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CO-OPERATION BETWEEN THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE LEAGUE
OF ARAB STATES

JOINT INSPECTION UNIT

Comments of the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to submit to the General Assembly the comments of the Executive Heads of the organizations concerned on the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Co-operation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States" (A/41/615).

* A/41/150.

INTRODUCTION

1. The report of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) on Co-operation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States (LAS) (A/41/615) is the first assessment of this co-operation undertaken by JIU. As indicated by JIU, co-operation between LAS and the United Nations dates back to 1950, when the League was invited to participate in the work of the General Assembly as an observer. Since then, co-operation between the two organizations has come to cover practically all aspects of development, and inter-secretariat agreements have been signed between most of the organizations belonging to the LAS system and the United Nations system. JIU further noted that in 1983, a meeting between the two systems was organized at Tunis, where a series of suggestions for strengthening technical co-operation between them were considered. The JIU report was prepared at the expressed wish of LAS that JIU should study the functioning and impact of this co-operation and should put forward suggestions for its rationalization and development.

2. From the outset, it should be pointed out that technical co-operation is only one area of co-operative endeavours between the two systems. As clearly enunciated by the Secretary-General of LAS at the Tunis meeting, LAS is also anxious to consolidate and develop existing ties in all areas relating to the maintenance of international peace and security, to co-operate in every possible way in the implementation of United Nations resolutions relating to the question of Palestine and the situation in the Middle East, to eradicate apartheid and all other forms of racial discrimination, to eliminate colonization and to promote the right of self-determination and the safeguarding of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all.

3. The report of JIU focuses exclusively on technical co-operation. The Secretary-General believes that it provides a useful overview of the various areas of technical co-operation and of the related mechanisms for co-operation between the two systems. Issued three years after the 1983 Tunis meeting, the report makes an analysis of technical co-operation activities during the last few years and, in general, provides a sound basis for strengthening this co-operation between the United Nations and the LAS systems. It does not, however, reflect the full range of co-operation between the United Nations and LAS.

4. In preparing his comments on the report, the Secretary-General has consulted with the Executive Heads of all participating organizations of the United Nations system. Their views have been taken into account in the preparation of these comments.

SPECIFIC COMMENTS

5. While acknowledging that the brief review of existing co-operation programmes is designed to be illustrative, various United Nations organizations have indicated that the report does not sufficiently reflect the current scope of co-operation 1/ and have made the following observations:

I. AREAS OF CO-OPERATION

A. Existing programmes and projects for technical co-operation between the two systems

1. Agriculture and food

Paragraphs 7 and 8: The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) noted that the environmental aspects were not given adequate treatment. Considering that arid and desert areas predominate in the Arab world, any future co-operation should give special emphasis (in terms of resources and projects) to environmental issues in general, and to desertification in particular. For its part, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) indicated that a study on "Food security issues in the West Bank and Gaza Strip" was prepared by ESCWA and the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD) in 1985.

Paragraph 11: To reflect more substantively the assistance extended by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), paragraph 11 should be amended as follows:

"The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), for its part, over the period 1978 to 1985 has granted various Arab specialized organizations and international institutions directly involved in agricultural research and training activities which address the agricultural development needs of the Arab region assistance that has been used to finance regional projects. The Arab Centre for the Study of Arid Zones and Dry Lands (ACSAD) has received IFAD assistance of more than \$US 5.5 million for financing the use of improved wheat and barley varieties in four Arab countries (Algeria, Morocco, Jordan and the Syria Arab Republic). Initial results showed that the new varieties introduced by ACSAD are drought tolerant and have a higher yield than local varieties. The new varieties consisted of ACSAD 59 and ACSAD 67 for bread wheat, ACSAD 65 and ACSAD 71 for durum wheat, and ACSAD 60, ACSAD 68 and ACSAD 176 for barley. A seed-production feasibility study was subsequently undertaken on the basis of these results. Because of the superior performance of these varieties, respective Governments have released them to farmers. An agronomic package of improved practices was also developed and tested for these varieties under different agro-ecological conditions.

