INT-1483

Distr.
INTERNAL

E/CEPAL/IN.9
5 November 1981

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

C E P A L

Economic Commission for Latin America

COMMENTS ON PROGRAMMES OF OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL UNITS WITHIN THE UNITED NATIONS

(Intra-Secretariat Consultation and Co-ordination in the Preparation of the 1984-1989 Medium-Term Plan)

81-10-2297

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

1. The fact that the regional economic commissions (except ECE) operate industrial divisions jointly with UNIDO gives the industrial programme a high degree of coherence in terms of goals and achievements. The general focus of all the programmes is on the principles set forth in the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade, and the programmes are based in particular on the Lima and New Delhi Plans and Programmes of Action. Action carried out jointly with UNIDO therefore ensures unity of approach and also, to a certain extent, co-ordination among the regions, thus avoiding duplication and promoting the exchange of experience and information.

2. Owing to the fact that it operates in a different context, the ECE industrial programme obviously does not fit into the above appraisal. However, the industrial experience that has been accumulated there, the programme of work that will be implemented, and the fact that many aspects of industrialization in the Third World are directly linked to industrial developments in the countries members of ECE would appear to indicate that it would be desirable to establish closer co-operation between that Commission and the units that make up the industrial programme, or to strengthen such co-operation. It would, for example, be possible to consider establishing ad hoc projects implemented jointly by ECE and the other regional commissions (North-South) similar to those that are beginning to be operated jointly by the other regional commissions (South-South).

3. In general terms, the Industrial Development Programme covers a relatively broad and comprehensive field and, in its more specific manifestations meets the requirements of the various regions.

All this takes place through extremely diverse activities whose chief characteristic is that they are conducted within the sector itself with a view to strengthening it and adapting it so that industry can achieve the goals that have been set for it and fulfil the responsibilities it has been given for the future. We see that there is something missing in this exercise, which is certainly perfectly valid in itself: there is a lack of activities to locate the industrialization process in the broader context of economic policy, or at least there is a lack of an express reference to such activities.

/It would

It would therefore appear appropriate to suggest that a number of activities aimed at exploring the various industrial alternatives and results offered by different economic policies should be started. It would also appear appropriate to recommend that such activities should be implemented by UNIDO, perhaps in co-operation with the joint divisions. In making these suggestions we merely wish to take up once again the concerns rightly expressed by the Committee for Development Planning itself with regard to industrialization and development.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

1. As could be expected, a comparative reading of all the medium-term plan proposals revealed a substantial number of common interests, centred around the subjects included in the eight major programme areas of the Operational Plan for the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action on Science and Technology for Development.

2. One of these subjects -the strengthening of regional technological capacity- is dealt with in all the plan proposals from developing regions. This is probably due to the nature of the subject, especially its umbrella characteristics, which make it very appropriate for a comprehensive approach at a time when resources are limited and likely to remain so.

3. It has in fact been our approach so far to have only one subprogramme so that under the strengthening of the regional technological capacity we may include several components, most of which are also to be found in the plan proposals of the other regional commissions.

4. This is true, for example, of repercussions of recent major technological breakthroughs on the economic and social structure of the region, a subject included, in one way or another, in the ECE and ESCAP plan proposals as well as in Programme Area I of the Operational Plan.

5. The design of technological development policies and plans in such a way as to support local technological capacity, including the use of appropriate technologies is another concern explicitly mentioned in (the recently approved Regional Programme of Action for Latin America in the 1980s (CEPAL resolution 422 (XIX)). It is also referred to in the ECA, ESCAP and ECWA plan proposals and of course, in several programme areas of the Operational Plan.

6. The same is true in the transfer and acquisition of technology, support of technological information, the reverse transfer of technology and international co-operation in science and technology, particularly among developing countries. All these components of the CEPAL plan proposal are also included in many of the other regional commissions.

7. We are now devoting a good deal of energy to a joint project with ECA on the subject of interregional co-operation. As it appears that there will be more initiatives of this nature in the future, we are now contemplating the possibility

/of opening

of opening up another subprogramme intended to cover this type of activities more explicitly and take account of similar projects among countries of the region as well.

8. In this connexion it is worth mentioning that recently, when our plan proposal was under discussion at our nineteenth session, it was recommended that a large part of the efforts to be undertaken should be focussed on activities of an operational nature, such efforts being co-ordinated with other international organizations and bodies in order to avoid possible duplication of work.1/

9. Needless to say, this move towards stronger support of regional and interregional co-operation will depend a great deal on the possibility of increasing our present resources in the field of science and technology and of improving and enhancing our associative links with other international bodies and organizations.

