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SUPPORT

PROGRAMME PLANNING

COUNTRY, INTERCOUNTRY AND GLOBAL PROGRAMMES

Implementation of selected country programmes

Asia and the Pacific

Report of the Administrator

SUMMARY

The present report is submitted in accordance with Governing Council decision 81/15 of 27 June 1981, in which the Council endorsed the Administrator's proposal to submit annual progress reports to the Council on the implementation of various country programmes, highlighting significant developments.

Information is provided on: (a) the major trends in the region, the financial performance of the programme and the various management actions to maintain the quality of programme and project performance and sustain the momentum of programme implementation; (b) the results of the mid-term reviews of the intercountry programme and the country programmes of Bangladesh, Bhutan, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Fiji, Mongolia, Myanmar, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea and Viet Nam; and (c) aid co-ordination activities undertaken in the region, including round tables, consultative groups and the role of field offices of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in promoting aid co-ordination.

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. There are at present 31 country programmes of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) assistance in the Asia and Pacific region. Transcending and interlocking with these is an intercountry programme which, in addition to addressing region-wide concerns, also specifically meets subregional needs including those of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the South Pacific.

2. The systematic and timely review of country programmes and reporting to the Governing Council on the mid-term reviews continued to be vigorously pursued in 1989. As a result, during the past year 13 country programmes and the intercountry programme benefited from mid-term programme reviews. Additionally, nearly every country programme was subjected to annual review involving the reappraisal of programme objectives, an evaluation of the status of the programmes and the contributions of projects to them.

3. The present report covers nine of the larger country programmes and the intercountry programme, which underwent mid-term review during 1989. It includes Bangladesh (DP/1990/12/Add.2) and Bhutan (DP/1990/12/Add.3), which were the subject of a separate and more detailed presentation to the Governing Council in February 1990. Although similar detailed presentations on Myanmar (DP/1990/38/Add.2) and Viet Nam (DP/1990/38/Add.3) are being made separately to the Governing Council at its current session, these two countries are covered as well in this report. The remaining five countries are the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Fiji, Mongolia, the Philippines and the Republic of Korea. The report also comments on the major trends, financial performance, aid co-ordination, and implementation modalities in this geographically large and diverse region encompassing countries of varying size and population, ranging from the small island economies of the Pacific to China and India.

II. SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT

4. Economic growth in the region remained at the relatively high level of 6 per cent in 1989. Although it is lower than the 9.1 per cent achieved in 1988, economic performance has been impressive compared to the world economy which, as pointed out in an Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), "Review of economic performance and prospects of the developing Asian-Pacific region at the end of 1989", grew by 2.9 per cent. It was much higher than the 3.2 per cent growth rate registered by the industrialized countries and the rate of 3.7 per cent registered by all developing countries.

5. This impressive performance by countries in the Asia and Pacific region continued to stem mainly from the rapid rate of industrial and manufacturing growth, the consistent record of macro-economic stability, the ongoing internally-driven process of structural adjustment, low levels of fiscal and external debt, high rates of domestic saving, and improved conditions for foreign investment. However, much of the recent dynamic growth in manufacturing has come

from trade, which became an increasing stimulus in almost all of the region's developing countries, and the downturn in 1989 was mainly attributed to the deceleration of export growth.

6. The relatively favourable climatic conditions in 1989, the absence of severe drought in South Asia and the low incidence of catastrophic storms and flooding combined with the increased usage of high-yielding varieties contributed to the expansion of agricultural production. In a number of countries growth in agricultural production was impressive, as illustrated by the 20 per cent growth achieved in India over the past two years.

7. Contrasting with the dynamism of the Asian economies, however, there exists an increasingly obvious dichotomy where, according to ESCAP data, there are more than 500 million people struggling to survive on incomes that are below the poverty levels set for their respective countries. Whereas economic growth has reduced the rates of poverty in percentage terms, the continuing high rates of population growth in many countries have resulted in a rise in the absolute numbers of people falling below the poverty line.