"Under IFAD's assistance of \$US 1.148 million, AOAD was able to undertake training activities, manpower development and institution building programmes. About 150 technicians from the Arab League States participated in AOAD-conducted training courses in project identification, preparation and implementation.

"IFAD's assistance of about \$US 1 million, to the Near East and North Africa Regional Agricultural Credit Association (NENARACA) was intended to strengthen and reorient NENARACA's activities in the area of agricultural lending to small farmers, and also to conduct national and regional training workshops and seminars for staff of the agricultural lending institutions in the region. NENARACA is also assisting national institutions in further

development of their programmes and in the improvement of their delivery systems for better servicing the credit needs of small farmers."

The following should be added at the end of paragraph 11:

"IFAD also provided grants totalling \$US 12.5 million to assist ICARDA to conduct agricultural research and training activities which address agricultural development needs of the Arab region and to construct parts of its headquarters in Aleppo (Syria). Furthermore, IFAD sponsored, in 1985, a project implementation workshop in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, aimed at tackling the severe shortage of trained manpower for the timely implementation of projects. Project managers and the senior staff from 23 projects, representing 10 countries in the Arab region participated in the workshop."

2. Industrial development

Paragraph 14: ESCWA wishes to record the following activities:

(a) The joint ESCWA/UNIDO Industry Division has actively participated in the preparations, including preparation of documents, for the fifth Arab industrialization conference held by the Industrial Development Centre for Arab States (IDCAS) - now the Arab Industrial Development Organization (AIDO) - in Algiers from 16 to 20 November 1979, and in the follow-up seminar to finalize its documents, held at Baghdad in April 1980;

(b) ESCWA prepared jointly with the Arab Telecommunication Union a study entitled "Telecommunication Equipment Manufacturing" published in 1984;

(c) Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD) co-sponsored with ESCWA a workshop entitled "Computer processing and transmission of the Arabic language" that was held in Kuwait in April 1985;

(d) ESCWA and AIDO have jointly prepared master-plans on technological capabilities in the fields of oilrefining, petrochemicals and fertilizers, and on capital goods and engineering industries (1986);

(e) Jointly with AIDO and AFESD, ESCWA is engaged in preparing a feasibility study on development to be completed in 1987;

(f) ESCWA, UNIDO and AIDO are co-operating with the Government of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen in preparing for a solidarity meeting for the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, scheduled to be held in 1987;

(g) ESCWA has rendered and is rendering advisory services in the framework of its co-operation with Arab League organizations in the following fields:

(i) Manufacture of chemical equipment (a techno-economic ESCWA study completed in 1981 has led to a project involving AIDO, AFESD, the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC), UNIDO and the Islamic Bank);

(ii) Pumps;

(iii) Seamless pipes;

(iv) Machine tools;

(h) A project is envisaged on computer arabization as proposed to the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) and AFESD;

(i) A project is envisaged for a feasibility study on regional silicon foundry to be submitted by ESCWA as proposed by UNIDO and AIDO to AFESD.

3. Mineral resources and energy

Paragraph 18: One minor amendment in paragraph 18 dealing with energy would seem appropriate as the group of experts convened by the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs (DIESA) in January 1986 was devoted to petroleum exploration and development agreements in developing countries in general and not on "agreements concerning the development of petroleum resources in the Arab countries", as cited. In addition, ESCWA has participated actively in:

(a) The Arab energy conferences organized by OAPEC/AFESD in Doha (1982) and Algiers (1985), contributing documents on major energy issues and serving as a member of the energy demand preparatory committees for the conferences;

(b) The OAPEC-sponsored symposium on energy conservation in the Arab countries (Tunis, 1983), presenting papers on the subject;

(c) The OAPEC-sponsored expert group meeting on new and renewable sources of energy in the Arab countries (Kuwait, 1985), by presenting a paper and assisting in formulating the plan of action on new and renewable sources of energy for the Arab region.

4. Trade and finance

Paragraph 20: The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) would like the paragraph to read as follows:

"In 1983 UNCTAD in collaboration with ESCWA, the Council of Arab Economic Unity and LAS, organized a regional seminar/study tour for Arab countries in Moscow/Sofia on trade and economic co-operation between the Arab countries and the socialist countries of eastern Europe."

