



**Governing Council
of the
United Nations
Development Programme**

Distr.
GENERAL

DP/1986/16
7 April 1986

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Thirty-third session
2-27 June 1986, Geneva
Item 4 (b) of the provisional agenda

P O L I C Y

IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS ADOPTED BY THE GOVERNING COUNCIL
AT PREVIOUS SESSIONS

Measures to promote better understanding of the role and activities
of UNDP and of the resource needs of the Programme

INFORMATION SUPPORT PROJECTS FOR THE INTERNATIONAL
DRINKING WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION DECADE AND
TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Note by the Administrator

Summary

By its decision 85/8, the Governing Council approved 1986 funding from Special Programme Resources to continue information support projects for the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade and for Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries. As requested in paragraph 3 of that decision, this paper presents the Administrator's recommendations for those projects for 1987 and subsequent years.

Introduction

1. Governing Council decision 83/15 of June 1983 authorized the use of Special Programme Resources for information support of the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade (IDWSSD) and of Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries (TCDC). Pending the allocation of resources for the fourth cycle, the Governing Council extended funding for continuation of these two projects in 1986 in its decision 85/8 of June 1985. This paper responds to the request in paragraph 3 of that decision for the Administrator to present recommendations for allocations covering 1987 and subsequent years.

I. INTERNATIONAL DRINKING WATER AND SANITATION DECADE

2. In 1985, at the mid-point of the Decade, the Secretary-General reported that, despite encouraging progress to date, "most of the enormous task of providing water supply and sanitation services to the unserved still lies ahead." Among actions needed for the remainder of the Decade, he called for continuation of "public information efforts in order to raise public consciousness concerning the critical needs for water supply and sanitation in developing countries and to generate public support for national and international efforts during the second half of the Decade."^{1/}

3. With funds allocated from Special Programme Resources, UNDP operates a project of information support for the Decade. The objectives of the project are to build, sustain and augment support for the attainment of Decade goals among key Decade participants and identified groups whose understanding and action have influence on the success of drinking water/sanitation programmes in developing countries. In particular, the project works on:

(a) Information support, by providing tailored information for selected Decade audiences, especially decision-makers and planners, on such topics as sources of financing, development of technologies, human resources development, and integrated multisectoral planning;

(b) Programme development, by helping promote new programme approaches concerning, for example, women's roles, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and communication and community participation in the Decade;

(c) Resource mobilization, by seeking to raise the interest and encourage the participation of donors in the Decade generally and in specific programmes.

4. In these functions, the project is a principal advocate, actor and co-ordinator in information support for Decade objectives. It works with existing international and national structures for the Decade, including the UNDP-chaired inter-agency Steering Committee for Co-operative Action and its

information task force, resident representatives and United Nations system country staff, and national action committees. It also reaches out to wider circles - to donor, governmental, non-governmental and media groups that are, or should be, involved in the Decade.

5. Information support activities by the project have included the preparation of a range of print materials for selected audiences, as well as posters and film; the organization of basic data, interviews and country reportage missions for magazines, newspapers, development journals and other media; and participation in seminars and workshops that help to build wider understanding of the Decade and exchange information and experience.

6. A main information vehicle for the Decade is the quarterly newsletter Decade Watch, which is researched, written, produced and disseminated by this project. Its Arabic, English, French, and Spanish editions reach a total of 13,000 selected recipients in all regions. A recent reader survey, which obtained some evaluation and guidance regarding the newsletter shows that it is well received (75 per cent of respondents rate it "very good") and well used by the respondents, not only for their information but also as a tool in their work. Respondents indicate that they share their copies with up to 20 other readers. Readers' suggestions from the survey are being carried out as much as possible within available resources.

7. In early years, it was essential to concentrate the information efforts of the project on consciousness-raising about why the Decade was necessary, what it sought to accomplish, and how this could be done. While it is still necessary to build such basic awareness in some quarters, in recent years the information programme has also been conveying many quite specific messages: about key trends, issues and country actions; about breakthroughs being achieved and new approaches being adopted; and about experience gained and its replicability.

8. One example of this evolution can be seen in film. The original Decade theme film, "Journey for Survival", graphically shows that lack of pure water is a cause of widespread suffering, and that it is unnecessary. The film has been used very widely (over 200 prints in seven languages are in circulation in 125 countries), has received numerous awards, and remains effective with audiences needing an introduction to the Decade. A new Decade film now being planned will take a different, pin-pointed approach. It will document how villages in one African country achieved strong community participation, including women's involvement, in both the planning and implementation of water supply programmes, and how other villages and neighbouring countries are profiting from the lessons learned. The project is advising the producers of this new film, which is being jointly financed by the project and two divisions of USAID.

