Thirty-fifth session
6 June-1 July 1988, Geneva
Item 9 (b) of the provisional agenda

FINANCIAL, BUDGETARY AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Revised budget estimates for 1988-1989

Role and function of the United Nations Development Programme
Office in Geneva

Report of the Administrator

SUMMARY

This report has been prepared in response to Governing Council decision 87/43 of 19 June 1987, which, inter alia, requested the Administrator to review the role and functions of the Geneva Office and to report to the Council at its thirty-fifth session (1988). The report provides an outline of the functions of the Office and proposes that the Office in future be headed by a Director at the D-2 level with no change to the staffing level approved by the Council for the 1988-1989 biennium.
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I. BACKGROUND

1. Governing Council decision 87/43 of 19 June 1987 included, inter alia, the following paragraphs:

"6. Decides that the budgetary grading of the position of the Director of the Geneva Office shall be retained at the Assistant Secretary-General level for the 1988-1989 biennium or until the departure of the present incumbent, whichever is earlier;

"7. Requests the Administrator to review the role and functions of the Geneva Office as a whole, including appropriate staffing grades, and to report thereon to the Council at its thirty-fifth session (1988)."

2. The purpose of this paper is to address the issues raised in this decision, to provide the Council with an overview of how the Geneva Office fits into the organizational structure of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and to propose for consideration by the Council the role and function that the Administrator wishes to entrust to the Office in the future.

II. THE GENEVA OFFICE IN PERSPECTIVE

3. The UNDP Office in Geneva is essentially an outposted unit of the headquarters of the organization - its presence in Europe, as it were. In the broadest sense of this role, the Office provides administrative and consular support to a wide range of UNDP activities which take place in Geneva and elsewhere in Europe and which may be sponsored by any part of the organization, for example visits by resident representatives, missions and consultations from headquarters. However, the office has a number of more specific roles, in which capacity it functions as the outreach of a number of different headquarters units.

4. As indicated on the UNDP organizational chart, the Geneva Office is one of a number of organizational units which report directly to the Administrator and the Associate Administrator. Depending on the activity, the Office works in conjunction with one of a number of other such organizational units which also report directly to the Administrator's Office: the Division of External Relations, the Division of Information and the Resource Mobilization Unit. Depending upon the substantive issue, the Office will also collaborate with any of the other bureaux in New York.
UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME
ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE
April 1987

UNDP FIELD OFFICES
5. Until 1987, the Office was also a UNDP field office in the sense that it managed a number of European country programmes as well as the European intercountry programme, under the overall supervision of the Unit for Europe which is now defunct. With the integration of this Unit with the Regional Bureau for Arab States into a consolidated Regional Bureau for Arab States and European Programmes (RBASEP), the Geneva Office relinquished its responsibilities for programme management. The intention of the Administrator was that this would enable the Office to focus on its primary function as the outposted presence of UNDP amongst the European-based specialized agencies and the European donors to UNDP.

6. Finally, the Geneva Office has for some years provided administrative and other support services to the other two members of the UNDP family based in Geneva: the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) and the Inter-Agency Procurement Services Unit (IAPSU). Similar support has also been provided to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in Geneva. The costs of providing these support services to UNV, IAPSU and UNFPA are reimbursed by them on an extrabudgetary basis.

7. In carrying out this portfolio of responsibilities, the Geneva Office has always operated on a modest budget, as is indicated in the following staffing summary:

<table>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Professional posts</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extrabudgetary</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>General Service posts</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extrabudgetary</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>27</td>
<td>23</td>
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8. In reviewing these numbers, it will be noted that the staffing level of the Geneva Office was reduced in the 1988-1989 biennium, as a reflection of the elimination of the responsibilities of the Office with regard to programme management. Moreover, in matching the staffing level with the responsibilities of the Office, it should also be borne in mind that the Administrator has traditionally sought to supplement the Geneva Office by temporary details of UNDP staff members who are between assignments.
III. THE ROLE AND FUNCTIONS OF THE GENEVA OFFICE

9. It is the intention of the Administrator that the Geneva Office perform a variety of functions as the UNDP presence in Europe. Some of these represent a continuation of its previous activities; others represent a somewhat new focus. Each of them is outlined in more detail in the following subsections.

