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SUPPORT

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATOR FOR 1986

Reports of the Joint Inspection Unit

Note by the Administrator

1. Eleven reports of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) have been issued since the beginning of 1986. Five of these are of interest or concern to the United Nations Development Programme and to the Governing Council and are the subject of this note. 1/ In reviewing this note, it should be borne in mind that at its forty-first session, the General Assembly, in its decision 41/448 of 5 December 1986 on the Joint Inspection Unit, decided to defer until its forty-second session consideration of the reports of the JIU issued in 1986.

JIU/REP/86/1 Field representation of organizations of the United Nations system: structure and co-ordination

2. The report was circulated among members of the General Assembly under the symbol A/41/424. At its forty-first session, the General Assembly took note of the JIU Report in its decision 41/444, of 5 December 1986, and decided "in the light of Economic and Social Council resolution 1986/4 of 23 July 1986, to transmit to the governing bodies of the United Nations system the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled 'Field representation of organizations of the United Nations system: structure and co-ordination' ... together with the views expressed by Member States during the discussion on those issues 2/ and the comments to be made by the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination for the consideration of those bodies in formulating their views for presentation to the Economic and Social Council at its second regular session of 1987." 3/ The Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC) has not yet issued its comments on this report, although the matter had been discussed at the second regular session of 1986 of the Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (Operational Activities) (CCSQ) (OPS). Given the importance of this report to UNDP, and since the views of the Council on this

report will have an important influence on its consideration at the second regular session of the Economic and Social Council later this year, comprehensive comments of UNDP are provided in this note.

3. In considering this report, the Council may wish to bear in mind three related matters:

(a) The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 86/74, paragraph 17, requests the governing bodies of the organizations of the United Nations system to pay particular attention to the need to rationalize field representation of the organizations. The resolution recognizes the necessity to consult with the recipient Government on this matter. Moreover, the decision states that new field offices should be established only if the required services cannot be shared with other organizations or provided in any other way;

(b) Recommendation 12 of the Report of the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts to Review the Efficiency of the Administrative and Financial Functioning of the United Nations, which is also relevant in assessing the JIU recommendations. This recommendation calls on relevant governing bodies to review the cost effectiveness and efficiency of the field representation of the various programmes with a view to merging field offices of the United Nations, whenever feasible, thereby achieving better co-ordination and reducing some of the administrative costs;

(c) The comments of the Secretary-General on certain aspects of this JIU report, which are contained in paragraphs 53-55 of document A/41/35 on operational activities of the United Nations.

4. At the outset, it must be emphasized that UNDP fully endorses the basic thrust and tenor of the JIU report. The inspectors' views on the proliferation of field offices, the negative effect which this proliferation can have on co-ordination, the burden it places on recipient countries, and the need to strengthen the co-ordination mechanisms of the United Nations system are fully shared by UNDP. UNDP agrees with the inspectors that it is uniquely placed, both in terms of its multi-disciplinary and multi-sectoral perspectives, to serve as a focal point for co-ordination at the field level and for the provision of the needed support services to operational activities.

5. UNDP notes with approval and agreement the JIU comments on the importance of joint or co-ordinated programming. Indeed, UNDP places even greater emphasis on this aspect of its work and it considers this to be central to effective co-ordination. UNDP places great importance on establishing common procedures for project preparation and monitoring as necessary inputs to the co-ordinated planning and implementation of operational activities. The JIU report has cited the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP) efforts at joint programming on a sectoral level as a model which could be explored further. UNDP is committed to pursuing and to expanding the scope of this collaborative effort with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) and the World Food Programme (WFP) in the context of the JCGP. UNDP is also committed to furthering collaboration and co-ordination between UNDP and the World Bank.

6. As the JIU report notes, the amount of technical assistance provided by the World Bank is very substantial. Structural adjustment requirements, the essential link between capital and technical programmes and the very magnitude of the World Bank technical assistance programmes all make it imperative to foster closer collaboration between the World Bank programmes and all operational activities for successful co-ordination and enhanced impact. The JIU report barely touched upon issues related to the World Bank and did not explicitly include World Bank field representation in its review.

7. The inspectors did, however, refer to the UNDP-supported round tables and the Bank-supported consultative groups, as well as to technical co-operation assessment missions, since renamed national technical co-operation assessments and programmes (NATCAPs). A very considerable effort has, over the last two years, gone into improving the round-table exercises and into developing NATCAPs as valuable inputs both to national planning and to the co-ordination of assistance from both multilateral and bilateral sources. Throughout this period, UNDP has worked closely with the World Bank, and will continue to do so.

8. The JIU noted that resident co-ordinators need to have the support of staff trained in economics in order to make them more effective in such broad ranging co-ordination efforts. In this context, UNDP draws attention to the programme recently launched within UNDP to recruit and place economists in UNDP field offices, initially in a limited number of African countries.

