GOVERNING COUNCIL
Twenty-eighth session
June 1981
Agenda item 10(c)

OTHER MATTERS

FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF THE ORGANIZATION
OF THE SESSIONS OF THE COUNCIL

Streamlining and rationalization of the
work of the Governing Council

Note by the Administrator

Summary

The Governing Council, during its last three sessions, examined ways of improving the effectiveness of its deliberations, controlling and limiting its documentation and streamlining its agenda. At its twenty-seventh session, the Council adopted decision 80/55 by which, inter alia, it requested the Administrator to consider the various comments and suggestions made during discussions on this subject and to present his views and suggestions to the Council at its twenty-eighth session.

Pursuant to this decision, the Note of the Administrator highlights some of the major issues raised during the various sessions of the Council, provides additional information on the background and on remedial actions already taken, and suggests new proposals for streamlining and rationalizing the work of the Council. This document calls for action by the Council and the attention of the Council is drawn to the recommendations in paragraph 65 of this Note.
INTRODUCTION

1. In line with action taken by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council for the streamlining and rationalization of their work, the Governing Council, during its last three sessions, 1/ engaged itself in examining how to improve the effectiveness of its deliberations, control and limit its documentation and streamline its agenda.

2. At its twenty-seventh session, the Council established a Working Group to consider different aspects of these matters. During the deliberations of the Working Group, such issues were raised concerning the substance and procedural aspects of the work of the Council as the duration of its sessions, the organization of its work, the nature of information and documentation provided to the Council and the necessary secretariat servicing support. On the recommendation of the Working Group, the Council adopted decision 80/55, by which, inter alia, it requested "the Administrator to consider the various comments and suggestions made during discussions and to present his views and suggestions to the Council at its twenty-eighth session."

3. This report highlights some of the major issues raised during the various sessions of the Council, provides additional information on their backgrounds and on the remedial actions already taken in their regard, and suggests some new proposals for streamlining and rationalizing the work of the Governing Council.

I. ROLE AND FUNCTIONS OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL

4. UNDP is an organ of the United Nations, administered under the authority of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, which exercise their powers in respect of the Programme under the Charter. 2/ UNDP is the main funding organization for technical co-operation and pre-investment activities carried out by the United Nations system; operations in various sectors provide the Programme with a multidisciplinary character.

5. The intergovernmental control of the policies and operation of the Programme is exercised by the Governing Council. The Council provides general policy guidance on the administration and operation of the Programme. 3/ In accordance with General Assembly resolution 2688 (XXV) on the capacity of the United Nations development system, the responsibilities of the Governing Council have been recognized as follows: (a) policy formulation; (b) determination of Programme priorities; and (c) review of implementation in both planning and practice.

1/ Governing Council decision 25/30, 79/33 and 80/55.
2/ General Assembly resolution 1240 (XIII), Part B, para. 8.
3/ Ibid., paras. 8, 11 and 12.
6. At present the Governing Council is also the intergovernmental body responsible for nine other operational funds or programmes: the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), the United Nations Volunteers (UNV), the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), the United Nations Revolving Fund for Natural Resources Exploration (UNRPRE), the Interim Fund for Science and Technology for Development (IFSTD), the United Nations Special Fund for Land-locked Developing Countries, the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office (UNSO), the United Nations Regular Programme of Technical Co-operation and the Special Measures Fund for Least Developed Countries (SMF/LDC). Thus, the amount pledged annually for operational activities under the Council's supervision totals nearly $1 billion. If Government contributions and contributions to projects in cash and kind are added, the aggregate development resources available to the above-mentioned funds and programmes approach $2 billion per annum.

7. In the past, the Council has concentrated its activities more on the review of programme implementation and the determination of priorities for programme planning. Since development cannot be considered a static phenomenon, the Council may wish to consider more frequently and more closely the policies guiding the operational activities carried out by the various funds under its supervision in order to allow them to respond in a more timely manner, as in the adoption of the Consensus 4/ and the New Dimensions programme in technical co-operation, 5/ to the changing needs of the developing countries. In considering the rationalization and streamlining of its work, the Council may also wish to consider how to further improve its policy guidance and formulation function for the different operational programmes and funds under its supervision. It should be noted in this regard that when the Governing Council at its last session decided in decision 80/55 to shorten the duration of future sessions, it specifically stated that such shortening would be "without prejudice ... to the full exercise of the policy and supervisory role of the Council."

8. At its last session, the General Assembly, by its resolution 35/56 adopted the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade, starting on 1 January 1981. The text of the Strategy recognizes that the goals and objectives of the International Development Strategy for the Second Development Decade remain largely unrealized and, in addition, that the present negative trends in the world economy adversely affect the growth prospects of developing countries. In the view of the General Assembly, the challenge of development requires a new era of effective and meaningful international co-operation for development. The new International Development Strategy aims at the promotion of the economic and social development of the developing countries with a view to reducing significantly the current disparities between the developed and the developing countries.


9. The new International Development Strategy recognizes that intensified emphasis must be accorded to the important role of technical co-operation in the development process. Technical co-operation makes a significant contribution to the efforts of developing countries to achieve self-reliance through its broad role of facilitating and supporting, for example, research, training and development.