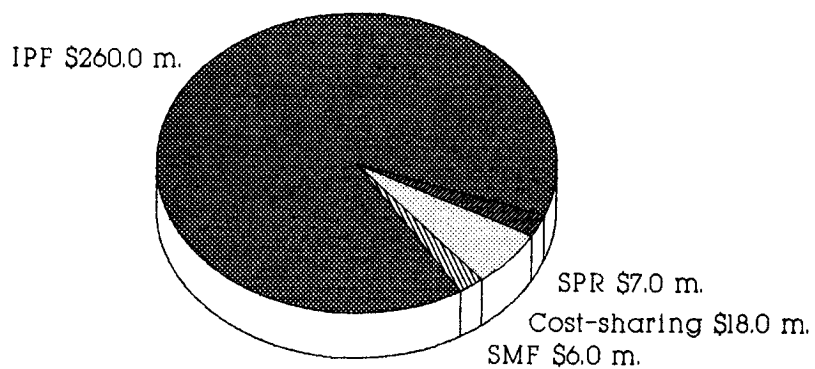
III. THE PROGRAMME

A. Financial overview

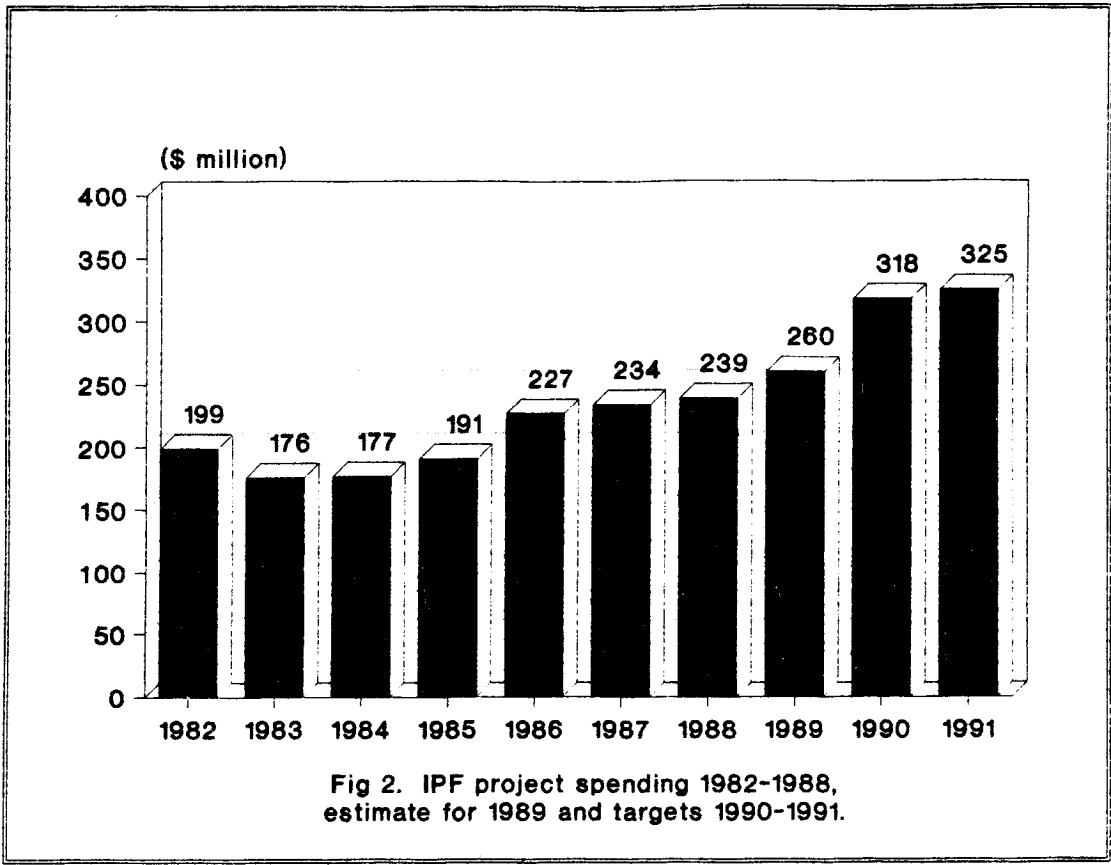
8. The total indicative planning figure (IPF) resources available to the Asia and Pacific region for the fourth cycle are \$1.5 billion. Including the carry-over from the previous cycle, they also reflect the significant increase in IPF levels approved by the Governing Council on 1 July 1988 at its thirty-fifth session (decision 88/31).

9. These resources are complemented by cost-sharing, the Special Measures Fund for the Least Developed Countries (SMF/LDCs), and Special Programme Resources (SPR) funding. For 1989, it is estimated that cost-sharing contributions by recipient countries and third parties would amount to almost 6 per cent of total funds disbursed in the region. Estimated delivery in 1989 by source of funds is given in figure 1.

10. In mid-1989 there were about 2,200 country and regional projects ongoing in the region. The total expenditure from the IPF on these projects in 1989 is estimated at \$260 million. This represents an increase of 9 per cent over 1988, when UNDP assistance to the region reached \$239 million. IPF spending in the Asia and Pacific region since 1982 is represented in figure 2. The figure also includes the spending targets for 1990 and 1991.



