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MID-TERM REVIEW OF COUNTRY, REGIONAL,
INTERREGIONAL AND GLOBAL PROGRAMMES

INTRODUCTION

1. In paragraphs 7 and 8 of its decision 88/17 of 1 July 1988, the Governing Council requested the Administrator for certain information on the mid-term review of country, regional, interregional and global programmes. In paragraph 7, the Council requested aggregate data on all mid-term reviews and an analysis of the main findings and results of the different reviews; in paragraph 8, the Council requested the timetable envisaged for the mid-term reviews and information on the measures taken to carry out mid-term reviews of regional, interregional and global programmes.
2. The present report attempts to deal with all the above points. Since by aggregate data on all mid-term reviews is meant essentially information by country on the timing of the reviews, such data should be adequately reflected by the timetable for the mid-term reviews. Furthermore, since the time-frames of most country programmes are broadly concurrent with the fourth indicative planning figure (IPF) cycle (1987-1991), not enough mid-term reviews will be completed in time for submission of their findings and results to the Council at its thirty-sixth session (1989). This report will therefore concentrate on presenting (a) a timetable for the mid-term reviews of country programmes and (b) information on the measures taken to carry out mid-term reviews of regional, interregional and global programmes.

I. TIMETABLE FOR THE MID-TERM REVIEW OF COUNTRY PROGRAMMES

3. The country programme process - starting from preparation through implementation, monitoring, annual and mid-term reviews to the final evaluation of the results and impact after completion - is primarily the responsibility of the Government. However, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is an active partner in carrying out all the phases of this process. The mid-term review is a crucially important step in the implementation and management of a country programme, but it is not an isolated step, rather it is an overall reassessment exercise in an ongoing process in which the constituent projects are subjected to constant reviews.

4. The primary purpose of the mid-term review of a country programme is to assess the progress made during the first half of the duration of the programme in achieving the objectives set out in the approved programme. The progress is measured in terms of both the activities launched and the results achieved. The mid-term review also offers a major opportunity to the Government to restructure the programme's strategy and priorities in the light of any unforeseen economic or political changes, or any natural calamities which warrant a reshaping of the country programme. Moreover, the initial country programme usually allocates some funds to broad objectives and also leaves some funds unprogrammed to meet unforeseen needs. Such funds are allocated to individual projects during programme implementation. The mid-term review therefore offers the opportunity to review the allocation of such funds to projects and to reach decisions on allocating such other funds that may have still remained unallocated.

5. The exact timing of a mid-term review depends on many economic, political and natural factors, although ideally it should be during the middle year of the programme duration. The time-frames of most of the currently ongoing country programmes coincide with the fourth IPF cycle (1987-1991) but there are a few for which the overlap is not complete. Considered purely on the time-frames of the country programmes, most of the mid-term reviews should be carried out in 1989. Apart from the time-frame of the country programmes, the other factors which should be taken into account in deciding the timing of a mid-term review are: (a) the date of approval of the programme by the Council (the programmes which were approved in 1988 will be reviewed in 1990); (b) the timing of the preparation of the next country programme; (c) the orderly deployment of UNDP human resources at headquarters, when such resources are requested to assist in the review process; (d) the schedule of presentation of reports on mid-term reviews to the Governing Council; and (e) such other factors as changes in Government, changes in policies or major economic events.

6. The Resident Representatives have held intensive consultations with the Governments in reaching agreements on the timing of the mid-term reviews. The Regional Bureaux at UNDP headquarters have provided guidance in this regard, keeping in view the considerations mentioned in the foregoing paragraph. The schedule of mid-term reviews as developed at the time of preparation of this report is provided in the annex. Not all the dates are firm, as consultations are still continuing on a number of the dates.

II. MEASURES TAKEN TO CARRY OUT REGIONAL, GLOBAL AND INTERREGIONAL PROGRAMMES

7. The Administrator's report entitled "Review of programme and project activities: framework for mid-term reviews of country and intercountry programmes" (DP/1988/19/Add.3) submitted to the Governing Council at its thirty-fifth session (1988) outlined the overall framework for mid-term reviews, spelling out in some detail the major points to be covered in all mid-term programme reviews.

