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OPERATIONAL AND IMPLEMENTATION ASPECTS OF POPULATION POLICIES

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## INTRODUCTION

1. The process through which population policy is accepted at the political level and exerts an impact on the development process can be viewed as comprising three elements: formulation - or the articulation of overall national population and development goals; planning - which involves the elaboration of strategies and measures for incorporation of population into programme formulation and resource allocation activities; and policy implementation - a process comprising the translation of policy into action through programmes and projects.
2. The execution of this linkage process requires not only improved methodological techniques and research but the careful reconsideration of all the institutional and operational instruments and processes of the country. While the two are related, the operational elements differ in the sense that they include aspects concerned with supplies, logistics, data, research, training and manpower services, while the institutional aspects refer to organizational arrangements required for effective operations. The former issues will be appropriately dealt with in the respective case studies while this paper will be concerned with the institutional mechanisms for policy formulation, co-ordination, implementation and evaluation.
3. Among the variety of factors observed as probable obstacles to the successful execution of this integration and implementation process has been unresolved organizational issues.<sup>1/</sup>
4. The World Population Plan of Action in its recommendations for the promotion of policies suggest "that a unit dealing with population aspects be created and placed at a high level of the national administrative structure". It goes on to state that population policies should be "integrated into comprehensive social and economic plans and programmes..." (paras. 94 and 95).
5. However, in the attempts to establish the institutional base through which population policies can be integrated with other aspects of development planning, several organizational issues emerge, the answers to which have been found to depend on many factors including: (a) the existing institutional set-up for national planning; (b) amount of resources available to support these activities; (c) national objectives, priorities and underlying philosophies; (d) administrative structure of the government and the decision-making hierarchy; and (e) the nature of the demographic problems facing the country and the priority given to the solution of these problems.<sup>2/</sup>

6. Several papers have focussed on the institutional aspects mainly through the establishment of population units, and have provided valuable insight into national experiences.<sup>3/</sup> It is, however, not an easy task to generalise the experience to other settings. Given the wide variation in the structure of government from one country to the next, as well as widely differing social, economic, political and demographic conditions, it is to be expected that no one single organizational model would fit all countries.

7. Moreover, there is only a small literature that goes beyond the planning stage to work out the operational aspects of implementing the multisectoral dimensions of a population policy. In the long run, most questions on institutional arrangement issues have been resolved only after some amount of organizational experimentation and re-adjustment has taken place.<sup>4/</sup>

#### **ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK**

8. The formulation and implementation of population policies is now being fully recognised as a complex, interdisciplinary, multi-institutional responsibility. Although population concerns have always been incorporated into planning exercises (mostly implicitly) by sectors such as health or education, there is a need for an institutional structure to ensure more explicit, systematic and substantive considerations, and to increase efficiency in policy formulation and implementation.

9. This paper attempts to present a frame of reference for the institutional mechanisms required for population policy formulation and implementation based on experiences from other countries. In an effort to conceptualise the basic institutional structures, the establishment of an institutional set-up will be viewed as a series of stages in a progression from the basic requirements to more complex arrangements required for fine-tuning the instrument.

10. Thus the approach adopted is that, certain institutions are needed at different levels and stages of the policy formulation and implementation process. For example, with respect to policy formulation, the requisite structure should include the Population Unit; information/education/communications (IEC) Unit; Population Council and research and data processing centres. On the other hand, the implementation, evaluation and monitoring aspects would require, at a later stage, a more complex mechanism incorporating a Multisectoral Committee as well as committees at the community and grassroots level.

11. This paper attempts to review the basic institutions in existence as well as expand on the current model through the introduction of new mechanisms considered essential for strengthening the role of population units and achieving effective integration of population into the planning process. The major strengths and weaknesses in the operations of each agency as well as the operational links to the other components in the institutional system are also developed.

12. The basic structure adopted by most countries consists of a central Population Unit for co-ordination and a National Population Council for overall policy direction. The establishment of additional agencies for the conduct of research and data collection complete this organizational structure.

13. But the creation of a Population Unit and National Population Council is viewed as only the first stage in the development of an institutional system. In recognition of the WPPA call to encourage and support innovative measures in the formulation and implementation of population policies, this paper attempts to elaborate on a number of new institutional elements, currently being pioneered in some countries, and considered essential for the successful execution of the integration process.

14. For example, given the complex nature of the socio-economic-demographic planning process and the resultant need for the collaborative efforts of a very broad cross-section from the public and private sector agencies, the recommendation is put forward for the establishment of a multisectoral Population Policy Implementation Sub-Committee.

15. Moreover, in recognition of the fact that successful population policy formulation and implementation as well as its effective co-ordination and evaluation can only be accomplished through awareness creation of the population-development linkages, this paper argues that the establishment of an Information/Education/Communications (IEC) sub-committee represents an equally strong component in the operational strategies for both policy formulation and implementation.

16. Finally, in acknowledgement of the WPPA call to "involve communities more actively in the planning and implementation of population programmes" (paras 96-99), the paper discusses an operational mechanism for the translation of population policies into National plans and programmes at the community level: a community-based institutional arrangement at the grassroots level, responsible for the design and promotion of programmes tailored to the needs and priorities of the village, is encouraged.