Insert between paragraphs 20 and 21: "UNCTAD convened an ad hoc group of experts in Moscow in January 1985 to evaluate: (a) training activities for the promotion of trade between Arab countries and socialist countries of eastern Europe; (b) to exchange views on the best ways and means of developing trade and economic co-operation between Arab countries and socialist countries of eastern Europe;

(c) to recommend specific technical assistance activities to be developed by UNCTAD, ECA, ESCWA, UNDP and the League of Arab States in this area. UNCTAD, within the framework of its technical assistance activities has published in Arabic a "Manual on trading with the socialist countries of eastern Europe" which has been distributed to interested institutions and ministries of all Arab countries."

Paragraph 24: IFAD should be added to the list of organizations which have co-financed development projects in the Arab countries. AFESD is currently administering, on behalf of IFAD, eight development projects in the Arab countries.

5. Transport and communications

Before paragraph 26: The following paragraph should be added:

"The transport division of ESCWA has assisted the Department for Economic Affairs of LAS in finalizing its working paper on the transport development strategy for the Arab world."

6. Patents and copyright

Paragraph 31: In respect of copyright, the following three activities should be mentioned:

(a) Training course on copyright organized by UNESCO at Algiers from 31 May to 5 June 1985 for nationals of the Arab States;

(b) Lecture series organized by UNESCO for nationals of the Arab States concerning the different legal traditions in existence in respect of copyright: the Anglo-Saxon concept, the Arab concept, the Latin concept, the socialist concept, and the concept which has emerged in the developing countries: Hammamet (Tunisia), 2 to 11 September 1985;

(c) Regional committee of experts on the protection of folklore. This committee was convened by UNESCO and WIPO at Doha (Qatar) from 8 to 10 October 1984. The purpose was to review the modalities for the application in the Arab States of model national legislation on the intellectual property aspects of the protection of folklore, in the light of the current situation regarding the protection of folklore at the national and regional levels.

With regard to future co-operation with the League of Arab States in respect of copyright, UNESCO is prepared to respond to all requests for assistance from States in the region. The competent authorities of these States might therefore be interested to know that advisory services can be provided to them upon request so as to help them: (a) to learn more about the international instruments on copyright and related rights, and the advantages which they could derive from accession to an international copyright convention; (b) to develop national legislation on copyright which would meet their needs in the fields of education, science and culture; (c) to establish a national infrastructure for copyright which would facilitate the circulation of intellectual works.

Intellectual and technical assistance may also be provided either: (a) in the form of advice to the authorities or nationals of these States regarding methods of acquiring copyright or; (b) at the request of those States, by approaching interested parties in the countries which produce printed or audiovisual material, so as to establish the necessary contacts with copyright holders and conduct negotiations.

7. Administration, documentation and information

Paragraphs 34 and 35: ESCWA has also contributed to regular exchange of information, documentation and advice with organizations of the LAS system and has, inter alia, been active in the following sectors and activities:

(a) Development planning

Preparation of the expert group meeting on "Feasible forms of economic co-operation and integration in countries of Western Asia", held at Beirut in December 1981, involved co-operation with LAS and the Council for Arab Economic Unity.

(b) Statistics

ESCWA assisted LAS in the preparation of a unified system of national accounts for the Arab countries in November 1979. Two volumes describing the system and its methodology were prepared jointly with an ESCWA team and adopted at meetings of experts on national accounts convened in Rabat (January 1981) and Amman (December 1981). LAS and ESCWA published jointly two issues of the publication entitled "Statistical indicators of the Arab world" which covered the period 1970-1979. At present, LAS and ESCWA have agreed to publish jointly the "Arab unified statistical abstract" which will replace the "Statistical indicators of the Arab world". The first issue covering the period 1979-1984 will be published in 1986.

8. Employment and population; problems relating to women and children; social sciences

Paragraph 37: ESCWA co-sponsored with LAS the conference on population and development in the Arab world (Amman 25-29 March 1984), which adopted a unified Arab position paper for the International Conference on Population (Mexico, August 1984).

