

UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC
AND
SOCIAL COUNCIL



GENERAL

E/CN.12/564
13 March 1961

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA
Ninth Session
Caracas, May 1961

DECENTRALIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC AND
SOCIAL ACTIVITIES AND STRENGTHENING OF THE
REGIONAL ECONOMIC COMMISSIONS

Note by the Secretary-General

CONTENTS

	<u>Pages</u>
Annex. UTILIZATION OF REGIONAL SERVICES IN THE PLANNING AND EXECUTION OF COUNTRY PROGRAMMES	5
Planning of Assistance	6
Implementation of governments requests	9
Recruitments	10
Placement of fellows	11
Substantive support to experts	11
Handling of administrative aspects	13
REGIONAL PROJECTS	15
SPECIAL FUND PROJECTS	23

/1. The texts

1. The texts of resolutions 793 (XXX) of the Economic and Social Council and 1518 (XV) of the General Assembly have been placed before the ninth session of the Economic Commission for Latin America in document E/CN.12/566.
2. In the first of these resolutions, the Economic and Social Council
 1. Draws the attention of Governments to the advantage of fully using the facilities and services of the regional economic commissions in relation to development programmes being undertaken by Governments, which are of common interest to countries in the respective regions;
 2. Requests the Secretary-General also to draw, as fully as possible, on the services of the regional economic commissions, especially in the planning and execution of programmes for advancing regional development in the economic and social fields;
 3. Requests the Secretary-General to encourage and intensify co-operation of the regional economic commissions through their secretariats.
3. The General Assembly, in its resolution, requested the Secretary-General, inter alia "to consult the regional economic commissions at their forthcoming sessions and the specialized agencies, and to report to the Economic and Social Council at its thirty-second session and to the General Assembly at its sixteenth session on the steps taken in implementation of resolution 793 (XXX) of the Economic and Social Council regarding the decentralization of activities and operations and the increased utilization of the services of the regional economic commissions."
4. The present note is submitted for the purpose of facilitating the Secretary-General's consultations with the Economic Commission for Latin America. Similar notes have been submitted to the other regional commissions at their recent sessions. On the basis of the views expressed during the sessions, the Secretary-General will submit to the Economic and Social Council and to the next session of the General Assembly the report requested of him in General Assembly resolution 1518 (XV). Consultations are being held in the meantime with the specialized agencies.
5. The Secretary-General's views in this matter were developed in a series of statements by the Under-Secretary for Economic and Social Affairs at the last session of the General Assembly.^{1/}

^{1/} The principal statement appears in document E/CN.12/572

5A. It would be in accordance with these views for the regional economic commissions to play a significantly larger role in the economic and social work of the United Nations, and particularly in its operational activities. An increase in ECLA's participation in United Nations operational activities may require an increase in its staff resources as appropriate.

6. In the annex will be found a statement on the institutional framework governing United Nations operations for the promotion of economic and social development, as well as information concerning the measures taken by the Secretary-General within that framework for increasing the range and scope of the responsibilities laid upon the regional economic commissions. It will be noted that the Secretary-General has been taking careful account of the conclusions reached by the Council's Committee on Programme Appraisals in its report to the thirtieth session of the Council.^{2/}

7. The Secretary-General suggests that the processes set in motion for the achievement of a greater measure of decentralization of United Nations activity and for the strengthening of the regional economic commissions point to the best lines of progress for the future. As regards the role of the regional economic commissions in operational activities, the following broad considerations would seem to be particularly relevant:

(a) It is primarily at the planning and programming stage that that role should be developed. It should be recognized that the regional commissions have developed or will develop with countries within their region relationships of a very intimate character and that they will acquire a knowledge of local problems which Headquarters could hardly match. The Resident Representatives of the Technical Assistance Board should, more and more, draw on the resources of the regional economic commissions for purposes of planning and programming and it is the intention of the Secretary-General to call increasingly on the Executive Secretary and his staff for programming tasks. A combination of regional and Headquarters action will often produce the best results. For there are certain fields

^{2/} Five-year Perspective, 1960-1964. Consolidated report on the appraisals of the scope, trend and costs of the programmes of the United Nations, ILO, FAO, UNESCO, WHO, WMO and IAEA in the economic, social and human rights fields (United Nations publication, Sales N° 60.IV.14)

in which more knowledge and competence has been developed at Headquarters and also because problems of implementation transcending the region concerned have to be taken into account even at the planning stage. All this indicates that flexibility is required, but it is felt that a significantly greater role than heretofore can be foreseen for the regional economic commissions.

