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CEPAL

Economic Commission for Latin America

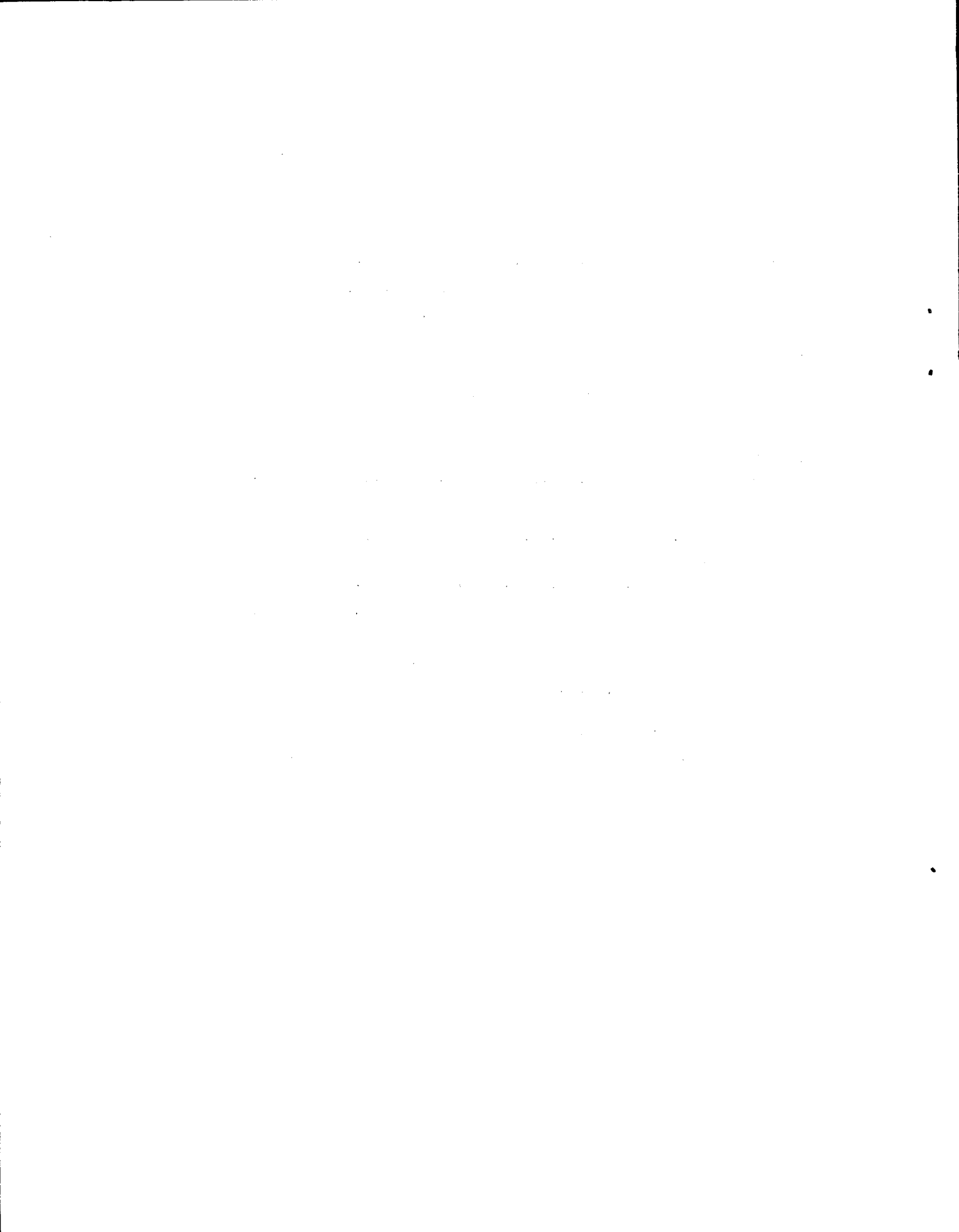
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THE PLANNING PROCESS IN THE UNITED NATIONS.  
THE CASE OF THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA

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## 1. Introduction

At its nineteenth session (May 1981), the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America (CEPAL) adopted resolutions 433(XIX), on the establishment of priorities in the CEPAL programme of work. In operative paragraph (a) of this resolution, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to ensure that the meeting of the Committee of the Whole to be held in 1982 included among its main agenda items the review of the planning and programming process of CEPAL.