17. Given our limited knowledge of experiences with formulation and, to a lesser extent, implementation of population policies, this paper cannot offer definitive recommendations, but only some suggestions to consider. Moreover, it is acknowledged that the model offers very little flexibility or direction for dealing with variations in different development planning systems. Thus, in the absence of more in-depth evaluative surveys and research, only time and impact will be able to demonstrate the most effective institutional network, under differing socio-economic and political conditions. But with some modification, the structural framework presented could be tailored to suit national situations.

#### INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES FOR POLICY FORMULATION

18. Considerable variation has been found in the institutional arrangements adopted by governments for policy formulation and implementation.

19. In recognition of this fact, a useful classification scheme was developed in an effort to identify broad categories of countries by their major characteristics, problems and corresponding needs and to suggest approaches for overcoming obstacles to successful policy formulation and implementation.<sup>5/</sup> Countries were classified according to three major types based on their analytical and planning capacity and the degree of population orientation to public policy.

20. The view that an institutional network plays a crucial role in ensuring policy formulation and implementation is illustrated in the UN Fifth Inquiry which reports the existence of four basic institutions for the majority of countries: (a) Special demographic survey unit (b) population unit in planning organizations (c) research institution (d) single agency responsible for co-ordination.

21. Among the general findings was a clearly marked relationship between the reported institutional arrangement and the government's view on population growth - stronger views were expressed where all four institutions were present.<sup>6/</sup> Furthermore, the data seemed to point to a marked positive association between the existence of a network of government institutions responsible for policy implementation and the likelihood that government will have formulated intervention and policy action. Again, the majority of intervention measures occurred where all four institutions were present in the country.<sup>7/</sup>

22. By now, most countries recognise that an institutional system should basically comprise three major components:

- (i) A population unit in the Planning Ministry;
- (ii) National Population Council;
- (iii) Research and data collection centres.

What is not clear is the mode of interaction between the population unit and sectoral ministries. Other questions concern how to operationalise the link between all three groups; how can individual policies be implemented, monitored and evaluated; how can population units achieve adjustments to sectoral programme where necessary to keep them in line with the policy goals; what is the *modus operandi* for sectoral co-ordination and implementation.

#### Population Units

23. Indications are that progress continues in the establishment of units responsible for taking into account population variables in development planning along the lines recommended by the World Population Plan of Action. The Fifth Population Inquiry reports that almost three quarters of the responding Governments had established such a unit.<sup>8/</sup>

24. Over the last five years, the UNFPA has supported a large number of projects aimed at the establishment and/or strengthening of a Population Unit for integrating population into development planning. A recent review of project experience<sup>9/</sup> has uncovered a number of weaknesses in project formulation and implementation that has been attributed to the observed unsatisfactory performance of population units.

25. Among some of the problems encountered in the institution-building projects has been the failure to clearly define the conceptual framework for integration of population into development planning activities prior to project implementation. This has often led to a shift in emphasis with less focus on population integration aspects. Moreover, the preparation of terms of reference for integration without the involvement of the planners has accounted, to some extent, for the inability of some population units to achieve institutional linkages with the various sectors.<sup>10/</sup>

26. Another factor accounting for the seemingly limited financial and administrative authority of the population units, their weak status within the planning system and the co-ordination problems has been the failure to determine, at the time of project formulation, basic issues concerned with organizational structure such as the population units' location, status, personnel and responsibilities.<sup>11/</sup>

27. Notwithstanding, it should be remembered that the population units were established in different countries under different socio-economic situations. Moreover, very little is known about the performance of population units under varying conditions.

28. Nevertheless, this paper argues that the failure of population units to accomplish their goals can be attributed to the fact that: (a) many aspects of the institutional framework were inadequately delineated at the time of the unit's creation, and (b) there is need to expand on the original approach adopted to include the establishment of additional institutional mechanisms to strengthen the population units' capability for policy co-ordination and implementation at the multisectoral and community levels.

#### Functions of Population Units

29. Essentially, there has been general consistency of opinion regarding the role of the Population Units. On the whole, the functions delineated for different countries incorporate a wide range of responsibilities which includes:<sup>12/</sup>

(a) provision of guidelines and technical assistance to sectoral ministries in project design and evaluation to enhance the integration process;

(b) preparation of inventories of demographic data and programmes used in the development planning process, considered essential for programme monitoring and evaluation;

(c) co-ordination of training of staff to improve technical capabilities as well as foster understanding of links;

(d) encouragement of the conduct of applied research to establish the Unit's credibility, utility and legitimacy;

(e) monitoring and evaluation of population-related programmes;

(f) dissemination of research findings, publications on population policies;

(g) preparation of inventories of existing research studies; development of research agenda; formulation of a strategy for co-ordination of research activities of various institutions;

(h) co-ordination of data collection in collaboration with statistical offices and universities;



(i) provision of recommendations to government to modify their programmes to keep them in line with the policy goals and to ensure that the data and information generated are appropriate for policy implementation;

(j) maintenance of a clear policy direction;

(k) encouragement of close professional interaction among members of diverse sectoral ministries.

