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

JOINT INSPECTION UNIT

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the General Assembly the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Co-operation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States" (JIU/REP/86/3).

* A/41/150.



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

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Table of Contents

	<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Page</u>
INTRODUCTION	1- 5	1
I. AREAS OF CO-OPERATION	6- 54	2
A. Existing programmes and projects for technical co-operation between the two systems	7- 48	2
1. Agriculture and food	7- 13	2
2. Industrial development	14- 17	3
3. Mineral resources and energy	18	4
4. Trade and finance	19- 25	4
5. Transport and communications	26- 29	5
6. Meteorology	30	6
7. Patents and copyright	31	6
8. Environment	32- 33	6
9. Administration, documentation and information	34- 35	6
10. Employment and population; problems relating to women and children; social sciences	36- 39	7
11. Health	40- 44	8
12. Education, science and culture	45- 48	8
B. Proposals for future co-operation	49- 54	9
II. MECHANISMS FOR CO-OPERATION	55- 66	11
A. UNDP intergovernmental meetings	57- 60	11
B. <u>Ad hoc</u> meetings of the two systems	61	11
C. The Joint Inter-Agency Working Groups (JIWGs)	62- 63	12
D. The focal points	64- 66	12

Table of Contents

	<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Page</u>
III. FORMULATION OF CO-OPERATION PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS	67- 78	13
A. Translation of the Joint Development Strategy into regional programmes and projects	68- 70	13
B. Project identification	71- 74	14
C. Project formulation	75- 78	14
IV. FINANCING OF CO-OPERATION PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS	79-101	16
A. Sources and volume of financing	79- 88	16
B. Financing policies	89- 93	17
C. Making financing cost-effective	94-101	18
V. EXECUTION OF CO-OPERATION PROJECTS	102-115	19
A. Equipment	103-107	19
B. Experts	108-110	19
C. Training	111-113	20
D. Sub-contracting	114-115	20
VI. EVALUATION OF CO-OPERATION PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS	116-121	21
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	122-139	22
A. Areas of co-operation	122-123	22
B. Mechanisms for co-operation	124-131	22
1. UNDP intergovernmental meetings	125-126	22
2. <u>Ad hoc</u> meetings of the two systems	127-128	23
3. The Joint Inter-Agency Working Groups (JIWGs)	129	23
4. The focal points	130-131	23
C. Formulation of co-operation programmes and projects	132-133	24
D. Financing of co-operation programmes and projects	134-135	24
E. Execution of co-operation projects	136-137	24
F. Evaluation of co-operation programmes and projects	138-139	25

ANNEXES

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INTRODUCTION

1. Co-operation between the League of Arab States (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. In 1960, the secretaries of the two organizations signed a memorandum relating, inter alia, to exchanges of information and documentation, accreditation of reciprocal representation, implementation of joint projects, and conduct of joint consultations. Since then, the United Nations system has steadily developed and the number of its specialized agencies increased. At the same time, the activities of LAS and the Arab specialized institutions have been diversified and have come to cover practically all aspects of development: economic, social, scientific, technical and cultural. Inter-secretariat agreements have been signed between most of the organizations belonging to the LAS system */ and the United Nations system **/, setting up consultation machinery and providing for joint activities.
2. 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. For the past five years, such co-operation has been an annual item on the agenda of the United Nations General Assembly, has formed the subject of a periodic report by the United Nations Secretary-General 1/ and has given rise to the adoption of a resolution at the end of each session 2/.
3. Lastly, LAS recently expressed keen interest in the idea that the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) should study the functioning of this co-operation and its impact and should put forward suggestions for its rationalization and development.
4. After reviewing the areas of technical co-operation between the two systems during the last few years (chapter I), we shall deal with the machinery for such co-operation (chapter II). Chapter III will relate to the formulation of co-operation programmes and projects (programming, identification and formulation), and chapter IV to the implementation of co-operation programmes and projects. The funding of such programmes and projects will be discussed in chapter V, and their evaluation in chapter VI. Conclusions and recommendations will be presented at the end of the report. We believe that following this sequence will enable us to make a stage-by-stage analysis of technical co-operation activities from planning to execution, identify strengths and weaknesses and submit recommendations designed to reinforce the former and shore up the latter.
5. The analyses, conclusions and recommendations of this report are based on visits to the headquarters of most of the organizations of the two systems concerned, on in-depth discussions with officials of these organizations and on first-hand documentation which they supplied to us. We would like to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General and Assistant Secretaries-General of the League of Arab States and their associates, and to the Directors-General and Secretaries-General of the United Nations organizations and Arab specialized institutions and their associates for being so generous with their time and providing us with all the documentation needed to prepare this report.

*/ "LAS system" is here taken to mean the Secretariat-General of LAS and the 22 Arab specialized institutions (see annex I for a simplified organizational chart of this system).

**/ "United Nations system" denotes the Secretariat and its bodies, UNDP and its funds, and the specialized agencies.

1/ See documents A/37/536, A/38/299, A/39/418 and A/40/481.

2/ See resolutions 36/24, 37/17, 38/6, 39/9 and 40/5.

I. AREAS OF CO-OPERATION

6. For the sake of conciseness only regional co-operation during the last ten years or so will be reviewed. On the other hand, this chapter will deal only with regional programmes and projects since, by definition, technical co-operation for development between LAS, the Arab specialized institutions and the organizations of the United Nations system relates only to regional programmes and projects, country programmes and projects being within the exclusive competence of each individual State.

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

1. Agriculture and food

7. This is, of course, a crucial sector for co-operation between the two systems, since it involves vital aspects of development: food security; conservation and protection of water, land, crop, fishery, forestry and livestock resources; action to combat drought and desertification; modernization of agriculture; strengthening of agricultural training, research and finance institutions; etc.

8. Numerous regional studies have been carried out by FAO in the areas of food security, planning of agricultural development, and use of energy in agriculture. In 1978, FAO prepared a study on the various possibilities of co-operation among the Arab countries in the areas of agriculture and food. In 1980, FAO helped the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD) to publish a major study on food security for the Arab countries. In 1983, FAO prepared another study on agriculture and economic integration in the Arab world.

9. Many meetings have been arranged by FAO in conjunction with the Arab Industrial Development Organization (AIDO), the Arab Federation of Chemical Fertilizer Producers (AFCFP), AOAD and other Arab organizations, such as the meetings on the use of fertilizer (Khartoum, 1981), agricultural credit (Amman, 1983), or packing, storage and distribution of fertilizer (Casablanca, 1983). In co-operation with the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO), FAO held a meeting on firewood and energy problems in rural areas (Tunis, 1984). FAO has also familiarized the Arab countries with the use of AGRIS (International Information System for the Agricultural Sciences and Technology) and CARIS (Current Agricultural Research Information System).

10. FAO has provided assistance to the Arab Centre for the Study of Arid Zones and Dry Lands (ACSAD) in preparing a land map of the Arab countries to the scale of 1:1 million and evaluating soil erosion. Co-operation between the two organizations also involved the preparation, in 1982, of a seven-year programme for soil restoration and water management. In addition, the two organizations have jointly prepared a pastureland management programme. FAO, in collaboration with ALESCO and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), has formulated a project for a green belt in North Africa which is currently being implemented. Co-operation between FAO and the Arab specialized organizations has also taken place in the areas of establishment and strengthening of agricultural institutions. For instance, the Arab Forestry Institute was established at Latakiah under FAO auspices. FAO has also participated in strengthening the Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics at Baghdad. It has endeavoured, whenever possible, to stimulate investment in projects within its sphere of responsibility. In 1983, the FAO Investment Centre, acting on a request by the Arab Fund for

Economic and Social Development (AFESD), undertook a study of investment projects in Morocco and Tunisia with a view to developing fishing in those two countries and supplying the Arab region with fish as a source of food.

11. The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), for its part, has granted various Arab specialized organizations assistance that has been used to finance major projects. ACSAD has received IFAD assistance of more than US\$5.5 million for financing the use of improved wheat and barley seed in four Arab countries. Initial results showed that the new varieties introduced by ACSAD have a higher yield than local varieties. A seed-production feasibility study was subsequently undertaken on the basis of these results. IFAD has also provided grants for training and the establishment of institutions at AOAD (US\$1.1 million) and at the Near East and North Africa Regional Agricultural Credit Association (NENARACA) (US\$1 million).

12. In addition, various major regional projects in the agricultural and food sectors have been granted UNDP financing, project execution being entrusted to various specialized agencies of the United Nations system. Some projects have been completed while others are still in the process of execution, such as the projects concerning fishing development in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, the introduction of jojoba growing in the Arab countries, or aquaculture extension (MEDRAP project). Other major projects are under study, such as projects on dune stabilization, the establishment of fishing co-operatives and pastureland management.

13. Lastly, UNESCO, ACSAD and ALECSO have together implemented three joint programmes regarding the preparation of hydrogeological maps, evaluation of water resources, and conservation and rational use of water resources. The three organizations have given training courses and held meetings on these questions and have translated documents for the Arab countries. On behalf of these countries, they have undertaken pilot projects for the improvement of traditional water supply systems.

