stipulations of decision 80/30 regarding approaching and achieving net contributor status, thus enabling more UNDP resources to be utilized for countries with greater economic needs.

7. His delegation was pleased to note the contribution of UNDP activities to the important area of training, as in the country programme for Papua New Guinea. It also noted the usefulness of the continuous programming approach, which was particularly appropriate in the case of a newly independent nation such as Vanuatu since it would allow for progressive adaptation of the programme to evolving national priorities.

8. Given the importance of evaluation to effective programming, his delegation hoped that continued information on programme and project evaluation would be made available to the Council in order to improve the quality of programme review, which was a responsibility of that body.

9. His delegation welcomed the assurance that UNDP would continue to exercise vigilance concerning UNDP-financed equipment components of programmes in accordance with Governing Council decisions on that subject. It was also pleased to note specific consideration of that subject in country programme development; in Uruguay, for example, discussions during programme formulation had produced agreement that programme emphases should include the elimination, to the greatest extent possible, of UNDP financing of equipment purchases.

10. His delegation also wished to reiterate its support for appropriate use of short-term consultants, as demonstrated in the country programme for Greece.

11. The United States endorsed the regional programme for Latin America and the Caribbean, which was designed to focus on key development priorities of the region, and supported the greater use of co-financing and supplementary financing mechanisms in order to mobilize additional resources for the programme over and above the third-cycle IPF.

12. Finally, his delegation commended the continuing efforts to co-ordinate UNDP activities with those of other multilateral and bilateral donors and to achieve complementarity. He noted particularly the complementarity of USAID and UNDP-assisted projects in agriculture and rural development in Yemen and the Sudan. Such co-ordination was crucial to the effective use of resources for development.
13. Mr. HARE (Canada) said that his delegation was pleased to note that the programme for Uruguay was based on an evaluation of the previous nine-year period and welcomed the use of short-term consultants.

14. With regard to the regional programme for Latin America and the Caribbean, his delegation supported the directions set out in paragraphs 21 to 33 of document DP/RLA/2. It would, however, have liked to see details of the tentative regional projects such as those recommended by the joint UNDP/FAO Working Group referred to in paragraphs 50 and 51. It would also have liked to know the possible financial implications of those projects. In any event, his delegation welcomed the co-ordination between UNDP and the specialized agencies.

15. Finally, his delegation believed that members of the Governing Council would have benefited from more information about the assessment of the 1977-1981 regional programme mentioned in paragraph 5.

16. Mr. MOSELEY (Barbados) said that his delegation noted with deep concern the serious effect of the resource situation on the level of programming for the third cycle and the critical implications for the country programmes of developing countries. Nevertheless, the Government of Barbados continued to attach great importance to UNDP as a major vehicle for multilateral technical co-operation. However, it was clear that that central role was now in jeopardy because of the resource situation. The country programmes submitted to the Council reflected the critical role played by UNDP assistance as a vital element in the implementation of the national development plans of developing countries. Accordingly, Barbados fully supported the country programmes submitted to the Council.

17. The regional programme for Latin America and the Caribbean had been prepared after consultations between Governments, regional and subregional institutions and executing agencies, and his delegation was particularly encouraged by that approach. Continued consultations between the Governments, the Regional Bureau, intergovernmental institutions and executing agencies in finalizing specific projects would ensure maximum responsiveness of the regional programme to the needs of all the countries of the region.

18. As a member of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Barbados considered the subregional framework as a primary frame of reference for the formulation of projects of special importance to the CARICOM countries. Subregional programming was critical if the regional programme was to accommodate fully the needs of those countries, especially in the promotion of TCDC activities and economic integration. The CARICOM countries had identified certain high priority areas for co-operation in the third cycle. He therefore emphasized the need for continued consultations, in which the CARICOM secretariat and relevant subregional institutions should be actively involved.

19. His delegation was also concerned that an adequate level of resources within the regional programme should be made available for the implementation of the subregional component, bearing in mind its importance to the development objectives...
of the region. The regional programme for Latin America and the Caribbean reflected the diversity of the region and the particular needs not only of the Caribbean, but also those of other areas. It highlighted the common goals and aspirations of the region as a whole and his delegation therefore hoped that it would receive the full support of the Governing Council.

20. Mr. TAKASU (Japan) said that his delegation was pleased to note that the regional programme for Latin America and the Caribbean had been prepared following consultations with Governments, regional and subregional institutions and agencies of the United Nations system. The orientation and the distribution of resources were well balanced, especially in view of the serious external payment problems of the region. It was a forward-looking and comprehensive regional programme and his delegation hoped that the characteristics of programming for regional co-operation would be taken into account in identifying and financing projects.