(b) The secretariats of the regional economic commissions can also, in many cases, participate in other phases of technical assistance. Advising on recruitment of experts and the selection of fellows, and briefing of experts, are cases in point. Moreover, authority for implementation of all phases of certain projects can frequently be delegated to the Executive Secretaries, save perhaps for some purely logistical operations. This has already been done and should increasingly be done in the case of regional projects but the procedure can also apply to country projects. Here again the decision should depend on the nature of the projects and the resources available at Headquarters and in the region.

(c) The question as to whether in the light of an increasing role in operational activities, special administrative units should be established in the secretariats of the regional economic commissions, should be left to the Executive Secretaries. In this respect, it should only be pointed out that at Headquarters the trend has been toward the development of units combining functions of a purely research and of an operational character. This has been felt necessary for the efficiency of the programmes since it is now widely recognized that a considerable amount of research directed toward technical assistance is necessary. These organizational and administrative problems involved in the operational programmes of the United Nations differ so much from case to case that no uniform solution can be attempted for them.

8. With these considerations in mind and to the extent permitted by the basic resolutions, governing the Expanded Programme, Technical Assistance and the Special Fund, the Secretary-General is looking forward to exploring further ways which would be conducive to the strengthening of the regional economic commissions and their constant increasing participation in operational programmes. He attaches great importance to the views which the Economic Commission for Latin America, the other regional economic commissions and the specialized agencies may wish to express in this matter.

/Annex

Annex

UTILIZATION OF REGIONAL SERVICES IN THE PLANNING
AND EXECUTION OF COUNTRY PROGRAMMES

1. The Secretary-General is responsible for the administration of funds committed to the Organization under two programmes: the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance under resolution 222 (IX) of the Economic and Social Council and the regular programme financed from the United Nations' budget under various resolutions of the General Assembly.^{1/} In 1961-62 the share of the Expanded Programme to be administered by the United Nations will amount to fifteen million dollars. Under the regular programme the total will amount in 1961 to two million two hundred thousand dollars to which the General Assembly has recently voted an additional sum of three and a half million dollars for assistance to the newly independent countries.
2. As regards the administration of the funds originating from the Expanded Programme, the Secretary-General is bound by the legislation developed by the Economic and Social Council on recommendation of its Technical Assistance Committee. As for the regular programme, only a few legislative rules have been laid down by the General Assembly but the Secretary-General has generally been guided by the policy formulated by the Technical Assistance Committee.
3. The greater part of technical assistance is rendered directly to individual governments, and the Technical Assistance Committee has placed an upper limit (now 12 per cent of total resources) for the programming of regional projects. Although there is no similar limitation for projects under the regular programme, the Secretary-General has been guided by the policy of the Technical Assistance Committee and, as a result, except for expenditures under Resolution 723 (VIII) which prescribes certain centralized activities, the percentage of resources devoted to regional projects in the total regular programme has not so far varied greatly from the upper limit laid down by the Committee.
4. Among the basic rules adopted by the Economic and Social Council regarding the assistance to be rendered to individual governments, two

^{1/} Resolutions 200 (III) on Economic Development, 418 (V) on Social Welfare Advisory Services, 723 (VIII) on Public Administration and 1256 (XIII) on the Provision of Operational and Executive Personnel.

principles are particularly binding for the participating organizations. These principles, as stated recently in Economic and Social Council resolution 786 (XXX) on country programming procedures, are: (a) "that countries receiving aid should have a free choice of carefully considered programmes and projects"; (b) "that participating organizations should continue to advise and assist the recipient governments in the planning and in the implementation of programmes and projects, and to review the technical aspects of the programmes and projects for which they assume responsibility".

5. It is in the light of these principles that the Secretary-General has endeavoured to place at the disposal of governments the best knowledge and technical services available in the Secretariat, both at Headquarters and in the regional economic commissions.

Planning of Assistance

6. Under the procedures laid down by the Economic and Social Council for the Expanded Programme, country programmes "shall be drawn up at the country level by the requesting governments in consultation with the Resident Representatives of the Technical Assistance Board". The Resident Representatives co-ordinate the consultations between governments and the organizations participating in the Programme to ensure that, within the resources available, the global programme requested by the government is well balanced and likely to be most effective in relation to the government's needs and priorities and the organizations possibilities of providing the services required. Due to his familiarity with multilateral and other sources of assistance and his knowledge of local conditions, the Resident Representative has a key role to play in assisting governments in the development of their programmes. At the same time, it is the United Nations' and the agencies' responsibility to advise the appropriate government authorities and the Resident Representatives in the technical planning of individual projects.