10. The important built-in role of technical co-operation in the development process is also succinctly described by the report 6/ of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation, Comprehensive Policy Review of Operational Activities for Development". The report states:

"There is now a greater understanding of the development process, in both its internal and external dimensions ... There is also an increasing awareness not only of the importance of achieving the right balance between the different inputs in development but more particularly of the significance of non-capital sources of growth, such as human resource development and the effective use of productive resources, which are the raison d'être of technical co-operation and related operational activities of the system." 7/

11. At its last session, after having considered the report, the General Assembly adopted resolution 35/81 in which, inter alia, reaffirmed that the operational activities for development of the United Nations system should make an effective contribution to the accelerated development of developing countries and to the implementation of the International Development Strategy. The Assembly also expressed its grave concern that financial contributions to the system's operational activities for development have increased substantially and have generally fallen short of the targets set by the governing bodies. It reiterated the need for a substantial and real increase in the flow of resources for operational activities on an increasingly predictable, continuous and assured basis.

12. By the same resolution, the General Assembly invited the governing bodies of the relevant organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system to consider the following three policy issues:

(a) New and specific ways and means of mobilizing increased resources on an increasingly predictable, continuous and assured basis;

(b) Measures to reduce administrative and other support costs; and

(c) Measures to improve coherence of action and effective integration at country level.

6/ A/35/224, prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 33/201.
7/ Ibid., Annex, p. 3.
The General Assembly also decided to undertake a comprehensive policy review of operational activities in 1983, and every three years thereafter, on the basis of a coherent, integrated and systematic approach.

13. As the main intergovernmental organ responsible for operational programmes and funds, the Governing Council can forcefully demonstrate its leadership role in responding promptly and effectively to the requests of the General Assembly emanating from its comprehensive policy reviews of operational activities. The Council, through consideration of policies affecting funds and programmes under its own supervision, will contribute to the comprehensive policy reviews of the General Assembly.

II. ISSUES WHICH MAY BE CONSIDERED UNDER POLICY REVIEW

14. At the present session, the Governing Council will be considering important policy questions on the planning of UNDP operations for the 1980s, especially for its third programming cycle (1982-1986). By such considerations, the Council will also be responding to the three specific issues raised in General Assembly resolution 35/81 (see paragraph 12 above). In addition, for illustrative purposes, the following are issues which may warrant continuing policy consideration by the Council at its future sessions.

A. The role of the development of human resources in economic growth

15. The two main components in the development process are an increase in the quantity of capital and labour, and an improvement in the efficiency and use of these resources. The non-material sources of growth contribute directly to the further spread of knowledge in an economy. These consist broadly in the information, know-how, social technologies, changes in organizational arrangements, methods and procedures, and so forth, which directly affect the rate of economic growth and of social progress. Improving the use of these factors is a prime objective of technical co-operation.

16. As many studies have noted, the development of human resources is a major stimulus of economic growth. While the supply of capital may vary, and equipment become obsolete, the basic technical knowledge and skills possessed by human beings endure and multiply. In some developing countries, these basic organizational and technical skills are either available or within financial means; but this situation is certainly less true of the poorer developing countries. In such countries, the efforts supported by technical co-operation are having a less than optimal effect and consequently impairing the overall effectiveness of development assistance. International development strategy therefore must ensure not only a better flow of external development resources but also a fuller response to the development of human resources.

/...
B. Ratio of technical co-operation in total development assistance

17. Since the early 1950s, the dialogue between the developed and the developing countries has largely emphasized economic and financial gaps and, especially, the means for increasing the flow of Official Development Assistance (ODA). In the history of development assistance, technical co-operation has evolved more or less as an adjunct to capital assistance and investment programmes, providing advice on policy measures to foster capital formation, rendering direct services for pre-investment studies, and developing skills to manage and operate newly-created enterprises and services.

18. At present, an increasing number of countries are looking to structural changes in international trade and to the transfer of technology to provide the major impetus to their continued growth. Needs in technical co-operation, however, are constantly changing and expanding. Many countries have reached the point where existing levels of technical co-operation are no longer adequate; higher, more sophisticated levels of training and experience are in increasing demand.

19. Despite the evidence indicating the importance of technical co-operation in the development process, they represent only a small fraction of all ODA flows which are currently allocated to technical as opposed to other inputs. Further, as stated earlier, the Members of the United Nations have recognized by consensus the need for mobilizing increased resources for operational activities for development on an increasingly predictable, continuous and assured basis. 8/ The statistics are all the more disquieting when the divergency of needs of the developing world is taken into account and since a large majority of developing countries are unable to achieve the growth rates to which they aspire. In the light of this situation, it question arises whether enough serious consideration has been given to whether the ODA provided at present contains a sufficient proportion of technical co-operation. A related issue might be raised concerning the advisability of a special target or ratio for technical co-operation within the global ODA target.