21. While his delegation agreed with the specifications given in paragraph 8 of document DP/RLA/2, it noted that subparagraph (b) stated that the regional programme should include only those activities which required effective joint action by at least three countries of the region as a prerequisite for the attainment of their objectives. It also stated that the projects should be based on a proposal by one or more countries, regional or subregional bodies, agencies of the United Nations system or other intergovernmental bodies. His delegation wondered whether that was in conformity with paragraph 1 of the consensus, which stated that proposals should be made by at least two Governments.

22. Finally, his delegation was pleased to note and support the growing instances of cost-sharing and hoped that relevant information would be reflected in future documents.

23. Mr. DE ROJAS (Venezuela) said that the May 1982 meeting of senior Government experts prior to the preparation of the regional programme for Latin America and the Caribbean had been extremely useful because it had made it possible to eliminate some projects in view of the need for austerity. The meeting had produced agreement on what was important in view of the meagre resources available and the work accomplished had been unprecedented in UNDP. Although it appeared that the project for the centre for development studies was not included, his delegation fully supported the programme.

24. Mr. ALBORNOZ (Ecuador) said that the regional programme for Latin America and the Caribbean met the needs of the region as a whole and reflected the increasing integration taking place there. There had been problems in the past owing to the continuation of old projects which failed to take account of changing needs, but following the rationalization initiated by the Assistant Administrator new and more relevant projects had been undertaken. Analysis of the projects carried out in the region had, however, starkly demonstrated the contrast between the region's needs, particularly in terms of projects promoting integration, and the resources available. Yet, despite the reduction in funds available, the regional programme...
remained an inspiring scheme of action for the common good. Projects such as those concerning the development of fisheries in the south-east Pacific and ANDEAN integration, and projects undertaken by CARICOM and by SELA to promote overall development in the region indicated the practical importance of UNDP for the region's aspirations.

25. The President of Ecuador had proposed to SELA and ECLA that a meeting be organized to seek solutions to the current serious economic crisis affecting South America. It was to be hoped that Governments could find additional resources to offset the shortage of UNDP resources, which was jeopardizing programmes of vast importance for the region. Cost-sharing arrangements were a positive development, and would no doubt continue. His delegation fully supported approval of the programmes for Latin America.

26. Mr. BAHADAN (Brazil) said that his delegation endorsed the observations made by the representatives of Venezuela and Ecuador. Brazil supported the regional programme for Latin America and the Caribbean.

27. Mr. BLANCO (Observer for Uruguay) said that his delegation was gratified by the support which had been expressed for the country programme for Uruguay. The proposal made by the Government of Ecuador to seek a solution to the economic crisis was welcome. Uruguay was committed to the development aims of the United Nations and fully supported UNDP. The Programme had respected the principle of national sovereignty while implementing its projects. The display of solidarity by Latin American Governments at a time of severe economic difficulties was commendable.

28. Mr. VECEGA (Assistant Administrator and Regional Director for Latin America), replying to questions raised by members of the Council, said that the Administrator had made great efforts to improve the quality of programme delivery, particularly in view of the reduction in resources. Evaluation of the regional programme took place on a continuous basis.

29. With regard to the increased use of short-term consultants and a decline in the purchase of equipment, he said that the Programme endeavoured to meet the needs of recipient countries in the most effective way. Equipment had been concentrated in those countries which were unable to supply it themselves. A list of projects under the intercountry programme had been distributed to the parties concerned.

30. Only some $37 million were available for programming under the regional programme out of an initial expectation of $57 million. Consultations were continuing in order to readjust priorities and to determine which projects would be executed. The task would be greatly facilitated if additional resources were found.
31. Projects under the regional programme could be proposed by any country, provided that they were endorsed by two others. Projects which were of concern to only two countries, for example the development of infrastructure in a border area, could also be proposed. Projects in any field could be considered, but had to be assessed in the light of the resources available.

32. Cost-sharing arrangements had been made for national projects, although it was to be hoped that they could be applied to regional projects. The figure for approved cost-sharing arrangements for the third cycle already exceeded $7.5 million, and it might be possible to double that figure for the regional programme alone. The preparation and implementation of programmes in the Caribbean were carried out in consultation with the CARICOM secretariat.

33. The PRESIDENT said that it was his understanding that the Council wished to approve the country programme for Uruguay (DP/CP/URU/3) for the duration of its programme period and within the limits of its illustrative indicative planning figure for the period 1982-1986, taking into account the balance of over-expenditure and under-expenditure of its 1977-1981 indicative planning figure.

34. It was so decided.

35. The PRESIDENT said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Council wished to take note with appreciation of the intercountry programmes for Latin America and the Caribbean for the third cycle, 1982-1986 (DP/RLA/2) and of the general arrangements for their implementation.