**Fig 1. Project spending by fund source,
estimate for 1989.**



11. The variegated needs and the breadth of the development priorities to which UNDP assistance responds in the region are represented in figure 3. As expected, figures for 1989 confirm past trends in the sectoral allocation of IPF resources with increased shares going to industry, and science and technology. The largest sectors were: (a) agriculture, forestry and fisheries; (b) industry; (c) natural resources; (d) general development issues, policy and planning; and (e) transport and communications.
12. Also significant is the distribution of IPF funds between expenditure components. Figure 4 illustrates the growing importance of training in UNDP assistance, largely achieved through the lowering of allocations for the equipment component. However in some countries, such as the People's Republic of China and India, expenditures on equipment retain relatively greater significance. While spending on expertise has been generally stable as a proportion of total funds, these aggregates conceal the ever-widening utilization of national, as opposed to foreign, expertise in UNDP technical co-operation, as well as the increasing use made of the United Nations Volunteers (UNV).
13. It is estimated that in 1989 expenditures on nationally executed projects amounted to 13 per cent of total delivery as compared with 11 per cent in the previous year. This is expected to increase more sharply in the second half of the fourth cycle with more new projects being chosen by Governments for national execution. From the United Nations system, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development (DTCD) of the United Nations Secretariat remain the principal executing agencies. These three agencies together execute approximately 42 per cent of the UNDP programme in the Asia and Pacific region. The Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific (RBAP) is actively encouraging the technical input of specialized agencies of the United Nations system in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of nationally executed projects. The distribution among executing agencies of the UNDP programme in Asia and the Pacific is represented in figure 5. As regards the intercountry programme, ESCAP remained the leading executing agency with an estimated project expenditure amounting to \$9 million or 21 per cent of the programme.

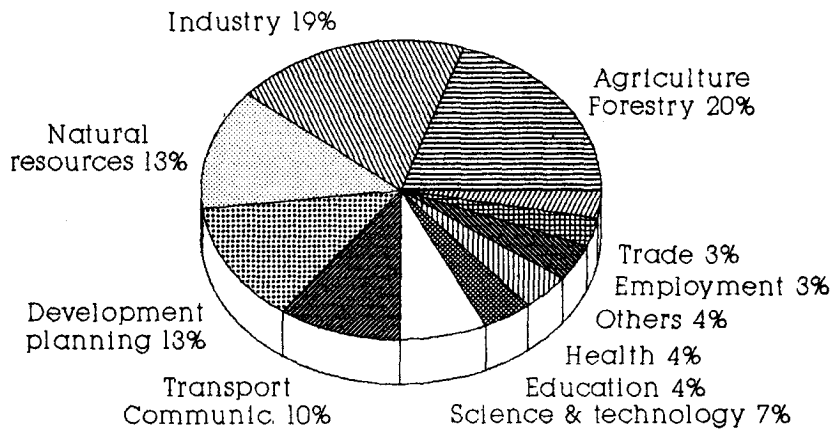


Fig 3. IPF spending by sector, estimate for 1989.

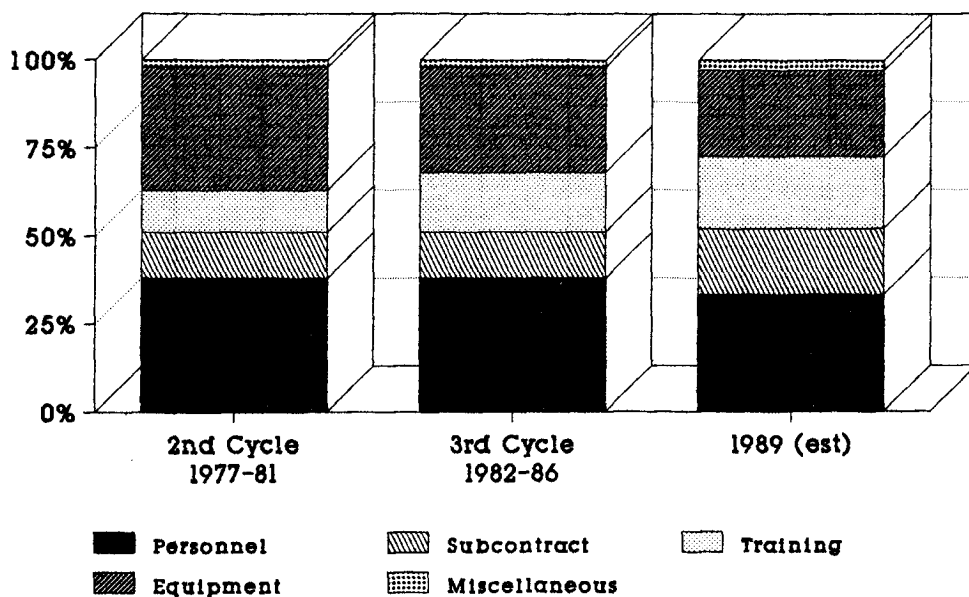
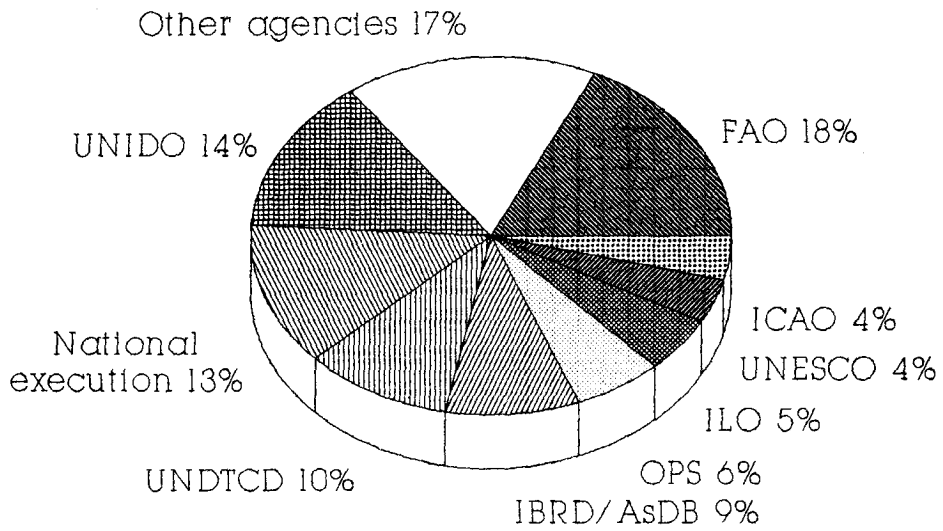