In this note by the Secretariat, the planning process of the United Nations is examined for the twofold purpose of:

(a) providing the relevant information on the planning process in the United Nations;

(b) pointing out those aspects which are specifically concerned with the participation of the member countries of the Commission in that process.

## 2. The planning process

Before a brief examination is made of the planning process as a whole, two important points must be stressed. The first of these is that the planning process in CEPAL is a part of the planning process in United Nations system; hence, it has the same characteristics as the process does in all the organizations of the system. The second point is that, in drawing up its proposals for the medium-term plan and the biennial programme-budget, the Secretariat takes into account not only the mandates contained in the resolutions adopted by the Commission and its subsidiary bodies, but also those contained in resolutions adopted by world and regional conferences convened within the framework of the United Nations by the Economic and Social Council, the General Assembly, and regional intergovernmental bodies outside the United Nations system.

This global process consists of four main phases, as follows:

(a) medium-term planning;

(b) preparation of the biennial programme budget (i.e., preparation of the biennial programme of work and the corresponding budget);

(c) implementation of the biennial programme budget, and, particularly, implementation and monitoring of the biennial programme of work; and

(d) evaluation of the biennial programme of work.

For each of these phases, there are one or more instruments, as follows:

(a) a medium-term plan;

(b) a biennial programme budget (a biennial programme of work and the corresponding budget);

(c) a programme performance report;

(d) an evaluation report.

/Each phase

Each phase or instrument serves as the framework or context for the subsequent phase or instrument. The medium-term plan, which covers a period of six years, is the framework within which three biennial programme budgets are prepared. Thus, the medium-term plan for the period 1984-1989 will serve as the framework for the preparation of the biennial programme budgets for 1984-1985, 1986-1987 and 1988-1989.

In turn, the biennial programme budget is the instrument used as the frame of reference for monitoring the implementation of the programme of work and the management of the real and financial resources approved in the budget. This makes it possible to report on the degree to which the programme of work is being implemented and on the utilization of financial resources. The documents prepared for this purpose for United Nations Headquarters at New York are known as biennial programme performance reports.

Finally, the information gathered during the implementation phase provides some of the information necessary to evaluate the progress that has been made in implementing the programme of work and makes it possible to identify, insofar as possible, its impact on the economic and social development of the region.

The United Nations has recently been engaged in the drafting of official regulations on the different phases of the planning process.<sup>1/</sup>

A series of regulations will be drawn up for each of the aforementioned phases; those pertaining to medium-term planning and the preparation of the biennial programme budget are closer to completion than the others.

In the case of CEPAL, the planning process is carried out in line with the following provisions:

(a) With regard to the medium-term plan, United Nations Headquarters has issued precise instructions which are applied both by CEPAL and by the other regional commissions. The CEPAL Secretariat prepares a preliminary draft medium-term plan on the basis of those instructions.

(b) A similar procedure is followed in the preparation of the biennial programme budget.

(c) As regards the third phase (implementation of the biennial programme budget), the CEPAL Secretariat currently has an internal follow-up system which enables the Executive Secretary to follow the progress of programme activities and seek to correct their course if they appear to be departing from the approved programme of work or, if necessary, to propose any changes that might be required by changes in priorities. The Secretariat can thus subsequently report to the member countries of the Commission on the implementation of and compliance with the approved biennial programme of work.

(d) The evaluation phase is probably the one which has recently received the most attention in the United Nations. An effort is being made to define evaluation more clearly in order to tie together the entire process and thus provide the information needed for the other phases, particularly those pertaining to the preparation and revision of the medium-term plan and the preparation of the biennial programmes of work. Internal evaluations have already been made of certain programme activities (programmes, subprogrammes or programme elements).