10. In this connexion it should also be said that the other regional commissions are certainly among those bodies with which significant joint efforts are expected during the period 1984-1989. The text of section C4 of our medium-term plan proposal will therefore be amended to include a reference to that effect which was inadvertently omitted from the current version of the proposal.

1/ See Draft Medium-Term Plan for the Period 1984-1989, (E/CEPAL/G.1164/Rev.1). Programme 20, p. 71.

/POPULATION

POPULATION

1. Medium-term plan - DIESA

(a) We have not identified duplications between DIESA and the Latin American Regional Population Programme executed by CELADE (Latin American Demographic Centre).

(b) In those cases where similar activities are identified, these are clearly differentiated by its different geographical coverage.

In this respect the outputs of CELADE should be considered inputs for DIESA, especially in relation with population projections and trends.

(c) When joint activities are being considered, improvements should be made in the information systems as well as in co-ordination and co-operation, especially in those studies mentioned under (c) in paragraph 22 of subprogramme 2: Demographic projections (page 8) and under (c) and (d), paragraph 35 of subprogramme 4: Population and development (page 11).

2. Regarding the activities of other regional commissions there obivously exists no duplication in view of the different geographical ocverage of each of them.

It would certainly be of interest to each of the regional commissions to interchange information on results and outputs maximizing by that way the utilization of the "know-how" accumulated, and the methodologies used by each of them.

As an example of the above, we might mention the experience accumulated by CELADE through the execution of studies on international migration in Latin America (IMILA), the estimations of fertility (IFHIPAL), the technologies developed for the processing and dissemination of documentation, or techniques for estimating trends in the distribution of population and changes in the structure of human settlements.

/HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

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1. There is no duplication of activities, mainly because the activities included in the Habitat Centre's programme are very limited with respect to the needs of the region. It is not so much a question of avoiding overlapping among the programmes of the various agencies concerned with human settlements as of integrating efforts in certain priority activities, inasmuch as the total resources available would not be adequate to cover all the needs for advisory services. The definition of most of these priority activities is a strictly regional responsibility.

2. The nature of most activities in the area of human settlements is determined by regional characteristics that differ sharply not only between developed and developing countries but also between one developing country and another. In the case of Latin America and the Caribbean, the unusually high rate of growth of the population and the high rate of urbanization have created their own characteristical problems.

3. General Assembly resolution 32/162 indicates that the regional economic commissions are to be responsible for the formulation and implementation of regional policies, programmes and projects. In this regard, it is worth noting, for example, that there are significant differences in concept regarding squatter settlements, which are often viewed from a paternalistic standpoint rather than as factors of social and economic development.

4. There are circumstances common to the Latin American countries which give rise to specific concerns in connexion with the implementation of the Vancouver Plan of Action. It would thus be advisable for the Secretariat of CEPAL and the Habitat Centre to programme their activities jointly with a view to reconciling the global and regional concerns involved and concentrating regional efforts on a few activities (point b, (iv) of Martner's circular). In this regard, a different distribution of work between the Habitat Centre and CEPAL might be considered (point b, (iii) of the same circular). In addition, the complexity and large number of subprogrammes included in the Habitat Centre's Medium-Term Plan 1984-1989 make it very difficult to give an adequate opinion of the rest of the Plan. Likewise, because of the format of the Plan, it is not clear how certain results might be used as inputs for other activities.

/5. In

5. In brief, it seems that the difficulties in co-ordinating the work plans of the Habitat Centre and of CEPAL arise from a lack of integration of global and regional policies, which leads to the conclusion that there should be more interaction between the groups preparing these policies for approval by the relevant legislative bodies. Furthermore, because of the excessively long planning periods, it is difficult to make any adjustments that might be required by policy changes; thus, programme implementation is less realistic than it should be.

Co-ordination with programmes of other regions

6. It is difficult to take advantage of experiences gained from projects relating to policies and planning when they are concerned with very different socio-economic and institutional situations.

7. On the other hand, there are interesting possibilities for technological exchange, particularly among countries with similar ecosystems. Many of the developing countries are tropical countries and this circumstance opens up possibilities for horizontal co-operation.