A. External relations and agency liaison

10. In collaboration with the Division for External Relations and other substantive bureaux at headquarters, the Geneva Office will be given an enhanced role in relationships between European-based agencies and UNDP. During the last two years, UNDP has engaged in a new and more substantive dialogue with the specialized agencies of the United Nations system. This dialogue, with which the Office has already been associated, has been based so far on formal review meetings which are held at intervals of one or two years. The new substantive dialogue requires follow up between the formal meetings which will be ensured by the Geneva Office.

11. At the request of the Regional Bureaux, the Office will also assist in clearing bottle-necks and delays in projects and other matters, and be a source of feedback to New York on important developments in these agencies. This will be an important responsibility made increasingly necessary by the financial problems being faced by some agencies.

12. European agencies hold numerous meetings at various levels of importance and significance to UNDP. It is expensive and time consuming to cover from New York all those meetings in which UNDP should participate. The aim is to keep New York travel to a minimum and to delegate authority, wherever possible, to the Geneva Office to represent UNDP. While it is clearly not possible for the staff of the Geneva Office to be substantively involved in all such issues, a monitoring and liaison function is indispensable.

B. Public relations and information

13. In close consultation with the Division of Information in New York, the Geneva Office will be responsible for the dissemination of information on UNDP throughout Europe and will be involved in efforts to create an appropriate public image for UNDP on the continent. To that end, it will undertake, inter alia, the following:

(a) Continuous contacts with the European media, including press briefings and press conferences, the writing and placement of articles, field reportage by individual journalists and group tours, as well as other press contacts;

(b) Audio-visual production and co-production, including the promotion and placement of all materials produced, such as films for television networks and group screenings;
(c) Information and communication campaigns directed at the public at large as well as targeted audiences, country-specific activities including sports broadcast on radio and television, poster series, advertisements, exhibitions, telephone information lines and special events;

(d) Production of ad hoc publications for Europe;

(e) Routine information work including the distribution of publications, answering queries, lectures on UNDP and the maintenance of data bases.

14. With the consent of Governments concerned, the Office will also maintain liaison with parliamentarians and parliamentary groups dealing with aid issues and be a source of information on UNDP policies, work programmes and accomplishments. This may entail personal contacts as well as seminars, mailings, assistance in field trips to developing countries and other special events. It should be noted in this connection that some European Governments have expressed the need for an intensification of the above efforts and are considering providing funds for use in developing a public information and awareness campaign in favour of UNDP. It is hoped that other European Governments will follow suit.

C. Liaison with European-based organizations and institutions

15. The Administrator believes that there is a great deal of potential and mutual benefit to be realized from fostering a more co-operative relationship with a wide variety of European institutions and programmes. The UNDP Office in Geneva is well placed to play a catalytic role in this respect, although it must also be recognized that such a relationship - if it is to be fully effective - must take the form of a network of linkages, affecting all parts of UNDP. With this in mind, following are some examples of the Administrator's intentions with regard to the Geneva Office.

16. In the last three years, UNDP has developed an increasingly close relationship with the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and its Development Assistance Committee (DAC). The Geneva Office will now become a focal point of contact for DAC matters and will assist the other UNDP headquarters units located in New York in dealing with the major substantive policy and operational issues in DAC/UNDP relationships. Continuing contact with the staff of delegations dealing with DAC matters is important in addition to contacts made in capitals and in New York.

17. The Geneva Office will assist UNDP in developing a closer working relationship with the European Economic Community (EEC) which has its own large aid programmes. It is clear from a review of the EEC aid programmes that there are tremendous opportunities for closer collaboration with various levels of this organization, both for co-financing and possible cost-sharing.

18. UNDP must also increase its interaction with international non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Several large international umbrella NGO organizations are located in Europe, especially in Geneva. The Geneva Office will assist the
respective headquarters units in establishing a more structured relationship with these organizations as well as with country-level umbrella NGOs.

19. The Office will also maintain liaison with other types of non-governmental structures which have an interest in development co-operation and with opinion makers more generally, including academic institutions, with a view to developing practical collaboration. In the academic field, this may include the establishment of curricula adapted to the needs of students from developing countries, the identification of research programmes on aspects of multilateral development aid, the participation of university personnel in selected project or programme evaluations, the participation of UNDP staff in teaching and applied research for limited periods, the systematic exchange of information, etc.

20. The Geneva Office will establish closer relationships with the various United Nations Associations in European countries in order to start or reinforce joint programmes aimed at promoting development co-operation, while at the same time establishing an appropriate image for UNDP in their respective societies. United Nations Associations provide important support for the cause of multilateral programmes and steps should be taken to provide them with the information needed for a clearer focus on UNDP.