/However, it

However, it will take some time for the Secretariat to be able fully to develop and systematize evaluation activities. It should also be added that United Nations Headquarters periodically conducts inter-secretariat evaluations of the activities completed during a given period within the context of a given programme. The Secretariat participates in these evaluations by sending the relevant information to Headquarters and collaborates, particularly, in the drafting of those conclusions which relate to its programme activities. These conclusions are then taken into account in the preparation of future programme activities.

Finally, it should be pointed out that in April 1982, a Programme Planning and Budgeting Board was established at Headquarters which assists the Secretary-General in connection with his responsibilities in the area of planning, programming and preparation of the budget. This Board is made up of the Under-Secretary-General for Administration, Finance and Management; the Under-Secretary-General for International, Economic and Social Affairs; the Assistant Secretary-General of Financial Services, Department of Administration, Finance and Management; and the Assistant Secretary-General for Programme Planning and Co-ordination, Department of International Economic and Social Affairs. Depending on the subjects with which it is concerned, the Board requests the participation of other organizational units in the United Nations.

### 3. Medium-term planning. The medium-term plan

#### (a) Characteristics of the medium-term plan

The first phase in the planning process is the preparation of the medium-term plan which, before being approved by the General Assembly, is called the draft or proposed medium-term plan. This plan must be approved by the General Assembly.

In accordance with General Assembly resolution 34/224, the medium-term plan constitutes the principal policy directive of the United Nations which:

- (i) states the medium-term objectives to be attained in the plan period;
- (ii) describes the strategy to be followed to that effect and the means of action to be used (research, training, advisory services, etc.);
- (iii) gives an indicative estimate of the necessary resources.

The medium-term plan translates legislative mandates into programmes. The objectives and strategy of each subprogramme -the main programme level at which the activities of the medium-term plan are described- are derived from the policy orientations and goals set by the intergovernmental organs of the United Nations system.

The medium-term plan normally covers all activities, substantive as well as servicing, including those to be financed partially or fully from extrabudgetary resources. It covers a six-year period (contrary to the plans prepared prior to the 1984-1989, which covered a four-year period, and is revised every two years. It serves as a framework for the formulation of the biennial programme budget.

In addition to the aforementioned general characteristics of medium-term planning in the United Nations, described in document A/37/206, the following provisions are also relevant:

/(i) The

(i) The plan should not be formulated principally on the basis of a projection of the past and the present towards the future; rather, it should be deductive, with its strategy, orientation, goals and activities deriving from the objectives and policy orientations set by the intergovernmental organs. Although in practice both the inductive and deductive planning approaches are used in preparing a medium-term plan, the United Nations' preference for the deductive approach should be stressed. This approach provides for a direct link among objectives, strategies and programme activities, so that the strategies and activities reflect the fact that they are derived from the objectives.

(ii) The medium-term plan should be comprehensive and not staggered. This implies a preference for a plan in which the various activities of the United Nations system are viewed as a whole, thus allowing for an analysis of the interrelationship between two or more programmes. When the interrelationship between programmes is stressed, it is possible to see more clearly what is involved, in terms of effort and time, for example, in the revision of the plan. Finally, a comprehensive plan implicitly recognizes that the problems of development -or a great majority of them- are intersectoral or multidisciplinary by nature. In a staggered plan, it is assumed that each sector of the system controls its own planning process and this weakens the concept of the interrelationship between programmes.

(iii) Medium-term planning should strike a balance between continuity and flexibility. Continuity is sought by extending to six years the duration of the plan. Flexibility, in turn, is sought through the provisions for revising the plan in order to include in the programme activities any changes that might be called for in resolutions adopted by intergovernmental bodies and world conferences after the plan has been approved.

(iv) The introduction to the plan, which constitutes a key integral element in the planning process, should highlight policy orientations and objectives and indicate the trends deduced from the mandates which reflect the priorities set by the intergovernmental organs. The plan for 1980-1983 included, for the first time, an indication of the general orientation of United Nations activities over the medium term. The introduction to the medium-term plan for 1984-1989 includes certain important changes with respect to the previous one: on the one hand, there is a general introduction to the plan and an introduction to each chapter of the plan, and, on the other, these introductions are linked to the International Development Strategy for the 1980s.