The Population Division of DIESA has had several working contacts with the Population Research Unit of LAS:

(a) In 1984, the Co-ordinator of the Division's Population Information Network (POPIN) visited Tunis to confer with officials of the LAS, and in particular with the personnel of Population Research Unit and the Arab League Documentation Centre (ALDOC) with a view to: (i) identifying priority areas in the

League's information collection and dissemination activities in support of its population research programme; (ii) assessing the need for strengthening the population information services of the League's secretariat; (iii) exploring possible collaboration between the League and the International Population Information Network in general, and POPIN-Africa in particular; (iv) making appropriate recommendations for upgrading the documentation/information function of the League's secretariat;

(b) The Population Research Unit of LAS has agreed to assist in the preparation of an Arab Language version of the Multilingual Demographic Dictionary, a technical publication originally prepared under the auspices of the Population Division;

(c) The Population Division in September 1986 will provide the services of one staff member for a three-week training programme in population estimates and projections.

Paragraphs 38 and 39: ESCWA participated with LAS in the formulation of a regional strategy for the development of the child in the Arab world as part of the regional activities for the International Year of the Child (1981). ESCWA assisted the Department of Social Development of LAS in formulating the Arab strategy for social development and in preparing three documents on the subject, with particular reference to women (1984).

Finally, the description of UNICEF's co-operation with LAS should be complemented by the following:

"LAS/UNICEF co-operation continues to focus on the welfare of children through the exchange of information and material, mutual participation in meetings on health and social development, joint sponsorship of studies, exchange of visits and regular consultations:

"(a) Joint Committee: LAS and UNICEF established a Joint Committee to meet regularly twice per year, alternately in Tunis and Amman, to discuss matters related to the co-operation between the two organizations.

"(b) Arab Social Report: UNICEF will assist LAS in the elaboration of the report by preparing a chapter on the "Arab Child", as well as providing available basic information and statistics on children in specific Arab countries.

"(c) Information and Communication: LAS and UNICEF agreed to co-ordinate with and consult each other and exchange available information and material on television and radio programmes and other media materials.

"(d) LAS Children's Department: UNICEF will co-operate in the development of a five-year programme for the newly established Children's Department in the Arab League.

"(e) Studies: LAS and UNICEF are considering joint co-operation in conducting a number of studies related to social development in Arab countries.

"(f) Meetings: UNICEF has attended the meetings of Arab Ministers of Social Affairs and Health in December 1985 and March 1986 respectively. LAS has been invited to attend the sessions of the Executive Board of UNICEF. Mutual invitations were addressed to attend other meetings held in the region.

"(g) Co-operation with the Council of Arab Health Ministers: the Council of Arab Health Ministers has endorsed in its eleventh session, held at Casablanca (11-14 March 1986) UCI-1990 with regard to Arab countries and decided to award its annual prize for 1986 to the best research on Child Immunization."

After paragraph 39: Mention should be made of the United Nations LAS Sectoral Meeting on Social Development, which was held at Amman from 19 to 21 August 1985. A number of resolutions emanating from this meeting - which were subsequently endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 40/5 - covered specific areas in which DIESA could be of assistance, such as the designing of the League's Joint Arab Social report; the establishment of an Arab Centre for Research and Training in Social Development; and matters relating to youth and to correctional institutions. Consultations on the implementation of resolution 40/5 are being held between the relevant units of DIESA and LAS.

9. Education, science and culture

The report refers to regional activities under the regular programme but does not mention extrabudgetary projects executed by UNESCO. In this respect, it would be desirable to insert after paragraph 45, and before paragraph 46, the following text:

"A wide range of educational activities has been carried out by the machinery established by UNESCO for project identification, preparation, execution, monitoring and evaluation. The activities covered a broad range of subjects and interests. The purpose of the activities was to meet the chronic needs of recipient States for the development and modernization of their education systems. UNESCO's contribution covered the following activities, at all levels: teacher training, syllabus development; literacy; adult education; development and production of educational materials; audiovisual aids and books; science teaching; provision and installation of equipment and training of teachers and technicians to use them; higher technical and vocational training and educational facilities in the broadest sense. UNESCO's co-operation also included the construction of buildings, institutional support for the ministries of education, educational planning, labour planning and studies on the relationship between training and employment. The funds allocated to these projects and activities were provided by UNDP, IBRD, regional banks, Arab funds, the Arab Gulf Programme for United Nations Development Organizations (AGFUND) and funds in trust."