30. Of course, in the long run, the specific functions selected by each country will depend on a number of factors such as the nature of the population problem, the perspectives of the governments and the resultant priorities given to solution of these problems, the availability of resources and the existing organizational and administrative structure.

31. Nevertheless, it is being argued that the weakness of most recommendations related to functions is the assumption of too much responsibility to the Unit. Probably the most controversial issue centres on the mechanisms for co-ordination, monitoring and evaluation which have not been well worked out. To what extent should population units conduct the integration of population in the planning process? How much of the co-ordination activities should their portfolio embrace?

32. Some argue that the responsibilities of the Population Units should be limited to a servicing function, that is, acting as a channel of communication between the demographic researcher and development planner.<sup>13/</sup> These servicing functions would comprise activities concerned with promoting awareness of links between demographic factors, resource allocation and other functions of development planning.<sup>14/</sup>

33. From another viewpoint, it is suggested that for true integration to be adequately achieved, the Unit would have to play a co-ordinating role as well. The latter would be specifically concerned with forging linkages with governments and non-government institutions and maintaining contact with the various sectors and levels of government to ensure consistency in approach to population-related matters.<sup>15/</sup>

34. In some instances, however, this co-ordinating role is often accorded to a separate body established for this purpose such as the National Population Commission. In this case, the Population Unit would function as its secretariat or facilitator of population-development planning.

35. In summary, however, whatever the political and development conditions of the country, the main functions of the Population Units should be: to create awareness of the need to integrate population factors into development planning through the dissemination of information; to co-ordinate the activities of sectors at the national as well as the grassroots level for implementation of the population policy; to encourage research and training activities which would facilitate the integration of population in development planning; to assist government to define population policy in relation to development planning.

#### Location of Population Unit

36. Based on the advice of the World Population Plan of Action, over seventy-five percent of all countries responding to the Fifth Inquiry have established a special population unit in a planning organization.<sup>16/</sup> The aim is to strengthen incorporation of population issues in the macro planning, centralise responsibility and draw on the technical competence of the ministry.

37. The above view is based on the assumption that the Planning Ministry has responsibility for development planning, collating sectoral plans, allocating resources as well as co-ordinating and monitoring implementation. In practice, however, planning structures vary according to a number of factors such as the degree of centralisation in the decision-making process, the amount of interdependence among sectors and the extent to which planners have direct control over resource allocation.

38. Thus the question under consideration refers to whether all planning ministries have the status and strength assumed. Would it not be more appropriate to fit in with the existing structures of responsibility for population matters and seek to strengthen these institutions rather than try to superimpose new structures which could cause friction and create interministerial rivalries?

39. Differing views exist concerning the location of the Unit which is largely determined by the existing institutional structure. In some countries responsibility for population matters rest with the ministry of Labour and Manpower or the Family Planning Board (although it is advised that the Population Unit be kept organizationally separate from the family planning programme to dispel the notion of its existence as another sectoral unit). In other countries, the central statistical office is considered an appropriate location since it is involved in the collection and analysis of population data. On the other hand, it is often argued that sectoral planners and statisticians do not have sufficient knowledge of or interest in macro-economic planning.

40. An alternative is the location of the Unit as a separate body in the Secretariat of the National Population Commission, since the Unit's chief role is to provide the Commission with the necessary inputs for decision-making concerning population policy formulation and implementation. The establishment of an autonomous entity placed directly under the Prime Minister's Office represents another view. This placement could strengthen the authority of the Unit and enhance the co-ordination functions. For these arrangements to be effective, however, there would be need for a strong technical staff since the location does not allow the Unit to benefit from the services of staff in other ministries. Moreover, in some cases, special legislation might have to be passed which could delay proper implementation.<sup>17/</sup>

41. Wherever the location of the Unit, there will exist both advantages and disadvantages which are mainly related to the functions of each institution and the contribution to the Unit's activities.

#### Status of Population Unit

42. The degree to which the Population Unit can exert an influence on the planning process is largely determined by its status or level within the organizational structure.

43. Moreover, the determination of the scope and degree of responsibility of these Units requires support from the highest decision-making level if the Unit is to achieve the legitimation needed for restructuring the institutional system.

44. In the initial stages, Population Units have experienced problems concerning the attainment of full legal and administrative authority as well as acceptance as being the institutional organ of the government's bureaucratic machinery for co-ordinating population integration matters.

45. They are often not in a strong position to influence sectoral decisions possibly because they are not responsible for control over budgetary resources. Thus their ability to influence sectoral decisions depends on the extent to which their analysis and advice are persuasive with respect to the need for sectoral planners to adjust their programmes or select alternative investment patterns. Unfortunately, the present state of the art in methodological research does not yet allow them the ability to provide convincing analytical evidence of population-development linkages.

46. Another constraint is related to the fact that by setting up a new institution, the Unit runs the danger of being perceived as a separate planning sector resulting in a widening of the already existing gap.