Fig 4. IPF spending by budget component.



**Fig 5. IPF spending by executing agency,
estimate for 1989.**

B. Project appraisals

14. The appraisal of projects is being given much greater attention in the present cycle commensurate with the increase made in 1988 in the delegated authority of resident representatives to approve projects. All 23 UNDP offices in the Asia and Pacific region now have adequate appraisal mechanisms to screen projects at the formulation stage in order to determine the appropriateness of their design, as well as their internal consistency and relevance to development objectives.

15. The quality of project implementation and the impact of projects on the developmental process are of continuing concern, and during the year more than 500 tripartite reviews and 80 in-depth evaluations of projects were conducted.

C. Special themes

16. Some special themes have assumed increased importance in recent years. Women's role in development is being actively promoted and funds have been earmarked to support the strengthening of this role. Another area of emphasis relates to the encouragement of the private sector in national development. In 1989 UNDP held more than 40 workshops in the region which brought together members of Governments and the private sector to discuss issues relating to private sector development in their country and/or subregion. The degradation of the environment and the relationship of the environment to development have become major concerns to industrialized countries and developing countries alike, and during the past year UNDP has been gearing up to play a more active role in this important field; five UNDP-sponsored environmental workshops were held at the national level during 1989 and the goal is to hold 20 in 1990. Plans were made jointly with ESCAP and the Asian Development Bank for a ministerial-level meeting on the environment in 1990. The need to improve economic management and the management of development has been highlighted as a most important area requiring strengthening, and during 1989 major efforts were under way to identify and formulate management development programmes in many countries of the region.

IV. COUNTRY PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

A. Bangladesh

17. The fourth country programme for Bangladesh has as its principal thrust support to the Government's overall objective of poverty alleviation, which is to be pursued through five main themes, namely: (a) higher productivity in agriculture; (b) consolidation and expansion of the industrial base; (c) development of human resources; (d) improvement of physical infrastructure; and (e) improvement of management of public policy and the economy. The mid-term review of the fourth country programme established that in spite of the disastrous floods of 1987 and 1988, satisfactory performance in terms of programme implementation and output had been achieved. While the original themes of the country programme remained relevant, further attention needed to be given to the issues of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), women, the private sector and the

environment. The review also noted that attention should be paid to the following: first, the designation of national project directors for each project and the provision of training in project design and management; secondly, provision of adequate counterpart staff; thirdly, careful review of the qualifications and experience of candidates for expatriate expert posts; and fourthly, acceleration of the approval of pipeline projects. The mid-term review report contains a total of 124 recommendations, a number of which are of direct relevance to the formulation of the next country programme, demonstrating that one of the chief benefits of the review exercise was that it provided a sound basis for forward planning. Prominent among these is the recommendation that to increase impact and streamline management, efforts should be made to reduce the number and increase the size of projects. Regarding the execution of projects, the modality of national execution should continue to be pursued. Support to investment programmes of the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank should also continue to focus on policy initiatives, feasibility studies and institutional support rather than on project preparation and supervision. The review also noted that the Study for Evaluation and Improvement of Technical Assistance in Bangladesh (SEITAB), to be conducted during 1990, would be a valuable supplement to the completed studies on project and commodity aid and would enable the Government and donors to review issues of concern to them in the use of technical assistance.