2. Industrial development

14. Co-operation between LAS and the United Nations system in the field of industrial development involves contacts between UNIDO and a number of Arab organizations, such as AIDO, the Arab Organization for Standardization and Metrology (ASMO) and the Council of Arab Economic Unity (CAEU), and is aimed, in particular, at strengthening the institutional infrastructure of industry, improving the production of existing industries, training technicians, preparing studies and providing advisory services.

15. For the Sixth Conference on the Industrial Development of Arab States, UNIDO and AIDO prepared two studies concerning: (a) world demand for petrochemical products and the Arab petrochemical industry; and (b) the present situation of the capital goods industry in the Arab countries. UNIDO submitted a study on some aspects of food canning operations to the First Arab Conference on Specifications and Standards in Food Industries. A study on the manufacture of semi-finished aluminium goods was carried out by UNIDO for submission to the Second Arab Aluminium Conference.

16. A number of Arab institutions already existing or in the process of being established have received technical support from UNIDO. UNIDO was associated with the establishment of the Regional Maintenance Centre at Algiers. In addition, UNIDO, UNDP and AIDO are participating in the project for the establishment of

an Arab Regional Packaging Centre. UNIDO and the Arab Federation for Cement and Building Materials are considering the joint establishment of an Arab Regional Development and Training Centre for the Cement Industry.

17. UNIDO has provided assistance to the iron and steel industry in the Arab region under a UNDP-financed project, supplying equipment, assigning experts and organizing seminars and training courses. The Arab Federation of Chemical Fertilizer Producers has received similar technical assistance from UNIDO under a UNDP/FAO/UNIDO/AIDO project.

3. Mineral resources and energy

18. Mineral resources are within the responsibilities of the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development (DTCD) of the United Nations Secretariat and, more particularly, its Natural Resources and Energy Division. In co-operation with the Arab Organization for Mineral Resources (AOMR), the Division prepared a study on phosphates for the Fifth Arab Congress on Mineral Resources. The two organizations sponsored a Seminar on Phosphates in the Arab World. Consultations have taken place between DTCD and the Arab Mining Company concerning the provision of assistance to Arab laboratories. For the Third Arab Energy Conference, DTCD prepared technical documents on the cost of photovoltaic systems, the development of oil shale, and investment requirements for the exploitation of new and renewable sources of energy. The Department of International Economic and Social Affairs (DIESA) of the United Nations Secretariat convened a group of experts on agreements concerning the development of petroleum resources in the Arab countries.

4. Trade and finance

19. At the request of LAS, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) organized a seminar for trade representatives and economic counsellors of countries members of LAS accredited to the European Economic Community (EEC) on difficulties encountered by the Arab countries in their export trade with EEC.

20. In 1983, the Economic Commission for Western Asia (ECWA) and UNCTAD organized a regional seminar for the Arab countries on trade and economic co-operation between the Arab countries and the socialist countries of Eastern Europe.

21. In the financial and monetary spheres, UNCTAD supervised the preparation of a study on relations between Arab and African countries which was submitted to a seminar on Arab-African trade held at Khartoum. UNCTAD also co-operated in a project for providing the Arab countries with statistical data on the commodity balance at the subregional level.

22. With a view to helping to elucidate the process of economic co-operation between Arab countries, UNCTAD, in co-operation with CEAU, prepared a project document relating, inter alia, to economic integration schemes among Arab countries.

23. In order to assist in the training of Arab insurance inspectors, UNCTAD executed a UNDP-financed project which resulted in the preparation of documents and the organization of a round table on the subject.

24. The World Bank, AFESD and the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA) have co-financed development projects in African and Arab countries:

25. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Arab Monetary Fund (AMF), which since 1980 has been an authorized holder of special drawing rights (SDRs), have undertaken parallel balance-of-payments financing operations in several Arab countries.

5. Transport and communications

26. In the air transport sector, regional co-operation between the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the Arab Civil Aviation Council (ACAC) includes co-ordination of civil aviation plans and programmes in the Arab countries; co-operation in the development of the civil aviation infrastructure, facilities and services in the region; exchange of technical information and documentation; invitations to and regular attendance at relevant meetings of the other organization, etc. In particular ICAO has participated actively in the work of the ACAC Air Navigation Committee which reviews requirements for air traffic services, communications and navigation aids in the region. Within the framework of the ICAO Technical Assistance Programme, a joint ICAO-ACAC arrangement furnishes fellowships for training of students from Arab least developed countries at the Gulf States Civil Aviation College in Doha.

27. As far as the United Nations is concerned, co-operation in shipping is the responsibility of UNCTAD and the International Maritime Organization (IMO). The former is contributing, through the TRAINMAR programme, to the study for the establishment of two regional training centres, while the latter is implementing a UNDP-financed project for the benefit of the Arab Maritime Transport Academy (AMTA). The main aim of this project is to develop and strengthen the maritime training afforded by the Academy and to provide advisory services to Governments members of this institution in the areas of maritime legislation, maritime safety and pollution of the marine environment. IMO has offered to provide the necessary documentation, expert information and other inputs for the meetings of joint inter-agency working groups for follow-up action on the proposals relating to maritime transport adopted in 1983 at the Tunis meeting between the Secretariats of the United Nations system and the Secretariats of the League of Arab States system.

28. In the past, co-operation between the Universal Postal Union (UPU) and the Arab Postal Union (APU) resulted in the establishment, with UNDP financing, of an Arab Postal Institute, which in 1982 was converted into an Arab Postal University. At the present time, the two organizations are implementing a project for training some 30 Arab consultants which is co-financed by themselves and UNDP.

29. The International Telecommunication Union (ITU), in its role as executing agency for UNDP projects in the telecommunications field, is co-operating closely with the regional organizations concerned, in all the phases of the MEDARABTEL project, aimed at the strengthening of the regional telecommunications network linking directly the Arab countries between themselves and with their neighbouring countries. This co-operation is materialized through the setting up of a High-Level Co-ordination Committee, in which the following organizations participate: the Arab Telecommunication Union (ATU), the Arab States Broadcasting Union (ASBU), the Arab Satellite Organization (ARABSAT), GULFVISION Corp., the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) and the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD). The same mechanism is adopted for the implementation of the Translation and Arabization Project, aimed at the translation of the glossary of telecommunication terms (28.500 terms), in order to facilitate the transfer of technology, the Arabization and standardization of training material and the utilization of Arabic as an official language of the ITU as well as the day-to-day work by the telecommunication administrations in the Arab States. Joint seminars are organized and arrangements made in order to provide assistance to the Arab regional organizations through this regional project, thus strengthening their secretariats. Upon completion of this project, activities will be progressively transferred to these organizations.

6. Meteorology

30. In 1984, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and ACSAD commenced implementation of a regional development project and a multi-purpose hydrological programme aimed, in particular, at the selection and application of appropriate techniques for the design of surface-water and groundwater hydrological networks and the training of staff specializing in the use of such techniques, the collection and computer processing of hydrological data, and the preparation of a manual for the use of hydrology technicians. This project, known as HOMS 3/, is receiving UNDP financing.

7. Patents and copyright

31. UNESCO, ALECSO and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) organized a Copyright Seminar for Arab States at Rabat in 1977. In 1984, WIPO, in co-operation with ATU, sponsored another seminar for the Arab countries on copyright and related rights. WIPO is currently executing two projects financed by UNDP. The first of these is designed to establish a patent information and documentation service within the secretariat of the Federation of Arab Scientific Research Councils (FASRC); it is in its second phase of implementation and the future service will be attached to an Arab Centre for Scientific and Technological Documentation, which is still under study. The second project consists of strengthening the industrial-property institutions of Arab countries by training experts, preparing a study and recommendations on the situation prevailing in the Arab countries and identifying subjects for possible co-operation between Arab administrators of industrial property.

8. Environment

32. Within the framework of the United Nations Conference on Desertification held in 1977, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and ALECSO prepared a number of studies concerning the Arab region. These two organizations are also participating in the implementation of the Regional Programme on the Environment of the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden which is aimed at establishing a co-ordinated network of institutions in the region and includes the setting up of marine research and monitoring stations.

33. In conjunction with LAS and some Arab organizations such as ALECSO and AIDO, UNEP has organized several workshops and seminars for the Arab countries on major problems directly related to the environment. During the period 1984-1985, the following topics were chosen: prevention of industrial pollution; training of teachers in environmental disciplines; and development of national services for environmental protection.

9. Administration, documentation and information

34. DTCD and the Arab Organization of Administrative Sciences (AOAS) have commenced implementation of a UNDP-financed project designed to: (a) develop the training of Arab specialists in administrative sciences, either through the granting of fellowships or through the provision of courses; (b) prepare training materials (manuals, documents, etc.); (c) improve methods and techniques for

3/ The acronym corresponds to the English title of the programme: Regional Development and Application of Components of the Hydrological Operational Multi-Purpose Programme.

enlistment of advisory services and the collection and computer processing of data; (d) support the Arab countries which are administratively least advanced.

35. Various United Nations organizations are providing assistance in strengthening the administrative and documentation services of the LAS secretariat. For instance, DTCD is helping LAS to improve the management of its secretariat. UNESCO, for its part, is giving support to the LAS Documentation and Information Centre (ALDOC) under a UNDP-financed project. Through the Population Research Unit (PRU), established within the General Department for Social and Cultural Affairs of LAS, and with the financial assistance of the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), DTCD is contributing to the strengthening of the Library, Documentation Centre and Information Network of LAS in the field of population and related areas.