47. Competition of population matters with other issues for the planners' priorities has also contributed to the delays in the integration and implementation process. Among the sources of obstacles has been a general inertia in planning which has always placed emphasis on economic factors. In this context, shortage of resources available for population intervention programmes represents another form of resistance. Equally important is the short time span for development planning which would always result in economic programmes being given higher priority than population programmes which have longer term impacts.

#### Sectoral and Regional Co-ordination

48. The policies that comprise the national population policy have implications for the involvement of a large number of government ministries and highlight specific activities that would be required of certain sectors such as Health, Employment, Education, Infrastructural development and Family Planning. One of the functions of the Population Unit, as stated above, is the co-ordination of sectoral programmes for integration of population into the planning process.

49. Integration, in this sense, can be viewed as a reciprocal process between the Population Unit and the agencies responsible for planning at the national, state and sectoral levels. It is based on co-ordination and should aim at reassuring the agencies concerned that in participating in the process they are helping each other to reach their own sectoral goals as well as achieving the objective of the national development plan.<sup>18/</sup>

50. Two views have been put forward with respect to the structure to be adopted by Population Units for co-ordination of sectoral activities. The first is that the Units contain experts working in each sectoral field, thus creating an integrated socio-economic-demographic planning section. An alternative arrangement is that Units be established at the central levels of all the respective ministries to facilitate implementation of the components of the policy. This suggestion depicts a structure in which a central population Unit operates within a network of units in sectoral ministries and agencies.<sup>19/</sup> A third approach has been the organization of informal joint working groups on an ad hoc basis found useful for the promotion of co-ordination.<sup>20/</sup>

51. In all the above situations certain drawbacks exist in the form of budget constraints, lack of professionally trained staff and the low level of commitment due to the fact that ministries have their own work priorities.

52. Whatever the views, the formulation of sectoral population-related policies requires a certain amount of preparatory work in order to ensure that the policies are firmly based in the realities of the sectoral plans and programmes.

53. If co-ordination and successful implementation of the policy is desired, it is essential that the formulation of these sectoral policies be conducted in conjunction with high level representatives of the institutions responsible for developing and implementing the plans and programmes within each sector.

54. By elaborating and discussing guidelines with technicians of both public and private institutions linked with population issues, the basis of participation is also widened and a greater awareness of the need for population policy formulation is created.

55. At the regional level, disaggregation of macro-economic planning to the administrative regions is considered necessary, especially if variations exist in social, economic and demographic characteristics. In this case, the central Population Unit could function as a facilitator for implementation on the regional level where a number of smaller Units would be organised in regional planning offices.

56. Whether all units are established at the same time or on a gradual basis would again depend on availability of staff and budget constraints. However, co-ordination at regional levels will require that the Central Unit tailor its support to the degree of advancement of the planning process in each state. The Unit will also need to be flexible enough to respond to the differing levels of sensitivity of state authorities in their perception of population problems as well as their willingness to overcome such problems through co-ordinated actions in their socio-economic programmes.<sup>21/</sup>

#### National Population Council

57. The establishment of a National Population Council, comprising high level policy-makers, usually at Cabinet level, has been adopted by most countries for policy implementation.<sup>22/</sup> The Council usually functions as an advisory board to the Prime Minister on all population matters and is responsible for overall policy co-ordination, monitoring and evaluation.

58. The presence of this Council with participation from high level officials serves to enhance the importance of the role of population in the development process and encourages government interest in resolving population problems as a part of development strategy. The existence of such a Council could also assist in encouraging the involvement of various segments of the population in programme formulation and implementation, the success of which depends on this kind of participation.

59. The catalytic role of a single co-ordination agency such as this, for policy action and implementation, is well illustrated in the report of the Fifth Inquiry where, among the governments reporting intervention measures, the majority had established a single agency responsible for co-ordination.<sup>23/</sup>

#### Research and Data Collection

60. In order to monitor and evaluate the functioning of policies, select policy options, make recommendations on budget allocations and participate in the policy and programme formulation within all relevant sections of the decision-making system, the Population Unit and National Population Council require tools, data and information on population-development relationships presented in a format that is practical and understandable.

61. Thus the building of a central store of data and the conduct of policy-relevant research constitute essential components of the institutional set-up.

62. The degree to which demographic data and research output are efficiently utilised in policy formulation and implementation is largely determined by the structure of the institutional set-up as well as the responsibilities assigned to the units of these institutions.<sup>24/</sup> Moreover, it has also been argued that the extent to which demographic data is utilised can also depend on the character of the political and bureaucratic systems of the country.<sup>25/</sup>

63. The United Nations Fifth Inquiry reports that more than half of the countries surveyed had a specific institution for carrying out research on population-development relationships as well as a special demographic survey unit. It was also found that there tended to be a greater predominance of institutions with capabilities for gathering data than for analysis or utilising data in population policy formulation and implementation. The implication is that the capability for utilising data represents a far greater unmet need than that for data production.<sup>26/</sup>

64. In an effort to improve the institutional base for research, three types of institutions have been given priority: (a) the Population Unit and/or other government agency such as the Ministry of Planning (b) Statistical offices and (c) autonomous research organization such as the university.