C. Content of the Programme

20. The basic fields of assistance and types of projects which could be financed by the Programme are mentioned in the early resolutions of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council establishing the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance and the Special Fund. 9/ According to these resolutions,

8/ General Assembly resolution 35/81, para. 7.
9/ General Assembly resolutions 304 (IV) and 1250 (XII), Economic and Social Council resolution 222 (IX).
assistance is given "... to projects in the fields of resources including the assessment and development of manpower, industry, including handicrafts and cottage industries, agriculture, transport and communications, building and housing, health, education, statistics and public administration." 10/ In accordance with provisions of the same resolutions, the form of assistance provided by the Programme consists of: (a) services of experts and consultants; (b) equipment and supplies; (c) seminars and training programmes; (d) scholarships and fellowships; and (e) pilot and demonstration projects.

21. Since the establishment of the criteria governing both the fields and forms of assistance, far-reaching changes have taken place in respect of development and international economic co-operation, to which UNDP has increasingly responded; at the same time, the technical co-operation required by Member States has become more complex and sophisticated. Although requirements for technical co-operation in basic development sectors such as agriculture, education and health maintained their importance, priority is increasingly being assigned to international co-operation in such areas as energy, trade, financial and monetary matters, and the environment. Similarly, new areas for international co-operation are emerging as the result of the Conferences on the Law of the Sea and New and Renewable Sources of Energy and from ongoing meetings on the peaceful uses of outer space. In order to respond promptly to existing and newly emerging needs, UNDP requires increased resources in real terms on an increasingly predictable, continuous and assured basis. Moreover, although recognition is growing at the intergovernmental level of the need for a multidisciplinary and integrated approach to the development problem, the majority of projects financed by UNDP are of a sectoral nature. It is essential that operational activities carried out by the programmes and funds under the supervision of the Governing Council maintain their dynamism, retain their relevance, enhance their effectiveness and respond with innovative approaches to the new and ongoing demands of Member States.

D. Measures to improve the linkage between substantive research and technical co-operation

22. Under the comprehensive policy review of operational activities of the United Nations system, the need for greater interaction and linkage between the substantive research and operational activities carried out by the United Nations system has been recognized. The report of the Director-General drew attention to one of the unique features 11/ of the operational activities of the United Nations system: the potential for making effective use of the experience the system has gained over the past 30 years, of its knowledge and understanding of a vast number of technical subjects as applied to the problems of the developing countries.

10/ General Assembly resolution 1250 (XIII), Part B, II, para. 5.
23. The report recommended that policy and practice should be brought closer together and greater efforts be made to link the substantive research and analysis functions of the organs of the system and the operational activities supported by the same organizations. It may be asked what measures are to be taken to improve this cross-fertilization and linkage between research and analysis and the operational activities carried out by programmes and funds under the supervision of the Governing Council.

E. Special funds and priorities established at national and global levels

24. The special funds established for specific activities and sectors and their impacts on priorities determined at national and global levels through a consensus process were examined in general terms at the General Assembly, during both consideration of the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system and the comprehensive policy review of operational activities. Information on this question and related issues has also been provided in the documentation submitted to the informal meeting of the Members of the Governing Council to be held 29-30 April 1981 in New York.

25. Some of the policy issues which may warrant consideration by the Council have been mentioned above for illustrative purposes. The Council at each session may wish to discuss and define one or more priority areas or subjects for consideration at its following session on the basis of that determination, the Administrator would prepare relevant documentation, including options and possible courses of action, for early review by the Council. (See draft decision 1 (a), (b) and (c), p. 2.)

III. ISSUES RELATED TO THE SESSIONS OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL

26. During consideration of the streamlining and rationalization of the Council's work, various comments and suggestions were made in respect of the organization of the Council's sessions.
A. Duration of sessions of the Council

27. The majority of delegations have commented in the past on the desirability of shortening the duration of the Governing Council's sessions. As is known, until recently the Governing Council held two sessions each year: one early in the year, for three weeks; and one in June, for four weeks. At its twenty-fourth session in June 1977, bearing in mind that this system of biannual sessions placed a heavy burden upon delegations, UNDP secretariat and United Nations conference services in terms of staff, time and overall cost, the Governing Council decided to hold one annual session of four weeks from 1978 onwards. At its last session the Governing Council expressed the desire to further shorten the duration of its deliberations and decided that, on an experimental basis, the duration of the twenty-eighth session should be three weeks. In this regard, however, it was recognized that such a shortening should not in any way imply a diminishing of its role and responsibilities. Indeed, in decision 80/55, it was noted that "... in deciding the duration of future meetings, the Council may wish to take into account the desirability of allowing additional time for the consideration of certain items in depth."

B. High-level segment of Council sessions

28. During the twenty-seventh session, the idea was put forward by several delegations of establishing a period of three or four days in each session for general policy statements and consideration of policy issues at the level of senior policy-maker. The remainder of the session would be devoted to management and review issues. The Council will in fact devote the first week of the present session to the consideration of important policy issues at a high level. In the light of this experience, it may consider continuation of the practice. (See draft decision 2 (a), p. 20.)

