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SUPPORT

PROGRAMME PLANNING  
COUNTRY AND INTERCOUNTRY PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS

Implementation of selected country programmes in the Arab States region, 1984

Report of the Administrator

Summary

Country programme reviews were held in 1984 in 7 of the 20 countries of the Arab States region.

Adjustments continued to be made to meet reduced funding levels. Changes concerned funding arrangements, execution modalities and the functional emphasis of IPF-funded project and programme components.

More specifically, Governments assumed greater responsibility for local cost components through contributions in kind or in cash. In many more cases, Governments shifted to the use of short-term experts or directly recruited long-term experts identified as suitable by the United Nations system.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has also continued its dialogue with Governments of the region and its agency partners on new directions for programmes in the light of changing requirements of countries. As a result of this exercise there has been a variety of new programme and project requests, particularly in middle-income and oil-exporting countries.

Three of the five least developed countries (LDCs) in the region were severely affected by drought conditions, necessitating a shift in emphasis of the programme. In the Sudan, which suffered greatly, UNDP's efforts concentrated first on the co-ordination of emergency drought relief assistance provided by the United Nations system and bilateral donors. UNDP will now focus on the rehabilitation of the displaced and refugees.

## I. BACKGROUND

### A. Annual reviews

1. In 1984, formal country programme reviews were held in 7 of the 20 countries of the Arab States region. The countries were Kuwait, Morocco, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Yemen. Together with the countries which held formal reviews in 1983, this brings the total country programme reviews to 14 over a two-year period. Jordan and Somalia postponed their reviews to 1985, while the resident representatives reported extensively on the status of the country programmes of the remaining six countries (Oman, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Sudan and Djibouti).

2. In Somalia, the originally planned review exercise was replaced by the first technical co-operation assessment mission jointly organized by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank under UNDP's leadership in December 1984. The mission reviewed technical co-operation projects and programmes funded by the United Nations system and the World Bank, as well as those funded under bilateral agreements. The mission aimed to help the Government and bilateral and multilateral organizations to streamline and rationalize their programmes, which include approximately 200 ongoing projects. This mission was one of many new or reinforced forms of close co-operation between UNDP and the World Bank.

3. The seven reviews held in 1984 consisted of a dialogue between the UNDP field office and the verity co-ordinating authorities of the Government concerned, in which local United Nations agency representatives and staff from sectoral ministries participated. In the case of Yemen, bilateral donors were invited too, and they responded positively to this invitation and to subsequent efforts of better co-ordination between the Government and the donor community.

4. In some countries, namely Morocco, Egypt and Yemen, the resident representatives prepared for the attention of the Government an issue paper providing guidance as to how the sectoral and project reviews should be conducted. In Saudi Arabia and Egypt, the review was preceded by a series of selected project evaluations and tripartite review meetings of all ongoing projects.

5. The present report is based on the correspondence between resident representatives and UNDP headquarters and the reports received from resident representatives upon completion of the reviews. In 1984, a senior staff member of UNDP headquarters was able to take part in only one review, that of the Syrian Arab Republic.

### B. Selection of countries and events

6. The countries covered by this report can be considered representative of the four subregions of the Arab world (North Africa: Morocco, Egypt; Middle East: Lebanon, Syrian Arab Republic; Gulf countries: Saudi Arabia, Kuwait; least developed countries (LDCs): Yemen, Somalia).

7. The food crisis in Africa south of the Sahara affected three countries in the Arab States region, namely, the Sudan, Djibouti and Somalia. In the Sudan, the situation was even further aggravated by the influx of refugees from Ethiopia during the latter part of the year.