65. Government agencies are subject to a number of constraints which may impede their effective conduct of the needed research. In addition to lack of adequately trained staff, there is the view that government planners may not be afforded the flexibility or

intellectual scope. On the other hand, it has sometimes been argued that a government institution has the advantage in that the research findings may be more responsive to the information needs of policy makers and is thus likely to exert a greater and more immediate impact on policy. Thus government research units are considered well suited to conduct both descriptive and evaluative studies to assess programme impact.<sup>27/</sup>

66. The Population Unit however, is not usually viewed as an appropriate venue for conducting research activities. In addition to being saturated with too many other co-ordination functions, it is argued that the Unit should be involved mainly with the research management aspects, analysis of policy implications of research, and identification of new areas of relevant research.<sup>28/</sup>

67. Statistical offices, responsible for collection and, in some cases, analysis of data, do not usually have the human resources or budget for adequate data analysis. Moreover, the rivalries that sometimes exist between the data collectors, who tend to exercise sole rights on the data, and the Planning Ministries, constitute one of the causes of under-utilisation of information.

68. This stalemate can often be circumvented through the sub-contracting of specific studies to national research agencies, such as universities, to undertake analyses. The chief advantage of the latter is the existence of a research infrastructure. Moreover, their independence gives them greater freedom and the detachment to assess programme impact in as critical a manner as required.<sup>29/</sup> Universities are also well suited to conducting long-term causal type of studies essential for increasing knowledge on population-development relationships.<sup>30/</sup>

69. On the other hand, academicians have often been criticised for their disinterest and lack of involvement in government planning and programming which produces research that lacks policy relevance. This paucity of operationally useful research findings is also attributed to the failure of planners to identify their policy priorities and needs to the research community.

70. The inadequate communication between researchers and planners brings into focus the critical role of the Population Unit to strengthen its liaison with the statistical office for data collection and with the research agency for its analysis. But equally important is the support function to encourage institutional collaboration to ensure focus on areas of specific policy significance.

## Conclusion

71. It has often been argued that the population units have not been performing effectively and are therefore of limited use in the integration of population in the planning process. While this view cannot be entirely endorsed, it should be recognized that population units are desirable but not sufficient or necessary institutional mechanisms, given the fact that there exist countries such as India, in which population policies are being implemented in the absence of such a Special Unit.

72. The above discussions point to the fact that in the early stages of the establishment of population units, the implementation of population policies in the planning process was not well conceived. Moreover, it is now being recognized that a new approach, incorporating a more comprehensive institutional structure is required to enable the population units to function more effectively in the population-development planning integration process at both the multisectoral and community levels.

73. The previous establishment of population units in different countries under differing socio-economic situations should therefore be viewed as the introductory stage to the wider organizational set-up needed for the improved performance of these units.

74. The functions ultimately adopted by these units should, however, be adjusted according to the countries' needs and should be constantly evaluated in view of the changing conditions of the countries.

## INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

75. The successful formulation and implementation of the policy requires high-level political support as well as a strengthening of interaction between statisticians, planners and policy-makers. Perhaps one of the most effective mechanisms for achieving this is the promotion of an understanding of the relationships between the socio-economic processes and population factors. Thus, in addition to research and data collection, high priority should be given to 'population-exposure' programmes and dissemination activities as components of the operational aspects of a population policy.<sup>31/</sup>

76. The most widely used organ for information dissemination among countries has been the publication of technical journals, bulletins, and newsletters containing reports on research findings, new methodologies as well as information on meetings and other country experiences.



77. But the circulation of journals, bulletins or reports does not guarantee the reader's interest or comprehension. This is more so in light of the normally weak linkages and inadequate communication/information network existing among government agencies.

78. More active forms of presentation of research results and their policy implications have been suggested in order to encourage informed co-operation in the process of policy formulation and implementation. For example, in the case of high-level officials and those responsible for budget allocation, the presentation of research results in person could constitute a more effective strategy.<sup>32/</sup> The organization of conferences and workshops represents another mechanism for the communication of information.<sup>33/</sup> Perhaps the most far-reaching strategy, however, would be dissemination of information through mass media or private interest groups.

79. On the other hand, we often overlook the fact that successful policy formulation and implementation requires the informed input, support and understanding not only of government and non-government organizations but also of the general public as well. It is thus important that the goals and strategies of the population policy as well as their links to the socio-economic processes be understood on as wide a basis as possible.

80. In view of this essential role of information dissemination and awareness creation for successful policy formulation and implementation, the recommendation is being repeated for the development of a system for information, education and communication (IEC), comparable to that developed for the family planning programmes, which would be oriented to the support of population and development activities.<sup>34/</sup> Although this IEC system, which has not yet been elaborated in operational terms, could be viewed as a part of the national management information system, having a separate institutional arrangement set up for its operations.

81. This is in keeping with the WPPA recommendation that governments should continue to explore innovative measures for spreading awareness of demographic factors and for fostering the active involvement and participation of the public in population policies and programmes (paras. 81-93). For guidelines on the establishment of an IEC Committee, see Appendix I.

#### PROGRAMMATIC IMPLICATION FOR POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

82. Once the policy has been formulated, the next critical function involves linking articulated statements of national policies and goals to actual investment decisions which result in operational development programmes and projects.