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

36. The International Labour Organization (ILO) has offered fellowships for further training to ten officials of the Arab Labour Organization (ALO), and in 1983, it organized a regional symposium on employment promotion in the Arab region. ILO co-operated with ALO in the implementation of the following projects: a Regional Project for Labour Administration, to be jointly executed by the ALO with financing from UNDP, is scheduled to become operational within the coming few months. Work is in progress on a Subregional Project on Middle Eastern Migrant Workers Job Qualification and Classification in which the ALO has been involved. In co-operation with the Arab Planning Institute, the ILO in 1984 conducted a four-week regional seminar on Population and Manpower Planning, with funds provided by UNFPA. In 1982 and 1985, the ILO took part in the ALO-sponsored Arab Expert Group meetings on the Arab Standardization of Occupational Classification; co-operation between both organizations will continue until the finalization of this ALO project. At the invitation of the ALO, experts from the ILO took part in the 1983-84 meetings that prepared the elaboration of an Arab Manpower Development Strategy.

37. Through the Population Research Unit (PRU), DTCD has arranged a number of training courses and seminars, which have acquainted Arab countries with modern techniques of demographic analysis and methods of integration of population issues into development planning, as well as providing an opportunity for discussion of population problems and population policy formulation and implementation. The PRU, with the financial contribution of UNFPA, has participated in a number of specific population studies, at national level as well as at the regional level.

38. DTCD, AFESD and ECWA have started to prepare a programme of assistance to women in the Arab World comprising projects relating to the training of women community leaders in rural areas, the training of women in the use and revival of traditional handicrafts techniques, and the preparation of a booklet on the rights of women. DTCD is also contributing to the preparation of a yearbook of Arab professional women for the purposes of exchanges of experts between developing countries. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), for its part, held a technical meeting at Amman in 1985 on the subject "Promotion of girls' development in the Arab world". UNESCO has carried out a number of seminars and training courses in various social science disciplines in co-operation with the Centre for Social Science Research and Documentation for the Arab Region (ARCSS) in which experts from several Arab countries participated. Other activities have included the construction of an Arab Lexicon on the Social Sciences; a project on the social indicators; and a research project on the Arab family and social structure.

39. In 1984, UNICEF prepared a draft study on the situation of Arab children and transmitted it to the technical secretariat of the Council of Arab Ministers of Social Affairs. It has also considered the possibility of publishing, jointly with LAS, a periodic report on the state of children in the Arab world similar to the UNICEF report on the state of the world's children. UNICEF has also proposed the establishment of a Supreme Council for the Arab Child which would be responsible for follow-up action.

11. Health

40. The Council of Ministers of Health of the Arab States and the Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean of the World Health Organization are implementing a multisectoral programme. In the area of essential drugs and vaccines, WHO and the Supreme Arab Committee on Drugs are helping to carry out a study on the possibility of group procurement of drugs by the Arab countries.

41. WHO has signed an agreement with the Arab Centre for Medical Literature, Kuwait, for the translation and publication of WHO documents. WHO is also making a compilation of health legislation in the Arab countries.

42. The struggle against diseases and epidemics in the Arab countries absorbs a large part of WHO's efforts. Together with the Arab countries, WHO is implementing the Zoonoses Control Programme (rabies, brucellosis, echinococcosis/hydatidosis, salmonella, etc.), particularly through the establishment of operational centres specializing in zoonosis control.

43. As regards parasitic diseases, WHO has carried out active teaching programmes on epidemiology and control of schistosomiasis in a number of Arab countries. Over the last decade, the UNDP/World Bank/WHO Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases (malaria, schistosomiasis, etc.) has implemented 43 projects in six member States of LAS with the aim of combating these diseases, developing epidemiology and social and economic research and strengthening research capability.

44. As regards drug dependence programmes, WHO and the Pan Arab Bureau for Narcotic Affairs organize seminars and collect data on illicit traffic.

12. Education, science and culture

45. Many projects have been or are being executed by UNESCO in the science, culture and education sectors in co-operation with various Arab specialized organizations. UNESCO and the Regional Centre for the Training of Educational Personnel at Amman are carrying out a UNDP-financed project for training high-level education administrators and providing the Arab States with advice and documentation in the latest educational sectors and advanced research on education.

46. The Regional Office for Education in the Arab States (UNEDBAS) is carrying out a UNFPA-financed Regional Programme for in-school and out-of-school education in the Arab countries in conjunction with eight national projects at the present time. The Co-ordinating Unit of the Educational Innovation Programme for Development in the Arab States (EIPDAS), together with an array of Arab institutions specializing in education, is helping to modernize educational systems in the Arab countries with a view to opening them up to innovations.

47. In conjunction with the Regional Centre for the Preservation of Cultural Property in the Arab States at Baghdad, UNESCO has taken a hand in training middle-level technicians to meet the requirements of the Arab countries. UNESCO is also sending Arab fellowship holders to the Regional Centre for the Training of Journalists at Damascus. UNESCO has co-operated with the Centre for Social Research on the Arab Region at Cairo in preparing an Arab social sciences glossary.

48. The Regional Office for Science and Technology for the Arab States (ROSTAS), ALECSO, ACSAD and ASMO are implementing two projects: (a) a study of the re-use of used water in agriculture and (b) the preparation of a hydrogeological map. ROSTAS is also helping to strengthen the links between Arab institutions specializing in the study of chemical pollution and between biological science institutes. In agreement with UNDP, UNESCO held a regional expert meeting at Algiers in 1985 on the introduction of computers into the educational systems of Arab countries. Lastly, UNESCO, in conjunction with ALECSO and AFESD, is conducting a feasibility study regarding educational industries in the Arab countries: publishing industries; industries producing school materials (including workbooks, tapes, laboratory equipment and equipment for the teaching of science and technology); and chemical, electronic and electro-chemical industries working for the educational sector.

B. Proposals for future co-operation

49. The following section reviews suggestions which are currently under discussion by different organizations belonging to the two systems and do not yet constitute projects properly speaking - i.e., it is not yet clear who would be responsible for their study, financing or execution. These proposals emerged from the joint LAS/United Nations meeting held at Tunis in June 1983 and are now being considered by the organizations concerned. Although they are still no more than ideas, we are reproducing them in this paper because some of them constitute interesting suggestions for projects in promising areas of co-operation.

50. Obviously for the Arab world, where arid and desert areas predominate, water resources are a vital asset which need to be properly known in order to be properly managed. Hence the idea of entrusting all water resource studies and projects to two regional institutes, one specializing in water resources management and the other in land surveys and hydrographic networks. ACSAD has offered to co-ordinate the work of a joint inter-agency working group (i.e., formed by interested organizations in the two systems) which would study measures to be taken.

51. Considering the importance of data processing and computer use, there is a proposal to set up a regional training centre in the areas of information science, documentation and computer technology and exchanges of rosters of experts. DTCD has agreed to act as co-ordinator for a joint inter-agency working group which is to give further consideration to this proposal. As a preparatory step, DTCD is planning to hold a regional seminar for the exchange of information on equipment used, programmes being developed and training and assistance requirements. AFESD, for its part, is sponsoring a project for Arabization of computers in conjunction with the Kuwaiti Scientific Research Institute. The project involves installing 3,000 computers in schools on an experimental basis.

52. Another sector which is being studied closely by the two systems is the exploitation of renewable sources of energy. A first meeting was held in Morocco in 1985 by the Permanent Committee of the Directors of the Arab Centres for Renewable Energies, with UNESCO participation. The meeting recommended that an Arab centre for renewable energy information should be established and requested UNESCO to give further consideration to that suggestion.

53. Consultations have taken place between DTCD and AFESD regarding possible co-operation in establishing a revolving fund for the exploitation of mineral resources in the Arab countries.

* * *

54. As can be seen, the organizations of the United Nations system, acting in co-operation with LAS and the Arab specialized agencies at the regional level, are engaged in arranging seminars and meetings, granting fellowships for training, preparing studies and documents, collecting information and statistics and recruiting experts. All these activities are important for obvious reasons: they enable Member States, through their intergovernmental institutions, to improve their knowledge of development problems, to co-operate so as to pool their efforts, to undertake joint activities, to draw on authoritative expert advice and to have staff capable of designing and managing projects. Some ten academies, institutes, centres and other regional Arab research, study and training institutions have been set up with financial participation from UNDP and the Regular Programmes of the United Nations and its specialized agencies. In most cases, however, this entails technical co-operation in what have become conventional sectors and rarely ultramodern sectors which require scientific knowledge and technical expertise that can be acquired only outside the region.

II. MECHANISMS FOR CO-OPERATION

55. Relations between the secretariats of the LAS system and those of the United Nations system are governed by a network of more than 40 arrangements, agreements, letters of intent, etc. (see annex II).

56. The mechanisms established by these means range from the exchange of documents to reciprocal representation at meetings. Other mechanisms provide for periodic inter-secretariat meetings or permanent representation.