B. Proposals for future co-operation

Paragraphs 49-54: The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has indicated that although it is co-operating primarily with individual countries and their institutions and has had only a few, ad hoc joint activities with some of the organizations of the Arab League, (e.g. OAPEC, ACSAD), it has been recognized as desirable to concentrate in the future more on the identification and formulation of regional/interregional projects in the framework of the Arab League, especially in the following areas of particular relevance to the IAEA's field of competence:

(a) Food and agriculture: in the areas mentioned, such as improvement of wheat and barley production, soil restoration, water management and prevention of harvest losses, the use of nuclear techniques might offer a contribution towards resolving the problems;

(b) Hydrology: the agency could be contributive with skills, knowledge and laboratory services to regional projects in this area, such as the one launched in 1984 by WMO and ACSAD on the "application of appropriate techniques for the design of surface-water and ground water hydrological networks";

(c) Health: the co-operation by the agency in the field of human health could be beneficial, especially with regard to diagnosis of disease and the radiation attenuation in the development of vaccines.

For its part, UNESCO notes that the topic of "youth" was not included among the subjects discussed under "Proposals for future co-operation". Earlier consultations with LAS had led UNESCO to believe that youth was one of the priorities selected for multilateral co-operation and co-ordination. In this respect, UNESCO would be prepared to participate in any inter-secretariat meeting convened by ESCWA and would like to receive the reports of the annual interministerial meeting organized by LAS for Ministers of Youth and Sports of the region of the Arab States.

UNESCO noted that there was no mention of the multilateral and bilateral proposals that were made at the meeting held at Tunis in 1983. That meeting brought together secretariats from the United Nations system and LAS and a report was produced which included, inter alia, in paragraph 67 (vii) the "preparation of joint studies on youth". UNESCO is prepared to co-operate with LAS on this project. A study designed to promote co-operation among member States of the region in respect of youth is planned for 1987 (UNESCO Programme viii.1.3, para. 08127 of its Programme and Budget). The study should assist in implementing the recommendations of the World Congress on Youth, held at Barcelona, Spain, in July 1985.

II. MECHANISMS FOR CO-OPERATION

A. UNDP intergovernmental meetings

Paragraph 58: UNDP has pointed out that the consultation procedure mentioned in this paragraph was already established in 1980 by the Governing Council in response

to a General Assembly resolution and has guided the preparation of the regional programmes in the third cycle as well as those being prepared for the fourth cycle. It is therefore misleading to say that this procedure is at "an early stage". Moreover, it should be emphasized that this consultation process does not prejudice the responsibility of the Governing Council with respect to the approval of regional programmes. Consequently, in paragraph 125, reference to approval by the intergovernmental consultation process is in error. According to the policies established by UNDP Governing Council, drafts of regional programmes prepared by or on behalf of the Administrator are discussed and reviewed at a specially convened meeting of the Governments of the region. These drafts are then reviewed in the light of the conclusions reached at these meetings and a final programme is submitted by the Administrator to the Governing Council, together with a report of the main conclusions of these consultative intergovernmental meetings.

Paragraph 60: Concerning the point made in this paragraph that regional programmes are reduced more than country programmes in periods of resources shortfalls, it must be emphasized that the reduction in resources during the third cycle (which is described in para. 83) was carried out across-the-board for both regional and country programmes.

B. The focal points

Paragraphs 64 and 65: As indicated in the report, the focal points are the Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Special Political Questions and the LAS's General Department for International Political Affairs. As noted in the introduction, LAS attaches importance to consolidating and developing ties with the United Nations in all areas relating to the maintenance of international peace and security, and to co-operating in every possible way in the implementation of United Nations resolutions relating to the question of Palestine and the situation in the Middle East.

Within the United Nations Secretariat, the Office for Special Political Questions was established to assist in advising the Secretary-General on specific questions of a political nature and to maintain close contact, inter alia, with the Organization of African Unity, regional and interregional organizations and associations and conferences dealing with political matters of concern to the United Nations, including the League of Arab States. It keeps the Secretary-General informed on the political aspects of social and economic questions and follows the work of the Economic and Social Council, the regional commissions and other related organs and conferences.