8. In their initial formulation, programmes set overall objectives and notionally earmark funds to be allocated to projects designed to assist in meeting those objectives. The major part of programme funds are allocated in this way. Some reserves are normally provided, however, to be allocated either to projects in support of the original objectives (programmed reserve) or in support of new needs as they arise (unprogrammed reserve). In the course of programme implementation, not all of the original projects may materialize. Additional funds may also become available through supplementary allocations.

9. Programme reviews are regarded by UNDP as key management tools. They are conducted in order to determine the effect of programmes in meeting their original objectives; to examine the continuing relevance of those objectives and revise them if necessary; and to make decisions on the new programming or reprogramming of unallocated funds.

10. The consultative processes to be followed for mid-term reviews of regional, interregional and global programmes are to a large extent similar, at least in form though not in depth, to those which were followed for the preparation of these programmes. The process of programme preparation and the procedures for consultation for it were outlined in document DP/1988/69. In line with the proposals contained therein, the UNDP offices concerned have initiated actions for the preparation of the mid-term reviews of the various regional programmes as well as the interregional and global programmes.

A. Regional programmes

1. The regional programme for Africa

11. The establishment of more effective means to monitor on a continuous basis regional programme activities has been a priority concern of the Regional Bureau for Africa (RBA) during the fourth programme cycle. Three regional programme office posts approved by the Governing Council in June 1988 will facilitate more effective co-ordination and monitoring of operations at the field level, strengthening linkages with national programmes and programmes with subregional entities including the Southern African Development Co-operation Conference (SADCC), the Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA), the Economic Community of Western African States (ECOWAS), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS).

12. A mid-term review, tentatively scheduled for the last quarter of 1989, will provide the opportunity to assess the continued relevance of the programme as a

whole with respect to design, content and direction. Most importantly, it should provide an operational assessment of the consultation process with the development partners; Governments, intergovernmental organizations, and executing agencies which formed the basis for the elaboration of the regional programme. On the substantive side, of particular interest is an assessment of major new thrusts to promote private sector initiatives, women in development and non-governmental grass-roots participation in development and the social impact of structural adjustment and, last but not least, the multisectoral projects for the promotion of economic co-operation and integration.

13. RBA will initially prepare a mid-term assessment paper focusing on the dynamics and present thrusts of the programme, in relation to the priorities set forth in the interregional programme document. The emphasis will be on thematic issues rather than individual project assessments. A consolidated financial statement also will be prepared. The RBA paper will solicit from the development partners their assessment of the programme as a continuing process, the corrective measures which can be taken to enhance the relevance and timeliness of co-operation and, most importantly, to set the stage for the fifth cycle programme. A final report will be sent to all partners.

2. The regional programme for Asia and the Pacific

14. The regional programme for Asia and the Pacific has remained under continuous review on a project-by-project basis through progress reports, tripartite reviews, terminal reports and evaluations. Since the beginning of the cycle, in 1987 and 1988, over 20 in-depth project evaluations and 100 tripartite reviews have been conducted. Several projects have also been reviewed by meetings of steering committees, technical committees and the board meetings of intergovernmental bodies. Monitoring has also been facilitated by the publication in March and October 1988 of the Intercountry Programme Management Plan for Asia and the Pacific, which is sent to all government aid co-ordinators, United Nations agencies and UNDP field offices. The Plan contains salient information on all ongoing, pipeline and recently completed projects, and their linkages with country projects, and provides the opportunity for Governments to discuss aspects of the regional programme with UNDP resident representatives.

15. In 1981, the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific (RBAP) also established the practice of convening regular meetings of aid co-ordinators to allow for the direct participation of Governments of the Asia and Pacific region in the formulation and review of the intercountry programme. Three such meetings have been held so far. MAC I (in New Delhi) was called to examine and approve the intercountry programme for the third cycle; MAC II (Bangkok) conducted a full mid-term review of the third cycle programme; MAC III examined and approved the intercountry programme for the fourth cycle. The next meeting, MAC IV, scheduled for March/April 1989, will be the second fully-fledged mid-term review.