A. UNDP intergovernmental meetings

57. UNDP has established a regional programme monitoring mechanism at the beginning and in the middle of each of its programming cycles: intergovernmental meetings are attended by representatives of the States concerned in each region and by representatives of the United Nations specialized agencies, inter-governmental organizations and regional specialized institutions. The Arab States participated, for the first time as a geographic entity, in the meeting on the third cycle. They met at Riyadh in January 1983 and reviewed the objectives of the third-cycle regional programme, implementation procedures and resources allocated to execution of the programme 4/. The LAS, the Arab specialized institutions and the organizations in the United Nations system were invited to attend in an observer capacity.

58. Although this procedure is only in its early stages, it represents an undoubted move towards integration of UNDP activity within the context of the development strategy for the Arab region.

59. The operation of this mechanism is nevertheless encountering some difficulties. A first obstacle lies in the fact that, although UNDP's share in the financing of regional technical co-operation programmes and projects is still substantial, it is no longer the sole source of financing. At present, the share of regional programmes and projects undertaken by the United Nations specialized agencies and financed from their own resources (regular programme, voluntary contributions, etc.) has caught up with and in some cases exceeds UNDP's share. Despite its importance, this technical co-operation is not taken into account in the work of the intergovernmental meetings organized by UNDP. This constitutes an undoubted limitation on the co-ordination of UNDP's regional programmes and projects and those of the United Nations specialized agencies.

60. In addition, the UNDP-financed country programmes absorb more than three quarters of the indicative planning figure (IFP), the remainder being allocated to the regional programme. It is sometimes at the expense of the latter programme that economies are made if UNDP resources are exhausted.

B. Ad hoc meetings of the two systems

61. The meeting held in Tunis in June 1983 initiated a process of consultation and marked the beginning of the rationalization and harmonization of the technical co-operation activities of the two systems as a whole within the context of the Arab region. Seen in this perspective, this meeting met a genuine need to devise a common approach. The high level of representation at

^{4/} See UNDP document "Regional programme for the Arab States 1983-1986" (DP/RAB/1) of 21 April 1983.

this meeting and its relatively short duration make it an ideal instrument for establishing the general outline of an overall policy for regional technical co-operation, discussing important common problems and opening up perspectives.

C. The Joint Inter-Agency Working Groups (JIWGs)

62. On the proposal of the Arab States, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted resolution 38/6 recommending, inter alia, the organization of two sectoral meetings, the one in 1984 and the other in 1985, to study the problems of (a) food and agriculture, and (b) the social development sector. In the same resolution, the General Assembly also recommended the establishment of Joint Inter-Agency Working Groups (JIWGs), in which the agencies and institutions of the two systems would be represented (hence the term "joint"). Prior to the establishment of these groups, the 200 regional projects presented at the Tunis meeting were reduced, thanks to the Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Special Political Questions and after consultation with the LAS and the Arab specialized institutions, to 37 projects. These projects were then communicated to all the specialized agencies and to various departments of the Secretariat, and to the LAS and the Arab specialized institutions. The two systems were asked to indicate whether they wished to participate in the work of the JIWGs which would be called upon to follow up those projects, and to specify the JIWGs for which they wished to act as convenors.

63. At the present time - more than two and a half years after the Tunis meeting - only two departments within the United Nations Secretariat, UNDP and four specialized agencies, have volunteered to act as convenors of JIWG meetings. Two Arab specialized institutions have also expressed a willingness to assume this responsibility. Out of 37 projects, 16 have so far found a taker.

D. The focal points

64. Two focal points, one within the United Nations Secretariat and the other within the general secretariat of the LAS, perform liaison functions in relation to the work of the JIWGs. These focal points are situated within the Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Special Political Questions and the LAS's General Department for International Political Affairs. Support for technical co-operation is thus, on both sides, entrusted to the political departments.

65. Given this situation, it may be asked whether a distinction should not be drawn between technical co-operation activities and activities of a purely political character, and whether the Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Special Political Questions is indeed the appropriate place for the focal point of technical co-operation for the whole of the United Nations system.

66. Regional technical co-operation between the two systems is therefore gradually acquiring co-ordination mechanisms, but this is a fairly recent phenomenon. The first UNDP intergovernmental meeting on the Arab regional programme dates back to 1983, the year which also saw the first ad hoc meeting of the two systems on the co-ordination of regional technical co-operation. The JIWGs did not begin their activities until 1984 and it is still too early to say whether they will succeed in covering all multilateral projects.

III. FORMULATION OF CO-OPERATION PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS

67. The projects being executed with UNDP participation 5/ and the 37 projects adopted following the meeting in Tunis in 1983 do not fall within a common general context and do not all relate to a development policy or strategy common to the countries of the region. This is bound to be the case, in fact, since, although at the national level practically all the Arab States have spelt out their development plans in terms of precise programmes and projects, the Strategy for Joint Arab Economic Development proclaimed in 1980 6/ has not been developed to the point of establishing co-ordinated and complementary joint regional programmes and projects.

A. Translation of the Joint Development Strategy into regional programmes and projects

68. Conscious of this shortcoming, the Council of Arab Economic Unity (CAEU) has undertaken the task of working, as a first step, on the unification of the periods covered by the development plans of the Arab countries and the harmonization of their methodology and, as a second step, on the formulation of joint regional programmes and projects on the basis of these plans. In addition, the United Nations has lent its assistance in the execution of these two stages 7/ and partial results have been achieved, since some ten Arab States have followed the CAEU's recommendation that development plans should begin in the same year (1981) and cover the same period (five years) 8/.

69. Within the context of the programming of regional projects for the Arab States, UNDP endeavoured, at the beginning of the third cycle (1982-1986), to place these projects within a coherent perspective and to link them to the priority objectives of the region as a whole, as expressed in the documents for the Eleventh Arab Summit Conference (Amman, 1980), the Symposium on the Arab World in the Year 2000 (organized by UNDP in Tangier in 1980), and the Arab Regional Meeting on Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries, held under the auspices of UNDP, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the Economic Commission for Western Asia (ECWA) in Geneva in 1980. Although this is a laudable effort, it should be noted that approximately half of UNDP programmes for 1982-1986 are simply the continuation of projects begun before 1982 9/.

70. For its part, FAO has offered to assist the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development and the Arab Authority for Agricultural Investment and Development in establishing precise food-security objectives for the Joint Strategy in the form of regional projects for the development of cereal production, increasing storage capacity, the prevention of harvest losses and the establishment of food reserves 10/.

5/ See annex III.

6/ Strategy adopted at the conclusion of the Eleventh Arab Summit Conference held in 1980 (see document A/37/638).

7/ See UNDP project RAB/77/010: Assistance to the CAEU.

8/ See the study on the CAEU and its achievements, published in Amman in 1975, p. 14.

9/ See above-mentioned document DP/RAB/1, pp. 19 et seq.

10/ FAO/LAS, Meeting on Food and Agriculture, Rome, 27-28 September 1984, FAO/LAS/84/3, p. 13.

B. Project identification

71. The main objective of the identification of regional projects should be to give priority to those projects which will be cost-effective and productive, assist in drawing the sector as a whole towards advanced activities and progress, and help to solve the most serious shortages and obtain the most urgent goods, and services. Of course, other objectives might be assigned to them, such as the strengthening of co-operation between the countries of the region, the development of local natural resources, and the employment of domestic human and financial resources. But an excessive number of priority criteria for identification purposes should be avoided so as not to render the choice impossible. It would be better, initially, to establish a limited number of criteria which are of genuine importance in the light of the objectives fixed by the Strategy.

72. One of these criteria might be the cost-effectiveness of regional projects. This would release the institutions responsible for project management and the countries participating in the projects from the obligation to subsidize money-swallowing activities indefinitely. The organizations in the United Nations system should, as far as possible, avoid involving themselves in the execution of regional projects whose cost-effectiveness is not assured and should devote their efforts to leading ongoing projects or projects under consideration towards cost-effectiveness, without which they would rapidly become an intolerable burden.

73. Another important criterion for identification might lie in the selection of projects which would contribute to the development of advanced activities: peaceful use of atomic energy and its application to agriculture, industry, health, etc.; use of new forms of energy, in particular solar energy; adaptation of data processing to the regional context; strengthening of services - foreign trade, insurance, monetary and financial markets. Regional projects meeting these criteria and submitted by the Arab specialized institutions currently exist, such as those submitted by the Arab Organization for Mineral Resources for uranium prospecting or the establishment of a mining research development fund, or the project submitted by the Arab Civil Aviation Council concerning the construction of light planes for crop-spraying.

74. A final important criterion for identification would be complementarity between related regional projects such as, for example, projects relating to prospecting for water, minerals, mines, gas or oil. Systematic information exchanges between these projects on soil structure, results of prospecting, grades encountered and so on would obviously be of the greatest interest.

C. Project formulation

75. Project identification should be immediately followed by project formulation so as to avoid the danger of losing immediacy. There is unfortunately no shortage of regional projects which have become obsolete because of excessive delay between their identification and formulation.