7. Within the framework of this procedure, the "technical advice" and professional guidance that the United Nations provides in connexion with the preparation of the technical assistance projects is a fundamental

/requirement of

requirement of the Programme. In fact, this responsibility of the organizations is becoming all the more important when the Programme is expanding and when a number of new countries are to benefit from technical assistance activities. To a large extent the professional advice and technical knowledge which is furnished to governments for the planning of their projects is a continuing task. New projects are often the outcome of previous technical assistance activities. The demand for assistance also changes over time. As the less developed countries mark progress, their needs for assistance will be more and more in new fields, especially technological fields, and, within these fields, their requests are likely to be of a more and more specialized nature. Governments are also often desirous to be assisted in the establishment of programmes of assistance where different types of assistance can be used in conjunction with each other or in succession. Governments, for example, often wish technical assistance to be used in relation with capital development projects or in preparation for larger projects in the field of pre-investment, such as those offered under the Special Fund, which in turn can prepare for actual investment either by the government itself or by foreign or international financial institutions. Finally, governments in formulating their requests can often benefit from the knowledge acquired by the Organization in certain fields, as a result of its research activities and of the experience gained through technical assistance in various parts of the world.

8. The Secretary-General has always attached great importance to rendering technical advice to governments in the formulation of their requests, at their demand and in compliance with the recommendations of the Economic and Social Council. In fact, one of the values of the technical assistance system under United Nations auspices is the diversity of resources and knowledge which it can bring to bear on the solution of a variety of problems and the possibility of capitalizing knowledge acquired in all parts of the world.

9. The Under-Secretary for Economic and Social Affairs is responsible for making sure that the various tasks involved in assisting Resident Representatives and recipient governments in establishing programmes and
/formulating requests

formulating requests are carried out properly. These tasks are performed under the authority of the Commissioner for Technical Assistance by the Bureau of Technical Assistance Operations (BTAO) and by the substantive personnel of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs at Headquarters and in the regions. With the merger of the Technical Assistance Administration and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, conditions have been created where it is possible to draw more readily on the substantive staff, without the former difficulties of inter-departmental communication.

10. It is one of the functions of the Bureau of Technical Assistance Operations to study at the beginning of each programme period all government requests, in the light of the information provided by the Resident Representatives and in the light of the expected financial resources. The requests are communicated to the substantive units, both at Headquarters and in the regional economic commissions which can generally give a judgement on their technical content. These comments are communicated by the Commissioners for Technical Assistance to the Resident Representatives who act on behalf of the United Nations to finalize an agreed programme with the governments concerned. It is on the occasion of this procedure that the BTAO and the substantive personnel can take stock of the knowledge and experience accumulated in the Secretariat and make appropriate suggestions to governments. The programmes can later on be modified by ad hoc requests submitted during the year by governments through Resident Representatives. These are also reviewed by the appropriate substantive personnel. Such ad hoc requests are communicated to the regional economic secretariats in those cases where their comments may be of particular importance.

11. In addition to such advice on the technical content of governmental requests, the substantive personnel is called upon to participate even more directly in the programming process. In certain cases, "programming missions" involving officers from various quarters are organized at the request of governments. It is the policy of the Secretary-General to have such missions more frequently headed by the Executive Secretary or a senior secretariat official of the regional economic commission concerned. In the case of governments which may not be too familiar with United Nations programmes, a staff member conversant in Special Fund matters can be attached

/to such

to such missions. More often, individual missions are organized in response to government requests, and substantive personnel may be utilized when the Organization has expert knowledge in the fields where advice is requested. There is little doubt that in view of the knowledge available in the regional commissions, both of the economic conditions in the countries of their region and in certain specialized fields, personnel from the regional economic commissions will be increasingly called upon to undertake such missions. Progress in this respect will go hand in hand with the strength they will acquire over the years through continuing and thorough research in particular fields. Examples of support given by regional staff to the formulation of governmental requests can be found in the annual reports of the regional economic commissions to the Economic and Social Council. It should be noted that the advisory groups and regional technical assistance experts attached to the secretariats of the regional economic commissions can play a particularly useful role in this respect.^{2/} In certain areas it will be of advantage to rely on Headquarters units. Flexible use of the total staff available at Headquarters and in the regions is an important requirement in an Organization with world-wide responsibilities. In addition, the Secretary-General must ensure that the maximum benefits be obtained by governments from the international character of the programmes administered by the United Nations.

Implementation of governments requests

12. Implementation of government requests is basically the responsibility of the Commissioner for Technical Assistance, the Bureau of Technical Assistance Operations, the Technical Assistance Recruitment Service and the Administrative Section for Technical Assistance Operations. The Commissioner for Technical Assistance is also responsible for enlisting for particular projects substantive and technical support available in the Secretariat, whether at Headquarters or in the regions. His tasks is to combine these resources in the most appropriate way to meet the requirements of government requests.

^{2/} See paragraph 24 below for an explanation of the functions of advisory group.