C. General trends in country programme implementation

8. In both oil-exporting and non-oil-exporting countries, the shift continued from a policy of economic expansion to policies focused on better utilization of existing capacities and consolidation of economic gains during the 1970s. Those policies found their reflection in adjustments in ongoing country programmes. In Morocco, a non-oil-exporting middle-income-level country, the resident representative initiated a new programme theme: the maintenance of existing investments and post-investment strategies. Since early 1984, UNDP, in collaboration with six major United Nations agencies and the World Bank, has been advising the Government on the reorientation of its policies and institutional managerial arrangements with regard to the maintenance of medical and scientific research equipment, agricultural and road transport equipment, and mining and industrial machinery as well as such infrastructural facilities as ports and roads. Four ongoing indicative planning figure (IPF)-funded projects have been redesigned in full agreement with the respective executing agency to meet immediate technical assistance needs and to lay the ground for future programming.

9. The situation in Saudi Arabia demanded quite a different adjustment. The decline in oil revenue led the Government to a major fiscal adjustment and review of sectoral priorities. Consequently, the country programme was reviewed as a whole and on a project-by-project basis in order to realign it with the Government's changes in developmental priorities. All ongoing projects were reviewed in terms of their contribution to an effective transfer of technology, the institution-building process, the promotion of high-level and middle-level managerial personnel and the training of national technical staff. In view of the Government's shift of emphasis to enhanced human resources development, UNDP-assisted projects, while not neglecting elements such as appropriate technological transfer and institution-building, will in the future pay greater attention to training national staff for managerial as well as technical positions. Although the Government's budgetary stringency measures and the reduced IPF level did not allow for the programme to attain the size originally foreseen at the beginning of the country programme in 1983, financial projections show that the programme has still grown from \$6.7 million in 1983 to \$7.6 million in 1984. For 1985 and 1986 the total programme (IPF plus Government cost-sharing) is anticipated to reach \$19.7 million and \$23.4 million, respectively.

10. This programme growth has been achieved because a number of projects which initially had not been included in the country programme were approved and implemented. In addition, the financing arrangements for a number of projects of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) were converted from funds-in-trust

to UNDP cost-sharing. This has resulted in unified financial procedures on the part of the Government in its operational activities with the United Nations system and allowed for better monitoring, effective evaluation and a reduction in administrative costs.

11. In Egypt, the country programme was adjusted to ensure that the operational activities of UNDP and the United Nations system continued to meet the country's technical co-operation requirements. In this process, the optimum utilization of scarce foreign exchange resources as well as national and financial resources was taken into account. In particular, new and more cost-effective modalities were chosen and savings in projects resulting from fluctuations in costing of UNDP inputs or owing to unexpected availability of assistance from bilateral or other sources were reprogrammed to finance priority projects.

12. More specifically, these adjustments resulted in only five of 45 ongoing projects using long-term experts and in only those fields where no qualified and experienced national specialists were available. Also, administrative support costs, often paid for in the past against the UNDP contribution, are increasingly being paid by the implementing ministries, thus saving foreign currency for indispensable external inputs such as consultancies, equipment and fellowships. Occasionally, national consultants, financed by UNDP, are used for very specific, ad hoc short-term assignments. The bulk of UNDP-provided inputs is for short-term consultants and training of national staff in highly specialized fields and the importation of equipment and supplies which are assessed to contribute to an accelerated solution of existing problems and which were not yet known and applied in the country. In other words, the UNDP programme has evolved around two main themes - the transfer of technology and the training of specialized national manpower.

13. It is expected that the Government will further develop ways and means to use judiciously the foreign currency contribution by UNDP and to finance all inputs which can be paid for in local currency either through government cost-sharing or government contributions in cash.

14. Government execution has been used so far for five projects, of which three are completed. This modality of execution was employed in cases where the technical and professional tasks had to be entrusted to consultancy firms and where government execution reduced the managerial and administrative work-load for the UNDP field office and concerned government authorities.

15. In Yemen, one of the five LDCs in the region, substantial inflow of external aid has created an urgent need for enhanced aid co-ordination. The Government has opted against the round-table mechanism as such, since fund-raising efforts through bilateral channels have been very successful. However, the Central Planning Organization (CPO) has requested UNDP assistance for the training of its staff in project design, monitoring and evaluation. Furthermore, CPO actively supports the resident representative's co-ordinating role, which extends in Yemen beyond the United Nations system's operational activities and includes assistance provided by bilateral donors.