(b) Main stages in the preparation of the medium-term plan

As regards the Secretariat of CEPAL, the preparation of the draft medium-term plan for 1984-1989, begun in late 1981, included the following main stages:<sup>2/</sup>

(i) The instructions sent by United Nations Headquarters at New York were received and distributed to the different units in the CEPAL system in order that they might prepare the first draft of the plan proposal. During this first stage, each unit analysed the various resolutions of the Commission and other bodies (world and regional conferences, General Assembly, etc.) concerned with the programme for which the individual unit was responsible; it studied the fundamental aspects of the current and future status of the economic and social development of the region in its sphere of competence and reviewed the on-going programme activities.

/(ii) Each

(ii) Each programme was reviewed by the Office of the Executive Secretary and a second draft plan proposal was prepared.

(iii) The draft medium-term plan was consolidated and a final revision was made. At this third stage, for example, the subprogramme having similar purposes were merged and an effort was made to co-ordinate the different units of the CEPAL system as well as to achieve co-ordination between CEPAL and other agencies or institutions, whether or not they belonged to the United Nations system.

(iv) The draft medium-term plan was presented to the member countries of CEPAL at the nineteenth session of the Commission (Montevideo, Uruguay, May 1981).

(v) The observations, changes, etc., made by representatives of the governments of member countries of the Commission were incorporated into the draft medium-term plan.

(vi) The draft medium-term plan was sent to United Nations Headquarters at New York for co-ordination and processing, through the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination and the Economic and Social Council, and for subsequent approval by the General Assembly.<sup>3/</sup>

Stages (i) to (iv) covered the period from December 1980 to May 1981; stage (v), the months of June and July 1981, and stage (vi), August 1981 and the following months.

(c) Participation of the member countries of the Commission in the medium-term planning phase

The draft medium-term plan for 1984-1989 for CEPAL activities was the first one to be examined by member countries at a regular session of the Commission before being transmitted to United Nations Headquarters at New York.

It should be pointed out, however, that in previous years the General Assembly had already shown its concern with achieving effective participation of the relevant sectoral, functional and regional intergovernmental bodies in the various phases of the planning process. In paragraph 5 of its resolution 31/93, adopted on 14 December 1976, the General Assembly requested the Secretary General to take measures to involve more closely the sectoral, functional and regional programme-formulating organs in the planning and programming process. In paragraph 2 (f) of its resolution 34/224, adopted on 20 December 1979, the General Assembly stressed that the effective participation of central and regional, sectoral and functional bodies in the formulation, consideration, review and evaluation of the plan should be achieved by means of an appropriate preparation period and greater co-ordination of their calendars of meetings. Finally, among the conclusions and recommendations adopted by the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination at its twentieth session (5 May to 14 June 1980), is the following: "The chapters of the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1984-1989 should be reviewed by the relevant sectoral, functional and regional intergovernmental bodies prior to their review by the Committee, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly". This desire to ensure the adequate participation of the member countries in the planning process is also in line with the principles derived from General Assembly resolution 32/197 on the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system.

/Considering above,



Considering the above, there can be no question that the presentation to the nineteenth regular session of the Commission of the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1984-1989 was a highly significant event. It should be added that the draft medium-term plan for the period 1984-1989 is closely linked with the Regional Programme of Action drawn up in compliance with Commission resolution 386(XVIII) and adopted by the Commission in resolution 422(XIX).

The participation of the member countries of the Commission also extends to other aspects of the medium-term planning phase. One important point is that which concerns the periodical revisions of the medium-term plan, which make it possible to include any necessary changes in the subprogrammes of each programme and to deal with any new aspects of the region's development that might arise after the plan has been approved as a result of economic and social changes at the world, regional and national levels.

#### 4. The biennial programme budget and the preparation thereof

##### (a) Some characteristics of the biennial programme budget

The second phase of the planning process is the preparation of the biennial programme of work and the corresponding budget.