13. Recruitment: The TARS, which is part of the United Nations Office of Personnel, is responsible for recruitment, including the negotiations of all personnel matters pertaining to the appointment of an expert, his remuneration, etc. TARS operates principally through a Headquarters Office (New York) and a European Office (Paris), and one of its principal functions is to coordinate in a central point all the expertise and advice available to the United Nations in the recruitment field. Thus, Resident Representatives and personnel officers in the regional economic commissions act from time to time on its behalf in the screening of candidates in their regions. In the same way TARS also relies considerably on the knowledge generally available in the substantive units of the Secretariat regarding the availability and suitability of individual experts in different countries and in different fields, the majority of which are proposed in the first instance by governments interested in supplying expert assistance. Since the supply of experts from the less developed countries will increase over the years, while the expertise required from the more advanced countries will be more and more in highly specialized fields, it is likely that the regional economic commissions may become more active in the recruitment process. One of the specific advantages of technical assistance under United Nations auspices is that it can draw - inasmuch as it utilizes convertible currencies or contributions from these countries - on expertise already available in the less developed countries, thus providing for a world-wide exchange of experience and personnel. Where substantive advice cannot be given within the Secretariat TARS utilizes external resources such as former experts, professional associations and the different industrial groups with which it maintains close contact in many countries. It handles, moreover, all applications for technical assistance assignments received by the Organization, whether they are from individuals or from the national committees which endeavour to coordinate the supply of technical assistance available in certain countries, and which are the major source of expert recruitment. It is not excluded that the establishment of similar committees might be warranted in certain less developed countries. Recruitment in these countries is assisted by the Resident Representatives who receive copies of all job descriptions, which are also communicated to governments through their permanent missions in New York.

14. Placement of fellows: It is the Bureau of Technical Assistance Operations, through its Training Section, which is responsible for the placement of fellows. Applications are normally secured through the Resident Representatives, but the secretariats of the regional economic commissions are also often called upon to assist in evaluating the suitability of candidates. The regional economic commissions are responsible for the selection of candidates for their own training courses and in-service training, as well as in some cases for regional institutes sponsored under United Nations technical assistance. Placement in European countries is secured through a small technical assistance office in Geneva. With the increasing availability of training facilities in the regions, the regional economic commissions are likely to play a more important role than in the past in the review of training facilities and also in placement. In the cases of ECAFE and ECLA it may be noted that the Secretariat is represented on the advisory boards of a number of regional training and research institutions.

15. Substantive support to experts: The preparation of expert assignments is an important phase of implementation, as much time can be saved by the expert if he receives adequate briefing on the mechanics of United Nations technical assistance, on previous assistance rendered to the country of assignment by the United Nations or under bilateral programmes, and on technical assistance experience in other countries in his particular field. Whenever possible, such briefing is provided in New York, in Geneva or at the seats of the regional economic commissions. In cases where it is warranted, a substantive officer may be asked to prepare a thorough evaluation of the assistance provided in the past and of the problems the expert is likely to encounter. Briefing also includes acquaintance with the general research work and supporting facilities available at Headquarters and in the regions, so that the expert may resort to these facilities when needed. Briefing is arranged on a case to case basis, depending on itineraries and also on whether the substantive units, either at Headquarters or in the regions, have a substantive contribution to offer. With the progress made in the research activities of the Secretariat and the accumulation of technical assistance experience on a world-wide basis, the briefing function becomes increasingly important, as it may greatly improve the assistance rendered as well as shorten in certain cases the duration of expert advice.

/Since most

Since most experts also provide training during their assignments, the various manuals and other training material prepared by the substantive units at Headquarters and in the regions must be considered as a valuable form of assistance.

16. Most experts are required to submit progress reports at appropriate intervals. These are reviewed by the substantive units which are thus given an opportunity of providing guidance to the expert while he is in the field, of drawing his attention to experience in other countries and of providing him with special studies or legislation which may be available at Headquarters or in the regions. The reports sometimes provide valuable information for the research work of the Secretariat. This particularly true of the final reports which each expert submits upon completion of his mission. These reports, which are intended for the government, are reviewed and commented by the substantive unit. Final processing, editing and reproduction is the responsibility of BTAO. BTAO also prepares a plan of action in consultation with substantive units to follow up the expert's recommendations with additional technical assistance when needed. The substantive reports, aside from their value for the aid-requesting governments, which is the primary objective, are often valuable instruments for the Secretariat, not only in view of their possible use for general research work, but also because the whole process of rendering technical assistance is very often brought an important step forward: for instance, reports recommending a specific legislation may often be of benefit to countries with similar conditions, where, instead of providing expert assistance, it will then be possible to arrange for the drafting of a similar legislation by local officials. In the case of budget classification, for example, a Manual of Budget Classification has been developed by the Secretariat in the light of technical assistance experience and has been applied directly by local officials in a number of countries.