B. Bhutan

18. The fourth country programme for Bhutan covers the six-year period 1986-1991 and originally included IPF resources of \$US 25 million. In accordance with the country's main constraint to development, which is a shortage of trained manpower, the main thrust of the Government's development efforts and the country programme was on human resources development with 35 per cent of the available resources programmed for that purpose. Other significant themes included development of the country's infrastructure, the strengthening of governmental institutions and the inventory and rational exploitation of the country's natural resources. The mid-term review of the country programme was conducted in June 1989. The review included participation by the Planning Commission as the co-ordinating body for external assistance, and the National Civil Service Commission, which is the focal point in the Government for human resources development. The review found that the sectoral allocations were practically the same as set out in the country programme document and that these sectoral focuses remained relevant to the Government's development priorities. At the time of the review, 39 of the original 48 projects were either under implementation or were being formulated. With the release of the supplementary IPF amounting to \$5.2 million, the total IPF resources for the 1986-1991 period came to \$30.2 million. During the mid-term review 16 new projects with budgets totalling \$18.9 million were approved for inclusion in the country programme in accordance with government priorities. However, the mid-term review noted with concern that available resources were fully committed while several priority needs remained unfulfilled. At the request of the Government, the Resident Representative subsequently visited several foreign missions in New Delhi to explore their interest in providing cost-sharing contributions towards meeting these needs.

19. Over the past three years the Resident Representative of UNDP in Bhutan, in conjunction with the Government, has made a concerted effort to reduce the number of projects operating in the country by the clustering of activities which were of a similar nature. Between 1987 and 1990 he has been successful in reducing the number of ongoing and active pipeline projects from 53 to 27. This was done to reduce the management work-load of the UNDP office and, more importantly, the Government, and in the belief that larger concerted efforts in a sector would have more impact than a group of smaller projects operating in isolation. It was agreed that the optimum number of projects operating at any given time should be of the order of the current level of around 20.

C. Democratic People's Republic of Korea

20. The mid-term review found that the second country programme for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (1987-1991) effectively addressed the areas of concentration, namely: (a) increased agricultural productivity; (b) improved efficiency and quality of industrial development; and (c) increased export earnings. Out of the total IPF resources available for implementation of the second country programme of \$19.73 million, approximately \$13.8 million had been committed to approved projects. A further \$3.3 million had been earmarked in support of new projects, leaving \$2.6 million available for programming. The transportation, telecommunications and energy sectors were identified as emerging areas deserving attention. The mid-term review found that during the second country programme better cohesion and co-operation were achieved between the four parties involved in project implementation (the government co-ordinating agency, the executing agency, UNDP and the project-implementing agency). It was felt, however, that greater attention should be paid to project preparation and backstopping on the part of agencies of the United Nations system, including the mounting of project formulation missions and the planning of project activities. It was noted that the Government faced problems in organizing participation of nationals in training programmes outside of the country and that equipment was often supplied late due to transportation problems. It was noted that during the second country programme, the role of national project directors had become more firmly established.

D. Fiji

21. The fourth country programme for Fiji (covering the period 1986-1990), approved by the Governing Council in June 1985 (decision 85/18), underwent a mid-term review in July 1989. At that time the Government stated that the country programme had been of great benefit to the development of Fiji, and that all the sectors earmarked had received assistance and in some cases the sectoral targets had been exceeded. However, several factors had changed since the fourth country programme was prepared. First, the fourth cycle (1987-1991) IPF allocations were increased. Second, several projects which had been approved during the third cycle were extended. Third, the Government's preference for short-term consultants changed and requests for longer-term experts and advisers became more prominent. In several cases, the Government requested technical assistance for line positions

as an emergency measure to fill staff shortages. In addition, the withdrawal of some other donors led the Government to decide that UNDP should take up certain projects that had been bilaterally funded. In summary, the review found that the agriculture, forestry, fisheries and physical infrastructure sectors had exceeded their target levels. The lack of UNDP assistance in the social development and health sector had been compensated for by three regional projects covering Primary Health Care (RAS/86/065); Co-operative Programme in Educational Publishing in the Pacific (RAS/88/028); and Water Resources Assessment and Planning in the Pacific (RAS/87/009). The mid-term review also established a base for preparation of the fifth country programme for Fiji and the scheduling of Fiji's first round-table meeting in May 1990, which is to bring together donors to discuss the country's development plans and assistance needs and to make pledges of assistance to meet these needs.