76. It might seem that the procedure for project formulation, better known as compiling the "project document", has been fully mastered and that it no longer presents any major difficulties liable to cause serious delay. Regrettably, this is far from being the case. Two years or more may elapse between formulation of a project and its acceptance by UNDP because, in this process, the traditional procedure on the question has been followed; in other words, everyone has waited until the countries of the region concerned by a particular project have agreed among themselves before submitting a request to UNDP, and until UNDP has agreed to share in financing and designated a United Nations agency willing to assume responsibility for project execution. Thus, between the three protagonists

- UNDP, the agency and the various countries - an exchange of correspondence gets under way, an exchange of versions of project documents which, after each modification, shuttle between various services until eventually everyone accepts a final formulation. This time-lag might be significantly shortened if, whenever an idea for an important regional project emerged in the region, a request was submitted to the competent agency to dispatch an official responsible for preparing, in consultation with the authorities of the countries concerned, the terms of reference of an exploratory mission by a consultant who, in two or three months, would visit the various countries in order to study the project thoroughly. He would establish the main characteristics of the project and discuss its technical aspects with the institutions and organizations in the two systems with a view to obtaining their technical opinions. All that would be left would be to find a country which would undertake to submit the project - on behalf of all the other countries concerned in the region - to UNDP for signature and assignment to one or more United Nations agencies for execution. The JIWGs (see chapter II) might, with the aim of speeding up their work, make use of this type of exploratory mission, which would cost only a few thousand dollars and for which UNDP or the agencies or institutions in the two systems might, as appropriate, assume responsibility.

77. Project formulation may involve other difficulties. Although, in most cases, project documents clearly indicate the essential characteristics of projects, such as duration, scheduling of their various stages, sources of financing and long-term objectives, an equally, if not more, important element is lacking: they contain no reference to any measure to prevent non-observance of deadlines. However, practice shows that delays in execution are frequent and in some cases amount to two, three, four or more years: they are then given a blessing in the second or third stages of the project.

78. A further difficulty often derives from the fact that, at the project formulation stage, no direct link is established between their financing, their products, the cost of these products and their commercial value. The project document clearly indicates that the end product of the project will consist of the preparation of a particular study, the training of so many specialists in a particular field, the provision of a particular consultancy service, or the execution of a particular research activity, but it does not specify the unit cost of the study, research, consultancy or training or indicate whether it is possible to obtain them elsewhere at lower cost.

IV. FINANCING OF CO-OPERATION PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS

A. Sources and volume of financing

79. As far as we know, there is no document produced by the United Nations or any other source indicating the volume of funds allocated to regional development co-operation between the two systems. The reason for this lies in the diversity of sources of financing and the difficulty of identifying them.

80. Although UNDP remains the largest provider of funds, it is difficult to put in figures the amount of its share, which takes several forms. The main form is, of course, the regional programme financed on the basis of an IPF, but there are also a multitude of special funds such as the Special Industrial Services programme, special measures for the least developed countries, etc.

81. During the period covered by the second cycle (1977-1981), approximately 105 projects received UNDP financial participation on the basis of an IPF of more than US\$22 million 11/. Three quarters of these projects were concentrated in three sectors: (a) development planning, (b) agriculture, forestry and fisheries, and (c) transport and communications.

82. As is well known, UNDP participation supplements governmental contributions. The Arab countries had undertaken to contribute to regional project financing up to practically double the amounts contributed by UNDP. Up to 30 September 1983, the share incumbent on them was estimated at US\$46.5 million as opposed to US\$27 million to be contributed by UNDP 12/. But it would seem that the amounts actually allocated to regional projects by the Arab Governments have not exceeded US\$2.5 million, and these figures are valid as of 30 September 1984 13/ (see annex III).

83. For the third cycle (1982-1986), the Governing Council of UNDP allocated a sum of some US\$58 million to Arab regional projects, of which 80 percent or US\$46 million was to be programmed. However, the decline in its resources prompted UNDP to reduce this amount to US\$32 million. To this sum must be added US\$11 million which were not spent during the 1977-1981 cycle; the total is thus US\$43 million, or an average of US\$8.5 million a year between 1982 and 1986. Multilateral funds are also entrusted to the organizations in the United Nations system to finance regional projects; for example, the OPEC Special Fund contributed more than US\$3 million to the financing of project RAB/81/002 for the development of fisheries in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden.

84. Reference should also be made to the International Fund for Agricultural Development, which between 1980 and 1983 granted assistance amounting to US\$3.5 million to the Arab Centre for the Study of Arid Zones and Dry Lands for research on improved seeds (see paragraph 11) and US\$1.1 million to the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development for the organization of training courses (see paragraph 11).

11/ Above-mentioned UNDP document DP/RAB/1, p. 9.

12/ UNDP Compendium of Approved Projects as of 30 September 1983, Series No. 14, p. 369.

13/ UNDP Compendium of Approved Projects as of 30 September 1984, Series No. 15, p. 395.

85. During the 1977-1981 cycle, the extent to which estimates were achieved was 66 percent (out of a programmed total of US\$33 million, US\$22 million were actually spent and US\$11 million had to be carried forward). If this same ratio is applied to estimated expenditure during the 1982-1986 cycle, the probable figure for actual expenditure is approximately US\$6 million per annum.

86. Apart from this sum, there are amounts deriving from other UNDP-related funds such as the United Nations Fund for Population Activities. Account should also be taken of the share of the regular programmes of the United Nations specialized agencies and entities forming part of the United Nations (UNEP, ECA, ECWA, etc.). In addition, these agencies and entities collect voluntary contributions (funds-in-trust and trust funds), part of which they assign to regional projects.

87. Furthermore, bilateral funds are channelled through the specialized agencies in the United Nations system, such as the funds for international campaigns to safeguard monuments (UNESCO) or the funds allocated to "footnote (a)" projects (IAEA).

88. In all probability, some US\$9 million has actually been spent by the United Nations system each year on Arab regional projects.

B. Financing policies

89. The partners of the United Nations system are, in practice, the various States, and not the LAS and the Arab specialized institutions. It is the States which allocate a share of their IPF to the financing of regional projects.

90. The LAS and the Arab specialized institutions generally provide no financing for regional technical projects comprising co-operation with the organizations in the United Nations system. This point should be borne in mind when considering co-operation between the two systems: at the regional level, as at the national level, co-operation with the United Nations system is the responsibility of the States of the region.

91. Account should also be taken of the difference in nature between IPF financing and non-IPF financing (regular programme of the United Nations agencies, voluntary contributions channelled through them, etc.). Whereas IPF funds impose no condition on the beneficiaries as to the choice of projects or sources of supply, non-IPF funds usually consist of tied bilateral financing; in other words, both the nature of the project and the source of supply are in most cases established by the donor country.

92. IPF financing is declining steadily, cycle after cycle, while non-IPF financing is increasing, but not to the extent that it totally offsets the decline in IPF financing. There is thus a gradual move towards predominance of tied bilateral financing channelled through the United Nations.

93. But regardless of the nature of the financing, the most significant development is the global reduction in funds allocated to regional programmes and projects and the need to think seriously about solutions for mobilizing substantial and reliable financial resources without, at the same time, increasing the burden on the States of the region.

C. Making financing cost-effective

94. Many regional projects are encountering financial difficulties. As long as UNDP financing continues, these projects somehow survive. But as soon as UNDP financing comes to an end, their existence becomes dependent on the resumption of UNDP financing under a new phase, the accumulation, year after year, of a deficit which no one knows how to eliminate or, more rarely, the substitution of the States hosting the projects for the other member States.
95. In order to deal with such difficulties, the United Nations should in future, before committing itself to the execution of regional projects, determine whether they will be of a non-profit nature or whether they will have to be cost-effective.
96. In order to reduce the budget for projects in the first category, use of a permanent administrative infrastructure, premises and personnel should, if possible, be avoided and as much reliance as possible placed on networks of institutions which will, in turn, assume responsibility for project activities and second the necessary personnel for short periods. The budgets for these projects, thus reduced, will be used to pay for a share of the infrastructure and personnel costs of the institutions in the network. Moreover, such a procedure will be in keeping with the desire of the States of the region not to establish new institutions and to make full use of existing institutions.
97. As to cost-effective projects, which at present constitute a tiny minority, their share should increase more rapidly.
98. Ideas for projects of this kind exist in greater numbers than one tends to believe. Even some existing projects could become cost-effective and forego budgetary contributions. Some projects comprise appreciable services free of charge (training of specialists, publication of statistical data, compilation of studies and surveys, provision of expert services); if these were sold at their true price, they would make a regular contribution to project budgets. An attempt should be made to invoice users for services; if users agree to this procedure, this will mean that the services obtained meet a genuine need.
99. Moreover, the fact of invoicing for services provided enables their price and quality to be judged and compared with those of competing services or products. If the comparison is not too unfavourable, this means that the projects are effective and useful.
100. During the initial years of these projects, it should be accepted that, for equal quality, their products and services will be slightly more expensive than those obtainable elsewhere. This discrepancy in price is often economically justified by the non-existence of "external economies" for projects undertaken in developing countries. But if a slight discrepancy continues, it should be accepted in return for the important spin-offs of regional projects such as their contribution to: (a) regional economic integration; (b) better knowledge of the problems of the region; (c) strengthening of the infrastructure available in the region, etc.
101. Invoicing for services and products deriving from regional projects might be adjusted according to the user. They could be offered free of charge to the less developed countries of the region.

V. EXECUTION OF CO-OPERATION PROJECTS

102. The execution of regional technical co-operation projects (recruitment of experts and consultants, purchase of equipment and material, training fellowships, negotiation of sub-contracting agreements, etc.) is encountering difficulties in the Arab region, although several important activities have been undertaken under these projects.