17. Progress reports are sent to the regional economic commissions whenever special problems arise where the regional commission can be of assistance. All final reports in the areas of work of the regional commissions are communicated to them and submitted for their evaluation whenever the regional secretariats are in a position to contribute to their review.

/18. Handling of

18. Handling of administrative aspects: The administrative and financial matters necessary for the execution of projects are managed by the Administrative Section for Technical Assistance Operations (ASTAO) of the Field Operations Service, Office of General Services. This Section extends to the Technical Assistance Operations the same techniques and procedures that have proven effective with respect to the political missions and Information Centres. This includes acting as central point for incoming and outgoing correspondence dealing with administrative matters and acting as liaison between the experts in the field, BTAO and the Administrative Services at Headquarters. Administrative or finance officers who may be available in the field, such as those in the regional economic commissions and the Resident Representatives' offices, are used as much as possible and there is a continuing effort to achieve common services among the various United Nations offices in each area.

/REGIONAL PROJECTS

REGIONAL PROJECTS

19. Governments, through the regional economic commissions and their subsidiary organs have made a large use of the possibilities offered by the technical assistance system in order to promote or support programmes of regional co-operation. Assistance in the initiation of such projects is a natural outcome of the deliberative function of the commissions and of the expertise available in their technical meetings, supported by the research work and technical advice of the regional secretariats. Proposals for regional projects under technical assistance are made by governments, either at the sessions of the commissions or through their subsidiary bodies, and also by the Executive Secretaries. Those proposals retained by the commissions are then reviewed, in consultation with the Executive Secretaries, by the Commissioner for Technical Assistance and the Bureau of Technical Assistance Operations in the light of the latest financial forecast, with resulting revisions which may be downward or upward. The projects retained are submitted to the Technical Assistance Committee along with country projects.

20. The implementation and administration of regional projects has been increasingly committed to the regional secretariats. This is particularly true of all substantive aspects of implementation: agendas of conferences, curricula of training centres, choice of participants and trainees, preparation of technical papers or training material, management of conferences, workshops, seminars and training centres, preparation of final reports, etc. It is often the case, however, that the regional secretariats rely on the substantive support of Headquarters units, whenever these have a special contribution to make. In the earlier phases of technical assistance at the regional level, most projects by their very nature lent themselves to central direction and implementation. A seminar in Copenhagen attended by participants from Latin America, or a study tour in North America for fellows from Asia and the Far East had to be organized principally from the centre. Many current regional projects, however, particularly projects connected with training in the region, now lend themselves to regional direction and implementation. This is particularly

/true of

true of the ECLA/TAO Economic Development Training Programme. This change in the nature of regional projects is now being reflected in changes in administrative and financial control, and considerable progress has already been made since the merger of the Technical Assistance Administration with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to delegate a wide degree of authority to the administrative and financial personnel located in the regions.

21. Technical assistance given through regional projects benefits greatly from the leadership, knowledge and technical services of the regional commissions, without which such assistance would often not have been possible. First of all, the commissions can provide significant advice in the formulation of government requests for technical and Special Fund assistance in their regions, in all those areas where the secretariats of the commissions have the necessary technical knowledge. Secondly, regional projects are often a culmination of the research work, studies and technical advisory services provided by the regional secretariats. This gives to their work added weight and a practical meaning which looms large in a total evaluation of the regional secretariats' achievements. Finally, the regular research activities carried out in the regions are often enhanced by the end-products of regional assistance, especially when such assistance is rendered by regional experts or advisers attached to the secretariats of the commissions. A few examples chosen from among the most significant projects carried out so far will be given as illustrations.

22. In Asia and the Far East, the Lower Mekong Basin development project provides an outstanding example of how a co-operative project can be conceived in a regional commission, supported by the research work and advisory services of the regional secretariat, receive decisive impetus from United Nations technical assistance and finally become a major co-operative venture to which large sums are being provided from a variety of sources. Under the leadership of ECAFE, not only has the entire system of the United Nations been brought into play (technical assistance, Special Fund, several specialized agencies), but also bilateral resources in sizeable amounts have been contributed to the project.

