

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN REGARD TO NATIONAL PLANNING

1. The magnitude and variety of needs of the various planning agencies in the preparation of national plans, sectoral programmes, and individual projects is going to create an enormous demand for technicians and specialists of a high calibre to assist nations in their planning tasks. The supply of such personnel by international agencies is difficult because of (a) the lack of explicitly spelled out requirements from the planning agencies; (b) a shortage of high-level personnel experienced in planning and programming (this shortage is being aggravated by multiplicity - if not duplication - of technical assistance missions abroad); and (c) pay scales that are insufficient to secure the services of top notch experts.
2. Since this problem is both immediate and critical, it is imperative it be evaluated at once. This might be done by a small task force made up of individuals with extensive experience in economic planning, programming, and feasibility analysis through an intensive study over the next 4-8 weeks. Such a task force would study: (a) the best methods of assisting the planning agencies to formulate their requirements; (b) the methods of procuring an adequate number of trained persons; and (c) the relation of this question to the problems of training planners and of research in the planning field. What is needed here is not a thick report but experienced judgement as to what to do with regard to the shortages of high-level personnel which is such an obstacle to sound formulation and execution of plans and programmes.
3. In certain countries there are already trained technicians, but there is need for special training which would enable them to participate in - or launch - appropriate research in areas that require specialized planning or project study that is unprecedented in their country. For instance, a certain experience in scheduling, cost and progress analysis of the first construction projects of a given type may be lacking even in planning offices of great ability.
4. Since the Secretariat of OAS has already initiated surveys and attempted co-ordination, it is suggested that a small task force of this kind be appointed forthwith.

By Michael J. Deutch