16. MAC IV has been in preparation since the end of 1987, when the Bureau began to solicit proposals for additional projects to be included in the fourth cycle programme. From the middle of 1988, the process of compiling detailed data on

projects, supplied by agencies and project managers, has been under way in order to draw up a fully quantified status report on the implementation of the fourth cycle programme. (A Project Support Unit has also been set up in the Regional Programme Division for this purpose). A quantitative and qualitative review of the performance of the programme in terms of its two overall objectives (human resources development and technology transfer) and its six special features (development management, private sector promotion, women in development, youth in development, poverty alleviation, and sub-regional co-operation) has also been prepared with the assistance of a consultant, who has made several missions within the region. In preparing this paper, the Bureau has also taken into account the conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned from the tripartite review and evaluation.

17. MAC IV will also be considering five theme papers, which have been prepared in order to stimulate more concentrated discussion on subjects of specific interest to the regional programme: networking, government execution, technical co-operation among developing countries, private sector support, and programme delivery to beneficiaries.

18. Finally, MAC IV will review a final list of pipeline proposals to which most of the remaining funds in the fourth cycle programme will be allocated. The list will be based on submissions by Governments and agencies and has been selected on the basis of a systematic prioritization by member Governments and detailed appraisals by RBAP. While submitting a short list of projects for prioritization by Governments, the Regional Bureau also submitted a paper containing an analysis of the regional development issues and the focus for the mid-term programming for consideration by Governments.

19. There will also be scope in MAC IV for some preliminary discussion about the fifth cycle intercountry programme.

20. The quantitative and qualitative review, five theme papers, and the final list of proposals for mid-term funding will be available to the Governments at least two months in advance of the meeting of aid co-ordinators.

21. In a region that is developing so fast economically and that is so socio-culturally diverse as Asia and the Pacific, the consultative process is a complex one, requiring the active involvement of 38 Governments, 24 field offices, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the 20 specialized agencies. It is worth noting that at the last MAC, the response rate was 84 per cent. Computerization is utilized to a sophisticated degree in compiling and analysing the responses from these parties. Computerization is also heavily used in the assessment of the ongoing projects, with the latest database management capability.

22. MAC IV will be conducted too late for a full written report to be presented to the Governing Council at its thirty-sixth session in 1989. However, an oral presentation of the main features of the meeting will be given.

3. The regional programme for Arab States

23. The fourth cycle regional programme for the Arab States started in 1988. It is, therefore, still too early to state in detail the measures and operational mechanisms to be adopted for carrying out the mid-term review of the programme.

24. However, some suggestions can be offered for what might eventually translate into operational mechanisms to be considered by the Bureau for the conduct of the mid-term review of the programme. These are the following:

(a) The review would involve all the Arab Governments, regional institutions involved in the financing and implementation of the programme, executing agencies, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Project Principal Resident Representatives and resident representatives;

(b) The documentation for the review should be distributed to the above participants 2-3 months in advance of the date of the meeting. The documentation could be in the form of one programme mid-term assessment document containing: (i) a project-by-project profile of the main facts; (ii) a project-by-project assessment; (iii) evaluation results; and (iv) the impact of the programme in terms of contribution to the programme priorities/objectives and recommendations for the second half of the cycle and the future programme;

(c) In addition, RBASEP may organize preparatory regional meetings involving select groups of government officials and United Nations agencies as well as members of the core group of Arab experts that participated in the programme development to review the progress made by the programme in contributing to the programme objectives in the three priority areas of: (a) food security; (b) acquisition of advanced technology; and (c) human resources development;

(d) Therefore, in addition to determining whether the programme is making progress as planned and recommending corrective actions as may be necessary, and on the basis of the results of preparatory meetings mentioned in (c) above, the review should also be used to reorient the programme in the light of major changes in the economic environment of the region.

4. The regional programme for Europe

25. A main characteristic of the regional programme for Europe is that at the time of inception of each project, a steering committee, a focal point at the national level, and a leading country or countries are identified and carefully institutionalized. This has naturally put these projects under continuous scrutiny and follow-up review. Also, given the fact that most of the European regional projects carry a very visible emphasis on network building that is arrived at through training seminars, symposia and meetings, the task of follow-up review is rendered easier.