/23. In Latin

23. In Latin America, the Central American integration programme offers another example of how governments may utilize the services of the regional commissions as well as United Nations operational programmes in support of regional co-operation. Under the auspices of ECLA, the five countries of Central America have established a Central American Economic Co-operation Committee through which they work towards the adoption of a Central American Trade agreement as well as common legislation or adaptations in national legislations to facilitate regional integration. The ECLA secretariat, through its sub-office in Mexico City, is responsible for the studies and technical advice needed by the Committee for the integration programme. In addition, substantial support is provided by the United Nations technical assistance programmes. In 1961-1962, experts in customs union, tariff equalization, industrial development, electric power development, housing and population will be provided under the Technical Assistance Programme. The FAO and ILO, for their part, provide assistance in the fields of land tenure and land use, marketing, agricultural statistics, industrial productivity and vocational training. In addition, under initiatives of ECLA, the United Nations established, five years ago, an advanced School for Public Administration in Costa Rica attended by administrators from the five countries, and the Special Fund has financed a substantial expansion of the Central American Industrial Research Institute, initiated by ECLA, which provides industrial advice to private industry and to government departments of the five countries. Part of the country requests for technical assistance are also geared to the needs of the integration programme.

24. The field of training lends itself particularly well to regional projects. The example of the ECLA/TAO regional training programme in economic development may be given, as it is closely integrated with the regular research activities and with ECLA's advisory services to governments, at their request. Until last year, the Santiago training course in economic development concentrated on the training of about fifteen to twenty fellows a year in the field of economic development programming. The courses given at ECLA were closely interwoven with research activities. Among the results of the combined research and training was the publication of a "Manual on

Economic Development Projects"^{3/} which is now a classical hand-book in the Latin American region and is also used in the in-service training performed in the other regional economic commissions and by the Headquarters training course for African economists. It may be noted that the training programme also organized intensive courses for economic administrators in various countries of the region. This year, the programme is undergoing some fundamental changes which bring it closer together with advisory services to governments: first of all, training is being expanded to a number of specialized fields where there is a marked shortage of trained personnel, in particular industrial programming, transport programming, public works, budgetary problems and financing. Five high-level instructors have been attached to the training centres in these fields, financed under technical assistance. In addition, short-term lecturers and ECLA staff members participate in the course. The instructors attached to ECLA's training centres also participate in the work of the advisory groups and spend brief periods of time in the countries concerned. As a result, a further integration of ECLA's research work, training activities and advisory services has been achieved.

25. The Advisory Groups Programme, organized by ECLA and BTAO with the participation of FAO and the collaboration of other specialized agencies, provides another example of closely co-ordinated projects. So far, advisory groups have been organized by ECLA at the request of the governments of Colombia, Cuba, Bolivia, Chile and Venezuela. This Programme came into being on the basis of the findings of the economic development studies conducted in a number of countries, following which Governments have requested ECLA to proceed one stage further in the concern with growth problems and with finding the best way to make a substantive contribution towards the development process. The main tasks of these groups are to leave in operation, upon their departure, a policy-making machinery at the Government level, and to train personnel with this aim in view. It is understood that the Groups have no participation in the actual formulation of policy, but serve to build up the mechanism which will enable the governments to

^{3/} United Nations Sales Publication, Sales N°: 58.II.G.5

/take their

take their own decisions. The need to train personnel explains the fact that the intensive training courses mentioned above are organized wherever possible in conjunction with the Advisory Groups, which in turn supplement the courses with "on the job" training for people assigned to work with them. The research work of ECLA is thus closely linked with the tasks of the advisory groups and of the training programme, while the advisory groups are also in a position to give valuable assistance to governments in the formulation of their requests for technical assistance and Special Fund projects.

26. The regional Economic Commission for Africa has also taken early advantage of the resources available under technical assistance in order to strengthen its activities. An example, of which there is a similar counterpart in Asia and the Far East, is the development of a long-range programme in statistics, combining research, training and advisory services. A regional conference of statisticians was held at the beginning of the Commission's existence in an endeavour to launch a five-year programme designed to ensure that the statistical services and documents of different African countries would be raised to a certain level by calling on all the possible means of multilateral or bilateral assistance available to the governments concerned, within a co-ordinated plan set in motion by the Economic Commission for Africa. In the 1961 work programme submitted to the third session of the Commission, several projects are included which will be financed as regional technical assistance projects, namely:

- (a) the provision of three regional statisticians attached to the ECA secretariat with the task of completing the statistical survey of Africa started in 1960;
- (b) the creation of four sub-regional centres for middle-grade statisticians in Addis Ababa, North Africa, Lomé and Accra;
- (c) study tours on field survey techniques in North African countries and on household surveys in Ghana and Togo.

In addition, the secretariat of ECA will provide in-service training for economists and statisticians at the headquarters of the Commission.

/27. In the

27. In the almost fourteen years of its existence, the Secretariat of the Economic Commission for Europe has accumulated a considerable fund of expert knowledge in a number of fields which, although primarily geared to the more highly industrialized countries of Europe, are of considerable, and increasing, interest to countries of other regions that are in the process of economic development. It is particularly in the field of trade and in various branches of industrial production and in a number of aspects of both policy and techniques of transportation that the work of the Secretariat of ECE is capable of making an important contribution to the technical assistance work of the Organization.