C. Subject-oriented sessions

29. Similarly, during the twenty-seventh session, several delegations expressed the view that, if necessary, the Council should hold short subject-oriented sessions to consider specific matters. Attention was drawn to the fact that in providing for such sessions, even for short duration at different times of the year, particular account must be taken to the travel costs to the delegations. Therefore, it was generally agreed that if any subject-oriented session had to be convened, it would be preferable that it immediately precede or follow the regular Council session. In relation to this, delegations also expressed the view that it might be necessary to have a separate meeting, lasting approximately a week, to consider and adopt country and intercountry programmes. This proposal has particular relevance for 1982, as the Council will have before it for consideration 86 country programmes and 4 regional programmes. Recognizing the enormous workload this presents the Council, the Administrator suggests that the Council may wish to consider to hold a short subject-oriented session for this purpose for three or four days prior to its twenty-ninth session. The organizational meeting to be convened as recommended below at the beginning of February 1983 could consider the country programmes and thus facilitate their timely approval for the third programming cycle. (See draft decision 2(b), p. 20.)
D. Holding of an organizational meeting

30. The General Assembly, in resolution 33/55 and decision 33/417, urged intergovernmental bodies to hold organizational meetings as far in advance of any scheduled sessions as practicable in order to elect their bureaux, consider their programmes of work and, where feasible, facilitate the efficient distribution of their work throughout the year with the assistance of the secretariat. The General Assembly urged the regional groups to agree, whenever possible, on the composition of the bureaux of United Nations bodies well in advance of the beginning of their sessions.

31. It should be noted that in response to the above resolution, a number of United Nations bodies - for example, the Preparatory Committee for the International Development Strategy, the Intergovernmental Committee for Science and Technology, and the Committee for Programme Co-ordination - held organizational meetings in 1979 and 1980 to elect their officers and to consider their work programmes. As is known, the Economic and Social Council schedules an organizational session early each year, as does the Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

32. In the past, in accordance with rule 11 of its Rules of Procedure, the Council elected its Bureau in January, at the first of its two annual meetings. When the Council decided to hold one annual session in June, it also decided to suspend the application of this rule. The rule, which remains in force, was later revised to provide for the election of officers at the beginning of each regular annual session.

33. The rule creates some practical inconveniences. The term of office of the Bureau normally continues until its successor is elected the following June. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 2813 (XXVI), however, the term of office of one-third of the members of the Governing Council expires on 31 December each year. Thus, there may be instances where a Government's membership in the Council expires while its representative is a member of the Bureau. Also, while the term of office of the one-third of the membership of the Governing Council elected each year during the first regular session of the Economic and Social Council nominally starts on 1 January of the next year, the actual association of these newly elected members with the Council takes place only in June of that year, i.e., 14 months after their election. Taking into account the General Assembly resolution mentioned above, a recommendation is submitted for consideration of the Council which will enable the Council to elect its Bureau at the beginning of February of each year, thus enabling the newly elected members of the Council to assume their role prior to the regular session which takes place in June. In this way, members can familiarize themselves with the questions to be considered at the normal regular session and the role of the Bureau between sessions of the Governing Council will be strengthened. (See draft decision 2(c), p. 20.)
E. Timing of the session of the Council

34. During the twenty-seventh session, several delegations expressed the view that the regular session of the Council should be scheduled earlier than it is at present, in order to give delegations more time to prepare for the second regular session of the Economic and Social Council. The Council, by its decision 80/55, requested the Administrator to consult with the United Nations Secretariat with a view to scheduling the twenty-ninth session as early as is compatible with the likely availability of documentation and taking into account the fact that no high-level meetings on Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries is scheduled for 1982. Accordingly, the Administrator requested the United Nations Conference Services to make the following arrangements.

i) For 1982

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Governing Council</th>
<th>25-28 May</th>
<th>Subject-oriented session for the approval of country programmes</th>
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<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Governing Council</td>
<td>31 May-18 June</td>
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ii) For 1983

| High-level committee on the review of technical co-operation among developing countries | 23-30 May |
| Governing Council | 31 May-17 June | Regular session |

If these dates are approved by the Committee on Conferences, there would then be more than two weeks between the end of the Governing Council session and the second regular session of the Economic and Social Council.

F. Agenda of the Council

35. During the twenty-seventh session, a consensus was reached to condense the Council's agenda without affecting the depth of analysis of the issues under consideration. In this context, the agenda of the twenty-eighth session was approved under certain major headings.

36. If the proposed recommendation that the agenda of the Council at each session should include an item on policy is endorsed by the Council, then future agendas may be organized under the following main headings: (a) policy review; (b) Programme implementation; (c) Programme planning; (d) other funds and programmes; and (e) budgetary, financial and administrative matters. (See draft decision 2(d), p. 21.)
37. In this regard, General Assembly resolution 33/5 requested United Nations bodies to review the length and cycle of their sessions with a view to exploring the possibilities of shortening them and/or of meeting on a biennial or less frequent basis. In resolution 2836 (XXVI), furthermore, the General Assembly requested its Main Committees to review whether annual reports of subsidiary organs could be submitted at less frequent intervals. Similarly, in decision 281 (LXIII) the Economic and Social Council decided to adopt, on a regular basis, a biennial cycle of meetings and, by its resolutions 1786 (LIV), 1913 (LVII) and 1978/1, decided that, with certain specified exceptions, all its organs should meet biennially unless the Council decides otherwise.