E. Mongolia

22. The mid-term review of the fourth country programme for Mongolia (1987-1991), held at Ulaanbaatar in May 1989, found that the Government's twin priorities for United Nations technical assistance as laid down in the country programmes document - (a) development of agriculture through increased livestock production; and (b) improvement of industrial capacities to utilize better the country's natural resources - were found to be still valid and relevant. There had been no major social, economic or political changes in the country since the approval of the country programme. However, in order to encourage and attract investment and earnings as well as technology and to reach markets in a wider international arena, the Government had taken an important decision to seek greater involvement and economic co-operation with a larger number of countries beyond its traditional trading and economic partners from among the centrally planned economies. The Government had also started decentralizing management of public sector undertakings. It was seeking to liberalize its system to provide more autonomy to these institutions to negotiate directly with overseas firms. Under these emergent circumstances, the Government sought to obtain UNDP assistance for diagnosing its management improvement needs under the Management Development Programme (MDP). The ensuing formulation missions led to a project of support to management training at the Institute of Administrative and Management Development (IAMD) with \$300,000 from the IPF and \$1.4 million from MDP. The project is to strengthen the research, training and advisory capacities of IAMD in economic management, international business management, enterprise management and public administration so that it can be an effective tool in carrying out its administrative and economic reform programmes. The project will incorporate twinning arrangements with several institutions overseas to provide a mechanism to implement the project in a co-ordinated manner ensuring quality and initiating long-term linkages abroad. The Government views MDP as an opener to a new dimension in UNDP co-operation in Mongolia and hopes that it will play a catalytic role in attracting additional donor support, especially for the training of Mongolian officials.

F. Myanmar

23. The mid-term review of the fifth country programme for Myanmar was undertaken in November 1989. Participants in the review included, in addition to the staff concerned of the Government and UNDP, representatives of other organizations and programmes of the United Nations system (FAO, the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control (UNFDAC), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), DTCD, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Bank) as well as a number of the major bilateral donors (Australia, the Federal Republic of Germany, Japan, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America).

24. Four main factors affected the outcome of the review: (a) the development needs associated with the country's declared economic policies and the transformation from a centrally planned and managed economy to a more decentralized, market-oriented economy; (b) the disruption of programme implementation which occurred in 1988 and 1989; (c) the extensive exercise undertaken by UNDP and agencies of the United Nations system working in co-operation with the Government to identify the new technical assistance needs and priorities which would facilitate the transformation from a centrally planned to a market-oriented economy, including seven sectoral reviews; and (d) the additional resources available to Myanmar in connection with its designation as an LDC, including those of the SMF/LDCs and the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF). Available IPF resources rose to \$89.3 million and total UNDP-administered resources to \$119.4 million.

25. Of the IPF resources, only about one third (an estimated \$28.9 million) was spent and \$51.1 million committed as of November 1989, leaving a balance of \$60.4 million unexpended and \$38.2 million uncommitted during the present IPF period. This financial position and the urgent needs of the Government with respect to the changes in national economic policy resulted in the identification of 67 new high-priority projects for funding in the current country programme and the next one. The changes in economic policy have generated new needs in the public and private management of services and enterprises, and project proposals were being developed in these fields.

G. Philippines

26. The fourth country programme for the Philippines was approved in 1986 for the period 1987-1991 on the understanding that adjustments would be made to respond to the changing priorities of the new Government. The programme contained four sectoral thrusts, namely: agricultural development; industrial development; energy conservation and development; and improved planning and management of development at the national and sub-national levels. The mid-term review was carried out over two days in September 1989. Representatives of agencies of the United Nations system, including the World Food Programme (WFP), UNICEF, FAO, ILO, WHO, UNIDO and UNFPA, attended as well as a representative of UNDP headquarters. The results were: (a) a confirmation of the changes which had been taking place in the project

mix compared to that planned over the period 1987-1989; and (b) a reorientation of programme thrusts to reflect current government priorities (i.e., the general and regional development sector rose from 30 per cent of the programme to 44 per cent). The new priorities - poverty alleviation, sustainable development and growth with equity - are also expected to be highlighted in the fifth country programme. An increasing number of projects (currently 18) are under national execution. NGOs are becoming increasingly associated with programme implementation through contracting arrangements and parallel participation in project implementation. The private sector is benefiting through assistance for improving the policy environment, dissemination of information on investment potentials and promotion of exports. Furthermore, some applied research supported by UNDP has drawn interest from private investors.

H. Republic of Korea

27. In connection with the Government's Sixth Five-Year Plan, which focused on the further strengthening of the Republic of Korea's growth potential, the UNDP fourth country programme (1987-1991), approved by the Governing Council on 18 June 1987 (decision 87/27), reflected the following development priorities: (a) support to the industrial sector, particularly small- and medium-scale industries; (b) strengthening of the country's science and technology base; (c) human resources development; and (d) environmental management and protection. The total resources available for programming came to \$13.8 million. The mid-term review found that the programme's objectives and main orientation were still relevant to the country's needs and that approximately \$12 million of the IPF was programmed in ongoing projects. A few minor problems had been encountered in the programme's implementation. Where projects supported sophisticated research and development activities, some United Nations executing agencies were increasingly facing problems in providing consultants and fellowship posts at the required level of sophistication. Agency execution using a government-appointed national director to manage the project was becoming a standard way of executing projects. At the time of the review, four projects had been approved for national execution and one such project was under preparation. In addition, the Government expressed the intention to reinforce the technical co-operation among developing countries (TCDC) component of the programme for the benefit of other developing countries, especially in Asia and the Pacific.

