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NOTE BY THE SECRETARIAT ON THE DIVISION OF RESPONSIBILITIES  
AMONG THE UNITED NATIONS SECRETARIAT UNITS  
CONCERNED WITH SHIPPING AND PORTS

At its forty-fifth session, the Economic and Social Council adopted resolution 1373 (XLV) entitled: "Division of responsibilities among the United Nations secretariat units concerned with shipping and ports". The text of this resolution reads as follows:

"The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling its resolution 1202 (XLII) of 26 May 1967,

Taking note of the measures adopted by the Secretary-General as set forth in his report on this subject,

Taking note of resolution 6 (II) dated 22 March 1968 of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development,

1. Invites the attention of all the appropriate bodies in the United Nations system to the measures adopted by the Secretary-General as set forth in his report;

2. Invites also the attention of all the appropriate bodies in the United Nations system to resolution 6 (II) of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development;

/3. Recommends

3. Recommends that the usual administrative steps be taken through the appropriate bodies of the United Nations to enable the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development to fulfil their respective tasks as set forth in the Secretary-General's report.

1561st plenary meeting,  
2 August 1968."

Operative paragraph 2 of the above resolution refers to resolution 6 (II) of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, entitled "Substantive support for technical assistance", the text of which reads as follows:

"The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development,  
Taking note of the measures adopted by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to avoid duplication in shipping matters described in document TD/66/Supp.1,

Aware of the advantages to be derived from the integration of substantive support for technical assistance with research on shipping and ports,

1. Welcomes the concentration of research on shipping and ports within the UNCTAD secretariat and the transfer of substantive support for technical assistance from the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to UNCTAD;

2. Emphasizes the importance of the uninterrupted continuation of substantive support for technical assistance projects without prejudice to the progress of other aspects of the work programme drawn up by the Committee on Shipping;

3. Recommends that the usual administrative steps should be taken through the appropriate bodies of the United Nations to enable the UNCTAD secretariat to fulfil its tasks, as set forth in document TD/66/Supp.1.

69th plenary meeting,  
22 March 1968."

In accordance with operative paragraph 3 of the above resolution, the secretariat attaches the report of the Secretary-General setting out measures to avoid duplication of activities within the United Nations Secretariat units dealing with shipping and ports.

UNITED NATIONS

ECONOMIC  
AND  
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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA

Forty-fourth session  
Agenda item 4

TRANSPORT DEVELOPMENT

Division of responsibilities among the United Nations  
Secretariat units concerned with shipping and ports

Report of the Secretary-General \*/

In response to resolution 1202 (XLII) on transport development adopted by the Economic and Social Council at its forty-second session, and in response to the resolution adopted by the UNCTAD Committee on Shipping on 8 March 1967, as confirmed by the Trade and Development Board at its fifth session, which deals with the same subject, the present document sets out the decision reached by the Secretary-General in order to avoid duplication of activities within the United Nations Secretariat units dealing with shipping and ports.

General background, progress in transport technology

1. The field of transport is in the midst of a technological revolution. New technological advances underscore the interdependent nature of different modes of transportation. Containerization, for instance, will make the rigid separation of modes transport increasingly irrelevant. The container itself may be transported by truck or aircraft, ship or railway, or a combination of the various means of transport, whatever the best combination may be, from the viewpoint of cost, speed or other factors.

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\*/ The report was also submitted to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development at its second session under the title "Division of responsibilities among the United Nations Secretariat units concerned with transport questions", 6 February 1968 (TD/66/Supp.1).

2. Other new technological advances will also have a profound influence on the pattern of world transportation. The "jumbo" jet aircraft will, within a few years, play an important role in international trade. The introduction of very large tankers will change the technological concept of ports. "Island ports" are already being planned and built. Within smaller dimensions, the "hovercraft", perhaps in combination with landing-craft types of ships and roll-on/roll-off techniques may, in certain circumstances and in certain areas, eliminate the need for conventional ports. Thus the use of these new developments may have a profound effect on investment requirements.

3. The concept of "multi-purpose development", already well established in the utilization of the resources of rivers for example, is gaining ground in other areas where adequate transportation needs to be developed. For instance "island ports" can be used for a variety of other purposes. Hydrographic surveying is now being combined with the collection of geological information for possible subsequent off-shore and sea-bed exploration.

4. The possibilities offered by improved technology, of new patterns of substitution between, as well as combination among, different modes of transportation, are of great relevance to the development efforts of the developing countries. These substitutions and combinations have to be soundly balanced if these countries are to optimize the returns from investments in the transport sector. Where new plans for transport investments are involved, a unified technological approach incorporating all relevant disciplines becomes essential.

5. At the same time, the growing interdependence of modes of transport and the interlocking of different disciplines underline the weakness of the fragmented institutional system of the United Nations and the need to find practical ways and means of overcoming this weakness. In the perspective of a global strategy, as now so frequently advocated for the second United Nations Development Decade, it would appear logical that consideration should be given to the establishment, within the United Nations, of an "International Transport Centre", which would be equipped to serve the different intergovernmental bodies and secretaries established to deal with transport questions on a global or regional basis. Only thus would it seem possible to give the efforts of the United Nations in this complex and rapidly growing field the necessary integration and multidisciplinary competence.

6. In the immediate future, however, while the broad perspective should be kept open, it is necessary to work towards less ambitious objectives and to aim at a practical division of labour among the various units concerned, both at Headquarters and in the regions, and at a better combination of activities which could gradually be brought within the framework of an integrated and concerted programme.

