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TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES:
THE CDCC EXPERIENCE



UNITED NATIONS

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P R E F A C E

This brief paper is an addendum to the document prepared in March last year and was intended for the planned tenth session of CDCC scheduled for April. As such, the addendum covers a TCDC seminar held in Barbados during June 1986 and some activities of the CDCC Secretariat in promoting and assisting in horizontal co-operation during the 1986/87 period.

TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES:
THE CDCC EXPERIENCE

1. A TCDC seminar was held in Barbados in June 1986 with the collaboration of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). The seminar helped to clarify the procedures and guidelines which exist within the United Nations development system for the furtherance and effective handling of Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries (TCDC), using United Nations system resources where available, particularly those of UNDP, to supplement national ones. This clarification was necessary since it is believed that the low level of TCDC activities within the UNDP country programming framework has been due to a lack of adequate knowledge about the methods and procedures within government mechanisms in most countries rather than to a willingness to accept the concept of TCDC.
2. It was recognized that virtually all countries participated in some form of traditional bilateral technical co-operation, but all of them have not integrated such co-operation within the framework of the United Nations system of technical co-operation among developing countries.
3. Specifically, while TCDC is indeed primarily the responsibility of participating countries, the conditions prevailing in the OECS countries due to the volatile nature of their economy, budgetary constraints, high overhead costs per administration, etc., do make it easy for them to cover local costs in order to benefit from UNDP's interregional project INT/83/904. There is, therefore, need for flexibility on this question of local costs.
4. At the seminar, the OECS countries submitted a list of their technical assistance needs and these were matched with offers of the donors attending the meeting. Excepting the area of tourism, participants from potential TCDC donor countries from the Latin American region indicated that virtually all the technical assistance needs of the English-speaking Caribbean could be met from the region on a TCDC basis if they so desired.

5. The seminar agreed on some specific recommendations which were designed to keep the seminar momentum alive at the country level through follow-up actions, as appropriate, by governments and related UNDP field offices. Included in these recommendations are the following:

(a) Countries should seek to strengthen their National Focal Points (NFPs) by putting into place the appropriate structures and personnel and providing the necessary authority to permit the UNDP TCDC Unit to enter into negotiations with donor countries, make decisions, commit resources and implement TCDC proposals.

(b) NFPs should concentrate some of their efforts in bringing about greater awareness of the concept of TCDC. Such efforts could take the form of seminars on TCDC as a modality for maximizing cost effectiveness. Towards this end, it was also recommended that national seminars should be held immediately, with NFPs serving as resource persons, in close co-operation with and under the guidance of the UNDP Resident Representatives or their Deputies and ECLAC personnel.

(c) Each country should undertake to ensure that funds are provided in national budgets for TCDC activities, however small this may be.

(d) Efforts should be made by NFPs to co-ordinate the activities of the various national agencies involved in the development process and who may wish to access TCDC.

(e) Countries should make every effort to manage their country Indicative Planning Figure (IPF) resources within the context of the TCDC modality as far as practicable and whenever in doubt as to how a project could be financed, should consult the UNDP Resident Representative or ECLAC.

(f) To the extent that TCDC is an integral part of the country's overall technical co-operation programme, every effort should be made by governments and UNDP field offices to consider the possibility of injecting TCDC elements, starting at the time of project identification, formulation, appraisal, approval, implementation and evaluation under UNDP's continuous country programming procedures. In fact, this entire process should have the first claim on their time in order to make UNDP's contribution more effective and lasting.

(g) It was also suggested that those countries which had not done so already should consider establishing an IPF-funded TCDC umbrella project to accommodate contingencies either as a beneficiary or as a donor through TCDC arrangements.

6. The report of the meeting was circulated to all member states and the secretariat urges member states to respond to the recommendations which will guide the secretariat in implementing the work programme during the coming biennium.

ECLAC and TCDC

7. Throughout the period, the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat has been instrumental in exchanging information on both offers and requests for assistance to its members and facilitated the provision of assistance. Presently, discussions are ongoing with Brazil for assistance in the agro-industry sector especially involving banana products and other small scale fruit processing activities.

8. The secretariat has also assisted in technology transfer projects where persons from the region have assisted each other in either solving production process problems or conducted "in plant" training for short periods. These have been primarily in the agro-industry sector also, but can be expanded to other sectors.

9. The ECLAC/CDCC secretariat will also assist, along with UNDP, in the hosting of the national workshops called for in the recommendations and will endeavour to expand TCDC activities to include other regions through the Regional Commissions within the limits of its budgetary resources during the coming biennium.