I. Viet Nam

28. The mid-term review of the third country programme for Viet Nam was held over a period of one week in November 1989. As over half of the total technical assistance provided to Viet Nam comes from organizations of the United Nations system and since UNDP was the major United Nations organization providing multi-sectoral assistance to the country, agreement was reached between all parties concerned whereby the programmes of other major organizations and programmes of the United Nations system represented in the country (i.e., UNICEF, WFP and UNFPA) were also reviewed during the same week as the UNDP programme. The important advantage of this approach was that it provided a better understanding of the concerns

addressed through the programmes assisted by various United Nations organizations and, by observing their complementarity, would bring about improved co-ordination. The review was conducted in three stages. First, the status of individual projects was discussed between the Government and its implementing agencies; secondly, the project issues identified during these discussions were reviewed between the Government and the agencies of the United Nations system based on the background papers prepared by the respective agencies; and, finally, a formal review meeting was organized where the programme of each agency was discussed separately followed by a round-up meeting to discuss and adopt the conclusions and recommendations. The final review meeting was attended by representatives of the central Government, its implementing agencies, field offices of agencies of the United Nations system, and missions from the headquarters of FAO, UNIDO, DTCD, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and ILO. Representatives of resident missions of major bilateral donors were also invited to attend the meeting as observers. The mid-term review found that programme implementation had in general followed its planned focus and responded appropriately and flexibly to the Government's current economic reforms adopted in December 1986. There have been no deviations from the goals and targets of the original country programme although there have been additions to it in terms of a stronger emphasis on macro-economic policy and on the promotion of investment.

V. INTERCOUNTRY PROGRAMME

29. In 1989, the third year of the fourth intercountry programming cycle, budgeted approvals reached \$62.2 million for the year. This represented a quarter of the total IPF resources of \$245 million allocated to the programme in this cycle. The UNDP contribution was matched by increased cost-sharing from participating Governments and co-financing from donor sources. Delivery in 1988 amounted to \$38.8 million, rising to an estimated \$46.6 million in 1989. In the second half of the cycle, project implementation is expected to accelerate.

30. As of March 1990, there were 381 ongoing projects and 29 pipeline projects. Project commitments reached \$195 million, with approximately \$36 million to process in pipeline projects. The intercountry programme themes of human resources development and technology transfer are evident in the large numbers of training and demonstration projects on new technologies. In sectoral terms, the transport and communications sector, in keeping with the priorities set by the Transport and Communications Decade for Asia and the Pacific, comprises the largest share (24 per cent) of the programme, followed by natural resources and agriculture. A recent survey of UNDP-financed intercountry programme and country projects indicated that the regional programme's share of the total for environmental projects under implementation in the region was the largest with \$37 million in forestry, pollution control and other environment-related areas.

31. Within the intercountry programme nearly one third of the resources is allocated to designated groups of countries: the major subregions of the South Pacific (SOPAC) and ASEAN, and to the LDCs. Total resources for the SOPAC subregional component of the intercountry programme are approximately \$35 million, slightly above the total of all individual SOPAC country IPFs. The allocation for

the ASEAN component now stands at \$12.7 million. The LDC component (for Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Samoa and Vanuatu) also received approximately the same amount. In addition, the countries in these groups also benefited from their participation in region-wide projects.

32. There is increasing recognition that linkages between national and regional projects are important for better co-ordination and combined impact; efforts are being made by UNDP to highlight such linkages. Last year an analysis of linkages was undertaken and it now forms part of the Inter-country Programme Management Plan (ICPMP). The plan also shows where each project is located; this facilitates a continuing review of project site dispersion efforts.

33. The Fourth Meeting of Aid Co-ordinators, held in March 1989 and organized for the purpose of conducting a mid-term review of the fourth inter-country programme, also programmed \$45 million covering 65 projects. In preparation for the fifth inter-country programme, a high-level meeting of some of the prominent development thinkers of the region will be convened in May 1990. The conclusions of this meeting will provide the basis for the ensuing formulation process for the next cycle based on consultations UNDP holds with the Governments and UNDP field offices of the region.

34. In 1989, the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific also organized two subregional seminars on the private sector in Manila and Seoul, in May and September 1989, respectively. In November, an Expert Group Meeting on the Environment was held at ESCAP under the auspices of a UNDP regional project on environmentally sound and sustainable development. A meeting was also organized for ASEAN on project monitoring in Jakarta in December.