As has been mentioned above, the biennial programme budget is prepared in the framework of the relevant medium-term plan approved by the General Assembly. This is a very important feature of the programme budget, as it determines the relationship that should exist between the two instruments or phases. As mentioned above, the medium-term plan states the medium-term objectives, describes the strategy to be followed in achieving those objectives and provides a first indication of the resources that are necessary, all at the subprogramme level. Consequently, the draft biennial programme budget must be derived from the medium-term plan.

The draft biennial programme budget is described in terms of programme elements, which are the smallest programme subdivisions. Two or more programme elements make up a subprogramme, the implementation of which contributes to the accomplishment of the objectives established in the subprogramme. Thus, there must also be an interrelationship between the different programme elements of a given subprogramme.

Basically, each programme element contains information on the results (documents, studies, seminars or meetings, advisory missions, etc.) sought over the two-year period, as well as information on when and how they are to be achieved within that time. To this is added an estimate of the resources necessary to implement the activities of the programme element. Information is also provided on the links between the programme element and the activities carried out by other agencies and units of the United Nations system, in order to ensure better co-ordination in the implementation of the activities of the programme of work and to avoid a duplication of efforts.

The draft biennial programme budget covers all activities for which regular United Nations budget resources are requested, including those pertaining to direction, administration and support.

/To these

To these characteristics of the biennial programme budget of the United Nations must be added one more, which is particularly important if this phase is to be as important as it should be within the planning process: it is essential to establish relative priorities among the different programme elements of a given subprogramme.

(b) Main stages in the preparation of the biennial programme budget

As regards the Secretariat of CEPAL, the draft biennial programme budget for 1982-1983 was prepared in the following main stages:

(i) The relevant instructions were received from United Nations Headquarters and distributed to the units of the CEPAL system in order that they might prepare a preliminary draft programme of work. At this stage, each unit also analysed inter alia the mandates contained in the relevant resolutions, the economic and social situation of the region, the ongoing programme activities, and the programmes of work of other organizations of the United Nations system (so as to avoid duplication of efforts). All this was done in order that due priority might be assigned, within the objectives and strategy of the medium-term plan, to those activities that are of the greatest importance to the region.

(ii) Each programme was reviewed by the Office of the Executive Secretary and a second draft programme of work was prepared.

(iii) A final revision and consolidation of the draft biennial programme of work was made by the Office of the Executive Secretary; the budget was prepared and the draft biennial programme budget was sent to United Nations Headquarters at New York.

(iv) The draft biennial programme of work for 1982-1983 was prepared for presentation to the member countries of the Commission at its nineteenth session.

(v) The draft biennial programme of work for 1982-1983 was studied by the member countries of the Commission at its nineteenth regular session.

(vi) Adjustments were made in the draft biennial programme of work for 1982-1983 in the light of comments made by representatives of member countries of the Commission and of the resolutions adopted by them.

Stages (i) to (iii) covered the period from September to December 1980; stage (iv) covered the months of January and February 1981.

Nevertheless, what should be stressed here is the fact that there is a discrepancy between stage (iii) and the following ones, since, as will be noted, the draft biennial programme of work and the budget were submitted to United Nations Headquarters before the proposed biennial programme of work had been submitted to the Commission for its consideration. Clearly, this situation was not consistent with the need to ensure the adequate participation of the relevant regional intergovernmental body in the planning process.

This problem was dealt with at the fourteenth special session of the Committee of the Whole (New York, 20 November 1980). In operative paragraph (b) of its resolution 419(PLN.14), the Committee of the Whole decided that: "The CEPAL system, beginning with the Commission itself, should bring its pattern of conferences and meetings into line with the two-year budget programming cycle introduced by the General Assembly. To that end, at its nineteenth session the Commission should decide on the new calendar of conferences and meetings of the entire CEPAL system with a view to implementing it, duly synchronized with the

/General Assembly's

General Assembly's budget programming cycle, as from 1982 and taking into account the objectives and priorities established in the various work programmes and regional action programmes approved by member governments." This synchronization was ensured at the nineteenth regular session of the Commission (May 1981). In addition, future regular sessions of the Commission will be held during even-numbered years rather than odd-numbered years as they had been in the past.