8. Similarly, it would seem useful to exchange information regarding financing systems especially conceived for lower income groups (e.g., ESCAP subprogramme 3 and ECWA subprogramme on construction materials).

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS

1. No harmful duplication of activities exists in the 1984-1989 medium-term plan of the other units dealing with the programme in Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs. Such a problem might well exist, however, with specialized agencies particularly in those subprogrammes concerned with specific population groups. Areas of common concern do, of course, exist among the different regional commissions, e.g., social integration, popular participation, integration of women into development, etc., but as is to be expected, differences in emphasis and focus are also to be found. This reflects the varying needs, perspectives, potentials and limitations for social development in the various regions, and the response of the regional commissions to mandates originating at the diverse tiers of legislative authority within the United Nations. Rather than an overlapping of activities in this programme area, complementary activities exist in several areas such as the Social Policy Instruments subprogramme of DIESA and related non-population groups specific activities in the regional commissions (Styles of Development and Social Change in the case of CEPAL, for example). This is also true with respect to subprogrammes for the Integration of Women into Development, another common feature of the proposed plans. Mutual support is possible and advantageous in such areas.

2. In other areas, particularly those which are group specific, e.g., the aged, the disabled and youth as well as such problem-oriented subprogrammes as Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, and social welfare (in the sense of social services) considerable diversity exists both in terms of the resources allocated (from an entire division to none) and the conceptual approach adopted. This situation may reflect not only the priorities of the commissions but also ignorance as to new and innovative approaches to social development problems. Since often these initiatives arise as concerns of different units in the United Nations rather than as concerns of the system as a whole, increased awareness through more intensive joint programming and concerted implementation may not serve to enhance the quality of an activity in units where it is either given low priority or resources are already too strained.

3. However, certainly in areas found in DIESA and the regional commissions such as popular participation, social implications and consequences of changing patterns of economic growth, social and institutional aspects of the restructuring of international economic relations and the social integration of marginal and

/less-advantaged

less-advantaged groups, input from the various units to each other would be beneficial. This could be achieved through the regular exchange of documents as well as better contact and co-ordination among the units involved, taking advantage of the periodic Headquarters meetings which all attend (e.g., Commission for Social Development) to discuss more formally the evolution of areas of common concern and the results of work.

4. Such an exchange would be useful particularly for the planning of DIESA in those areas where it acts as "lead agency" or where it must draw upon the input of the regional commissions for studies, monitoring reports, regional seminars and meetings in preparation for world-wide events, follow-up work and consultations with countries, etc. Not only would DIESA know in advance what it could reasonably expect to receive given the priorities and resource limitations of the regional commissions and be able to plan accordingly, but the commissions would be in a position to respond more flexibly to the demands made of them.

5. With regard to the totality of the programme it often seems to lack a structure of clearly defined priorities which take emerging and potential issues sufficiently into account. In many ways it appears to be constructed by an aggregation of objectives extrapolated forward from the issues already fixed in the system's legislative mandates. A more integrated approach on the whole is called for and the relevant activities of the Office for Development Research and Policy Analysis should be included in any system-wide programming exercise in social development. This is another significant gap which deserves careful consideration. Particularly pertinent recommendations for achieving a more coherent and credible integrated approach to development have appeared in the report of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Social Aspects of the Development Activities of the United Nations which have recently been endorsed by the Economic and Social Council (E/198/57, 1 May 1981, pages 17 and 18). The observations of this group are especially useful for overcoming the problem of the de facto disconnexion in substantive methodological and operational terms between the economic and the social in the analysis and interpretation of development processes. Some of its recommendations would assist in achieving an integrating conceptual umbrella, thus avoiding the present situation of equal weight being assigned to each issue with the consequent "crisis management" approach finally being adopted to assign resources as the worldwide events of the corresponding international year, decade or world conference approach.

/FOOD AND

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

(a) Taking into account the regional coverage of the work programmes of the economic commissions, no duplication or overlapping is foreseeable. The proposed plans clearly reflect their future activities in the field of food and agriculture.

(b) Due to the different stages of development to which the regional commissions are being confronted to in this field, the results obtained by one of them could be of interest to others.

(c) The area of food security and their corresponding regional components could lead to the design of interregional co-operation. FAO and WFC are in contact with the regional commissions in order to promote such activities.

(d) The World Food Council is mainly concerned with consultations and co-ordination tasks, while FAO is in charge of executing concrete programmes and projects which at the regional level are being co-ordinated with our Joint Division.