The present state of legislation in respect of distribution of functions

7. At its second session, the UNCTAD Committee on Shipping adopted a resolution <sup>1/</sup> on March 1967 in which, in one of its provisions, it "reaffirms that the secretariat of UNCTAD is competent to provide substantive support, in co-ordination as appropriate, with other United Nations bodies to technical assistance activities in maritime transport (including ports)". The Committee further "recommends that, in the light of the above reaffirmation, the Secretary-General of the United Nations be asked to consider ways of avoiding duplication of activities among the United Nations Secretariat units dealing with shipping and ports".

8. Acting on the above-mentioned resolution of the Committee, the Economic and Social Council, at its forty-second session, adopted resolution 1202 (XLII) on transport development, in which it requested the Secretary-General not only to "consider ways of avoiding duplication of activities within the United Nations Secretariat units dealing with shipping and ports..." but also to "continue to study the application of the latest scientific and technological advances to the transport development of developing countries...". The Council further requested the Secretary-General of the United Nations to "examine, in consultation, as appropriate, with the specialized agencies concerned, the ways in which the activities of the United Nations system of organizations in the transport field can best be co-ordinated and improved".

9. In the light of the provisions of these resolutions, the Secretary-General is fully aware of the need (a) to make every effort to avoid duplication of work on shipping and ports within the United Nations system; and (b) to keep in view, in making such efforts, the questions of co-ordination as well as

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1/ Official Records of the Trade and Development Board, Fifth Session, Supplement No 2, annex I (c).

the improvement of the United Nations work programme in the whole field of transport. In this connexion, it is important to give due recognition to the recent developments concerning transport technology as briefly outlined in the first section of this document.

#### Arrangements for the future

10. There should be no great problem as regards the servicing of the various bodies of the United Nations, including the reporting and research necessary for their work. Each of the secretariat units has obviously a direct responsibility which, under present arrangements, is difficult to delegate. With a thorough knowledge of the respective work programmes, and by avoiding an excessively autarchical approach, each should be able to draw on the other's experience and particular competence as the need arises.

11. So far as operational activities are concerned, it will be readily agreed that the secretariats of the regional economic commissions should play a major role in the initiation and programming of operational activities. This is so in the first instance, because there is general recognition of the aptitude of the regional commissions to identify the needs of their member countries, including those which can be met through the various operational programmes. This aptitude points to a certain pattern of decentralization, which becomes increasingly relevant as the regional commissions maintain direct co-operation with the various global bodies concerned. In the case of transport, a further reason for vesting a large part of the initiative with the regional secretariats is the need to conceive transport in the framework of the various integration schemes which, at different levels and with different degrees of intensity, are being pursued in the developing areas. Transport is a key to economic integration, as has recently been stressed, and it is essential that organizational arrangements should reflect this guiding principle.

12. "Major role" does not of course mean "exclusive role"; excessive rigidity would be harmful as ideas for good projects can emerge in a number of ways. But it is hoped that from now on the secretariats of the regional commissions will be much more active than in the past in initiating and planning operational activities in the field of transport.

/13. The

13. The UNCTAD secretariat and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs should therefore be viewed, in respect of operational activities, mainly as pools of competence and knowledge within their respective spheres of responsibility, for the substantive support of projects, their analysis and evaluation, and as services for the collection and keeping up to date of information relating to transport, the undertaking of research necessary for substantive support and service, and the organization of seminars on a global basis. The division of responsibility between the UNCTAD secretariat and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs is therefore formulated in the paragraphs which follow.

14. In the matter of shipping and ports, the economic research and research into the impact of technology on the economics of operations, together with the substantive support and servicing of UNDP and the regular technical assistance programmes in these fields will be within the competence of UNCTAD.

15. All forms of land transport, together with inland waterways, coastwise and short-sea services, including port facilities to the extent they are associated with them, whether involved in the carriage of goods in domestic or in foreign trade, together with the substantive servicing of UNDP and regular technical assistance programmes in these fields will be within the scope of the responsibility of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

16. In so far as matters which involve the co-ordinated use of more than one mode of transport are concerned (intermodal) or any which involve the competence and discipline of more than one department or agency, the over-all co-ordination of activities will be within the competence of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. However, on specific aspects the Department would ensure, as is appropriate, adequate consultation with or delegation to the respective department or agency competent in those aspects.

17. Any department or agency will be free to initiate studies or research in the field of intermodal or "interdisciplinary" transport matters in which its own competence and sphere of influence predominate. In so doing, however, it should ensure that the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and any other affected agencies or departments are kept informed and that their co-operation is sought if considered appropriate.

18. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs will continue to be responsible for giving assistance to Governments on the formulation, development and implementation of their general transport policies. However, as in the case of the intermodal or "interdisciplinary" transport projects mentioned above, the Department will ensure, where appropriate, adequate consultation with or delegation to the respective department or agency competent on these specific aspects.

19. The terms "shipping" and "ports" as used in paragraph 14 shall be deemed to include all international and national shipping services (ocean and coastwise), except that where the development of coastwise shipping is or would be linked, or is competitive with alternative land transport, the Department will co-ordinate and consult with UNCTAD on the shipping aspect.

20. The term "ports" shall be considered as covering all aspects of port development, construction, administration and operations, except the coastal and harbour engineering aspects. Furthermore, UNCTAD will ensure adequate consultation with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs in matters which might affect landward transportation problems or inland waterways, coastwise and short-sea services.

21. Even such an attempt as has been made in the foregoing paragraphs does not permit an exhaustive or definitive solution. There will still be many "grey" areas, and therefore it should prove most useful if the UNCTAD secretariat and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs from time to time undertook to present their respective work programmes in a single and unified document which will assist in identifying gaps and further improving existing arrangements, and help the respective governing bodies to review the programmes.