A. Equipment

103. The total amount of equipment which has been made available for Arab regional projects is considerable and is expected to increase still further in the future with the purchase of other apparatus and machines. This equipment is varied, ranging from ordinary typewriters to computers, and includes satellite communication installations and sophisticated research instruments.

104. The organizations in the United Nations system have made laudable efforts in the purchase, installation, operation and maintenance of all this equipment. It should be noted that, generally speaking, the equipment has been provided by sources outside the region. Taking account of the substantial progress achieved by local industries, the various organizations should obtain their supplies from the countries of the region whenever their products are competitive from the standpoint of price and quality.

105. Some regional projects seem under-equipped, whereas others appear to be over-equipped, particularly as far as computers are concerned. Efforts should be made to ensure that the latter are used to full capacity by associating several users. A thorough study of the total number of computers installed and their rate of use should be undertaken before the purchase of new units.

106. This question should be related to the establishment, in conjunction with the organizations in the United Nations system, of data banks using the computers. A study of the number of potential users and of the value and cost of the expected services should be undertaken before any decision to increase the number of such data banks.

107. Another related aspect should be examined, namely, the preparation of translations, dictionaries and glossaries in Arabic necessary for the operation of these computers. Co-ordination of the compilation of glossaries would be of great value and would avoid duplication and waste.

B. Experts

108. Details of the number of experts recruited each year by the organizations in the United Nations system in the context of regional projects are not available, but it may be estimated at over 1,000 since the commencement of technical co-operation (on the basis of an average of two experts for more than 500 UNDP-financed projects).

109. It should be noted that the general trend is towards the shortening of the periods during which experts stay in the region, and their replacement - to a large extent - by consultants or headquarters officials dispatched for short periods of one to four weeks. In addition, the qualifications required are becoming increasingly complex. It would seem, however, that a limited knowledge of Arabic and the fact that it is not used as a working language by many experts and consultants sent to the region constitute a difficulty which could be overcome through more frequent recourse to experts from the region.

110. A first step in this direction was taken with the establishment of files of Arab experts by a number of organizations in the United Nations system. Exchanges of information should take place between these organizations and the Arab specialized institutions which have undertaken to establish and update similar files.

C. Training

111. Several thousand persons have received training or further training within the context of regional projects supported by the organizations in the United Nations system during recent decades. They have done so through fellowships, participation in seminars, or enrolment in training centres and institutes established in co-operation with the United Nations system. As far as we know, there is no document which would provide information on the exact number of persons trained and their field, whether they have remained in the region, whether they have found work there or whether they are occupying positions for which they have been trained. In the field of training, there is a serious shortage of detailed, numerical information, which complicates any attempt to identify the problems and achieve beneficial co-ordination of training.

112. Although, on the whole, training through regional projects has proved useful, anomalies still exist. For example, in most cases fellowships are for training outside the region. This policy might have been justified 10 or 20 years ago, when there were no universities or institutes in the Arab countries but now, with the development of university and post-university centres in these countries, training in the region should become the rule and training abroad the exception.

113. Efforts should also be made to ensure that all persons trained are able, on completion of their studies, to find work corresponding to their field. Under some regional projects, considerable sums have been spent on the training for long periods (three to four years) of specialists who, as a result of the turn-around in the international economic situation, have remained unemployed or have had to accept jobs not directly related to their skill. In some cases, technicians and engineers have received, on completion of training, diplomas which were not recognized in their country of origin.

D. Sub-contracting

114. In the execution of regional projects, some organizations in the United Nations system have recourse to Arab specialized institutions as centres of excellence in their field. FAO and UNESCO have used the Arab Centre for the Study of Arid Zones and Dry Lands for the execution of research and development contracts. UNESCO has entrusted work to the Federation of Arab Scientific Research Councils.

115. However, this type of co-operation continues to be the exception, even though it is an area which is rich in potential. The organizations in the United Nations system should make more frequent use of the services of the Arab specialized institutions and regional intergovernmental organizations.

VI. EVALUATION OF CO-OPERATION PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS

116. Without evaluation of the impact of programmes, the effectiveness of projects, and the extent and manner of attainment of their objectives, it would be difficult to learn the lessons of the past and thus provide guidance for the future.

117. In fact, according to the very wording of the documents governing their execution, most regional projects, especially the larger ones, are subject to evaluation procedures in mid-term and on completion. Multi-annual programmes, in particular those executed with UNDP financial participation, are also the subject of critical examination in mid-term and on completion. In the case of both programmes and projects, it has happened that corrections are made in mid-term and improvements introduced into subsequent programmes and projects.

118. However, evaluations would be more effective if they were strengthened in three respects: objectives, procedure and institutionalization.

119. Among the major objectives of the evaluation of regional programmes and projects, the identification of activities which have become outdated or obsolete or no longer meet priority needs should not be overlooked. Many ongoing projects were initiated several years, if not decades, ago. Some of their activities have become routine or lacking in real value. They should be replaced by other, more modern or more future-oriented activities. Ideally, this updating or modernization should become systematic, and lead to a redeployment of human and financial resources and to their assignment to important and promising tasks. This would, of course, entail the constant updating of scientific knowledge and continuing training of the experts and personnel in charge of projects. But that is the price of progress.

120. From the standpoint of procedure, existing evaluations would render even more important services if they were preceded by ex ante or prior evaluations. As is well known, such evaluations, in relation to mid-term and ex post facto evaluations, have the advantage of helping to identify major shortcomings before the start of activities and thus help to save funds that the rectification of the shortcomings would inevitably have required in mid-term or on completion.

121. Lastly, at the institutional level, the assumption by a central unit of responsibility for the evaluation of regional programmes and projects would seem fully justified. Such a unit, comprising light-weight and inexpensive structures, would be called upon to undertake tasks which at present are not, apparently, the responsibility of any service; the systematic collection and updating of information on such project components as equipment (nature, cost, extent of use, possibilities of sharing, etc.), experts (number, fields, origins, duration of assignment, etc.), training (number of fellowship-holders, fields, training abroad, training in the region, etc.) and research contracts. General information of this kind would provide a clearer picture of regional programmes and projects, and would assist in their harmonization and the establishment of comparisons, criteria, and alternative choices and policies. This indicates the usefulness of such a unit, whose work would provide a basis for decisions without entailing any constraint on any party. It would in fact provide a general and logical framework for evaluations of regional programmes and projects.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Areas of co-operation

122. Technical co-operation for development at the regional level between the organizations in the United Nations system, the LAS and the Arab specialized institutions involves, on the one hand, over 20 organizations, entities and funds related to the United Nations system and, on the other, 22 Arab specialized institutions. This co-operation is exercised in many areas and covers practically all sectors of development. It has several important achievements to its credit, ranging from the preparation of studies to the training of specialized personnel and the establishment of centres and institutes. It is, however, often confined to sectors which are within the reach of the countries of the region and rarely justify recourse to outside expertise (paragraphs 6-54).

Recommendation No. 1

123. The organizations in the United Nations system should make a point of giving priority, in their regional co-operation with the Arab specialized institutions, to advanced sectors which justify recourse to outside expertise.

B. Mechanisms for co-operation

124. More than 40 inter-secretariat agreements and arrangements link the organizations in the United Nations system to the LAS and the Arab specialized institutions. Under these agreements, permanent delegations of the LAS and certain Arab specialized institutions are accredited to the organizations in the United Nations system, and recognition is given to reciprocal representation at meetings and assemblies and observer status. In the area of regional technical co-operation for development between the two systems, consultation and co-ordination mechanisms have been established: inter-secretariat meetings, ad hoc sectoral conferences, intergovernmental meetings, working groups, etc. (paragraphs 55 and 56).

1. UNDP intergovernmental meetings

125. Regional programmes and projects which are of concern to the Arab countries and whose financing UNDP shares are discussed and approved at the beginning of each UNDP cycle by an intergovernmental meeting which is attended by representatives of Arab States, UNDP, the various organizations in the United Nations system, the LAS and the Arab specialized institutions. In the mid-cycle, another meeting, attended by the same parties, is held to consider the progress of programmes and projects. These meetings constitute a useful instrument for co-ordinating and harmonizing regional technical co-operation between the two systems. However, they have two limitations: (a) they cover only programmes and projects enjoying UNDP financial participation, and (b) the Arab specialized institutions only have observer status at these meetings (paragraphs 57-60).

Recommendation No. 2

126. In order to benefit from the experience accumulated by the Arab specialized institutions, UNDP should obtain the technical advice of these institutions prior to the intergovernmental meetings on the Arab regional programmes at the beginning and in the middle of the cycle.

2. Ad hoc meetings of the two systems

127. In 1983, a mechanism for co-ordinating technical co-operation between the two systems was set up: it comprised ad hoc meetings of the representatives of all the organizations and institutions on both sides, in most cases at a high level: general secretaries and heads of agencies (paragraph 61).

Recommendation No. 3

128. The high level of representation at ad hoc meetings between the organizations in the United Nations system, the LAS and the Arab specialized institutions should encourage the United Nations system to concentrate the work of forthcoming meetings of this kind on the examination of major problems in regional technical co-operation and means of solving them, leaving the detailed discussion of projects to the mechanisms set up for this purpose.