83. In this context, an important question concerns how well equipped are the above institutions to carry out policy implementation. How well organised are the population units or councils for undertaking policy interventions.

84. These concerns can be illustrated with reference to the programmatic implications of specific policies. For example, in the case of a sectoral policy, such as the agriculture sector and its influence on the household decision-making process, available evidence suggests that attitudes and behavior supportive of a small family size norm are more likely to exist outside the rural sector or where this sector is strongly influenced by socio-economic changes. Thus the success of governmental efforts to influence the household decision-making process would depend in part on the extent and depth of their public sector programmes for the rural economy.<sup>35/</sup> The latter would usually take the form of land and commodity taxes, the provision of services in the form of roads, public health, education and price subsidies or control. The effective implementation of these public sector measures could help government gain leverage for policy to affect the micro-economic-demographic decision-making process.<sup>36/</sup>

85. Indeed the institutional set-up for implementing this programme would involve the participation of all departments of the agricultural ministry, and would require linkages with the other ministries responsible for provision of social services. However, it is not envisaged that the Population Unit or National Population Council would have the political leverage or administrative capacity to co-ordinate the implementation of such activities which should be left under the portfolio of the sectoral ministries responsible.

86. Similar institutional arrangements would be required for the implementation of policies concerned with the spatial distribution of population. Among the policy instruments proposed for affecting the spatial distribution of the population would be, for example, rural policy programmes for modification of rural land tenancy schemes through agrarian reform; increase of credit to agriculture; assistance for improvement of labour absorption in rural areas; reduction of migration from the rural sector and development of sub-urban areas to stem the flow of migration to large cities.

87. The above policies would require the co-ordination of activities of at least four Ministries: Agriculture, Town Planning, Labour, Employment and Infrastructure. In addition, the ministries responsible for the improvement of social services in rural areas (such as Health and Education) would have to co-operate in the implementation process.

88. In like manner, consideration would have to be given to the institutional set-up best suited to translate population growth policies (to some extent, synonymous of a policy to decrease fertility) into special national programmes. Thus, for example, there would be need to design instruments to change large family size norms and all the attendant influences. Programmes would include (i) a legal instrument for the creation of family welfare (ii) taxing policy (iii) personal savings policy (iv) policies concerning social security (v) employment (vi) education (of adolescents as well as adult literacy programmes) (vii) housing (viii) female labour force participation (ix) infant mortality and health of parents (x) the promotion of research on the inter-relationship between population and socio-economic variables.

89. The latter instruments would involve the co-operation of at least nine ministries, including, of course, at the micro-level, the Family Planning Programme in conjunction with the Ministry of Health. Furthermore, the specific mechanisms through which the programmes of these ministries are interrelated must be made explicit and developed in collaboration with the agencies concerned.

90. The implication therefore, is that there is an urgent need to expand the existing institutional system to incorporate a multisectoral operational mechanism for policy and programme implementation which involves the technical substance of development planning within sectors and with respect to overall investments for national development.

91. The next section attempts to delineate such a system for continued interagency and interdisciplinary programming of all population activities.

#### MULTISECTORAL SUB-COMMITTEE FOR POPULATION POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

92. Given the broad perspective of population planning resulting from the complex nature of socio-economic-demographic interrelations, it is clear that the implementation of the national population policy requires the collaborative efforts of policy-makers from a very broad cross-section of public and private sector organizations responsible for population-related programmes.

93. As earlier discussed, what is now needed is the translation of the national population policy strategies into specific policies, programmes and projects for which individual organizations are responsible.

94. However, the process of implementation is not a straight-forward one due to the differing degrees of involvement of various population related organizations. Thus policy or programme issues related to population can fall into different categories resulting in a complex situation of institutional interaction. For example, the first set of institutional relations concern factors directly associated with population policies, such as programmes related to the immediate determinants of fertility. In this case, family planning programmes and other aspects concerned with the implementation, evaluation and delivery of services would represent this direct level of interaction.

95. On another level would be a second set of policy issues not directly connected with family planning but which have an intimate bearing. These represent, for example, health programmes for reducing infant mortality, pre-natal and postnatal care, improving the status of women, improving literacy and education levels, improving the nutritional status of target groups and employment creation. Hence, although the policy initiative would come from various ministries, the importance of introducing population components into them needs to be made very clear.

96. The third level relates to a wider set of policies which, though not directly related with population policies, could have important consequences for them. These include integrated rural development programmes; subsidies on food items and other social services; increasing incomes.<sup>37/</sup>

97. Concern with the implementation of a population policy usually has a lagged effect after the formulation process is completed. For those countries who were early adoptors, it took the government many years to realise that the implementation of a population policy required an institutional structure far more complex than the establishment of a centralised Population Unit to serve as Executive Secretariat to the National Population Commission.

98. Therefore, the creation of a Population Unit and National Council can be considered as only the first stage in the development of an institutional arrangement for population policy implementation. Given the diverse sectoral activities involved, further attempts are required to incorporate the active participation of sectoral ministries through the establishment of a Population Policy Implementation Committee - an intersectoral committee which can provide the forum where matters can be discussed and joint decisions taken on programme activity.

