



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

Distr.
GENERAL

DP/1987/15/Add.2
6 May 1987

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

POLICY

Thirty-fourth session
26 May-19 June 1987, New York
Item 4 (a) of the provisional agenda

PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of decisions adopted by the Governing Council
at previous sessions: Annual review of thematic programmes
established by the Council

Addendum

Report on regional workshop on human resources development

Buenos Aires, Argentina, 8 to 11 December 1986

I. DISCUSSIONS

1. In accordance with provisions established in decision 86/14 of 27 June 1986, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in collaboration with the Bariloche Foundation, carried out a regional workshop on human resources development from 8 to 11 December 1986 in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

2. The workshop discussions took place within the broad conceptual framework of what constitutes human resources development. They were centred on practical policy issues which could be addressed by technical co-operation programmes. Participants, who came from the region, from agencies of the United Nations system and from the World Bank, attended in their personal capacity and included academicians as well as managers and people directly involved in human resources programmes from the private and public sectors. The agenda covered the following items:

(a) Overview of human resources development in Latin America: UNDP experience in human resources development;

(b) Development issues in Latin America and the Caribbean in the context of the economic crises, adjustment and economic reactivation;

- (c) The public sector, including State enterprises;
- (d) The informal sector, both urban and rural;
- (e) Education, communication, and learning processes most conducive to human resources development;
- (f) Economic and technological factors affecting the demand for human resources;
- (g) Employment and human development;
- (h) Proposals to change the role of UNDP in human resources development;
- (i) Outlook of development issues in Latin America and the Caribbean as they affect human resources development;
- (ii) The role of technical co-operation.

3. It was considered an immediate imperative to implement human resources development programmes. The current economic crisis and related adjustment processes presently experienced in the region are producing severe and sometimes irreversible effects on human resources development; furthermore, the resumption of economic growth requires an assured supply of a different mix of human skills. Human resources development was seen as the main objective of the development process itself and as part of the social, political, economic and cultural rights of the individual.

4. It was considered that the kind of technical co-operation required in support of critical issues affecting social sectors and human resources development in the region is not in the nature of the transfer of technology. Thus, the programmes launched should aim at mobilizing domestic talent in the search for innovative approaches that take national realities into consideration. At the same time, it is clear that there cannot be a single comprehensive response to human resources development issues at a regional or even at a country level; but rather such programmes should be tailor-made for specific targeted social groups.

5. Human resources development was viewed as a long-term process. Thus, the planning, formulation, implementation and evaluation of programmes in this field should be made with a medium- and long-term prospective. For this reason, investment in human resources development is particularly critical in periods of economic crisis; failing to do so may have serious effects on the future development potential of the countries concerned. It is important to develop policies and financial instruments to ensure adequate financing for human resources programmes.

6. Human resources development cannot be subject to considerations or assessments which are carried out with short-term instruments such as cost-benefit analyses, or manpower approaches. The need to improve the quality of the stock of human resources at all levels, from specialized workers to professionals at the Ph.D.

level, was seen as a necessary condition for economic and social development and for overcoming the current economic crisis.

7. With regard to employment, the role of the public sector was seen as complementary to that of the private sector. In periods of crisis, the public sector may be called upon to launch programmes of massive employment, such as public works schemes.

8. Since the resumption of sustained economic growth and the expansion of employment in the modern sector is not foreseen in the near future, the informal sector is expected to continue to absorb employment. For this reason, it was considered important to develop policies and financial instruments to support activities in this sector.

9. The crux of the problem in this sector lies in the urban sector, since it is expected that two of every three Latin Americans will live in a city by the year 1990. Urban populations are already confronted by rapidly deteriorating infrastructures and services that are creating increased competitiveness among lower income groups for living space, access to schooling, hospital services, water systems and transportation.

10. The incorporation of new technologies in the productive sector requires changes in specific fields of competence of the labour market. Self-reliant growth in the region necessitates human resources development at all levels, including post-graduate training and high technology.

11. The participants identified a series of principles, policies and actions to be incorporated in a regional technical co-operation strategy for human resources development. Such a strategy may encompass an assessment of the impact of adjustment programmes on human resources development in the short, medium and long terms; carrying out projects in the social sector specifically targeted to the most vulnerable groups of the population, which historically have not benefited from economic growth; undertaking technological research and development programmes linked to the productive sectors and to formal and non-formal educational systems. It was also considered necessary to improve the quality and efficiency of social services delivered, and to allocate the necessary financial resources for this task.

II. RECOMMENDATIONS

12. In the light of the foregoing considerations, it was recommended that UNDP assist countries in the region to meet the following goals:

(a) To assess the social impact of short-term adjustment programmes and to establish systems for monitoring the social impact of economic policies;

(b) To prepare and document their cases on the long-term effects of adjustment;

(c) To support innovative and non-conventional human resources development projects, formulated in accordance with national realities and which do not aim at reproducing external experiences;

(d) To undertake projects and programmes oriented to human resources investment and to improve the quality and efficiency of social services delivery;

(e) To assess fiscal budgeting and investment processes, with a view to reallocating resources in favour of human resources development;

(f) To promote and develop mechanisms for institutional and organizational innovation, including training systems for different managerial levels;

(g) To establish the necessary mechanisms to attract qualified high-level staff to the public sector;

(h) To promote integrated and sustained non-conventional policies in support of the informal sector, including training for income generation, productive welfare policies, and the development and establishment of financial instruments for access to credit;

(i) To formulate programmes for beneficiary groups implemented through established and experienced government, private and non-governmental institutions;

(j) To undertake educational and on-the-job training programmes, with the participation of private enterprises, so as to ensure private sector investment in this process;

(k) To support programmes which incorporate new and modern technologies and methodologies for education and training, linking the educational system, at all levels, with social, productive and service activities;

(l) To assess the impact on the social sector and labour market of the introduction of new technologies;

(m) To carry out technological forecasting, including components that assess training and professional requirements.