26. In this light, the proposed mid-term review of the European regional programme for Europe, scheduled for June 1989, will be facilitated. However, in view of the following basic elements that have been injected in the European regional programme, the process of preparing for a well-conceived and structured mid-programme review meeting has already started by approaching first the various United Nations agencies and organizations involved so that each one can prepare an individual brief view of the programme under its own execution;

(a) The regional programme for Europe is very innovative and specific given the level of social and economic development of its main participants;

(b) The European regional programme puts in active partnership IPF and non-IPF European countries (this was done at the request of IPF-recipient European countries). In certain projects, countries from outside the European region do participate. This was encouraged to expand the benefits that regional technical co-operation may render;

(c) The European regional projects aim basically at the creation of networks at the European countries level, whenever such networking becomes possible, to establish a methodology and chain, at the national level, for the exchange of information and ideas that interest European countries. In doing so, the individual projects attempt to strengthen institutional set-ups, where required, to ensure the base for such network building;

(d) The European regional programme is considered to be pioneering in some specific areas, especially those dealing with advanced technologies. The spreading of findings and recommendations in these projects beyond the European region has already started and it is hoped that examples of interregional co-operation could be established and expanded.

27. The mid-term review of the European regional programme will be conducted bearing in mind the need to preserve and expand on the above-mentioned characteristics. One way to achieve this will be to assess the reasons for any lack of success or shortcoming in the attainment of these basic characteristics.

28. A task-force meeting will be held in February or March 1989 to discuss the above issues and to prepare a set of recommendations for the review meeting.

29. The regional IPF funds available for the European regional programme were far below what it would cost to implement all the feasible project ideas that the Consultative Meeting and the Task-Force established in 1986, had recommended. Therefore, a main objective of the mid-term programme review will be to reassess the performance of each ongoing and pipeline project to re-examine the wisdom of priorities assigned in 1986 to the various project ideas. In this connection, the review exercise will attempt to assess new possibilities of funding the European regional programme.

5. Regional programme for Latin America and the Caribbean

30. The programme has been under continuous review through monitoring visits, tripartite reviews, evaluations and terminal reports. Moreover, a significant number of projects have built-in review mechanisms through meetings of steering committees, technical committees and boards of intergovernmental bodies which oversee institutions in which the various regional projects are being implemented. Governments are involved at all stages of the project cycle, namely identification, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

31. The main objective of the mid-term review is to determine whether the regional programme is proceeding according to plan and to recommend corrective action if the programme needs to be altered in order to respond to changing economic, political or social circumstances. The review is scheduled to be carried out in May 1989.

32. To this end, the Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean (RBLAC) plans to submit to the Governments, Projects' Principal Resident Representatives, resident representatives, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), executing agencies and regional institutions involved in the implementation of the regional programme, two to three months in advance, a paper on the mid-term assessment of the third regional programme, outlining its evolution and formulation, particularly with respect to major thrusts of the programme, namely: (a) critical poverty, equity and employment; (b) self-sustaining growth; (c) scientific and technological advancement; and (d) the promotion of regional co-operation and integration. This will also include new issues emerging as priorities at the regional level, e.g., the environment and sustainable development.

33. Moreover, RBLAC will prepare an assessment of the monitoring system in place (tripartite review meetings, evaluation mission reports, progress reports, work plans) and of modalities of execution, networking, government execution, TCDC, grass-roots organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and support to the private sector.

34. The Resident Representatives will discuss all these papers with the Governments in preparation for the mid-term review. The mid-term review will be undertaken with active consultation and participation of the Governments, executing agencies and regional organizations.

B. Global and interregional programmes

35. All programmes supported by the global IPF are subject to extensive reviews and evaluations by Governments through their governance mechanisms, such as the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), the Programme for Research Training in Tropical Diseases, and the Meeting of Interested Parties of the Diarrhoeal Diseases Control Programme. In addition, specific mid-term and final reviews are carried out by independent consultants, usually selected by the Technical Advisory Committee of CGIAR for all UNDP-financed global agricultural research projects.

36. Similar governance and external review mechanisms exist for large interregional IPF programmes, most of which are of a multi-donor character. In addition, regular tripartite reviews are carried out for all smaller interregional activities. These reviews and evaluations are all shared with all interested and/or participating Governments and it is proposed that they be brought to the attention of the Governing Council in the context of its mid-term review of interregional and global programmes.

III. REPORTING TO THE GOVERNING COUNCIL

37. Paragraph 8 (b) of decision 88/17 of the Governing Council also requested the Administrator to indicate how and when he intends to report to the Council on the mid-term reviews of the intercountry programmes.