Thus, the Office for Special Political Questions is assigned responsibility for overall liaison functions and overseeing the various efforts of the United Nations system in strengthening co-operation and co-ordination with LAS and its specialized organizations with the view to enhancing their capacity to serve the mutual interests of the two organizations in the political, economic, social and cultural fields. Within this overall framework, the development and implementation of technical co-operation activities remains the prerogative of the various organizations and agencies of the United Nations system in accordance with their

respective mandates. Given the wide range of these activities and the number of entities involved, it would be difficult to identify a single focal point for technical co-operation activities.

III. FORMULATION OF CO-OPERATION PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS

A. Project identification

Paragraphs 71-74: The Inspectors outlined a set of criteria for regional project identification involving: (a) emphasis on cost effectiveness; (b) selection of projects contributing to advanced activities; and (c) complementarity between related regional projects. While these criteria are acceptable, it is felt that other equally important criteria concerned with investment in human resources should not be overlooked, despite the fact that cost effectiveness in development of human resources is difficult to assess. The statement that too many criteria would complicate the selection of projects is noted. This could be avoided, however, by a weighted ranking of the various criteria.

B. Project formulation

Paragraphs 75-77: With regard to the delays between project identification and project formulation mentioned in paragraphs 75 to 77, as well as other sections of the report, it is not clear whether the Inspectors refer both to UNDP and trust funds under the administration of agencies. As concerns UNDP, delays of the type described in the report are a rare exception and, if they occur, may be due to efforts in resolving outstanding issues at the project design stage. It is well documented that this is essential to ensure a successful project. It is also essential in regional projects for participating Governments to agree to all major provisions and, above all, the nature and scope of their contribution and support.

IV. FINANCING OF CO-OPERATION PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS

A. Sources and volume of financing

Paragraph 83: See UNDP's comments on paragraph 60.

Paragraph 84: Substitute "between 1978 and 1985" for "between 1980-1983" in the second line of this paragraph. The figures "\$US 3.5 million" in the third line and "\$US 1.1 million" in the 4th line of this paragraph should be amended "to over \$US 5.5 million" and "\$US 1.148 million" respectively to be consistent with the figures mentioned in paragraph 11 of the report. It is also suggested that the amount of technical assistance given by IFAD to the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) and the Near East and North Africa Regional Agricultural Credit Association (NENARACA) as mentioned in paragraph 11 should also be indicated in paragraph 84.

B. Financing policies

Paragraphs 89-93: The Department of Technical Co-operation for Development (DTCD) noted that, although the report pointed out that "LAS and the Arab specialized institutions generally provide no financing for regional technical projects" and that UNDP assistance or their possibilities of co-financing is declining, alternative financing was not discussed, whether from the World Bank, AFESD, the Arab Bank for the Economic Development of Africa (BADEA), Islamic Development Bank, OPEC Fund, or bilateral sources. The fundamental problem of Arab specialized agencies being unable to provide substantial counterpart funds is not sufficiently emphasized in the report. Invoicing for services rendered is an attractive concept which might improve cost effectiveness and a search for alternative sources of supply at lower cost; however, the issue of who should ultimately pay for increased co-operation between the United Nations and Arab institutions is not dealt with. The report assumes UNDP funding but recognizes that available funds will continue to decline from this source. There is no discussion of how tied bilateral financing can be taken advantage of for the Arab region. DTCD believes that meaningful partnership will not develop unless co-financing is available to the Arab institutions.

C. Making financing cost-effective

Paragraph 94: It may be argued that one measure of cost-effectiveness - a concept which is used by the Inspectors throughout the report - is whether participating Governments are prepared fully to support a regional project initiated with United Nations assistance even beyond the life of that United Nations support.

V. EXECUTION OF CO-OPERATION PROJECTS

A. Training

Paragraphs 111-113: It should be emphasized with respect to training that UNDP favors in-country training and training within the region.