9. Although some of the issues referred to above may appear to go beyond the direct question of field representation, which was the immediate subject of the JIU report, the report itself is not limited to consideration of field representation. Implicit throughout the report is an overriding concern with improved co-ordination and the more cost-effective conduct of operational activities. UNDP agrees that this is the proper perspective from which questions related to field representation of the organizations of the United Nations system should be viewed. Thus, UNDP finds the approach and conclusions of the JIU report to be consistent with the concerns expressed in many fora and which, inter alia, have also been expressed in the report of the Group of 18 (see para. 3 (b) above).

10. The recommendations of the report are inevitably more narrowly focused on questions of field representation. While UNDP endorses recommendations 1 and 2 without reservation, it should be pointed out that, in themselves, the recommendations are not sufficient. For example, no mechanisms are proposed for establishing more detailed criteria or for monitoring their implementation. It is also not clear who will mandate the application of the criteria. The recommendations, and the report as a whole, would, in the view of UNDP, be stronger and possibly more effective, if explicit reference were made to the possibility of strengthening field representation without the establishment of separate field offices, along the model of WFP, UNFPA and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). In other words, a single United Nations system field office might be a desirable aim in a number of countries.

11. UNDP has difficulties with the inspectors' third recommendation on setting up a roster of possible candidates for the post of resident co-ordinator, including

suitable candidates of the specialized agencies. It should be borne in mind that a process which operates well has been implemented for some time. This process is based on procedures developed within the ACC framework concerning the designation of the single official referred to in General Assembly resolution 32/197 on the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system. As a result of this process for the designation of the resident co-ordinator, of 115 UNDP resident representatives acting as resident co-ordinators, some 40 have worked in one or more agencies of the United Nations system; a further seven, on leave from their Governments, come from bilateral donor aid backgrounds.

12. If a roster of possible candidates for resident co-ordinators were to be set up as suggested by the JIU, this could mean, in the light of ACC procedures mentioned earlier, that the appointment of resident representatives would in fact be removed from the authority of the Administrator. The establishment of a roster for resident Co-ordinators would imply either that UNDP could not appoint its own resident representatives (and this is, of course, unacceptable) or that the posts of resident representative and resident co-ordinator would be separated. UNDP believes that to separate the posts of resident representative and resident co-ordinator would not only undermine the central position and responsibilities of UNDP and its field network, but would also create even greater inefficiencies within the system. Moreover, the establishment of an entirely new support structure for resident co-ordinators would run counter to all that both the JIU and the Group of 18 have been advocating.

13. UNDP endorses the fourth recommendation which the inspectors have made in their report that responsibility for the United Nations Information Centres (UNICs) be assigned to the resident co-ordinators. A rationalization of the work and the representational responsibilities of the UNIC directors and the resident co-ordinators is desirable.

JIU/REP/86/3 Co-operation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States

14. The report was circulated among members of the General Assembly under the symbol A/41/615. The comments of the Secretary-General, which reflect comments by UNDP, were issued in document A/41/615/Add.1.

JIU/REP/86/4 JIU Report on Technical Co-operation Activities of the International Telecommunication Union

15. This report, primarily of concern to the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) raised the long-standing matter of the ITU request for additional support-cost reimbursement. At its thirty-third session (1986), the Governing Council reviewed the matter and reaffirmed its previous position on this subject in its decision 86/52 of 27 June 1986.

JIU/REP/86/9 Problems of storage and its costs in organizations of the United Nations system

16. The report was circulated among members of the General Assembly under the symbol A/41/806. Comments thereon by the Secretary-General are currently under preparation for eventual consideration by the General Assembly at its forty-second session.

JIU/REP/86/10 Technical co-operation between the United Nations Development Programme and the regional economic commissions: Economic Commission for Africa

17. The report was circulated among members of the General Assembly under the symbol A/42/110. The comments of the Secretary-General, which reflect comments by UNDP, were issued in document A/24/110/Add.1.

Notes

1/ The following additional reports were prepared by the JIU in 1986: Role of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Africa (JIU/REP/86/2); Management of interpretation services in the United Nations system (JIU/REP/86/5); Cash management in the United Nations and four specialized agencies (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and the World Health Organization (WHO)) (JIU/REP/86/6); Publications of the International Court of Justice (JIU/REP/86/7); Administration of justice in the United Nations (JIU/REP/86/8); Review of UNICEF activities and structures (JIU/REP/86/11).

2/ See A/C.2/41/SR.29-34.

3/ This resolution also requests that the JIU report concerning technical co-operation among developing countries be transmitted to the governing bodies of the United Nations system. The Administrator has done this through document DP/1986/12. The Council took note of this report in its decision 86/55, paragraph (b). Moreover, the report has been transmitted to the High-level Committee on the Review of Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries (TCDC) at its fifth meeting, held 18 to 22 May 1987.