(c) Participation of member countries of the Commission in the phase of preparation of the biennial programme budget

With the cycle of meetings of the Commission now synchronized with the General Assembly's budget programming cycle, the adequate participation of the member countries of the Commission in this second phase of the planning process will now be guaranteed. In practice, therefore, this means that the proposed programme of work for the biennium 1984-1985 can be submitted to the Committee of the Whole at its sixteenth session (December 1982), before work proceeds on the preparation of the proposed programme budget for 1984-1985 and its subsequent transmittal to United Nations Headquarters.

The main stages in the preparation of the proposed biennial programme budget for 1984-1985 and for subsequent ones would henceforth be the following:

(i) Receipt of instructions from United Nations Headquarters and distribution of some to the units in the CEPAL system for preparation of the preliminary draft biennial programme of work.

(ii) Review, by the Office of the Executive Secretary, of each programme and preparation of a second draft biennial programme of work.

(iii) Final revision and consolidation by the Office of the Executive Secretary of the draft programme of work for 1984-1985 and submission of this draft to the Commission at the sixteenth session of the Committee of the Whole (or the regular sessions of the Commission in the case of future draft programmes of work).

(iv) Incorporation into the draft biennial programme of work for 1984-1985 of the comments and changes suggested by the Commission.

(v) Preparation of the corresponding budget and transmittal of the draft biennial programme budget for 1984-1985 to United Nations Headquarters.

5. Implementation and monitoring of the biennial programme budget

At the beginning of this note, it was pointed out, with respect to this third phase, that the Office of the Executive Secretary has an internal follow-up system for monitoring the implementation of the activities of the biennial programme of work and the utilization of the corresponding financial resources.

To expand the information on this third phase, the following aspects will now be considered:

(a) The preparation, at the internal level, of periodic activities reports;

(b) The preparation of the activities reports (biennial or annual reports or reports covering a specific period of less than one or two years);

(c) The preparation of the biennial programme performance report;

(d) The holding of internal seminars.

/Through the

Through the quarterly activity reports, all the units of the CEPAL system inform the Executive Secretary of their accomplishments during the period concerned. The reports contain information on research activities, documents prepared or published, seminars or meetings organized by the unit or those in which the unit has participated, advisory missions, etc. These reports also include information on problems that have precluded or hindered the proper accomplishment of the activities of the programme of work and information on the time the staff has devoted to each subprogramme. The reports are prepared individually, but each division or unit also prepares a consolidated report which highlights the main features of the individual reports submitted by officials belonging to the unit concerned.

On the basis of these reports, an activities report is prepared and submitted to the member countries at a regular session of the Commission or at a session of the Committee of the Whole.

In addition, the quarterly reports contain the background information that is needed to prepare the biennial programme performance report which is transmitted to United Nations Headquarters. This report, prepared at the end of each biennium, concentrates on an examination of the results obtained as they relate to those described for each programme element of the biennial programme budget.

Finally, internal seminars are held in order to promote dialogue among technical staff, to improve knowledge of the work being done by the different Secretariat units and to facilitate co-ordination and coherence between studies. In other words, these internal seminars are designed to increase the intersectoral and multidisciplinary dynamics to the biennial programme of work.

There are other more specific types of monitoring which relate, for example, to the control of certain financial resources (as in the case of the quarterly travel schedule, which is linked with the implementation of activities provided for in the biennial programme of work).

Finally, it should be noted that consultations are frequently held with regional agencies outside the United Nations system in order to enable CEPAL to keep up to date with respect to the activities carried out by such agencies and thus reinforce or establish co-operation links and avoid a possible duplication of efforts.

#### 6. Evaluation of the biennial programme of work 4/

As mentioned above, this phase of the planning process is probably the one that has attracted the most attention in the United Nations in recent times. It is also the phase in which greater effort must be made if the overall process is to be properly tied together. The subject is too broad to be fully dealt with in this note.