38. With the same objectives in mind, and in response to views expressed by delegations at the twenty-seventh session, the Governing Council may wish to consider biennial presentation of some of the items on its agenda. For instance, in-depth reports on the activities of funds and programmes under UNDP jurisdiction might be considered every two years, except in cases where resolutions of the General Assembly call for annual review. A brief factual report on these funds and programmes could be provided at each session for information purposes. Biennial in-depth review, furthermore, could be scheduled for the years in which the Council does not consider the biennial budget of UNDP. It would help achieve a better and more rational organization of the sessions of the Council, such a decision would also help reduce the volume of documentation prepared for each session, an issue discussed below. (See draft decision 2(e), p. 21.)

G. Reporting to the Council

39. The Administrator, in his opening statement to the twenty-seventh session of the Governing Council, suggested that a number of questions which are at present the subject of separate documents and separate debate could in the future be briefly reported to the Council and be discussed only if the Council Members felt that policy issues were involved. In accordance with Council decision 80/55, a single document should be issued whenever information on several related questions can be consolidated. Similarly, presentation by the secretariat of the items for discussion, and its replies to the discussion should be brief, comprehensive and focused on the action expected from the Council. (See draft decision 2(f), p. 21.)

H. Organizational matters

40. In this context, it is recommended that, as in the case of the Second Committee of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, introductory statements by the secretariat on items or on separate funds and programmes be made consecutively, when appropriate, so as to provide members of the Council with the possibility of expressing their views on these items in a single intervention. (See draft decision 2(f), p. 21.)

H. Organizational matters

41. Several measures could be taken in respect of organizational matters for the better utilization of the time available to the Council during its sessions. Some of these measures have already been implemented, but they could be enforced more vigorously and strictly. The suggested measures are the following:
(i) Establishment of a list of speakers for each item

42. A list of speakers for the consideration of main items should be open prior to the session, and delegations should be invited to inscribe their names as early as possible. The Council has already made a similar recommendation in its decision 80/55, paragraph 1(d). Similarly, during the session the list of speakers for each item could be opened and closed, as appropriate, in order better to plan each meeting of the session. (See draft decision 2(g), p. 21.)

(ii) Time-limits

43. Except during the high-level segment of the Council's session, statements under each item should be no more than 15 minutes for the representatives of each Member State and 10 minutes for other participants. Several United Nations bodies and conferences in the past have approved such a time limit for plenary meetings and/or general debates. (See draft decision 2(h), p. 21.)

(iii) Organization of work

44. An organization of work approved at the beginning of each session is desirable not only for the Council as a whole but also for the Budgetary and Finance Committee. The Committee should have its own agenda in a separate document and decide on the organization of its own work. Both the Council and the Committee should set a tentative date for the beginning of each item, on the basis of agreed upon schedules. However, this organization should be as flexible as possible so that, if the Council or the Committee completes its consideration of an item before the indicated date, consideration of the next item can begin immediately. Care should be taken to avoid debate on the same items by both the Council and the Budgetary and Finance Committee. (See draft decision 2(i), p. 21.)

(iv) Adherence to schedules

45. The meetings of the Council and the Budgetary and Finance Committee should start as promptly as possible, at the time for which they have been scheduled. According to a report of the Secretary General (A/AC/172/50), during its twenty-sixth session, the Governing Council lost 56 hours and 55 minutes, due to late starting (33 hours, 40 minutes) and early ending (23 hours, 15 minutes). (See draft decision 2(j), p. 21.)

I. Decisions of the Council

46. In accordance with Governing Council decision 79/33, in all documents the issues should be clearly stated and clear recommendations or alternative courses of action should be indicated and grouped together at the end of the document. Similarly, in accordance with decisions 25/30 and 79/33, the Administrator informs the Council of financial implications, including the source of funding, of any decision in question; whenever a document relates to a proposal for a new or modified programme or project, a statement of cost involved is included or attached. At present the Council adopts at each session, under separate heading and number, a large number of decisions. For instance, at the twenty-sixth session the Council adopted 49 decisions and at the twenty-seventh, 55 decisions. In order to avoid proliferation of decisions, it is recommended that, whenever possible, decisions should be grouped under a single heading. (See draft decision 2(k), p. 21.)
47. The Council, by its decision 25/30, requested the Administrator to introduce a code system for the identification of Governing Council decisions, the system being designed so that it could be applied retroactively to all the Governing Council's decisions. Accordingly, decisions taken at each session since then are coded in a manner customary to other United Nations organizations. The secretariat of the Council, furthermore, has examined all decisions adopted by the Council at sessions prior to the twenty-fifth and coded them retroactively. A conference room paper is being prepared to inform the Council of the titles and numbers of decisions adopted since the first session. The Council has also asked the Administrator, in consultation with the United Nations, to consider the feasibility of issuing an index of the decisions of the Council. A progress report on this issue (DP/481) was submitted to the twenty-seventh session. Since then, the following actions have been taken:

(a) The texts of all decisions have been extracted from the respective Council reports (in English, French and Spanish) and are available for indexing;

(b) Contact with officials of the United Nations Dag Hammarskjöld Library has been established and assurance of co-operative assistance has been reiterated; and

(c) Relevant organizational units within UNDP are considering the electronic equipment to be installed.