36. It was so decided.

37. The PRESIDENT said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Council wished to authorize the Administrator to proceed with appraisal and approval action on requests for UNDP assistance for projects falling within the outlines of each country and regional programme, in accordance with the decisions of the Governing Council that expenditures be kept in reasonable conformity with the relevant illustrative indicative planning figures (E/5543/Rev.1, para. 31), increased as appropriate with Government cost-sharing contributions, and always subject to the overriding requirement of containing expenditures within the financial resources available at any given time so as to preserve the financial integrity of the Programme.

38. If he heard no objection, he would also take it that the Council wished to request the Administrator, in the implementation of the above programmes and projects, to take into account the views expressed by the representatives of Governments.

39. It was so decided.
40. **Mr. HARE** (Canada) said that it was essential to have more information on country programmes in order to win the support of domestic public opinion and parliaments. His delegation endorsed the calls for greater cost-effectiveness and for increased co-ordination on a country-by-country basis. The deliberations which had taken place in the Council would be useful during consideration of country programming at the next session of the Intersessional Committee of the Whole.

41. Canada agreed that it was important to improve the quality of country programmes and the economic lot of the least-developed countries, without diluting the role of the Programme or the primacy of national Governments. Canada also agreed that development could and should be approached in a "UNDP way".

42. **Mr. WIESEBACH** (Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Programme Policy and Evaluation) said that a number of speakers had raised questions about the country programming process as a whole, especially the contents of country programme documents submitted to the Council for consideration. In that respect it was useful to review the arrangements for country programming made by the Council at its twenty-seventh and twenty-eighth sessions on the basis of two reports by the Administrator, documents DP/454 and DP/518, in which he had suggested revised country programming policies and procedures for the third programming cycle.

43. Document DP/454 was concerned with the shift in emphasis from programming by inputs to programming by objectives or continuous programming. That approach envisaged a dynamic and open-ended country programme synchronized with the national plan which would evolve in response to the Government's articulation of its own development programme and activities. A specific set of objectives to be served by the country programme had to be identified and a continuous review of programmes had to be carried out in terms of implementation of ongoing activities and an assessment of newly arising technical co-operation needs for which UNDP assistance could be made available. That approach had been specifically approved by the Council for the third programming cycle and was illustrated in a number of the reports before the Council.

44. In document DP/518, further details were provided about various aspects of country programming for the third cycle to facilitate the process of review and approval by the Council; the Administrator proposed the use of different formats for country programmes of $20 million or less and for larger programmes; whatever the size of the programme, however, a minimum of information had to be provided: information on the development priorities selected for UNDP assistance and how that assistance related to a Government's own efforts and its use of other external resources to achieve related objectives; information on specific UNDP assistance, including UNDP commitments continuing from the previous country programme; information on resources to be held in reserve for unforeseen activities arising from changes in the national plan or strategy or new priorities perceived by the Government. He had already noted, that because of programming limitations relating to the 55 per cent cut in programme delivery, much of that approach was somewhat theoretical and it might be difficult to finance even ongoing projects from reduced indicative planning figures.
45. It was difficult to provide more information on individual projects because of the limitation of the length of programme documents to eight pages for smaller country programmes and 24 pages for larger country programmes. Another very important source of information on the subject was the project-specific fact sheets distributed for all projects with a UNDP input of over $250,000. Although there were sometimes delays in the provision of those fact sheets, UNDP intended to take vigorous action to improve its record on that count.

46. On the question of continuous monitoring and review of country programmes, the Administrator had in the reports already mentioned recommended that periodic country programme reviews be undertaken by regional bureaux and that the regional bureaux should prepare annual progress reports on their programmes highlighting significant developments and giving their views on further implementation of projects. The Council had approved that proposal in 1981, and the first such report would be submitted to the Council at its thirtieth session.

47. One delegation had asked whether there was a policy in UNDP regarding the relative merits of concentrating resources on a few sectors or dispersing them over many sectors. The Administrator's programming instructions provided for a sectoral concentration of resources to maximize the impact of the indicative planning figure and to avoid spreading UNDP resources too thinly. There was a concentration of resources in a few sectors in many country programmes, especially those with small indicative planning figures such as the programmes for the Sahel countries.

48. The question of the extent to which global priorities were being taken into account in country programmes had been considered intensively by the Council at previous sessions. In 1981, the Council had requested the Administrator to ensure that, in the process of formulating country programmes, Governments were informed of the overall global concerns enunciated in intergovernmental fora, bearing in mind their prerogatives in preparing their own country programmes. The Administrator was systematically advising resident representatives to draw the attention of Governments to global concerns enunciated by global conferences or in important decisions of the General Assembly or other bodies. The holding of round-table meetings for least developed countries also provided an opportunity to review global priorities. As could be seen from document DP/1983/2, increased attention was being paid to global priorities as compared to previous years.