16. The co-ordination is carried out within the framework of the second five-year plan (1982-1986) on a sectoral basis. It is conducted in such a way that overlap and duplication can be avoided, and commitments against the IPF-funds, which were made at the beginning of the third cycle on the basis of the 100 per cent allocation, can be shifted to other sources of funding, that is, cost-sharing or parallel funding. This would allow the UNDP programme to regain its flexibility and IPF funds to serve as seed money for projects which will lead the country into its third five-year planning period coinciding with the fourth IPF programme cycle.

17. The above countries were described at some length because they can be considered as a cross-section of the four subregions in substantive as well as procedural terms.

## II. IMPLEMENTATION OF SELECTED COUNTRY PROGRAMMES

### A. Changes in priorities

18. Three countries on the African continent, the Sudan, Somalia and Djibouti, were affected to various degrees by the present drought, with the Sudan being the hardest hit. Under the changing emergency conditions, many ongoing and planned development activities assisted by UNDP had to be reoriented. The main emphasis of UNDP-funded projects in the north of the country will be rehabilitation and long-term drought relief of the displaced as well as of refugees, while in the south the decentralization into three separate regions will have to be more adequately reflected. By the end of 1984 steps were being taken in the Sudan to initiate a package of rehabilitation-cum-development projects related to the drought emergency funded from the IPF, the United Nations Emergency Operation Trust Fund (UNEOTF) and the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office (UNSO). Efforts are now under way also to draw upon Special Programme Resources (SPR) of UNDP and resources of the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) for the same purpose. The adjustments being made to the UNDP programme as a result of this concerted effort will be discussed at a country programme review scheduled for May 1985. At the time of writing, preparations were being completed in respect of a donor workshop to discuss the rehabilitation and development needs of Darfur region, one of the worst-affected areas in the Sudan. If the workshop proves fruitful, similar initiatives may be taken for other regions affected by the drought emergency in the north of the country.

19. In Somalia, assistance provided over the last eight years has been responsive to many of the country's needs for external aid, but at the same time has strained the Government's co-ordinating and monitoring ability to such a degree that the Government requested UNDP to undertake an assessment of technical co-operation needs. A joint UNDP/World Bank mission, the first of its kind under UNDP leadership, visited the country in December 1984. The report will provide a valuable inventory of all ongoing technical co-operation activities and recommendations as to how future externally supported projects and programmes can better serve and strengthen the Government's overall development efforts.

20. In Lebanon, the difficult political and security situation continued to have a major impact on the delivery of programmed UNDP assistance. The "Evacuation" Phase V declared by the United Nations Security Co-ordinator in early 1984 caused the departure of experts and consultants of the United Nations system and prompted the Administrator of UNDP to suspend all UNDP programmes temporarily on 15 February 1984.

21. Subsequently, two projects, executed by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) close to Tripoli, were excepted from the suspension of programme implementation, and later on the implementation of fellowships outside Lebanon and some urgent short-term consultancy missions and a sub-contract were authorized. In late 1984, a moderate expansion of UNDP activities took place, although long-term experts are still not permitted to reside in the Greater Beirut area. As a consequence of this overall situation, delivery of technical assistance to Lebanon by UNDP declined from \$3,025,000 in 1982 to \$1,214,000 in 1983 and to an estimated \$660,000 in 1984. These figures exclude cost-sharing contributions.

22. Despite the fact that delivery fell considerably short of expectations, UNDP projects retained in general the originally attributed relevance within the basic principles of the Government's economic policy, as exemplified by the project Improvement of Olive Culture LEB/79/009. This FAO-executed project produced 70,000 new selected plants in seven months instead of in the usual three years, and led to olive production three years after plantation instead of after six years. The total UNDP contribution to this project is \$223,000 with \$150,000 of government cost-sharing.