In this regard, DTCD noted that it has been able to undertake most of its training activities within the region. However, DTCD regrets that its observations regarding the strengthening of the Secretariat General of the Arab League were not reflected in the report. The Arab League had requested DTCD assistance in developing a comprehensive programme for improving its organizational system, manpower planning, staff development and use of computers. DTCD had prepared a project for automatizing the Secretariat's administrative systems and procedures. The admitted administrative and technical weaknesses of the Arab League organizations are not discussed; nor is there reference as to how the United Nations agencies might be of assistance.

B. Sub-contracting

Paragraphs 114 and 115: The conclusion that the United Nations system should make more frequent use of the services of the Arab specialized institutions and regional intergovernmental organizations has been duly noted. However, the issue of sub-contracting via international organizations may be superfluous, since Arab States have direct access to their own organizations and do not need to have this facility through a third party.

VI. EVALUATION OF CO-OPERATION PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS

Paragraphs 116-121: UNDP has been able to comment on two JIU reports on the subject of evaluation. UNDP's Central Evaluation Office, established in 1983, has gradually strengthened the monitoring and evaluation of all aspects of UNDP's Programme, including regional programmes and projects.

COMMENTS ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Areas of co-operation

Recommendation No. 1 is not necessarily or entirely valid. For FAO, in many cases, co-operation is taking place in advanced fields (remote sensing, computer science, etc.). Moreover, it is the Arab organizations that choose the sectors of co-operation be they advanced or otherwise. For DTCD, requests for assistance often relate to badly needed mundane expertise and equipment for which financing is otherwise not available. For WHO, based on WHO policies to attain health for all by year 2000 through primary health care, recommendation 1 does not apply to health promotion as it suggests highly sophisticated approaches which would not be commensurate with the policy resolutions adopted unanimously by WHO member States in the World Health Assembly.

Nevertheless the Secretary-General believes that it would be advisable to build up a procedure which would allow for the careful and effective selection of projects necessitating outside expertise and which would justify the intervention of United Nations organizations. This would involve establishing priorities between sectors and between projects based on a clear set of socio-economic criteria.

B. Mechanisms for co-operation

Recommendation No. 2: UNDP has in place an extensive network of consultation for the preparation of the regional programme for the Arab States, including the experience acquired by various specialized institutions in the region. However, while Arab specialized institutions would be a knowledgeable source of specialized advice to UNDP with regard to regional programmes, the regional offices of the United Nations organizations and other United Nations agencies can and should continue to be involved, in view of their assessment of sectoral needs in the region.

The Secretary-General agrees that a closer co-operation with Arab specialized institutions is needed at all stages and should be better organized. As of now these institutions only have observer status at the intergovernmental meetings attended by representatives of Arab States, UNDP, various organizations in the United Nations system and the League of Arab States. These meetings constitute a useful instrument for co-ordinating and harmonizing regional technical co-operation between the two systems and UNDP should obtain the technical advice of Arab specialized institutions prior to intergovernmental meetings on Arab regional programmes in order to benefit from their experience.

Regretfully, only two Arab specialized institutions have expressed a willingness to act as convenors of the Joint Inter-Agency Working Groups. For UNEP, those Groups are an extremely important modus operandi in view of the multi-disciplinary nature of environmental issues and would provide a forum for thematic joint programming.

Recommendation No. 3: The Secretary-General believes that it is necessary to establish a system for the evaluation of the projects and for their conformation and consistency with the strategy for joint Arab economic development. The high level of representation at ad hoc meetings between the organizations in the United Nations system, the League of Arab States and the Arab specialized institutions should encourage the United Nations system to concentrate on the examination of major problems in regional technical co-operation and means of solving them. A strategy for joint Arab economic development was adopted by the Eleventh Arab Summit Conference in 1980. In order to implement the strategy, sectoral programmes based on regional projects should be formulated. The criteria for selection for such programmes and projects should be established with care.

Recommendation No. 4: As outlined in our comments on paragraphs 64 and 65, the Secretary-General believes it necessary for the Office for Special Political Questions to continue to exercise overall co-ordination and liaison functions in maintaining close contact with LAS. With regard to technical co-operation, the Office for Special Political Questions will continue to rely on the expertise available within the system. Thus, the substantive responsibility of co-ordinating and intensifying the activities of the Joint Inter-Agency Working Groups with a view to achieving practical results is entrusted to the relevant organizations and agencies of the United Nations system.