D. Development co-operation modalities

21. Because the level of consciousness concerning the development process is high in many European countries and because there are so many active programmes, the Administrator is of the view that this offers a number of possibilities for innovative programme development. He therefore intends the Geneva Office to play a catalytic role in this regard. Following are some indications of what could be achieved in this respect.

22. In addition, there are several countries in Europe where local and regional Governments, including cities, have developed an interest in providing assistance to developing countries. Local and regional authorities may wish in certain cases to avail themselves of the unique know-how, capacities and world-wide presence of UNDP to maximize the impact of their assistance and integrate the projects they support into a wider development strategy. To that end, UNDP has established a special facility called local and regional co-operative agreements (LORCA). This is a unique facility combining the strength of grass-roots development work with longer-term development planning as practised by UNDP. The Geneva Office is already working in this area and will be charged with further assisting headquarters in the exploration of the potential for this source of assistance for local and regional Governments and in the implementation of it.

23. Finally, in the field of development co-operation, the Geneva Office will be involved with UNDP-funded regional programmes to the extent that its location represents significant advantages for ensuring essential links with participating non-indicative planning figure (IPF) countries and for promoting non-traditional co-operation between European countries and developing countries outside the region. This involvement will be at two levels: (a) the Office will be designated as principal project representative for certain European regional programmes,
particularly in those situations where a regional project includes both IPF countries and European donor countries; (b) it will work closely with the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), which wishes to develop an outreach programme under which the benefits of certain work done by the Commission would be made available through UNDP to developing countries.

E. Administrative and support services

24. As indicated earlier in this document, the UNDP Office in Geneva has always provided a variety of consular and administrative support services for the UNDP family as a whole and for those members located in Geneva in particular. It will continue to provide such administrative services for all UNDP operations in Geneva in the following areas:

(a) Personnel administration for UNV, IAPSU and UNFPA in Geneva, also including administrative action with regard to UNDP-related personnel being recruited in Europe;

(b) Assistance to resident representatives and other UNDP staff on missions to Geneva;

(c) Support to UNDP Governing Council meetings and other gatherings held under the auspices of UNDP in Geneva;

(d) Registry and mail operations for UNV, IAPSU and UNFPA in Geneva;

(e) Transport and travel arrangements for UNV, IAPSU and UNFPA, as well as UNDP-related visitors to Geneva;

(f) Office space management for the UNDP family in Geneva;

(g) Administration of trust funds established by European donor Governments for specific activities in Europe.

25. Apart from the above routine administrative support services, the increasing role of UNDP in round-table meetings has implications for the Geneva Office. Thus, the first main meeting of the round-table process at which the Governments of least developed countries (LDCs) and major donors participate takes place in Geneva or at another European location. The Geneva Office will therefore be the focal point in Europe for the organizational aspects of the round-table meetings. In close co-ordination with the relevant units in New York as well as the resident representative concerned, it will make arrangements for the conference secretariat, provide logistical support, extend public information services requested by the country concerned and carry out other follow-up action as may be required.

26. The Administrator also envisages a role for the Geneva Office in so far as staff training is concerned. Some of the training needs that must be addressed by UNDP can be met in the most suitable and most cost-effective manner through training events held in Europe. In collaboration with the appropriate unit in

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New York, the Geneva Office will assist, *inter alia*, in the organization of induction training for Junior Professional Officers recruited in Europe and in the technical training of UNDP field office staff, particularly with regard to office automation.

IV. BUDGETARY IMPLICATIONS

27. In determining the most appropriate budgetary and staffing level for the Geneva Office, the Administrator has reviewed both the functions performed by the Office in the past and the responsibilities he is now assigning to the Office. He has also been mindful of the views expressed by members of the Governing Council in the course of several informal consultations on the subject. On this basis, he is recommending that the Office be headed in future by a Director at the D-2 level on the reassignment of the present Director. The Administrator intends to ensure that the post is filled by an experienced senior manager, capable of projecting the presence of UNDP in Europe in an appropriate way.

28. The Director will be supported by a core Professional staff of 5, and 13 General Service staff members, i.e., the same staffing level as was approved by the Council for the 1988-1989 biennium. Extrabudgetary posts amounting to one Professional and three General Service posts are currently expected to continue, although this level will depend upon the actual level of extrabudgetary activities undertaken by the Office. The Administrator will, furthermore, continue his current practice of supplementing as necessary the normal staff of the Office by temporary details of UNDP staff members who are between assignments.