#### B. Overview of programme implementation and trends

23. Provisional figures on 1984 programme delivery show that 83 per cent of the approved IPF resources were spent. For approved cost-sharing funds the expenditure rate was 74 per cent. This represents an increase of 2 percentage points for IPF delivery, and an increase of 4 percentage points for cost-sharing compared to the 1983 delivery. However, in absolute terms the 1984 IPF expenditures were 21 per cent lower than in 1983, and expenditures against cost-sharing contributions 7 per cent lower, reflecting the import of the reduction of IPF allocations to a 55 per cent level. IPF expenditures in 1984 were also negatively affected by the situation in Lebanon and Iraq, and by a major outstanding government cost-sharing contribution in Yemen which gave a one-time credit to the IPF. On a country-by-country basis delivery rates were very satisfying, with Djibouti, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman and Somalia having delivered 91, 96, 95, 94, 88 and 86 per cent of their respective combined IPF and cost-sharing programmes.

24. Improved project design, monitoring and evaluation remained foremost on the mind of the staff of the Regional Bureau for Arab States (RBAS) at headquarters and in the field. In October 1984, a first training workshop for senior local programme staff in 13 field offices was organized by RBAS in collaboration with the Training Section of UNDP. Other field offices, for example, in Morocco, continued with locally-organized training courses mainly for government officials on project design and formulation issues. While it is too early to assess the effect of such training, the usefulness for in-service training has been recognized by staff at all levels.

25. In 1984, 22 in-depth project evaluations were carried out, bringing the total of RBAS countries which evaluated projects according to the enhanced evaluations procedures to 12. In addition, a whole series of internal evaluations were undertaken. RBAS organized, in co-operation with the Central Evaluation Office of UNDP, a review of all the 1983 evaluations. Findings and recommendations going beyond the projects immediately concerned were shared through the evaluation co-ordinator network with all RBAS professional staff. For 1985, a review of follow-up action on evaluation carried out in 1983 and early 1984 is foreseen.

26. A major programme theme was activities of technical co-operation among developing countries (TCDC) in the Arab, Latin American and Caribbean and Asian regions. Exchanges of experiences were initiated in selected fields, including plant genetic research and development, remote sensing, computer software development and atomic energy research. Many of these initiatives, however, will see their full-scale follow-up only in 1985.

27. Another theme which was actively pursued both at country programme and regional programme levels was the enhanced co-operation between UNDP and the World Bank. Apart from improved exchange of information, co-operation at the project and programme level was reinforced in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, the Syrian Arab Republic, Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Democratic Yemen. RBAS and the concerned regional departments of the Bank held a high-level, two-day meeting in October 1984 with a view to expanding collaboration in the Arab States region. Agreement was reached on procedures for the improved sharing of information and mutual consultation at early stages of the programming processes of the two organizations. Resident representatives coming for briefings at headquarters have also included discussions with the respective Bank departments, and missions of Bank staff have been advised to seek an enhanced exchange of views and co-operation with resident representatives and their staff.

28. With regard to the regional programme, the adjustment process necessary to realign projects with the priorities approved for the regional programme by the Governing Council in June 1983 was almost completed. Commitments for the whole cycle stand at \$34.5 million as against \$41.3 million available for programming, and delivery rose from \$6.7 million in 1983 to \$7.9 million in 1984.

### C. Factors affecting programme implementation

29. A number of countries were seriously affected by events outside the control of UNDP and its government counterparts. Three countries, Lebanon, Iraq and the Sudan, faced political and security problems which hampered programme implementation. The problems of the Sudan were further deepened by drought and famine.

30. National budgetary cut-backs in many Gulf countries remained in force and continued to influence negatively the approval of new projects with major government cost-sharing contributions. An enhanced presence of UNDP professional staff financed against extrabudgetary resources, however, greatly facilitated the contacts with government authorities, which should result in a reversal of the overall trend.

D. Completed projects

31. The year 1984 saw the financial completion of 175 projects, some of which were already completed in operational terms. Below are some examples of results and achievements.

1. Technical Teachers Training Institute (TTTI) - (EGY/71/592)

32. About 300 instructors from full-time courses and approximately 120 from in-service afternoon courses in nine engineering trades covering mechanical, electrical and electronics production and maintenance graduate from TTTI each year. This covers the entire national requirement for workshop instructors in these trades for both wastage replacement and expansion in the industrial trade schools and technical institutes.

