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PROGRAMME PLANNING

Country programmes

FOURTH COUNTRY PROGRAMME FOR YEMEN

Note by the Administrator

I. PROCESS OF THE PROGRAMMING EXERCISE

1. The preparation of the fourth country programme for Yemen started in the middle of 1985, at the time when the Government began to formulate the first preliminary parameters and guidelines of the Third Five-Year Plan (1987-1991). It followed the conceptual development of the Plan which was greatly influenced, inter alia, by confirmation of a major oil discovery in the country. It benefited greatly from the findings and recommendations of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)/World Bank Sector Studies for the Five-Year Plan as well as from the joint Government/UNDP/Federal Republic of Germany Evaluation of the Third Country Programme (March 1986).

2. The Resident Representative's note presented to the Government in May 1986 did not only reflect UNDP experience in the country and current technical assistance needs which corresponded to the development priorities as formulated by the Government, but also crystallized intensive discussions on programming matters with various executing agencies and bilateral donors - a discussion which is to be continued throughout the whole period of country programme implementation. The Government supported the main thrust of UNDP technical assistance, as outlined in the note. It stressed the need to improve the quality and sharpen the focus of that assistance.

3. The programming and identification missions of executing agencies - the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), among others - and efforts of local representatives of the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) resulted altogether in 62 project ideas. In preparation of the country programme, UNDP also reached broad agreement with the World Bank and the International Development Association (IDA) on ways of better co-operation in execution of their loans in Yemen. Contacts with all major bilateral donors brought a more thorough understanding of assistance plans and effectively opened new possibilities of co-financing of UNDP projects in this country.

4. The final version of the country programme is the result of very close co-operation between the Government and UNDP. The Resident Representative maintained close dialogue with the Central Planning Organization (CPO) throughout the whole period of drafting and finalization of the country programme. The views of line ministries in connection with the technical missions of the executing agencies were also sought. In the final stage a joint ad hoc committee was established between CPO and UNDP. It was in meetings of this committee that the programming concepts and project proposals were finally screened and approved for inclusion in the country programme.

II. THE FOURTH COUNTRY PROGRAMME

5. Areas of concentration of the fourth country programme for Yemen have been identified as: agriculture, water, industry and health. Those are but four thematic topics in the all-out effort to develop the country's human resources. The general background of the UNDP assistance effort will also include raising productivity and the ability to manage the country's resources and overall development. A separate cluster of projects contained in the programme which address human resources development in sectors other than those mentioned above seems appropriate for UNDP assistance and is justified by Yemen's current development needs.

6. In accordance with the Government's priorities, much of UNDP assistance will be concentrated in the agricultural sector. Drawing lessons from previous experience, UNDP will concentrate its inputs on a regional rather than country-wide level. Therefore, a cluster of well-defined projects will address problems of enhanced, integrated agricultural development in the Northern Highlands and Ma'rib regions, which have previously received little attention in technical assistance programmes.

7. The majority of new projects directed at the productive sectors - be it agriculture or the industrial sector - concentrate on creating a better institutional and structural environment for growth. A large proportion of these activities is intended to lead to follow-up investments originating from the private sector in Yemen or connected to large, government-sponsored developmental plans, with possible involvement of international financing.

8. The Government identifies the availability of water as one of the most important pre-conditions for the success of the Third Five-Year Plan. UNDP will aim at assisting the Government in providing the population with water for household and agricultural use through cost-effective, efficient methods.

9. Projects in the social sector deal with health care and will be implemented with full community participation, taking advantage of the potential and invaluable help of local non-governmental organizations which will be rendered in its meaningful application by women. UNDP intends to co-operate also with the Yemen Women's Association in a programme of broadening the informal education programmes for women through training women teachers in literacy, home economics and family welfare.

10. Projects connected with better water supply and usage, as well as others designed to cope with sand-dune fixation and afforestation problems, respond to the Government's concern for protecting the environment of the country.

11. During the fourth country programme UNDP will be providing technical assistance to a few large-scale development operations involving substantial government and external capital investment. That will be the case with the development of the northern and eastern agricultural regions and oil development. Assistance to the High Water Council and development of health services infrastructure for primary health care also address problems of national importance. Without overlooking the importance of other projects, the above group of projects gives UNDP a unique opportunity to make a difference in a few selected crucial sectors of Yemen's economic and social life.

III. MANAGEMENT OF THE COUNTRY PROGRAMME

12. Past UNDP experience in Yemen makes it necessary to look for ways of increasing timeliness, efficiency and cost-effectiveness of delivery. UNDP will try to start bigger and relatively more complicated projects on the basis of preparatory assistance seeking to develop more detailed project documents, to identify better the implementation constraints and to establish the pre-conditions for the success of the projects and ultimately assure their sustainability. Regular tripartite reviews, periodic systematic project evaluations and at least one review of the country programme will ensure continuous improvement of the ongoing programme and serve as an invaluable source of experience to be used in future programming.

13. In the discussions with the Government, it was decided that UNDP will apply on as broad a basis as possible the modality of national experts and United Nations Volunteers (UNV). In the first case of a national input into the execution of projects, both the goal of raising professional qualifications and cost-effectiveness would be targeted. UNVs, especially those who speak Arabic, proved to be an effective element of UNDP-assisted projects in Yemen and will be used much more extensively in future years.

14. The active involvement of the major bilateral donors as well as the World Bank in Yemen opens possibilities of enhancing the impact of international assistance by properly utilizing various co-financing mechanisms and applying assistance packages with meaningful UNDP participation. This will in a co-ordinated and coherent fashion include, inter alia, management services agreements for the execution of IDA loans to Yemen. In all sectors dialogue will be maintained and intensified between UNDP, the Government, the donors and other assistance and credit agencies on how to achieve greater co-ordination and complementarity of external inputs in pursuit of national development goals.

IV. RECOMMENDATION OF THE ADMINISTRATOR

15. The Administrator recommends that the Governing Council approve the fourth country programme for Yemen.