28. In a number of cases the co-operation of the Secretariat of ECE with the other regional economic commissions has enabled knowledge to be transferred collectively from the industrialized members of ECE to the less developed countries.

29. Reference should also be made to the existence of an ECE in-service training scheme. This scheme which originally began with the aid of extra-budgetary funds is now supported by technical assistance contributions.

30. Many other examples could be adduced to illustrate how much operational programmes have come to be supported by the regional economic commissions and how much, in turn, they bear on their regular activities. Details on regional projects are found in the annual reports of the regional commissions to the Economic and Social Council.

31. A number of regional projects are planned and implemented centrally. The Economic and Social Council has created a number of functional commissions of which there are no exact counterparts in the regions. This is the case of the Human Rights Commission, the Narcotics Commission, the Social Commission, the Commission on the Status of Women, the Population Commission and the Statistical Commission. In some of these fields, for example human rights, narcotics and the status of women, which are not within the terms of reference of the regional commissions, regional projects (e.g. regional seminars or workshops) are suggested by the functional commissions themselves. The functional commissions (e.g. Population, Statistical and Social) review the activities of the regional economic commissions which are relevant to
/their respective

their respective field of activity and occasionally make recommendations to them, which in due course are considered by the regional commissions in the overall context of regional activities. In other cases, for example statistics and population matters, the functional commissions have global responsibilities which warrant it that regional projects be planned as part of an overall programme. For example, when the Statistical Commission recommends to governments that a world census of population or a world industrial census should be carried out in a particular year, it may be appropriate to recommend to the Technical Assistance Committee that it approve the holding of a number of regional seminars or training courses in the conduct of such censuses, or to finance teams of census advisers attached to the secretariats of the regional economic commissions. The Statistical Commission, together with the regional Conference of Statisticians which are held at two or three years intervals, thus provides leadership in a field where it is of paramount importance to achieve international standards of comparability. Other commissions, such as the Social Commission, are desirous to see their policy recommendations reach the governmental level and translated into actual policies. They do, therefore, suggest that regional seminars or workshops be held in order to familiarize government departments with United Nations recommendations and with developments in other parts of the world. In an increasing number of cases regional projects - in such fields as community development, housing and urbanization - are of joint interest to the Social Commission and the regional economic commissions. They involve participation of both regional and Headquarters staff. The functional commissions also often give impetus to the development of inter-regional projects which permit the cross-fertilization of knowledge and experience among the various regions.

32. It should be noted that there is no rigidity in this pattern: the structure of inter-governmental organs both centrally and in the regions has shown a rather remarkable tendency to adapt itself to changing conditions. New organs may be created, such as the newly established Committee for Industrial Development. Others may be abolished, e.g. when it appears that the Secretariat has received sufficient policy guidance and can report directly to the Economic and Social Council (case of the Fiscal Commission),

/or when

or when most of the work has come to be performed by the regional economic commissions or in newly created specialized agencies (case of the Transport and Communications Commission).

33. Another reason for central implementation of some regional projects relates to staff management: it is not always feasible and, indeed, it would often be unjustified to create, both at Headquarters and in the several regions, similar groups of staff each working on the same type of problems. For example, in the field of public administration, it has been found expedient so far to maintain a central staff which services the various regions. This staff, therefore, is primarily responsible for the preparation and implementation of regional seminars, workshops, public administration institutes, etc. It does so, however, in close consultation with the regional secretariats. In the fiscal and financial field, the small central staff which was maintained after the abolition of the Fiscal Commission, now devotes most of its work to regional projects, such as the budgetary workshops held successively in the various regions under the chairmanship and general direction of the Executive Secretaries. It may be noted that after the abolition of the Transport and Communications Commission part of the central staff was reassigned to the regional secretariats.

SPECIAL FUND PROJECTS

34. Special Fund projects differ from Technical Assistance projects in several respects. The Special Fund concentrates on fairly large projects involving relatively heavy financial commitments. These projects are intended to lead to early tangible results advancing economic, social and technical development and, in particular, facilitating new capital investments. The Special Fund programme, unlike the Technical Assistance programme, is not based on geographical allocation of resources through the system of country programming. The Special Fund programme is established through evaluation of government requests by the Managing Director of the Special Fund and approved by the Governing Council, at its spring and fall sessions.