VI. AID CO-ORDINATION

35. In recent years UNDP has played an active role in aid co-ordination activities in the region, primarily at the request of recipient countries. Aid co-ordination activities undertaken by UNDP field offices and by headquarters are of a varied nature and take place at several levels. Apart from the high-profile activities such as consultative groups and round-table meetings, there are many other aid co-ordination activities in which the field offices are involved. In recent years, various forms of local consultation groups on aid issues have emerged. The country programming exercises and the country programmes themselves have been utilized to promote aid co-ordination. The field offices also have assisted in promoting both formal and informal linkages among donors, especially at a sector and sub-sectoral level. The various activities of UNDP in the region have been described in a recent paper by RBAP entitled "UNDP and aid co-ordination in Asia and the Pacific".

36. Round tables. In 1989, round tables were held for the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Maldives. The round tables have now developed a structured pattern which enables donors and the recipient countries to engage in a policy dialogue both at the meeting itself and in the follow-up process. The Lao People's Democratic Republic round table had a special significance in that it came at a

time when the Government was involved in changing the direction of its centrally planned economy towards more market-oriented principles. The round table provided the opportunity for the Government to explain to the donor community its new economic policies, especially with regard to the more extensive role for the private sector and the opportunities afforded to foreign investment. The round table, apart from the extensive policy dialogue, led to highly satisfactory donor commitments for the implementation of the country's development programmes. The Maldives round table was also the forum for an extensive exchange of views on the country's economic policies, in addition to the commitment by donors of continued flows of development assistance. The environment was highlighted in view of its particular significance to the Maldives. For both these meetings, UNDP assisted the Government in preparing extensive background documentation analysing the Government's economic and development policies, development assistance requirements, and problems of aid management.

37. Consultative groups. In the context of the agreement with the World Bank, UNDP has undertaken a more substantive role, both in the preparatory process and at the meetings of consultative groups themselves. UNDP has provided assistance in the preparation of several studies of concern to consultative group meetings and, at the meetings themselves, the statements of resident representatives have focused on specific issues related to technical assistance. The Impact of Foreign Aid study in Pakistan is illustrative of the studies undertaken in the consultative group context. The objective of more extensive involvement by UNDP in the consultative group process is to utilize technical assistance in undertaking analytical studies critical to a country's development process.

38. Local co-ordination groups. In many countries in the region, both formal and informal co-ordination has emerged in recent years. This has been in response to the distinctly felt need for a forum where donor agencies can collectively discuss aid implementation and management issues with Governments. In countries such as Nepal, UNDP with the full support of the Government has helped in organizing these local consultation arrangements. In countries such as the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the field office has facilitated local-level consultations between donors and the Government as follow-up to the round-table meetings. In Bangladesh, UNDP has been co-ordinating the work of the Inter-agency Working Group on Disasters and has also undertaken studies on commodity and project aid to assist discussions at the local level. Experience has shown that these groups do make an important practical contribution to aid co-ordination.

39. Country programmes in aid co-ordination. It has been found through experience that a country programme can act as a catalyst to promote linkages among donor activities at project and programme levels. Facilitating aid co-ordination through the country programme takes many forms. First, it is in the very act of preparation of the country programme itself. In Indonesia and India, several sectoral reviews were undertaken which identified an extensive range of technical assistance requirements to be taken up by donors. In Myanmar, preceding the mid-term review process, at least eight sectoral reviews were undertaken to identify the priority technical assistance requirements in the context of the new economic policies of the Government. Secondly, UNDP has continued to assist the strengthening of those central institutions of government dealing with aid

management, thereby making possible more effective co-ordination of development assistance. Thirdly, country programmes can be used to facilitate a programme-oriented approach in dealing with the full range of requirements in a sector or subsector. Fourthly, country programmes have been extensively involved with pre-investment activities which often lead to capital investments by a range of donors. Fifthly, country programmes have actively promoted co-financing and complementary financing arrangements with other donors.

40. The UNDP field office in aid co-ordination. The 23 UNDP field offices of the region have all played, in varying degree, an active role in promoting aid co-ordination through various forms of practical assistance to donors. First, the field offices have continued to publish the annual development co-operation reports (DCRs). These reports have now been streamlined and in several countries computerized data bases facilitate their preparation. The current set of DCRs in the region contain in total an inventory of over 10,000 projects, classified by donor, Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC) sector and type of assistance. The DCR performs the function of an information tool for the donor community. Secondly, UNDP field offices and the UNDP Resident Representative in the role of Resident Co-ordinator have facilitated increased collaboration among agencies of the United Nations system. Thirdly, field offices have offered their services to multilateral and bilateral donor agencies in facilitating the formulation and execution of their assistance programmes. Whenever multilateral financial agencies do not have their own representatives in the field, the UNDP field office has facilitated their work in the country concerned. Fourthly, the field offices have responded to NGO needs to co-ordinate their work in related fields with other NGOs, UNDP donor agencies and agencies of government primarily through the exchange of information. Fifthly, the UNDP field offices in various countries have played a key role in times of emergency and disaster.