3. The Joint Inter-Agency Working Groups (JIWGs)

129. In accordance with United Nations General Assembly resolution 38/6, several JIWGs have been established for the follow-up of 37 regional projects. To date, however, the JIWGs established cover only a limited number of projects. Few agencies or institutions within the two systems have volunteered to convene such Working Groups (paragraphs 62 and 63).

4. The focal points

130. Within the secretariats of the United Nations and the LAS, all information concerning the 37 projects and the JIWGs is transmitted to two focal points. On the United Nations side, the Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Special Political Questions discharges this responsibility, although its powers are essentially political and it is accordingly not very concerned with technical co-operation activities (paragraphs 64 and 65).

Recommendation No. 4

131. In order to give fresh impetus to the JIWGs, the Secretary-General of the United Nations should examine whether their support by the Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Special Political Questions should not be reconsidered in the light of the predominantly technical aspect of work of the JIWGs. However, regardless of which secretariat unit assumes responsibility for support for the JIWGs, this support should be entrusted to a senior headquarters specialist in technical co-operation who would be responsible for co-ordinating and intensifying the activity of the JIWGs and guiding it towards practical results.

C. Formulation of co-operation programmes and projects

132. A Strategy for Joint Arab Economic Development was adopted by the Eleventh Arab Summit Conference in 1980. In order to put the Strategy into practice, sectoral programmes based on regional projects should be formulated. The criteria for selection of such programmes and projects should be established with care (paragraphs 67-78).

Recommendation No. 5

133. The organizations in the United Nations system should ensure that their programmes and projects for co-operation with the LAS and the Arab specialized institutions fall within the framework established by the Strategy for Joint Arab Economic Development. The identification and formulation of regional projects designed to put the objectives of this Strategy into practice should take account of the suggestions made in the body of the report, in particular the need to design cost-effective and complementary projects.

D. Financing of co-operation programmes and projects

134. The sums allocated by the United Nations system to the execution of regional programmes and projects amount, on average, to US\$9 million a year. Although these sums are not insignificant, they are steadily declining and are used to finance projects which are mostly encountering financial difficulties. Whenever participation by the United Nations system in the financing of these projects comes to an end, their budgets become difficult to balance (paragraphs 79-101).

Recommendation No. 6

135. In order to lighten the budgetary burden of regional projects, the organizations in the United Nations system should: (a) make more frequent use of the "networks of institutions" mechanism and employ their administrative infrastructure for the backstopping of non-profit projects; and (b) increase the number of economically viable projects.

E. Execution of co-operation projects

136. Thanks to regional technical co-operation between the organizations in the United Nations system and the Arab States, approximately 1,000 experts have been made available to the region, thousands of specialists have received training or further training, various equipment has been provided and put into service, and sub-contracting agreements have been concluded with the Arab specialized institutions. More information on the use of this equipment, the fields of activity of experts and the impact of training would be very useful (paragraphs 102-115).

Recommendation No. 7

137. Whenever such a course is possible and less expensive, the organizations in the United Nations system are invited to use the resources available in the region by calling on the services of local experts, obtaining equipment from

domestic industries and undertaking training within the region. They should endeavour to achieve full and rational use of equipment, training leading to guaranteed employment and more frequent sub-contracting, taking advantage of the experience gained by the specialized institutions in the region.

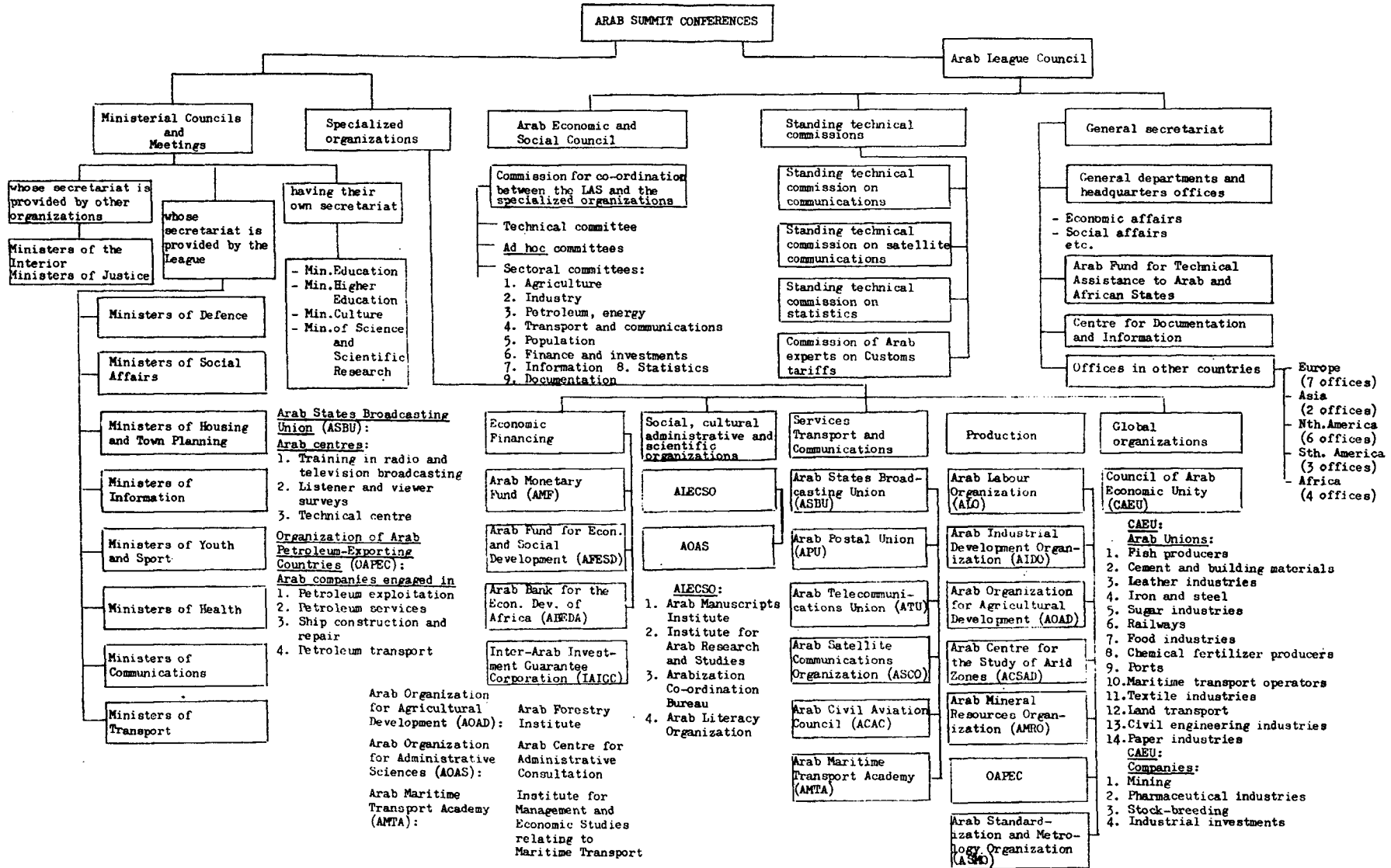
F. Evaluation of co-operation programmes and projects

138. Regional programmes and projects, in particular those with UNDP financial participation, are, in general, the subject of mid-term evaluation or final evaluation. This evaluation should be strengthened in respect of objectives, procedure and institutional infrastructure (paragraphs 116-121).

Recommendation No. 8

139. The United Nations should lend assistance to the LAS on request, with a view to assisting it in strengthening its evaluation activities concerning regional programmes and projects.

ANNEX I. ORGANIZATION CHART OF THE LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES



ANNEX II. INTER-SECRETARIAT AGREEMENTS, LETTERS OF INTENT, CO-OPERATIVE ARRANGEMENTS BETWEEN ORGANIZATIONS IN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM, THE LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES AND THE SPECIALIZED ARAB INSTITUTIONS

	United Nations (Secretariat)	United Nations Department of Technical Co-operation for Development (UNCTD)	United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations (UNCTC)	United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS)	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)	United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)	United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)	UNESCO ^{b/}	FAO ^{c/}	International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)	International Labour Office (ILO)	United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)	World Health Organization (WHO)	World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)	World Meteorological Organization (WMO)	International Trade Centre (ITC)
League of Arab States - General Secretariat (LAS)	X	X	X					X	X		X		X	X	X	
Arab Standardization and Metrology Organization (ASMO)								X	X							
Arab Labour Organization (ALO)											X					
Council of Arab Economic Unity (CAEU) ^{a/}					X		X		X			X				X
Arab Industrial Development Organization (AIDO)									X					X		
Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD)									X	X						
Arab Centre for the Study of Arid Zones and Dry Lands (ACSAD)						X		X	X						X	
Arab Mineral Resources Organization (AMRO)		X	X									X				
Organization of Arab Petroleum-Exporting Countries (OAPPEC)																
Arab States Broadcasting Union (ASBU)								X						X		
Arab Postal Union (APU)																
Arab Telecommunications Union (ATU)																
Arab Satellite Communications Organization (ASCO)																
Arab Civil Aviation Council (ACAC)																
Arab Maritime Transport Academy (AMTA)																
Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO)						X		X	X					X		
Arab Organization for Administrative Sciences (AOAS)																
Inter-Arab Investment Guarantee Corporation (IAIGC)																
Arab Bank for the Economic Development of Africa (ABEDA)								X								
Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD)								X	X	X						
Arab Monetary Fund (AMF)																

^{a/} The CAEU has also signed agreements with GATT.