49. One delegation had asked why the health sector seemed to play a relatively minor role in the country programmes. The activities financed by WHO and UNICEF in the health sector and related areas were comparatively important; UNICEF was completely independently financed and the UNDP share in WHO projects was very small. Thus UNDP-financed assistance in the health sector was often complementary to assistance financed by WHO and UNICEF; moreover, WHO and UNDP had embarked on a joint evaluation of primary health sector projects and a joint report would be submitted to the Council.
50. On the question whether the large number of missions sent to certain countries was really necessary for programming UNDP resources, he said that the matter could be greatly influenced by the recipient Government. Under the UNDP consensus, the country programming exercise should be undertaken by the Government with the assistance at an appropriate stage of representatives of the United Nations system, under the leadership of the resident representative. In practice, the number of missions had to be decided in each case by the Government and resident representative. It was difficult to draw up general rules about the number of missions needed to prepare a country programme. Clearly, however, restraint must be exercised so as not to overload the Government or the field establishment.

51. Attention had been drawn to an apparent discrepancy between paragraph 8 of the fifth country programme for Algeria (DP/CP/ALG/4) and annex IV, column 3, of document DP/1983/2/Add.1. The discrepancy probably resulted from the rendering into French of the paragraph in the annex, which had been intended only to convey the nature of the problem without changing the substance of the country programme.

52. The President said that if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Council wished to take note with appreciation of the report by the Administrator on trends and problems in the country programmes (document DP/1983/2 and Add.1) and the comments made thereon by delegations.

53. It was so decided.

54. Mr. Zaanouni (Assistant Administrator and Regional Director of the Regional Bureau for Arab States) said that he had been asked whether UNDP intended to finance a training programme for 500,000 refugees in the Sudan and whether there would be implications for the resources allocated to the Sudan. UNDP did not intend to finance the training programme; the programme was a national programme which the Government of the Sudan intended to implement with its own resources and other resources. UNDP assistance was limited to strengthening the administrative services of the Government of the Sudan. It would also finance the establishment of the six pilot training centres.

55. A question had been asked about the evaluation of projects for Yemen. He had ascertained that all projects, without exception, had been the subject of tripartite consideration between representatives of the Government, UNDP and the executing agency before the approval of the country programme for 1983-1986. Ten important projects had been evaluated in depth in the two years preceding the finalization of the country programme. Some projects which were being financed by cost-sharing with donor countries had also been evaluated at the expense of those countries. As was pointed out in the note by the Administrator on the third country programme for Yemen (DP/CP/YEM/NOTE/3), a critical review of all ongoing UNDP-assisted projects for Yemen had been jointly undertaken by the Government and UNDP in mid-1981 to further facilitate the preparation of the third country programme.

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56. It had been asked whether the departure of Sudanese personnel working on UNDP projects, especially as a result of emigration to Saudi Arabia, was likely to affect the success of those projects. Not all the projects for the Sudan were seriously affected by that exodus, although it did exist and affected some projects for North Sudan in some degree; the projects for the southern part of the country were not affected at all. The Government of the Sudan was aware of the problem; a report had been produced reviewing all UNDP activities and making recommendations and suggestions which were being implemented; that report had been prepared jointly by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning and an international consultant recruited by UNDP.

57. There was indeed a discrepancy in the figure of $246.3 million quoted in paragraph 7 of the country programme for Saudi Arabia (DP/CP/SAU/3) and the figure of $197 million mentioned in annex 1. The second figure was correct, because the annex was more recent and the appropriate correction had not been made in the main text of the country programme. Even the corrected figure might be superseded because estimates of cost-sharing and funds-in-trust arrangements for Saudi Arabia were continually changing and the Government of Saudi Arabia had decided to convert a number of projects from trust funds to cost-sharing.

58. He had been asked to provide more details about certain programmes, especially the country programme for the Sudan, and about related expenditure. The preparation of country programmes in general and the country programme for the Sudan in particular had been carried out in accordance with the Council's decision at its twenty-seventh session that country programmes should be based on programming by objectives. The five country programmes for Arab States showed how the distribution by objectives varied in each case. The Regional Bureau had been concerned to abide by the Council's decision and stress objectives rather than expenditure. Further information could, however, be provided to interested delegations.

59. The Council would note that four of the five country programmes for Arab States - those for Algeria, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Yemen - would not give rise to major financial difficulties since they were to be totally or partially financed through cost-sharing with the beneficiary countries or third countries. He was very concerned about the financing of the country programme for the Sudan and feared that, if additional resources were not found over the following two years, notably from third countries, it might be necessary to terminate some projects and therefore lose the benefits gained from the first phase of those projects. He appealed to donor countries to pay special attention to the case of the Sudan and find a solution to that problem.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.