99. The latter would also have the advantage of ensuring programme consistency and effective monitoring and evaluation. Moreover, the inputs required for sectoral programming - exchange of ideas, skills and collaborative work - can be properly met through such an arrangement. This committee would constitute the nucleus of a larger body responsible for the operational aspects of the implementation process.

#### Composition

100. The Population Policy Implementation Committee should be a multisectoral committee comprising members from most of the agencies responsible for population-related programmes. Included in this interdisciplinary network would be the Ministries of Education, Youth and Community Development, Industry and Commerce, Health, Social Security, Agriculture, Construction, Infrastructure, Labour, Town Planning, as well as representatives from the autonomous research institutions (universities), Trade Union centres, Family Planning Board and the Private Sector Organisation. Members should be senior level technicians responsible for executing sectoral programming (in comparison to the advisory role of the high level officials participating on the National Population Council).

#### Frame of Reference

101. In collaboration with the Population Unit and under the direction of the National Population Council, the Population Policy Implementation Committee will be responsible for integration of population in the planning process. In this role, the Committee will function as the 'implementation arm' for the population policy.<sup>38/</sup>

102. The committee will also function as a mechanism for assisting the Population Unit in monitoring programme implementation through feedback of information on programme experience and assessment of programme impact.

103. The dissemination of information, research findings to other staff members and superiors to ensure an informed programme formulation process constitutes another essential function. Provision of statistical data generated within the Ministries would be an additional responsibility.

104. In order to determine that research findings have programmatic significance and can be used as guidelines for action by policy-makers, an additional function of the Committee would be to participate in the process of identifying the fundamental research questions as well as assessing and interpreting research findings for incorporation in the decision-making process.

105. Given the fact that planners are primarily concerned with resource allocation, another important function of the Committee would be to influence resource allocation within the public and private sectors and ensure that relative weight be given to population influencing programmes in the public investment plan.

106. One of the first tasks of the Population Policy Co-ordination Committee should be to build a central information bank on all population-related programmes existing in the country. This is necessary for the purpose of re-assessing policy targets and priorities as well as examining progress made towards achieving the objectives of the population policy. This information is also needed for recommending options on budget allocations and as a barometer for assessing the degree of integration of national and local programmes. Hence, a Population Policy Implementation Plan Survey, collecting information on all population-related programmes and their demographic-socio-economic implications, should be conducted.<sup>39/</sup>

107. The creation of a new institutional system may probably require a long period of consideration and adjustments due to differences in interest and responsibility among the various government institutions. In view of this, one of the initial strategies could be to concentrate on establishing an informal system of co-ordination and collaboration between the Population Unit and other public and private sector institutions concerned. On the other hand, such a system can only work where officials are convinced of the need to establish links.<sup>40/</sup>

#### POLICY CO-ORDINATION AT COMMUNITY LEVEL

108. The strengths and weaknesses of some policy programmes can often be explained in terms of the larger institutional framework within which they operate. Moreover, the interface between public programmes and individual behaviour has rarely been given sufficient attention.<sup>41/</sup>

109. An important aspect of the formulation and implementation process often forgotten in the maze of institutional structures is the target population - the individuals for whom the policies are being formulated.

110. It is becoming increasingly clear that successful formulation and implementation requires the active participation of not only government or non-government organizations but also of the wider community.

111. Indeed, indications are that there is need to decentralise the implementation of population policies even further and to operationalise the integration process at the local level. This requires the establishment of a grassroots organization to implement the population policies at the community level for which the Population Unit or National Population Council do not have the administrative capacity.<sup>42/</sup>

112. This would be in keeping with the WPPA recommendation that "to be effective and successful, population programmes and development activities should be responsive to local values and needs, and those directly affected should be involved in the decision-making process at all levels" (rec.12).

113. Thus, for example, fertility policy goals aimed at reducing population growth, can be linked to development programmes through the use of community-based development projects with the objective of manipulating socio-economic activities at the village level. Hence, these projects could be concerned with social services (example, schools, health facilities), agriculture extension services (irrigation, provision of seeds), physical infrastructure such as roads. This would have the effect of mobilising local resources and community participation with the goal of raising the development level of the community, thus providing incentives for fertility reduction.

114. The programmes such as health, education, women's employment, would be designed with the objective of improving the socio-economic conditions and adjusting other socio-cultural characteristics considered as deterrants to population growth and balanced distribution. The latter constitute examples of the population integration process at the micro-level and at the lowest administrative level.