9. Programme development activities involving the project have also evolved in response to changing conditions. In earlier years, the project prepared original concept papers and guidelines regarding communication and community participation, enhanced involvement of women, and action by indigenous non-governmental organizations in the Decade. As a result, the inter-agency Steering Committee, its individual members and numerous Governments and NGOs are integrating these concepts as action elements in Decade programmes wherever possible. The project now continues to help promote awareness and acceptance of these essential elements and of the new techniques of planning and implementation they require.

10. One example is the work of the project with indigenous NGOs. The project helped prepare and conduct structured consultations among selected national NGOs, Government units and donors in four south Asian countries to encourage collaboration among them and improve NGO delivery capacities for national Decade programmes. As a result, national NGO Decade Service structures are being established in these countries to profile NGO needs and capabilities, develop co-operative projects, match projects with donors, and train national NGO operatives in community education, project planning and management. This project has provided some initial funding for institution-building of these services.

11. An example of the results is that the NGO Decade Service in one country is now managing a health education programme under a contract with United Kingdom bilateral aid. It also serves on the steering group of a major nationwide water supply programme, involving USAID as bilateral partner, and is itself assisted by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and an NGO consortium from the United States as well as by UNDP. The NGO Decade Service in another country has been located within the Government-sponsored structure for social services co-ordination, and has attracted additional financing by NGOs from the Federal Republic of Germany and the United States.

12. Resource mobilization for the Decade is supported by the project both in the general sense and for specific purposes. For example, to support general Decade resource mobilization in donor countries, the project has provided thousands of extra copies of its materials, as requested, for incorporation in development education programmes; it has forwarded suggestions of projects that donor NGOs might sponsor; and it has furnished ideas and advice for Decade fund-raising campaigns by donor NGOs. As regards specific purposes, the project helped to attract and negotiate domestic and external funding for national NGO services and programmes as described above; it generated the initial bilateral interest in funding the UNDP/bilateral interregional project on the promotion of women's involvement (INT/83/003); and it produced a publication for the latter project to use in reporting to donors and stimulating further support. In addition to such direct involvement in resource mobilization, the entire information effort of the project is, of course, aimed at building and sustaining support, including financial support, for Decade programmes and activities.

13. The Administrator considers that the project has demonstrated its value in a number of ways, as documented above. He also concludes that similar activities, adapted to changing circumstances, as in recent years, will be required during the balance of IDWSSD, i.e. 1987 through 1990. In the coming period, the project will particularly seek the dissemination, by all feasible means and as widely as possible, of the expected findings from interregional research on water supply handpumps suited for village-level operation and maintenance (VLOM) and on low-cost sanitation technologies. These affordable and manageable solutions will need to be known by audiences numbering in the hundreds of millions, especially among unserved rural populations. Such breakthroughs that make appropriate hardware more widely available bring with them the need for increased information on accompanying software requirements, such as community and NGO participation, hygiene education, human resource development, operation and maintenance, and enhanced involvement and benefits for women. In this context, pilot work under the interregional women's Decade project and on national NGO action (described above) should be producing results that also warrant information treatment and dissemination in the coming period.

14. These future information needs are far-reaching and obviously exceed the capacity of an information project which has a budget of \$319,200 for the year 1986 under decision 85/8. By its nature, however, the project has acted as a leader and a catalyst and worked in combined or complementary efforts with other international and national partners. On this premise, the Administrator recommends continuing the information support project with average annual budgets of \$320,000, or a total of \$1,280,000, chargeable to Special Programme Resources during the four-year period 1987-1990, up to the end of IDWSSD.

II. TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

15. Among the frequently noted obstacles to increased technical and economic co-operation among developing countries are long-standing attitudinal barriers and practical difficulties in interregional exchanges of information and experience. To help overcome such problems, the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for TCDC called for the United Nations system to "lend intensive support" to "long-term information and education programmes" on TCDC.^{2/}

16. One response to this has been a magazine issued by UNDP, at first under the name TCDC News and, since 1985, under the name Co-operation South. Its originally planned print run of a total of 12,000 copies in Arabic, English, French and Spanish editions has since increased to 30,900 because of direct individual requests from people writing in from all over the world. In early years, each issue of the magazine brought together easily available information on a number of topics, but more recently each issue has had more specific focus, including specially researched treatments of TCDC in a region, sector or theme. Initial results, still incomplete, from a recent reader survey indicate that the magazine receives good ratings, provides valued news,

and is circulated for information and education purposes far more widely than its print run would suggest. Several recent issues have also stimulated requests for additional bulk copies, for example, for circulation to educators by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), and for a regional conference of the African Association for Public Administration and Management; in addition, news media in the North and the South reprint articles from the magazine.