J. Reports of the Governing Council

48. At its twenty-sixth session, the Council decided in decision 79/33, paragraph 4, that the summary records for the Governing Council should be maintained but its report should be considerably shortened. At its special meeting from 11 to 20 February 1980, the Council noted that, in accordance with relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council on the control and limitation of documentation, the report of the Council on its twenty-seventh and subsequent sessions should consist essentially of the decisions of the Council, with references, as appropriate, to pertinent summary records. The report of the Council at its twenty-seventh session was prepared accordingly; the reports of the future sessions will follow the same pattern and format.

49. Taking into account the new format of the report and the limited time available to the Council in the shortened duration of its sessions, it is recommended that the Council follow the practice of the Economic and Social Council and the Main Committees of the General Assembly and no longer formally adopt its report. (See draft decision 2(1), p. 21.)

K. The role of the Bureau

50. As mentioned above, it is recommended that the Bureau be elected at the beginning of the year at the organizational meeting of the Council, so as to assist the Council more actively in discharging its responsibilities. The
President of the Council, in consultation with other officers of the Bureau and the Administrator, may initiate consultations, as required, with Governments both before and during sessions of the Council for the purpose of organizing the work of sessions so as to better facilitate completion of the tasks the Council will have before it. Similarly, the Bureau can meet with the secretariat informally between sessions from time to time in order to consider issues concerning documentation as well as the organization and preparation of Council sessions. (see draft decision 2(m), p. 21.)

IV. CONTROL AND LIMITATION OF DOCUMENTATION

A. Review of the situation

51. The volume of documentation produced for United Nations bodies is an important, ongoing problem. Governments have frequently addressed themselves to the need to reduce the volume, improve the quality and ensure the timely issuance of documents in all working languages. According to a recent estimate, the volume of documentation produced by the United Nations (New York and Geneva alone) reached 920 million page-impressions in 1979. If one adds the documentation produced by other United Nations organizations, the total exceeds 1.5 billion page-impressions. The cost of producing and distributing documents, excluding the cost of writing them, is now over $100 million a year. If all the page-impressions of documents produced by the United Nations system yearly were laid end to end, they would encircle the globe at the equator more than 10 times. 12/ It should also be noted that the cost of reproducing one page in all official languages is $300 (1979 figure).

52. On numerous occasions delegations have complained of the mass of documentation they are expected to study and to digest before meetings and of the frequent delays in its distribution. These criticisms have led to the adoption of formal resolutions by the General Assembly (35/56) and the Economic and Social Council (1979/1, 1979/41 and 1979/69). In its decision 25/30 and 79/33, the Governing Council expressed similar concern.

53. The following measures, among others, can be mentioned as responses to requests by the General Assembly 13/, the Economic and Social Council and the Governing Council:

(a) To keep the request for documents to a minimum compatible with the efficient conduct of business;

(b) To review all recurrent documents in order to determine whether they have become redundant, have lost their usefulness or could be issued at less frequent intervals;

12/ See JIU/REF/80/12.

13/ The General Assembly in its resolution 2538 (XXXIV) requested the Secretary General to prepare a short document setting forth in clear terms the policies laid down by the General Assembly regarding the control and limitation of documentation and to make it available to the Member States prior to each session of a council, board, commission, committee or other body. The last up-to-date version of that document is A/INF/36/1 of 3 February 1981, which will be made available to the Council at its twenty-eighth session.
(c) To integrate or consolidate documents that deal with related or similar themes;

(d) To request the secretariat to bring to the attention of the Governing Council, at the time decisions are being adopted, any request for documentation that exceeds the ability of the secretariat to produce such material on time within its approved resources and to provide relevant explanations;

(e) To urge the secretariat to play a more active role in advising the Governing Council on means of limiting meeting reports and documentation;

(f) To establish 15 to 20 pages as the general limit for the length of documents and to limit to a maximum of 32 pages all action-oriented documents. The latter rule is to be applied to the document as a whole, including any annexes and appendices that may be required;

(g) Each document should be prefaced with a brief summary of its contents and should contain at the end a very succinct indication of the points for discussion and all the main issues requiring intergovernmental consideration and action;

(h) If the document calls for action, clear recommendations or alternative courses of action should be indicated and grouped together at the end of the document, and, to the extent possible, the texts of decisions should be included; and

(i) Each document should indicate on its cover page whether specific action is recommended or whether it is for information.

54. It is suggested, therefore, that the Council should reiterate the necessity of implementing and strictly adhering to the above measures recommended by the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and/or by itself. (See draft decision 3(a), p. 22.)

