PROGRAMME PLANNING

Country and intercountry programmes and projects

FOURTH COUNTRY PROGRAMME FOR NIGER

Note by the Administrator

I. PROCESS OF THE COUNTRY PROGRAMMING EXERCISE

1. The third country programme (DP/CP/NER/3) ended in December 1986, and preparation of the fourth programme began the same year. However, the new national development plan for the period 1987-1991 was still in preparation at that time, and a round-table meeting with the development partners was foreseen for mid-1987. It was consequently decided to seek an extension of the third programme through June 1988. This extension was approved by the Governing Council in June 1987 (DP/CP/NER/3/EXTENSION 1).

2. In the latter part of 1986, in preparation for the new country programme, a joint in-depth evaluation of the third programme was made by consultants provided by the Swiss Government, from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and Government representatives. Subsequently, a UNDP consultant mission made general programming proposals derived from the evaluation, from the structural adjustment programme and from the government Five-Year Plan. The conclusions of the evaluation and of the programming mission formed the preliminary basis for the Resident Representative's note, which also took account of the conclusions of the round-table meeting held at Geneva in June 1987. The Resident Representative's note was presented to the Government in September 1987, and was fully endorsed by the Government.

3. The draft country programme was prepared at Niamey in close consultation between the UNDP office and the Government, and circulated to executing agencies. In addition to the inputs derived from the evaluation and the UNDP programming
mission, it incorporated those provided by agency representatives in the country and by agency technical missions, as well as suggestions which emerged from consultations with the World Bank and other donors after the round-table meeting. The draft programme was approved by the Government in November 1987.

II. THE FOURTH COUNTRY PROGRAMME

4. The current development plans and strategies of the Government are embodied in the 1986-1988 structural adjustment programme and the five-year Economic and Social Development Plan for 1987-1991. The threefold objectives of the structural adjustment programme are improved management in the public sector; policy initiatives in support of the private sector; and a stronger economic resource base, particularly in agriculture. Important related objectives include a sectoral adjustment programme for public enterprises, a rehabilitation programme, and a programme in support of employment creation and private initiatives. The Plan envisages agriculture as the economic base of the country and sets forth strategies for the development of other sectors, the progressive integration into a market economy, and a growth rate above that of population growth. Particular emphasis is given to the demographic factor, to the integration of women in the development process, to the improvement of health conditions, and, in the agricultural sector, to desertification control, food security and water supply. The implementation of the Plan, for which a financing plan was presented to the June 1987 round-table meeting, requires some $1.9 billion. The round-table partners indicated their agreement with the priorities and major orientations of the Plan, and their intention to help to meet the external financial requirements.

5. The fourth country programme is formulated around four development objectives defined in the Plan, namely: (a) growth in rural productivity; (b) the reorientation and promotion of enterprises, public and private; (c) strengthened economic management; and (d) better living conditions for the population and improved population planning. The second and third of these objectives are at the same time consonant with the objectives of the structural adjustment programme, while the fourth may be seen as providing a social development complement to the structural adjustment programme. The fourth country programme, in contrast to its predecessors, does not focus on the education sector, which the Administrator believes is of key importance to the development of Niger; however, he is pleased to note the significant resources devoted to this sector by the other development partners, including Canada, the Federal Republic of Germany, France, Norway, Switzerland and the United States.

6. Resources taken into account for programming purposes include $27.1 million from the indicative planning figure (IPF) and $51.5 million from other sources. The first programme objective (rural development) will absorb 63 per cent of resources programmed; the second objective (enterprise development) will receive 10 per cent; the third (economic management) will receive 7 per cent, while the fourth objective (better living conditions and population planning) will receive 20 per cent. Programmed reserves will account for $3.2 million, and an unprogrammed reserve of $1.5 million will be set aside. Noteworthy among the non-IPF sources of programme funding are: $21 million from the United Nations
Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) tentative programme for 1988-1990, in addition to its currently programmed $5.1 million; $16 million from the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office (UNSO), including a Danish Development Agency (DANIDA) village forestry project to be executed by a non-governmental organization (NGO); and $9.5 million from the World Food Programme (WFP) in food aid.

7. The Administrator points out that the design of the fourth country programme takes account of salient recommendations of the 1986 evaluation, with respect to the macro-economic context and sectoral programmes. It provides for flexibility to take account of new sectoral programmes as they emerge, and other changes. Particular attention is given to institution-building and to the development of the human resources of the Niger, in order to endow the country with a real measure of technical autonomy. UNDP policies with respect to a participatory approach involving NGOs, Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries (TCDC) and other modalities of execution are well reflected.

8. The Administrator is pleased to note that the fourth programme accords an important place to the promotion of private sector initiatives in Niger, in collaboration with both the Government and the Chamber of Commerce. Another welcome feature is the attention paid in several projects to the integration of women in the development process, not only with respect to their productive roles but also with respect to family planning, health and education. These latter activities will be greatly facilitated by the recent Government decision to appoint a Secretary of State for Women's Affairs, Social Affairs, and Health.

9. An important aspect of the implementation of the country programme will be the conduct of a national technical co-operation assessment and programmes (NaTCAPs) exercise, which on present plans should begin towards the end of 1988, and which will be designed to ensure that the considerable volume of technical assistance received by Niger is directed effectively to the development priorities and human resource goals set by the Government.

10. As part of the round-table process, sectoral consultations will be held in 1988 on rural development, the private sector, and transport. The next round-table meeting is scheduled for 1989. In these round-table activities, UNDP will pursue its role with respect to the provision of technical assistance in support of the Government aid co-ordination effort. UNDP will also assist in aid mobilization, in the round-table framework and for emergency purposes, as in the 1984-1985 and 1987 droughts.

III. MANAGEMENT OF THE COUNTRY PROGRAMME

11. Since June 1986, the Ministry of Planning and the UNDP office in Niamey have formalized the process of programme management co-ordination, with the creation of a working group. A review of the country programme will be made each year in collaboration with the Government and interested agencies, in accordance with a recommendation of the 1986 evaluation mission. A mid-term review will be held in 1990, as well as a programme evaluation. The Administrator believes that the mid-term review will benefit from the participation of all contributors to programme financing, whether through cost-sharing or trust funds (Denmark, France,
Netherlands, Switzerland and United States), or by other modalities (UNCDF, United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), UNSO, United Nations Volunteers (UNV), WFP).

12. The UNDP field office will be strengthened by the addition of a field economist, in order to improve economic analysis and aid co-ordination with the Government and donors.

IV. RECOMMENDATION OF THE ADMINISTRATOR

13. The Administrator recommends that the Governing Council approve the country programme for Niger.