The instructions for the preparation of the draft medium-term plan for 1984-1989 explicitly mention the question of evaluation and point out that such an exercise should be envisaged for each subprogramme. In this regard, it is considered, for example, that the following should be borne in mind:

/(a) The

- (a) The purposes of evaluation:
  - (i) What changes or results are to be measured?
  - (ii) What hypotheses are to be verified?
- (b) The characteristics of the evaluation (methodology, periodicity, etc.);
- (c) The nature of the indicators of results and of impacts;
- (d) The means used to collect information and the corresponding sources;
- (e) The use to be made of the conclusions of the evaluation.

The instructions for the preparation of the draft programme budget for the biennium 1984-1985 also refer to the subject of evaluation (although not explicitly, as did the instructions for the biennium 1982-1983).

In order to clarify further this fourth phase, it might be useful to make a distinction between evaluation of the medium-term plan and evaluation of the biennial programme budget (particularly the biennial programme of work).

The ultimate purpose of the evaluation exercise is to determine, when implementation of a subprogramme is completed, what changes have been produced in relation to the problem or situation considered initially, on the one hand, and, on the other, to what extent these changes may be attributed to the implementation of the relevant activities.

If the objectives have been attained, it is to be assumed that there will have been a positive change or an improvement with respect to the original situation or problem dealt with by the subprogramme and described in the medium-term plan. (Indeed, the problem considered is precisely the opposite of the objective of the subprogramme.)

At the same time, it is known that the implementation of each programme element belonging to a given subprogramme contributes to the achievement of the objectives formulated at the subprogramme level. This is made possible, basically, by the attainment as programmed of the results indicated in the biennial programme of work, most specifically in each of the relevant programme elements.

Moreover, the transformation of the inputs into results during a biennium should be monitored and any departure from the course programmed will normally make it necessary to carry out an evaluation that will make it possible to take a decision or to initiate action to correct the situation.

In the light of the above, it is evident that the reasoning applied is based on the concept of causality: given causes are linked to given consequences. Thus, inputs lead to results, results to the purpose and the purpose to the objective.

It is also clear that if an evaluation exercise is to fulfil the purpose for which it is carried out, the elements of the programme must be duly described, the objectives of the subprogramme duly formulated, etc.

Moreover, it is evident that the conclusions that might be reached as a result of the various evaluation exercises must be taken into account not only in the revisions of the medium-term plan and of the biennial programme budgets, but also in the very preparation of these instruments of the planning process.

Finally, in article VI, on evaluation, of document A/37/206, reference is made to internal and external evaluation. Internal evaluation is that which is carried out by the members of the secretariat of the organization responsible for the activity being evaluated; external evaluation is that which is carried out by bodies outside the secretariat of the organization concerned.

7. Some aspects of the problem of establishing priorities  
in the programme activities of CEPAL

The establishment of priorities is equivalent to the assignment or redeployment of resources in order to achieve substantive changes in programme activities.

Redeployment may be:

- (a) between programmes;
- (b) between subprogrammes of a given programme;
- (c) between the programme elements of a given subprogramme.

Resources may be redeployed either when the medium-term plan or the biennial programme budget is being examined or when these instruments are revised. In this regard, the identification of activities that have been completed or are obsolete, of marginal usefulness or ineffective is an important component of the process of establishing priorities.

Another point that must be mentioned is the fact that the resources concerned are not only those included in the regular budget of the Organization, but also those obtained from other sources. The extent of these resources, called extrabudgetary resources, depends to a large degree on the willingness of the countries to provide them. Thus, it is important to be able to estimate in advance the volume of extrabudgetary resources that will be available in order to set priorities.

In setting priorities, the following criteria must be considered:

- (a) The importance of the objectives established for the different subprogrammes by the member countries of the Commission in the medium-term plan.
- (b) The Organization's capacity to carry out the programme activities in given fields or on given subjects;
- (c) The concept of efficiency, which means that it must be determined whether each substantive unit responsible for carrying out the various programmes of the programme of work is able to achieve the relevant objectives.

These criteria may at times be contradictory. Thus, for example, a set of activities may be of crucial importance for the member countries, but the efficiency of the substantive unit responsible for it may be such that a reduction of resources would be in order.