/NATURAL RESOURCES

NATURAL RESOURCES

I. Water resources

In water resources, the programmes are presented in too vague a form to be certain that there is potential overlapping or duplication but there are indications that this is the case. For example, the technical missions, the advisory missions on the Action Plan are again mentioned as an activity, as are regional reviews of groundwater.

Given the likely probability of continuing potential duplication and overlapping of activities carried out in New York with these undertaken by the regional commissions and the need to improve communication between the commissions, I would suggest the following,

(i) We propose that a special working group of the Inter-Secretariat Working Group on Water Resources, and similarly for minerals, be established consisting only of DIESA, DTCD and the five regional commissions;

(ii) These working groups be charged with integrating the activities carried out at New York and in the commissions by joint preparations of budgets and medium-term plans;

(iii) Between the commissions the need would be to exchange information and experience as we have common but not overlapping or duplicated activities, but with DIESA and DTCD there is a need to ensure that these activities are restricted to complementary global programmes and are not extended into areas falling properly to the regional commissions; and

(iv) There is need for greater specificity in the medium-term plans if any meaningful co-ordination is to occur.

II. Mineral resources

(a) General comments

In view of the fact that in general the activities that are being carried out to develop mineral resources have a direct relationship with use of international inputs, in other words, technology and financing, and with international trade in the products in question, it would be possible to consider the feasibility, in addition to achieving adequate complementation and co-ordination of operational aspects, of bringing about a greater unity as regards criteria concerning key issues:

/legislative authority,

legislative authority, the problems considered and strategies. The following specific action could be proposed in that connexion.

(i) In addition to consideration of the relevant General Assembly and Economic and Social Council resolutions, consideration in the legislative authority of resolutions at the level of the regional commissions, particularly the following:

- ESCAP: paragraphs 566-572 (XXXVI)
- ECA: Lagos Plan of Action - April 1980
- CEPAL: 388 (XVIII) IDS Appraisals

(ii) Analysis of all the "problems considered" and the governmental objectives set forth in the subprogrammes of DIESA, DTCD and the regional commissions.

(iii) Preparation in the light of subparagraphs 1 and 2 above of an "international mining sector strategy" and of a corresponding "plan of action".

(iv) Comparison of the activities of the 1984-1989 Medium-term Plan with the plan of action making the significant changes required.

(b) Comments on activities under the 1984-1989 Medium-term Plan

There are three fields in which the CEPAL Mineral Resources Subprogramme might contain activities that are duplicated by the programmes of other units:

(i) Co-operation with countries in formulating a mining legislative authority and in promoting investment agreements (DTCD/ECA and CEPAL). The following co-ordination activities are suggested:

- The exchange of information on mining legislation among the three bodies referred to.

- The exchange of information and joint action, where appropriate, in the promotion of investment agreements and co-operation among countries.

(ii) Periodic studies on developments and trends in the mining sector and on selected products (DIESA/DTCD/ECWA/ESCAP/CEPAL). It is suggested that a single United Nations study should be prepared, with appropriate chapters on trends in, and problems and prospects of, the sector in each region and on the major minerals. The study in question could be the responsibility of DTCD, with co-operation from the other units, subject to agreements on the study's table of contents.

/(iii) Exchange

(iii) Exchange and dissemination of geological and mining information of a technical and economic nature (DIESA/DTCD/ESCAP/ECA/CEPAL). It is suggested that DIESA/DTCD should prepare a project on the establishment of a "Mining Sector Information System" at the international level.

(iv) Other areas in which joint action on the part of the various units could be called for would be the following:

- Studies on, and advisory assistance in, exploitation of marine mineral resources, co-ordination of which could be the responsibility of DIESA.
- Studies on, and advisory assistance in, the improvement of public institutions in the mining sector, with DTCD being responsible for co-ordination.
- Advisory assistance in drawing up an inventory of marine and land-based mineral resources, with DIESA/DTCD/UNESCO being responsible for co-ordination.
- Technical training, with DTCD/United Nations University being responsible for programming and co-ordination.

(v) Activities under the 1984-1989 programme are chiefly focussed on project implementation and advisory services, an area in which CEPAL is not deeply involved owing to its shortage of human resources. It would appear that ECWA is in a similar position, and it is therefore suggested that DTCD should devote priority attention to countries in the two regions in question.