^{b/} UNESCO has also signed agreements with the Arab Bureau of Education for Gulf States, the Arab Federation for Technical Education, the Federation of Arab Scientific Research Councils, the Gulf Organization for Industrial Consulting, the Islamic Development Bank and the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

^{c/} FAO has also signed agreements with the Arab Authority for Agricultural Investment and Development (AAAD).

ANNEX III. UNDP REGIONAL PROJECTS (RAB) AS OF SEPTEMBER 1984

Project Number and Title	Executing Agency	Date Approved	Estimated Completion Date	Estimated Project Cost		
				UNDP	Third Party Contribution	Government Contribution
<u>General Development Issues. Policy and Planning</u>						
RAB-74-011 Programme for the Identification and Preparation of Inter-country Investment Projects and Related Feasibility Studies	AFESD	12/75	12/85	3,885,519	0	0
RAB-77-002 The Arab Planning Institute - Kuwait	ECWA	1/77	12/85	1,552,653	0	0
RAB-79-031 Assistance to the Arab Organization of Administrative Sciences	UN	1/80	12/87	1,949,155	0	0
RAB-80-009 Household Survey Services in Western Asia	ECWA	11/80	12/84	1,230,352	0	0
RAB-80-036 ECA Multinational Programming and Operational Centre Tangiers	ECA	12/80	12/84	231,953	0	0
RAB-81-003 Arab Institute for Banking and Financial Studies	ECWA	8/81	12/84	58,616	0	0
RAB-81-006 Special Support Services for the Regional Programme for Arab States	UNDP	10/82	12/86	174,000	0	0
RAB-82-002 Advisory and Programme Support to the International Centre for Public Enterprises in Developing Countries	GVT	1/82	12/85	288,500	0	0
RAB-82-006 Assistance to CAFRAD	UN	6/82	12/84	99,896	0	0
RAB-83-021 Upgrading of Industrial Property Systems in Arab Countries	UNDP	1/85	12/86	193,000	0	0
RAB-84-004 Administrative Development Plan for the Secretariat of the League of Arab States	UN	7/84	12/85	132,000	0	0
RAB-84-006 Integrated Development Planning Adviser for Refugee Affected Areas in the Sudan and Somalia	UNDP	3/84	12/85	210,000	0	0
RAB-84-011 Regional Consultancy Services and Training	UNDP	6/84	12/86	1,500,000	0	0
RAB-84-012 Workshop on Regulating and Negotiating with Transnational Corporations	UNCTC	8/84	12/84	78,500	0	0
RAB-84-032 Establishment of a Patent Information and Documentation Unit (PIDU), within the Federation of Arab Scientific Research Councils (FASRC)	UNDP	10/84	12/87	420,500	686,000 (FASRC)	0
TOTAL FOR GENERAL DEVELOPMENT ISSUES. POLICY AND PLANNING				12,004,644	686,000	0
<u>Natural Resources</u>						
RAB-80-011 Ressources en eau dans les pays de l'Afrique du Nord	UNDP	9/80	12/85	3,846,648	0	271,352
RAB-80-014 Mineral Exploration of the Egypt/Sudan Area of Integration	UN	12/80	12/85	357,150	0	0
RAB-80-031 Yemeni Joint Project for Natural Resources	UN	6/81	12/86	1,782,884	0	0
RAB-82-013 Transnational Project on the Major Regional Aquifer in North East Africa	UN	3/84	12/86	501,600	0	0
RAB-84-023 Training of Technicians in Water Resources Management and Technology in Arab Least Developed Countries	UNDP	7/84	12/84	36,000	0	0
TOTAL FOR NATURAL RESOURCES				6,524,282	0	271,352

ANNEX III. UNDP REGIONAL PROJECTS (RAB) AS OF SEPTEMBER 1984

(continued)

Project Number and Title	Executing Agency	Date Approved	Estimated Completion Date	Estimated Project Cost		
				UNDP	Third Party Contribution	Government Contribution
<u>Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries</u>						
RAB-75-010 Desert Locust Survey and Control Project	FAO	12/76	12/84	1,018,153	0	0
RAB-81-002 Development of Fisheries in Areas of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden. Phase II	FAO	10/81	12/84	1,679,401	3,441,000	0
RAB-81-012 Development of Apiculture	FAO	8/83	12/84	3,658	0	0
RAB-82-009 Introduction of Jojoba Plantation in the Arab Countries	FAO	12/83	12/84	22,765	0	0
RAB-83-016 Mediterranean Regional Aquaculture Project	FAO	1/84	12/86	640,000	0	0
RAB-83-017 Improvement of Olives Production	FAO	1/84	12/86	600,000	153,000	300,000
RAB-83-018 Studies on Food Security in the Arab Region	UNDP	5/84	12/85	80,000	0	0
RAB-83-022 Strengthening of Desert Locust Survey and Control Services	FAO	12/83	12/84	100,000	0	0
RAB-83-023 Development of Fisheries in Areas of the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. Phase III	FAO	5/84	12/85	1,231,760	0	0
RAB-84-003 Improvement of Technical Capabilities in Apiculture Production	FAO	2/84	12/85	366,000	0	0
TOTAL FOR AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND FISHERIES				5,741,737	3,594,000	300,000
<u>Industry</u>						
RAB-78-021 Regional Co-operation Programme for the Development and Promotion of Fertilizer Production and Utilization	UNIDO	9/79	12/84	927,597	0	0
RAB-80-013 Establishment of the Arab Regional Packaging Centre	UNIDO	9/81	12/84	202,233	0	0
RAB-81-005 Regional Programme for the Development of the Arab Iron and Steel Industry	UNIDO	7/81	12/86	607,958	0	0
RAB-83-020 Establishment of the Arab Regional Packaging Centre	UNIDO	12/83	12/85	656,419	0	0
RAB-84-008 Establishment of Domestic/International Sub-contracting Exchanges	UNIDO	5/84	12/84	80,000	0	0
TOTAL FOR INDUSTRY				2,474,207	0	0
<u>Transport and Communications</u>						
RAB-79-014 Implementation of Middle East and Mediterranean Telecommunications Network	ITU	10/79	12/84	2,172,761	0	808,808
RAB-79-015 Advisory Services in regard to Port Reception Facilities in the Mediterranean Sea Area	IMO	4/81	12/84	195,012	0	0
RAB-81-013 Translation and Arabization of Telecommunications Glossary Terms	ITU	10/82	12/84	18,830	0	763,370
RAB-81-014 Civil Aviation College/Gulf States. Phase II	ICAO	12/81	12/84	352,934	0	40,000
RAB-82-011 World Maritime University	IMO	8/82	12/85	127,015	0	0
RAB-82-025 Training Development in the Field of Maritime Transport	UNCTAD	9/83	12/85	206,300	0	0

ANNEX III. UNDP REGIONAL PROJECTS (RAB) AS OF SEPTEMBER 1984
(continued)

Project Number and Title	Executing Agency	Date Approved	Estimated Completion Date	Estimated Project Cost		
				UNDP	Third Party Contribution	Government Contribution
RAB-83-010 Postal Development and Training of Specialists	UPU	8/84	12/86	337,004	0	0
RAB-84-001 Assistance to the Civil Aviation College, Gulf States. Phase II	ICAO	3/84	12/86	800,164	0	350,178
RAB-84-028 Arab Maritime Transport Academy	IMO	1/85	6/87	931,400	0	912,981
TOTAL FOR TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS				5,141,420	0	2,875,337
<u>International Trade and Development Finance</u>						
RAB-82-030 Preparatory Assistance for an Intra-regional Maritime Information System in the ECWA Region	ECWA	8/83	12/84	44,000	0	0
TOTAL FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT FINANCE				44,000	0	0
<u>Health</u>						
RAB-81-007 Mediterranean Zoonoses Control Programme	WHO	2/82	12/84	102,348	0	0
TOTAL FOR HEALTH				102,348	0	0
<u>Education</u>						
RAB-79-025 Institute of Education, Amman, Jordan. Phase IV	UNESCO	10/79	12/85	786,138	0	0
TOTAL FOR EDUCATION				786,138	0	0
<u>Humanitarian Aid and Relief</u>						
RAB-83-012 Second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa	UNDP	7/83	12/84	108,500	0	0
TOTAL FOR HUMANITARIAN AID AND RELIEF				108,500	0	0
<u>Culture</u>						
RAB-79-030 Documentation Centre for the Secretariat of the League of Arab States	UNESCO	12/79	12/86	2,606,198	0	0
TOTAL FOR CULTURE				2,606,198	0	0
<u>Science and Technology</u>						
RAB-84-007 Regional Development and Application of Components of the Hydrological Operational Multi-purpose Subprogramme (HOMS)	WMO	6/84	12/86	400,000	0	0
TOTAL FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY				400,000	0	0
TOTAL REGIONAL PROJECTS (RAB)				55,933,474	4,280,000	3,446,689

Source: UNDP Compendium of Approved Projects as of 30 September 1984, Series 15, pp. 395 to 398.