

# UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME



Distr.  
LIMITED  
DP/1982/ICW/CRP.1  
14 September 1982

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

GOVERNING COUNCIL  
INTERSESSIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE  
First session  
13-15 September 1982, New York  
Agenda

## MEASURES TO PROMOTE UNDP'S ROLE, IMPACT AND SUCCESSES

### Note by the Administrator

1. A number of Delegations have spoken to the questions about improved measures to promote understanding of UNDP's role, impact and successes, and thereby resource needs which the Committee's Agenda encompasses in Item 5. While the Administrator hopes that the Committee will wish to address this item in depth at a later session, for which the Secretariat will prepare a paper, the following are brief observations to the comments made so far.
2. Following upon those comments made at Geneva and summarized in ICW/4, paras 37-38, during the Committee discussions the Ambassador of Barbados suggested that UNDP would benefit from more presentation of the Programme's cumulative historical role, and identifiable successes, in the economic growth of developing countries and thus in their increasing reciprocal partnership with the industrialised countries, to the benefit of those countries as well. Several Delegations endorsed this proposal, and it is most timely in the view of the Administrator who is currently considering such research leading to the kind of information material Delegates have in mind.
3. The Administrator has become increasingly aware of the fact that UNDP has, historically, been so busy at its daily operational job across the whole developing world that it may have paid insufficient attention to its own history; to the cumulative record of its impact. UNDP has, of course, always monitored, evaluated, and assembled the individual project-level results of UNDP's co-operation with developing countries. But under the pressure of delivery, year after year, there may have been neglect of the "larger picture"; the cumulative record of impact for a country's economy as a whole.
4. Recommendations before the Administrator in fact call for assembling such histories. Committee members will, however, appreciate that this is by no means a simple task, not least if UNDP is to avoid exaggerative claims simply

/...

for the sake of "public relations". Indeed it is an intrinsic part of the UNDP story that it has not "done everything", anywhere -- because, indeed, UNDP has acted as the catalyst to draw in other assistance resources based on its planning and able to use its training assistance. But all who know the UNDP "history" know that the impact is there at the foundations, in country after country, of their growing participation in the world economy and as trading partners with industrialised countries. The Administrator will address the need for more information of this kind energetically, but authentically.

5. In terms of project-level results, UNDP does of course provide governments and wider audiences with information on these by a variety of means. The Annual Report of the Administrator to the Governing Council contains every year a considerable range of specific instances of project achievements; and the more public and much more widely distributed printed version every year also contains other project success stories. Achievements are reported to the Council by Directors of the Bureaux and the Division for Global and Interregional Projects, and of course (though briefly) in Country Programme documents, as also (though not for every single project surveyed) in the various thematic evaluation studies. The periodic digest of news from UNDP called "Development in Action", which is currently being re-designed, also contains succinct accounts of project achievements and, if staff resources permit, it is hoped to issue more frequent one-page project achievement sheets. Yet again, progress and results in UNDP-supported projects are published in the widely read inter-agency journal, "Development Forum" which UNDP supports; in such special booklets as a recent one dealing with the global and inter-regional programmes; and in a forthcoming series called "UNDP At A Glance".

6. By arranging for journalists to report to their own media on UNDP activities in developing countries -- between 60 and 90 such missions a year -- people in donor as well as recipient countries also read about project achievements. UNDP is continuously trying to interest important media in the major donor countries to publish material about UNDP and its achievements, but as the distinguished representative of Australia observed, UNDP's identity does not have instantaneous appeal among lay audiences.

7. The distinguished representative of Belgium referred to the importance of visiting with parliamentarians, and the Administrator assumes that representatives of donor countries are aware that he personally -- as well as the Deputy Administrator -- tries to achieve such visits as often as possible. If more could be done in terms of these contacts, governments must so signal to UNDP and assist it because, as hardly needs stressing, the UNDP Secretariat normally proceeds to parliamentarians through the executive branches.

8. The Administrator would like to mention in this context that he does believe much more useful exposure of UNDP's work and achievements among parliamentarians of donor countries could be achieved if their periodic visits

/...

to developing countries could more often include visits to UNDP offices and projects. Unless UNDP is thought of in advance, what tends to happen is that such important observation and assessment missions of parliamentarians concentrate entirely on their countries' own bilateral projects.

9. Again, mention can be made of the fact that some donor governments call for periodic assessments of UNDP's work on the ground by their own missions, an exercise which the Administrator entirely welcomes. Could more be done in this direction? It is for governments to decide on this and any other element of deficiency in the extent to which adequate information about the results of UNDP's work reaches them, subject of course in all cases to the readiness of the governments of developing countries, since it is their projects, assisted by UNDP, that are involved.

In this entire connexion, and looking to a more in-depth discussion at a later session of this Committee, the Administrator offers one or two further basic observations.

10. First, it will be important for such discussion for all concerned to identify what kind of greater information, in what sort of detail, about what, and for whom, may be needed. The spectrum and the scope involved in these issues are very large indeed. As to scope, as is well known, at any one time UNDP is supporting some 5,000 projects -- small and larger -- in over 150 developing countries and territories, and in virtually every field or sector or sub-sector. As to the spectrum of possibly needed additional information, it can range -- depending on identified need in relation to who needs it -- from one-page summaries of project achievements; through more elaborated descriptions but still of the progress in and by a given specific project; to more comprehensive accounts of impact from typologies of many projects in many countries such as might be one facet of the work of an evaluation unit ... and on to the cumulative, historical economic and social impact pictures suggested by the Ambassador of Barbados.

11. Secondly, it will be necessary for the Committee to bear in mind the present constraints in staff and other resources imposed upon UNDP in relation to the recording, assembly, and dissemination of these kinds of information. Involved in such work is a chain of staff time-consumption starting with UNDP's offices in developing countries, proceeding to agency headquarters and to New York and UNDP's programming and evaluation units, and thence in some considerable measure to the UNDP's Division of Information. The Administrator believes it is reasonable to observe that, historically, the Governing Council has not been generous about staff resources for precisely these areas of work. To cite one quick but very important example, it must be realised that, although UNDP has to mobilise the largest volume of grant financial resources in the entire UN System and with the least emotively or sectorally appealing "image", UNDP has one of the smallest divisions of information among voluntarily funded

/...

UN organizations or major specialized agencies.

12. The Administrator hopes that these preliminary observations may be of assistance to the Committee in relation to the relevant items on its agenda and to future discussions thereon. The subject-area is large indeed, as indicated in the foregoing, and if it is to be dealt with usefully in the brief sessions of the Committee there will be need for reasonably precise analysis and thinking. The Secretariat will do its very best to facilitate this necessary precision of information for the Committee's most effective examination.

-----