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PROGRAMME PLANNING

COUNTRY AND INTERCOUNTRY PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS

FOURTH COUNTRY PROGRAMME FOR THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Note by the Administrator

I. PROCESS OF THE PROGRAMMING EXERCISE

1. The country programme preparations for the Central African Republic began in June 1985, when the Government and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) agreed to begin preparations for a round-table conference. A macro-economic study and a number of sectoral studies were carried out over the next eight months with a view to defining Government development policies and external aid requirements. By September of the same year, the Government decided that the documentation produced for the round-table meeting should be fed into the preparation of the first National Development Plan covering the same period as the fourth programming cycle.
2. In December 1985, there was a country programme review under the joint chairmanship of the Minister of Planning and the UNDP Resident Representative. A number of agency representatives, both resident in the country and from their respective headquarters, also participated in the review. At the end of the review, and as a follow-up to one of its conclusions, the Government requested UNDP to organize a national technical co-operation assessments and programmes (NATCAP) exercise focusing particularly on the areas of: economic planning, rural development, public administration, and education.
3. In March 1986, the Government and UNDP invited a small group of major donors to Bangui for a preliminary review of the documentation from the round-table meeting. Participants made substantive recommendations on the technical aspects of the documentation as well as on the government policy guidelines. The NATCAP

mission participated in the review and the Government decided to include the NATCAP final report in the round-table documentation.

4. Between July 1985 and July 1986, a number of agency programming missions visited the country: the International Labour Organisation for the sector of labour and employment, training and human resources development; the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) for rural development; the United Nations Department of Technical Co-operation for Development (UNDTCD) for public administration. Some of the round-table sectoral studies were also carried out by consultants identified by specialized agencies, and the NATCAP exercise drew information from the reports and advice of agency missions.

5. In August 1986, the Resident Representative issued his note to the Government. After emphasizing the landlocked and least-developed status of the country, the note took into consideration the conclusions of the various consultations on, and evaluations of, the performance of the third country programme. In particular, it made proposals for concentrating indicative planning figure (IPF)-financed assistance on high priority development sectors identified in the document of the new development plan of the Government, through the round-table and NATCAP exercises. The Government formally agreed to the proposals made in the Resident Representative's note.

II. THE FOURTH COUNTRY PROGRAMME

6. The fourth cycle country programme for the Central African Republic plans to concentrate programme resources on the following themes: (a) institutional development; (b) human resources development; and (c) increased rural productivity.

7. One of the salient findings of the NATCAP exercise is the quasi-permanent nature of technical assistance personnel in the Central African Republic. There seems to be insufficient provision by the Government or donors to transfer know-how from externally recruited experts to national counterparts. This could adversely affect the morale and professionalism of the national cadres. Through a structural adjustment loan agreement, the World Bank is helping the Government to overcome these problems by administrative reforms and by revitalizing the private sector. On the advice of the World Bank, the Government has requested UNDP technical assistance in developing personnel management plans and training programmes. UNDP and the African Development Bank (AFDB) are helping to identify needs for retraining and to develop and implement retraining programmes to enable personnel to move from the public to the private sector.

8. The sector of rural development is accorded the highest priority among all others in the new development plan of the Government. The NATCAP exercise found that it needed more technical assistance than any other sector. Over 70 per cent of the population earn their living through agriculture, which provides 41 per cent of the gross national product (GNP). At the request of the Government, therefore, over 50 per cent of the fourth cycle IPF will be devoted to projects aimed at achieving food self-sufficiency, dietary improvement and diversification, and fostering income-generating activities for women and at the grass-roots level generally.

9. All analyses of development constraints in the Central African Republic, such as the NATCAP report and sector studies, emphasize the weakness of the main institutions of the Government and the urgent need to strengthen them. The sectoral ministries do not yet have adequate sectoral planning capacities and the ministry responsible for macro-economic planning and management of the economy has not yet acquired the capacity to co-ordinate sectoral planning and give overall leadership in homogeneous planning and management of development objectives. The decision to make this one of the main areas on which to concentrate programme resources in the fourth cycle is therefore well justified.

10. Over 80 per cent of the population of the country have no access to potable water in the rural areas where they live. In the context of the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade (IDWSSD), the Government has a rural water supply programme for which it has requested UNDP technical assistance during the fourth cycle. Several IPF projects will therefore be devoted to this area.

III. MANAGEMENT OF THE COUNTRY PROGRAMME

11. The Ministry of Finance, Economy and Planning is the co-ordinating ministry with which UNDP will manage the new country programme. The usual programme monitoring and evaluation activities required by UNDP regulations will be implemented in collaboration with this ministry and with executing agencies. A mid-term review of the programme is envisaged in 1989, with the full participation of the Government, UNDP, and the executing agencies. Other donors outside the United Nations system who have parallel or complementary assistance programmes with UNDP-financed projects will also be invited to participate in the evaluation of UNDP activities that interest them. During the course of the cycle, it is hoped that the NATCAP exercise will be resumed, first to review the implementation, within the country programme, of the recommendations of its first phase, and secondly, to extend the exercise to new sectors or update the findings of the first phase. In all cases, the renewed activities of the NATCAP process will include an evaluation of technical assistance delivery by UNDP and other external assistance programmes.

IV. RECOMMENDATION OF THE ADMINISTRATOR

12. The Administrator recommends that the Governing Council approve the fourth country programme for the Central African Republic.