35. The Special Fund, in its evaluation of the requests received from governments through the TAB Resident Representatives, invites comments and suggestions from the United Nations. All such requests for comments are in turn made available to the secretariats of the regional economic commissions for their comments and suggestions. The Managing Director presents his recommended programme twice a year to the Governing Council for its approval. Prior to doing so, the programme is reviewed by a Consultative Board consisting of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the President of the International Bank for Reconstruction and the Executive Chairman of the Technical Assistance Board as well as the Managing Director of the Special Fund.

36. Each approved project is executed on behalf of the Special Fund by an Executing Agency designated by the Special Fund, primarily from among the members of the United Nations family (the Specialized Agencies, IAEA and the United Nations). The United Nations is at present serving as the Executing Agency for fifteen projects, representing total Special Fund allocations of

/ \$12.6 million

\$12.6 million and total government contributions of approximately \$13 million.^{4/} Ten of these projects are located in Asia and the Far East; three in the Americas and two in Africa. Eleven of these projects are for the development of natural resources (water and mineral surveys); two for industrial research; one for general economic survey and one for building materials development. Three of the projects are regional, two concerning the riparian countries of the Mekong and one the Central American countries.

37. Activities relating to the Special Fund programme have become a major function of the United Nations and their significance is increasing with the expanding scope of the Special Fund programme, both in terms of the number of the projects and in terms of the anticipated extension of the Special Fund programme into new fields such as in economic planning and programming and public administration. The United Nations, quite apart from its responsibilities for the execution of the Special Fund projects, is conscious of the role that it should play in assisting the governments in developing Special Fund requests and in providing the Special Fund with useful evaluations of projects under review. In this area the technical staff at Headquarters cooperates closely with the technical assistance experts, the Bureau of Technical Assistance Operations' staff and the secretariats of the regional economic commissions.

^{4/} The Special Fund has already approved 115 projects representing total Special Fund allocations of \$96 million and total government contributions of approximately \$227 million. The Special Fund projects cover the following major geographical distribution: 35 in the Americas; 31 in Asia and the Far East; 23 in the Middle East; 19 in Africa; 6 in Europe and one inter-regional project. Of these, four are projects requested by several governments as joint undertakings and are classified as regional projects. The projects approved are in the form of surveys, research and training and are mostly in the fields of agriculture, natural resources, industry, transport and communications. Special Fund assistance consists of provision of international experts, equipment, supplies and services, as well as fellowships.

38. Execution of Special Fund projects involves substantive, operational, financial, recruitment, procurement and contract arrangements which are embodied in a plan of operation for each project. A plan of operation is a tripartite agreement with the Government, the Special Fund and the Executing Agency, which describes the various technical phases of the work to be done and the related time schedule, respective financial and other obligations, and the organizational requirements of the project. In many instances special technical consultants have been recruited for the purpose of assisting the Executing Agency in the highly specialized aspects of such work.

39. The manner of execution of Special Fund projects, set forth in the relevant plans of operation, varies greatly according to the operational needs of the projects, which may range from provision of expert and fellowship services, not unlike those rendered under the technical assistance programme, to complete subcontracting of the projects to private or public organizations. The Bureau of Technical Assistance Operations is responsible for the actual execution of the projects.

40. The United Nations Headquarters Secretariat relies on the regional economic commissions in respect of many of the activities pertinent to the functions of the Executing Agency, to the extent that their services can be made available. With respect to regional projects, the United Nations has relied primarily on the contribution of the secretariats of the commissions. In addition to providing substantive services, the secretariats of the commissions have participated in negotiations of plans of operation with governments and have also made available to some of the projects financial and administrative services.

41. As stated above, only a few regional projects have been approved thus far, mainly as a consequence of the high demand for national projects under a programme which is only entering its third year of existence.

42. The regional economic commissions can play an important role in bringing governments together in the formulation of regional projects of importance and in assisting in developing the institutional and financial framework for their implementation, as has been done by ECAFE on several projects concerning the Mekong River Basin Development and by ECLA in

/respect of

in respect of the Central American Research Institute for Industry (ICAITI). Neither of these projects could have been formulated without considerable painstaking effort over a long period by the secretariats of the commissions. Thus the evaluation and approval of these projects has been facilitated by the fact that the institutional framework existed and had proved its usefulness.

43. In the formulation of national projects, whether or not of significance as regional undertakings, the secretariats of regional commissions can be of effective and continuing assistance to the programme. Their knowledge of needs and resources, their close relations with officials of the governments they serve and their central role of cross-fertilization in their region should have an important impact on the number and calibre of national projects developed for Special Fund financing.

44. Recent policy statements by the Managing Director of the Special Fund indicate that the Special Fund is likely to approve projects relating to economic development planning and programming. This opens up new possibilities for government action through the regional commissions for the establishment of regional institutes designed to provide expert services and training programmes and facilities in the above fields.