These brief comments should suffice to show that the problem of setting priorities is quite complex and that many different factors must be considered in such an exercise.

Footnotes

1/ In this regard, reference should be made to a report of the Secretary General entitled "Draft Regulations Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and Methods of Evaluation" (A/37/206).

2/ The medium-term plan for the period 1984-1989 is the fifth such plan to be presented since 1974, when this type of planning was first put into effect.

3/ It should be added that at this phase of medium-term planning, interinstitutional consultations are envisaged, i.e., consultations between different specialized agencies of the United Nations in order to improve interinstitutional co-ordination and avoid any possible duplication of efforts.

4/ As noted in United Nations document A/34/286, evaluation is defined as "a process which attempts to determine as systematically and objectively as possible the relevance, effectiveness and impact of activities in the light of their objectives". Other terms commonly used are defined as follows:

(1) Relevance: concerns the degree to which the rationale, objectives, and expected impact of an activity are, or remain, pertinent, valid, and significant with regard to long-range objectives or other identified priority needs and concerns. (2) Effectiveness: is a measure of the extent to which an activity achieves its objectives. (3) Impact: is an expression of the changes produced in a situation as the result of an activity which has been undertaken.

Annex 1

Definitions of the four programming levels approved by the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination in report, E/5803 of 28 April 1976.a/

1. Level 1: a major programme

This term designates a major purpose or function of the organization, for which objectives can be set. As a general rule, these are long-term objectives for the achievement of which no timetable can be set. A major programme includes existing consolidated programmes such as:

- (a) Population (United Nations)
- (b) Development of work skills and abilities (ILO)
- (c) Conservation of resources and the struggle against disease and plagues (FAO)
- (d) Education (UNESCO)
- (e) Environmental health (WHO)

2. Level 2: a programme

This term refers to a grouping of related subprogrammes designed to achieve one or more objectives that contribute to the broader objectives of the major programme designated as level 1. At level 2, some organizations prepare detailed descriptions and spell out specific objectives. Some organizations do not need to break down further the overall description of their programmes and, in such cases, the detailed recommendations of the Working Group b/ on minimum requirements for descriptions at level 3 would apply to this level. Some examples of programme titles that might be used at this level are the following:

- (a) Population in the ECA region (United Nations)
- (b) Vocational training (ILO)
- (c) Struggle against disease and plagues (FAO)
- (d) Education and higher training of teaching staff (UNESCO)
- (e) Basic sanitary measures (WHO)

3. Level 3: subprogramme

A subprogramme is a logical grouping of several activities designed to achieve one objective and may be evaluated by means of output indicators and, normally, by the use of criteria referring to a greater or lesser degree of success. Insofar as possible, the evaluation of a subprogramme should refer to the effect it has had on the conditions prevailing within the countries of the world and among them. At this level, most organizations represented in the Working Group would include detailed descriptive material, as well as explanations of subobjectives. Some typical examples of the titles of programmes at this level would be the following:

- (a) Demographic projections (United Nations)
- (b) Industrial vocational training (ILO)
- (c) Control of tripanosomiasis affecting animals in Africa (FAO)
- (d) Higher education (UNESCO)
- (e) Water supply (WHO)

/4. Level



4. Level 4: a programme element

A programme element is:

(a) a project designed to achieve a specific objective as regards the results to be obtained in a given time span, the achievement of which can be verified; or

(b) a continuous activity the results of which can be measured.

A programme element contributes to the achievement of the objective of a subprogramme at level 3; it is made up of elements the cost of which can be measured and is normally under the administrative responsibility of a single person. Following are examples of programme elements:

(a) Estimates and projections of total population by sex and by age for several countries (United Nations)

(b) Factory training plan (Iraq) (field project) (ILO)

(c) European Centre for Higher Education (Bucharest) (UNESCO)

(d) Algeria-field project (WHO).

Footnotes

a/ These definitions must be considered with some caution, inasmuch as the situation may be quite different in two different organizations, such as FAO and CEPAL.

b/ This refers to the Working Group which drafted these definitions at the request of the ACC.

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