2. Central Metallurgical Research and Development Institute (CMRDI)  
(Phase II) - (EGY/72/016)

33. The Institute is now well equipped with pilot plant facilities provided by the project for beneficiation, extractive metallurgy, melting and casting and metal working. In addition, CMRDI is now staffed by competent scientists who were not only trained abroad but also received on-the-job training under the guidance of experts from the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). The Institute is currently executing 17 projects sponsored by industry and foreign agencies aiming at the evaluation and utilization of local ores, transfer of technology, and quality and process improvement. The Institute is also serving all metallurgical companies in addition to some chemical, oil and engineering companies. The value of contracts has increased from a couple of thousand Egyptian pounds a few years ago to more than half a million Egyptian pounds.

3. Assistance to the Department of Lands and Surveys - (JOR/75/013)

34. The project has contributed to the introduction of modern computation systems and technical know-how within the cadastral section of the Department of Lands and Surveys. In addition, specialized measuring teams have been trained in triangulation within an overall network, in traverse precision networks and in detailed measurements. The introduction of modern techniques and equipment has improved the speed and flexibility with which the Department is now responding to ever-increasing demands from both governmental and non-governmental sectors.

4. Range Management and Stabilization of Nomadic Sheep Husbandry  
(JOR/79/010)

35. The project provided technical assistance support to a project of the World Food Programme (WFP) in the field of range, fodder and sheep production management. The project has also demonstrated to the farmers the value of introducing forage in the traditional rotation and has shown that their incomes can be stabilized through an integrated farming system.



5. Malaria Control - (OMA/81/010)

36. This project has organized overall malaria control system (MCS) services and activities, and has led to the progressive expansion of anti-malaria operations and the building of the MCS headquarters at Shinas, Masana's, Yankul, Mudaibi, Mintrib and Rustaq. Two more MCS headquarters will be completed by the end of 1984 at Wadi Bani Rawahr and Ibra.

6. Improvement of Meat and Milk Yield of Chami Cattle and Goats (SYR/77/007)

37. The objective of this project was to provide for the establishment and implementation of a national breeding programme designed to conserve and improve the indigenous Chami cattle and goats. A nucleus stock of Chami cattle and Chami goats at three Government farms has been established and the required breeding and research work has been initiated. The continued expansion of the breed improvement programme for cattle and goats should result in greater milk production and increased rural incomes in the Syrian Arab Republic.

7. Assistance to the Development of Apiculture - (TUN/75/005)

38. An extensive programme of research, training and bee colony production has enabled Tunisia to become self-sufficient in honey and beeswax, to improve agricultural production and to increase the earnings of small farmers by some \$600 a year.

E. Additional resources for the implementation of country programmes

39. The follow-up to the Djibouti donors' round-table conference held in November 1983 has been substantial. For instance, a World Bank/UNDP/Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and Italian funding package was successfully negotiated for geothermal energy exploration. In addition, some projects were financed by UNEOTF. It is estimated that of all the projects which had been submitted to the round-table conference some projects totalling approximately \$60 million have found funding from either bilateral or multilateral sources.

40. Similarly, the Sudan, Yemen, Democratic Yemen and Somalia received emergency assistance from UNEOTF for priority rehabilitation and relief projects for a total of \$2.5 million.

41. The co-operation which began in 1983 between UNDP and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was continued. A regional adviser to the Governments of Somalia and the Sudan on the integration of current or planned assistance programmes for national and refugee programmes took up his duties in mid-1984. Another project will provide for access to safe drinking water by establishing an effective and efficient water point maintenance unit capable of repairing or rehabilitating boreholes in an area with a population of approximately 400,000. Another project on road maintenance is being finalized.

42. During the preparation for the Second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa (ICARA II), a whole series of projects were identified for Somalia, the Sudan and Djibouti for which RBAS is actively seeking non-IPF funding.

43. World Bank loan funds which were channelled through UNDP as government cost-sharing for urgently required technical assistance have been another additional funding source.