55. In response to relevant resolutions and decisions, the Governing Council secretariat has tried as far as possible to reduce the documentation submitted to the Council. The statistical data below indicates a progressive trend. It should be noted, however, that a sizeable amount of the documentation submitted to the Council concerns country programmes and notes and thus increases from year to year, according to the number of the country programmes presented for approval. For instance, at the present session the Council will consider only 14 country programmes and one regional programme. However, it is estimated that 86 country programmes and 8 regional programmes, totaling more than 400 pages, will be submitted at the twenty-ninth session of the Council.
B. Indicative quota

56. The Joint Inspection Unit has dealt with problems related to documentation of the United Nations system in several of its reports, the most recent dated December 1980 and entitled "Control and Limitation of Documentation in the United Nations System" (JIU/REP/80/12). This report and its recommendations are at present under consideration by the relevant organizations of the United Nations system. According to the Inspectors, many organizations of the United Nations system have experimented over the years with a wide variety of systems to control the volume and improve the quality of documents and to ensure their issue on time; but no organization is satisfied that its system is sufficiently effective in attaining these aims. Nevertheless, in the view of the Inspectors, the documents control and quota systems used in some organizations deserve serious attention. Therefore, in their report the Inspectors recommend, inter alia, that United Nations organizations should consider introducing a documents quota system, as appropriate. The Inspectors, however, do not suggest the details of such a system and acknowledge that they may vary greatly among organizations according to their respective sizes, structures, activities, budgetary rules and administrative procedures.

57. Briefly, in a quota system, each unit of a secretariat receives a predetermined annual allocation of funds and services to meet its documentation needs. Quota system efforts and results in the United Nations system have thus far been modest. With respect to United Nations documentation in which the documents of the UNDP Governing Council constitute a part of total reproduction, the merits and disadvantages of a quota system for the allocation of conference resources has been under consideration for some time, but as yet no decision has been taken in this regard.

58. An alternative to a quota system is the forecasting system utilized by most of the larger and several of the smaller organizations of the United Nations system, including the United Nations itself. According to this system, the originating units identify and forecast the intended pattern and volume of their documentation over a period of time - annually, semi-annually or on a quarterly basis, for example - and then revise or up-date the forecast monthly.
59. The Governing Council may wish to consider whether to adopt at each session, for the following session, an indicative quota for the amount of documentation which it expects as a maximum. Taking into account its capacity for deliberation, and excluding country and intercountry programmes, this amount would be perhaps 1,500 pages. The indicative quota may also include such sub-quotas as 300 pages for policy papers, 1,200 pages for information papers, and the like. (See draft decision 3(b), p. 22.)

C. Country programmes

60. The country programmes form a sizeable amount of documentation submitted to the Council at each session. In this context, the Council may wish to consider a related issue, namely the question of reproduction of country programmes in all working languages. At present, the country programmes are translated and reproduced in all working languages. As stated earlier, it is expected that 86 country programmes with accompanying notes will be submitted to the Council at its twenty-ninth session, for a total of more than 3,100 pages. The timely issuance of these documents in all languages will not only be a serious problem to the United Nations documents services, but will also impose a heavy financial burden on the United Nations regular budget. According to estimates provided by the United Nations Department of Conference Services, issuance of these 86 country programmes in the submitted original language will cost $73,000. On the other hand, if they were to be issued in Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish, the cost would be twenty times greater, or about $1.5 million. In order to have the country programme documents on time and to reduce the cost of reproduction by at least twenty times, one option available to the Council is to accept that the country programmes henceforth be reproduced in the original language of submission only, one of the three working languages of the Council; a brief summary or highlights of the country programme in question could be given in the related note of the Administrator, which would be translated into all working languages. (See draft decision 3(c), p. 22.)

61. In previous decisions the Governing Council attempted to make a distinction between the kinds of documents submitted for its consideration. In decision 79/33, for instance, it decided that if the document were intended for information purposes only, it should be stated so clearly. In decision 80/55, the Council decided that each document should indicate on its cover page what specific action, if any, was to be taken by the Council. By the same decision, the Council decided that documents presented for its information that did not lead to comments or suggestions affecting their contents should simply be listed as noted, so that decisions taken during the session would relate clearly to action-oriented matters. It should be noted that it is not always easy for the secretariat to make a clear-cut distinction between documents for information only and those requiring action. Some documents which are largely of an informative nature may include a few paragraphs calling for action, together with a recommendation in that respect. The secretariat does and will continue to exercise its best judgment in specifying the nature of each document and indicating in the summary if an action is required.
62. In this connexion, it should be brought to the attention of the Council that some organs of the United Nations are establishing different types of classification for their documentation. Documents submitted to the conferences of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) for example, are classified either as "main policy papers" or "support papers". Each type is reproduced with different coloured covers, in order to emphasize the difference. The numbers of main policy papers are fewer and their size shorter compared with support papers. This distinction assists delegations in attributing priority for consideration of the documentation; at the same time it helps the document services of the Secretariat to attribute higher priority to the timely reproduction and distribution of the policy papers. If the Council wishes to consider the same type of distinction, the secretariat could study the feasibility of applying the same procedure for the Council's documentation. (See draft decision 3(d), p. 22.)

E. Rationalization of the symbol series of the documentation of the Council

63. Some years ago, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council adopted certain modifications to the symbol series of their documents in order to facilitate the computerization of information.