C. Formulation of co-operation programmes and projects

Recommendation No. 5: For WHO, recommendation 5 would have to be framed within the context of present co-operation between WHO and the Executive Council of Arab Ministers of Health.

The United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations (UNCTC) believes it advisable to put the accent on educational projects, including training in the field of negotiation, as well as the organization and the management of trading companies. Such projects should be considered priority areas, namely because of the wishes expressed by some of the concerned countries to receive support from the

UNCTC in the above-mentioned fields. Analysis of the needs of members of the Arab League reveals insufficiencies in these fields.

While agreeing with recommendation 5, the Universal Postal Union (UPU) however, believes that the recommendation should equally be directed towards LAS and the Arab Specialized Agencies.

ICAO has proposed two regional projects to UNDP in respect of the Arab region: Assistance to the Gulf States College, Qatar; and a regional manpower/training requirements survey. Both of these projects are expected to be supportive of the Strategy for Joint Arab Economic Development. Any future projects formulated by ICAO for regional funding will certainly give due attention to the Strategy.

With regard to both recommendations No.5 and No.6, UNESCO pointed out that it is already working with the Arab States Broadcasting Union through its regional project RMI/82/POL "Integration of Population Development Programmes through the Arab States Broadcasting Union". This collaboration ensures that not only the expertise of LAS but also that of experts from various Member States and other regions is used in communication and population units. Generally, UNESCO believes that co-operation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States should be maintained and strengthened at all levels. Machinery for such co-operation should permit a better exchange of data, both substantive and technical, among agencies of the United Nations system. The exchange should, however, also include experience acquired in other regions of the world so as to ensure that the co-operation between the United Nations and LAS does not become intellectually isolated.

D. Financing of co-operation programmes and projects

Recommendation No. 6: For FAO, co-operative networks of national/regional institutions have been established in various regions, in a number of fields, and will continue to be established, as the need arises.

For ICAO, it is its policy to identify and formulate "economically viable projects" so that civil aviation may constitute a revenue earner rather than a burden on the economy.

For the implementation of its technical co-operation activities in the Arab countries, UPU generally uses the "networks of institutions" mechanism. Thus, its training activities are organized mainly in Arab postal faculty in Damas. In order to reduce costs, UPU in special cases, uses the facilities made available by the postal authorities of the host countries.

E. Execution of co-operation projects

Recommendation No. 7: Calls for the organizations in the United Nations system to use local resources (experts, equipment and training institutions). The established policy of the United Nations system in this respect is to use, to the

extent possible, local resources provided that acceptable standards are maintained. For instance, where feasible, equipment for ILO-executed technical co-operation projects has been regularly obtained from developing countries (in 1984-85 this represented some 35 to 40 per cent of the total value of orders). According to established rules, project officials are encouraged to undertake local prospection to assess what equipment is available and its cost. Preference has been given to locally manufactured equipment as distinct from equipment imported from developed countries. Regarding recruitment of experts, it has been the ILO's policy for several years to encourage Governments to allocate, where possible, technical co-operation project funds for employment of national consultants/experts undertaking specific project activities which could be most effectively performed by nationals with the necessary knowledge of local conditions. The result has been a steady increase in employment of national consultants/experts for ILO-executed projects in the Arab States and elsewhere.

F. Evaluation of co-operation programmes and projects

Recommendation No. 8: In general, the United Nations attaches importance to evaluation and will co-operate to the extent possible in strengthening the evaluation of regional programmes and projects.

Annex II: Inter-Secretariat agreements

The report does not include a reference to the Agreement of Co-operation between IMO and LAS, which was signed on 17 February 1984. In addition to its co-operation agreements with AFESD and AOAD, IFAD has also a co-operation agreement with BADEA.

Notes

1/ The Secretary-General notes the absence in the report of any specific reference to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the problems relating to refugees - an increasing pre-occupation - and to the role of the Department for Disarmament Affairs on the relationship between disarmament and development.