17. Recent experience with the magazine, as well as some suggestions received from the reader survey, show that it needs some further improvement, with implications for project costs chargeable to Special Programme Resources. First, to develop content that has more strategic value takes the full-time attention of an editor, which is now being provided. It also requires the ability to go beyond normal sources reachable at headquarters, involving travel for in-depth reportage in selected countries and projects, and some commissioning of writers with specialized or country-level knowledge. Second, the format can be improved, with increased use of photographs, charts, drawings and other graphics that will bring out the human and statistical, historical and current dimensions of TCDC and Economic Co-operation among Developing Countries (ECDC) more strongly and vividly. The financing recommended by the Administrator for 1987 and subsequent years makes modest provision for these improvements, as well as for some increase in print runs to meet reader demand.

18. So far, the principal instrument for information support of TCDC has been Co-operation South, and with the improvements already made and proposed, it will continue as a key element in the promotional strategy. But the Administrator is convinced that wider and deeper information action is needed if TCDC, including its UNDP-led promotion, is to get more serious attention and if constraints to TCDC awareness and action are to be lessened. To these ends, he is proposing two additional types of activities:

(a) Synthesis publications. Some TCDC topics and information requirements need more extended treatment that has longer-term use, and can reach more differentiated audiences, than is possible within the limits of a periodical. For such purposes, it is proposed to prepare and publish occasional booklets, and provision is made under the information support project for the research and production costs of three such titles, each averaging 32 pages in length, over the coming years. For example, one early requirement, which has been evident for some time, is a "question and answer" type of booklet, covering the most frequently encountered attitudes, questions and issues concerning TCDC. This publication would provide reasoned, coherent responses in written form, in an effort to capture, but also move beyond, the dialogue on what TCDC is and is not, what it signifies in historical and practical terms, and how it works and can work better. Another such publication could cover TCDC in planning, i.e., how TCDC can and does infuse the planning processes of selected countries; how planners are trained in and work in the TCDC discipline; and how this makes a difference in project design, implementation and costs;

(b) Media seminars. South-South co-operation, including TCDC, has not so far become an integral, let alone key, part of the "story agenda" of media producers, editors and journalists, even in the South. UNDP, for its part, has occasionally been able to help media coverage of major TCDC meetings. However, a more systematic approach is needed: to involve editors who influence story assignment and selection, not just writers-reporters; to help them see TCDC in practice and in actual project settings, not just in intergovernmental meetings; and to draw them into exploring the need for improved information flows for TCDC and for ways in which the media can help. The proposed format is a short in-region media seminar/study tour for editors from one region, with participants from two or three other regions, to be held around the time of a major ECDC/TCDC venue; after initial briefing and discussion and brief coverage of the venue, participants would divide into groups for separate itineraries in two countries each, emphasizing actual projects. They would finally come together to exchange information and impressions, consult with specialists on South-South information flows through media, and brainstorm and strategize on goals and methods for improved, more extensive and in-depth media coverage of TCDC/ECDC. The UNDP Division of Information has experience with this kind of media seminar format, most recently with northern and southern reporters covering African drought emergency and rehabilitation. Provision is made under the TCDC information support project for such media seminars in three regions during the five-year period 1987-1991.

19. With the proposed improvements in Co-operation South magazine, three synthesis publications and three regional media seminars over the next five years, the annual costs chargeable to Special Programme Resources for information support of TCDC range from \$235,000 to \$394,000 (the latter in a year with a special publication and a seminar). For the period 1987-1991, the total estimated cost is \$1,600,000.

III. RECOMMENDATION OF THE ADMINISTRATOR

20. In light of the above, the Administrator recommends allocations for the two information support projects in the amount of \$1,280,000 for IDWSSD and \$1,600,000 for TCDC from Special Programme Resources.

Notes

1/ A/40/108, paras. 88 and 92 (g).

2/ Report of the United Nations Conference on Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries, Buenos Aires, 30 August-12 September 1978 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E/78.II.A.11 and corrigendum), recommendation 13, paragraph 32.