64. With the same objective in mind, namely to facilitate the identification, storage and retrieval of both pre-session and in-session documentation as well as of project recommendations, the secretariat is proposing to the Council for its approval the following changes concerning the symbols of the documentation, to begin in 1982:

(a) The documents of the Council will be numbered on a yearly basis, beginning each year with "1", for example, DP/1982/1. The consecutive numbering will include any special sessions or meetings of the Council;

(b) The Budgetary and Finance Committee will have its own agenda, organization of work and checklist of documents;

(c) Project and programme documents will have new symbols and follow a schedule of their own. These documents and their recommendations will no longer be issued as "restricted", but as "general" documents;

(d) Draft decisions submitted to the Council and Budgetary and Finance Committee will be issued as "limited" documents;

(e) The membership of the Council will be issued annually as a Council document under the "information" series;

(f) The pre-session list of documents will be issued under the "information" series, not the "general" series;

(g) A final checklist of documents will be issued after each session under the "information" series;
(h) A decision number will be given to the adoption by the Council of the agenda and the organization of work; and

(i) The Bureau's report on credentials will be submitted to the Council under the "general" series. (See draft decision 3(e), p. 22.)

V. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ADMINISTRATOR

65. In the light of the information and analyses provided above in relation to the rationalization and streamlining of the Council's work, the Administrator recommends that:

The Governing Council,

1. Decides, with respect to the role and function of the Council:

(a) Henceforth to allocate and orient a well-defined part of its deliberations to major policy issues and emerging developments in the operational activities carried out under its supervision on which immediate action is necessary. For this purpose, and in full accordance with its functions under relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, the Council will make recommendations, as appropriate, to the Member States participating in the Programme and will establish adequate policy guidelines and directives for the programmes and funds for which it is responsible;

(b) That the agenda of the Council at each session will include, as a main item, policy reviews; and

(c) To define policy areas or subjects at each session for consideration at its following sessions and requests the Administrator to prepare relevant documentation on the priority topics selected by the Council for policy review, including options and possible courses of action for its consideration.

2. Decides, with respect to the sessions of the Council, that the following should apply:

(a) To hold a short part of its annual sessions at a high, senior policy-maker level for the purpose of considering issues which could provide the necessary dynamism to technical co-operation activities carried out under the supervision of the Council;

(b) To hold, as necessary, short subject-oriented sessions to consider specific matters. Preferably, such subject-oriented sessions should immediately precede or follow the regular sessions. The Council decides to hold a short subject-oriented session for three or four days prior to its twenty-ninth session to consider the country and intercountry programmes;

(c) To hold a one or two day organizational meeting at the beginning of February each year in New York to elect its Bureau and to consider, if necessary, organizational matters and the disposition of any pending matters;
(d) To establish the agenda of each session, apart from items on organizational and other matters, under five main items: (a) policy review; (b) Programme implementation; (c) Programme planning; (d) other funds and programmes; and (e) financial, budgetary and administrative matters, and further decides that it will consider biennially the question of Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries (TCDC);

(e) To have a broad policy review of other funds and programmes under its supervision biennially, in years when it does not consider the biennial budget of UNDP, except for those funds whose activities must be considered annually in accordance with the relevant General Assembly resolutions;

(f) To make introductory statements by the Administration and separate funds or programmes consecutively, so as to provide Council members with the opportunity of expressing their views in one single intervention;

(g) To establish a list of speakers for the consideration of the main items prior to the session and, during the session to open and close a list of speakers before the consideration of each item;

(h) That, except during the high-level segment of the Council's session, statements under each item, in principle, should be no more than 15 minutes for the representative of each Member State and 10 minutes for other participants;

(i) That the Budgetary and Finance Committee should have its own agenda in a separate document and its own organization of work;

(j) That its meetings should start as promptly as possible, at the time for which they have been scheduled;

(k) That in order to avoid the proliferation of the decisions of the Council these decisions should be grouped, whenever possible, under a single heading and that documents which contain proposals having financial implications, in accordance with decision 79/33, should include a statement of the costs involved or should provide in a separate statement the relevant financial implications. The Council further decides that the financial implications of each draft decision should be considered by the Budgetary and Finance Committee before adoption by the Council;

(l) Taking into account the new format of its report, to follow the practice of the Economic and Social Council and no longer formally adopt its report; and

(m) To elect its Bureau at the beginning of the year at its organizational meeting and to request the Bureau, in co-operation with the Administrator, to initiate consultations, as required, with the Member States both before and during the sessions of the Council, for the purpose of organizing and facilitating the completion of the work of the Council.
3. Further decides, with respect to the control and limitation of documentation:

(a) That the necessity of strict implementation and adherence to the measures recommended by the General Assembly, by the Economic and Social Council, and by the Council itself on the control and limitation of documentation should be reiterated;

(b) That an indicative quota for the documentation which it expects as a maximum at the following sessions be adopted and that it will exclude documentation on country programmes but will include subquotas for main policy papers and support papers;

(c) That from the twenty-eighth session onwards country programmes should be presented to the Council in the language of the session only, one of the three working languages of the Council and that a brief summary and highlights of the programmes should be provided in the terms of the Administrator, to be published in all working languages;

(d) That the feasibility of publishing the documentation of the Council in two categories, "main policy papers" and "support papers", should be studied by the Administrator; and

(e) That the changes proposed by the Administrator concerning the symbols of documentation should be implemented.