38. The discussions above have indicated that the regional programmes will all be reviewed in 1989, except that for the Arab States, which was approved by the Council in 1988. Three reviews of the regional programmes - Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean - will be completed by the middle of 1989 and reports on them should be submitted to the Council in 1990. The review of the Africa regional programme is scheduled for the last quarter of 1989, but efforts will be made to include this review also in the report to the 1990 session. The programme for the Arab States will be reviewed in 1990 and presented to the Council in 1991. The global and interregional programmes, as reported earlier, will be reviewed by their governance mechanisms over a period of time. A report on these reviews may be submitted to the Council at its thirty-seventh session (1990).

39. The Governing Council's guidance is required for the orderly preparation and reporting on the mid-term reviews of the various programmes. In view of the strong concurrence between programme durations and the fourth IPF cycle, most of the mid-term reviews are due in 1989. According to the timetable for the country programme reviews presented in the annex and the timings of regional programme reviews presented above, as many as 80 country programmes and four regional programmes will be reviewed through the third quarter of 1989, reporting on which will be due for submission to the Council in 1990. Another 40 country programmes and one regional programme are scheduled to be reviewed in the fourth quarter of 1989 or later, a report on which will be due to the Council in 1991. Both the preparation of the reports and their consideration by the Council will present formidable challenges. The Council may wish to deliberate on this situation to consider whether the reporting could be done on a selective basis, to make the tasks realistic and feasible.

Annex

SCHEDULE OF MID-TERM REVIEWS OF COUNTRY PROGRAMMES

I. AFRICA

1989

through 1988	First quarter	Second quarter	Third quarter	Fourth quarter	1990	Undecided
Burundi	Gambia	Botswana	Ghana	Benin		Angola
Madagascar	Mali	Cameroon	Malawi	Burkina Faso		Cape Verde
	Mauritius	Central	Nigeria	Chad		Comoros
	Niger	African	Senegal	Côte d'Ivoire		Congo
	Rwanda	Republic		Guinea		Ethiopia
	Swaziland	Gabon		Liberia		Equatorial
	Zambia	Guinea-		(Regional)		Guinea
		Bissau				Kenya
		Lesotho				Mozambique
		Mauritania				Sao Tome and
		Tanzania				Principe
		Togo				Seychelles
		Zaire				Sierra Leone
		Zimbabwe				Uganda
(2)	(7)	(11)	(4)	(6 + Reg.)		(12)

II. ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

1989

through 1988	First quarter	Second quarter	Third quarter	Fourth quarter	1990	Undecided
China	Bangladesh	Bhutan	Pakistan	Philippines	Maldives	Cook Islands
India	Democratic	Burma	Samoa			Fiji
Indonesia	People's	Mongolia	Sri Lanka			Iran, Islamic
Lao People's	Republic	(Regional)	Thailand			Republic of <u>1/</u>
Democratic	of Korea					Kiribati
Republic	Papua New					Niue
Malaysia	Guinea					Singapore
Nepal	Republic					Solomon Islands
	of Korea					Tokelau
						Tonga
						Tuvalu
						Vanuatu
						Viet Nam
(6)	(4)	(3 + Reg.)	(4)	(1)	(1)	(12)

1/ Iran's country programmes extended through 1988.

III. ARAB STATES AND EUROPE

1989						
through 1988	First quarter	Second quarter	Third quarter	Fourth quarter	1990	Undecided
Bulgaria	Algeria	Djibouti	Iraq	Albania	Sudan	
Poland	Democratic	Hungary	Morocco	Bahrain	Libya	
Saudi Arabia	Yemen	Jordan		Cyprus		
Somalia	Egypt	Oman		Qatar		
Syria	Malta	Yugoslavia		Yemen		
	United Arab Emirates	(Regional-Europe)				
	Turkey					
	Tunisia					
(5)	(7)	(5 + Reg.)	(2)	(5)	(2)	

IV. LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

1989						
through 1988	First quarter	Second quarter	Third quarter	Fourth quarter	1990	Undecided
Argentina	Brazil	Honduras	Chile	Bolivia		
Belize	Colombia	(Regional)	El Salvador			
Cuba	Costa Rica		Mexico			
Ecuador	Dominican Republic		Venezuela			
Haiti	Guatemala					
Nicaragua	Uruguay					
Panama						
Paraguay						
Peru						
(9)	(6)	(1 + Reg.)	(4)	(1)		

