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PROGRAMME PLANNING

Country and intercountry programmes and projects

FOURTH COUNTRY PROGRAMME FOR BURUNDI

Note by the Administrator

I. PROCESS OF THE PROGRAMMING EXERCISE

1. The programming process for the fourth country programme of Burundi really began with the round-table conference between the Government and its major donors in February 1984. This provided a long-term perspective of the development priorities for the country. Among the main conclusions of the conference, for example, was an agreement between participants that the Government development priorities in food self-sufficiency, management capacity, and education, deserved external support. At the request of the Government and donors, UNDP initiated preparatory activities for sectoral consultations in the areas of rural development and education as follow up to the round-table meeting.

2. Between August and September 1985, the Government, represented by the Ministry within the Presidency responsible for Planning, and the UNDP Resident Representative carried out a review of the third country programme. The review concentrated on the quality and quantity of programme delivery, especially in relation to the Government Fourth National Development Plan (1983-1987). In the course of the programme review, the Resident Representative also consulted with major bilateral and multilateral donors with a view to further determining any common objectives or problems between their ongoing assistance programmes to Burundi and the ongoing UNDP programme. The preparatory work for the sectoral consultations also made it possible for the Resident Representative to foresee linkages between future UNDP country programme objectives and the objectives of aid programmes of donor partners.

3. As part of his consultations with partners prior to the actual formulation of the fourth country programme, the Resident Representative visited a number of agency headquarters in Geneva, Rome, and Vienna in the summer of 1985. During these visits, he reviewed the performance of the respective United Nations system agencies in the delivery of the third country programme. Furthermore, he had requested the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Bank to assume the leading roles in the technical aspects of the sectoral consultation preparations on education, and obtained important contributions from the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to the preparations for the rural development sectoral consultations.

4. In October 1985, the Resident Representative submitted his note to the Government, highlighting the land-locked and least-developed status of the country. It summarized the conclusions drawn from the foregoing consultations and made proposals for the fourth country programme, oriented towards supporting the Government development priorities and at the same time redressing the shortcomings which came into light during the third country programme. The Government accepted the proposals contained in the Resident Representative's note.

5. At the request of the Government in December 1985, a pilot exercise in national technical co-operation assessments and programmes (NATCAP) was launched in Burundi. The NATCAP helped to identify the technical assistance needs which were highlighted in the Resident Representative's note as priority objectives for indicative planning figure (IPF) assistance.

II. THE FOURTH COUNTRY PROGRAMME

6. The fourth country programme is concentrated on the following:
(a) strengthening the base for rural productivity; (b) improving the capacity for economic planning and management; and (c) increasing human resources development.

7. Burundi has one of the highest population densities in Africa, with over 180 inhabitants per square kilometre. An analysis of the programme reveals the predominance of the rural sector and its potential in the future of the economy: while 89 per cent of the land is arable, only 46 per cent is under cultivation. Agriculture accounts for over 60 per cent of the gross national product (GNP), and 93 per cent of the population earn their living through agriculture. Coffee alone provides over 75 per cent of export earnings. The allocation of 37 per cent of the fourth cycle indicative planning figure (IPF) to help the Government continue to expand current production of well-established crops and to venture into new areas such as fisheries and swampland rice cultivation is therefore well justified. This UNDP view is shared by other major donors, such as the World Bank, which plans to collaborate with the Government to strengthen agricultural services in Burundi during the new UNDP programming cycle.

8. One of the early findings of the UNDP-sponsored NATCAP exercise was that economic planning and management needed considerable strengthening in Burundi. The country has many external partners who are eager to support its development

efforts. However, a competent central mechanism responsible for the identification, co-ordination, mobilization, and utilization of external assistance seems lacking. The choice of the country programme to strengthen the Government economic management capacities is therefore justified. UNDP hopes to be able to collaborate with the Government in organizing a round-table conference half-way through the new cycle. These activities make IPF priority assistance in strengthening economic management even more appropriate.

9. Despite its population density, Burundi has an adult literacy rate of only 30 per cent and a school enrolment of 45 per cent. Since January 1987, the Government has embarked on a drive to increase school enrolment to 100 per cent of all children of 7 years and over by 1992. This is one of the main reasons for selecting education and human resources development as a priority area in the new country programme. The new programme will also help increase higher education and training in the applied sciences of agriculture and veterinary science, as part of the Government efforts to increase agricultural production. This training will include women agricultural science graduates; a separate project will provide management training for women administrative cadres.

III. MANAGEMENT OF THE COUNTRY PROGRAMME

10. The Ministry within the Presidency responsible for Planning is the co-ordinating ministry for UNDP. It rationalizes requests for IPF assistance from the various Government departments and works with the UNDP field office and agency representatives in the implementation and monitoring of the programme. The Resident Representative will maintain regular consultations with agency representatives in the country and with their headquarters in a continuing effort to ensure quality control and effective programme delivery. The mid-term review will bring together representatives of the Government and the executing agencies to evaluate programme implementation and recommend improvements. The next round-table conference which the Government hopes to organize in 1989 with UNDP assistance will facilitate an evaluation by UNDP and donor partners of those Government projects which are jointly financed from IPF and other donor resources. The usual evaluation and monitoring measures required by UNDP regulations will also be applied.

IV. RECOMMENDATION OF THE ADMINISTRATOR

11. The Administrator recommends that the Governing Council approve the fourth country programme for Burundi.