115. In order to operationalise this approach, the institutional set-up would have to be expanded to incorporate a structure co-ordinated at three levels: the national or central level; regional or state level and community-based village councils or local level, each with its own specific responsibility.<sup>43/</sup>

116. The community-based system would comprise village councils or advisory committees incorporating executives, selected members and other national leaders. One of the main functions of these councils would be to advise on and promote small scale projects designed according to the needs and priorities of the village which would then be reviewed and approved at both the regional and central levels.<sup>44/</sup>

117. The empowering of responsibility to local authorities for programme formulation, implementation and resource mobilisation may require an Act from Parliament. In the case of Nepal, a Decentralisation Act is being recommended to make the incorporation of population components in all local and district level planning imperative and to enforce that twenty percent of the development grant be spent on population-related programmes.<sup>45/</sup>

#### PERSONNEL REQUIREMENTS FOR FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

118. The availability of skilled personnel constitutes an important ingredient for successful policy formulation and implementation. Indeed, shortages of qualified persons has been cited as one of the major obstacles for many countries.<sup>46/</sup>

119. The actors involved in policy formulation and implementation can be grouped into three broad categories. The first consists of high level officials (policy-makers, ministers and parliamentarians). The second would comprise the professionals, technicians and academics while the third group is composed of other middle-level officials - the support staff to the planning and sectoral Units.<sup>47/</sup>

120. With regard to high-level officials, no specific skill should be required except awareness of the interrelations between population dynamics and the process of socio-economic development as well as exposure to the issues involved in the integration process.<sup>48/</sup> The second group constitutes the technicians responsible for executing the integration process. Recommendations are that members of this group should possess advanced level training in economics, development planning and demography with support skills such as statistics and computer training.<sup>49/</sup> With respect to the middle level officials, sufficient knowledge (of a diploma level) is required on population and development theories and interrelations.

121. It is suggested that the Population Unit should be staffed by experts from a wide variety of social science disciplines in order to manage the multi-sectoral nature of the policy formulation and integration process.

122. An important corollary, however, is the need to design a system to encourage professional motivation and provide a stimulus to continue working in the Planning Units which are continually experiencing difficulties in retaining their professional staff.



123. This situation also holds implications for training as well as other personnel management aspects which require that much attention be paid to training needs of staff, adequate remunerations and the promotion of an appropriate range of career opportunities.<sup>50/</sup> In addition, in cases where some countries experience high emigration of professionals, policies would have to be put in place to attract as well as retain staff.<sup>51/</sup> Where joint activities between the Population Unit and other institutions are required, some National Population Councils have considered the payment of honoraria to the implementors.

#### DEGREE OF CENTRALISATION

124. The above institutional components have often been regrouped along a continuum according to the degree of centralisation of the network.

125. On one end of the continuum exists the centralised system in which the Population Unit in the Planning Ministry functions as the 'center of gravity' and carries out most activities - research, policy creation, evaluation and planning, though some research is commissioned to other private agencies.<sup>52/</sup> This pattern is usually found in countries with strong family planning Boards which often play a dominant secondary role and may operate as Secretariat. The line of authority usually runs from the Population Unit to a higher level Co-ordination Committee where information is sent for review before the submission of recommendations to Cabinet.

126. The main advantage of this system is that the greater degree of centralisation may strengthen authority, facilitate the Unit's access to funds and enhance its authority over financial allocation. On the other hand, problems of co-ordination especially with respect to eliciting the co-operation from sectoral ministries represent a major dysfunction.<sup>53/</sup>

127. At the other end of the scale is the decentralised pattern which involves the utilisation of several existing structures resulting in a balance of relative strength and influence.<sup>54/</sup> This pluralistic approach helps to speed up the institution building process. Nevertheless, it may also run into co-ordination problems due to lack of clear division of authority. The complexity may also hinder access to funds and reduce authority for allocation of resources to population programmes.<sup>55/</sup>

128. At the intermediate level stands the system in which the Population Unit in the Planning Ministry represents the central agency with basic responsibility for co-ordination, evaluation and monitoring. This Unit works through an implementing sub-committee comprising members drawn from other sectors. Separate institutions are established for research, data collection and training. Finally, all agencies are given legal status by a high-level interministerial or executive committee which evaluates plans and makes recommendations to Cabinet.<sup>56/</sup>

129. A committee such as this gives the system a quality of pluralism as it draws from a wide source of membership yet retains strong co-ordination ability. This pattern also allows for the central Population Unit to co-ordinate and consolidate information from other sectors for translation into coherent planning and programmes.

### CONCLUSION

130. This paper has attempted to bring together a variety of suggestions, largely based on the experiences of other countries, for establishing institutional mechanisms for population policy formulation and implementation. After briefly considering the programmatic implications of the socio-economic-demographic interrelations contained in population policies, this study reviewed the basic foundation of the institutional set-up for population policy formulation, that is, the Population Unit, National Population Council, Research and Data Collection Centres. The strengths and weaknesses in the functions of each agency as well as the operational links to the other components in the institutional network were presented. Then, in light of the multi-dimensional aspect of population-policy formulation and implementation, the paper considered the need for a multisectoral institutional mechanism and a separate section was devoted to recommendations for the establishment of a multisectoral Population Policy Implementation Sub-committee.

131. In recognition of the importance of information dissemination and awareness creation for successful policy formulation and implementation, the study proposed building into the institutional network an Information, Education, Communication (IEC) sub-committee. The terms of reference and operational framework for each of these institutions were detailed. The paper concluded with a discussion on the quality of staff requirements, and a classification of institutional structures by patterns of centralisation.

132. It is not expected that this comprehensive structure be put in place at the beginning of the policy formulation exercise. In fact, it is often advised that the process of institution building be undertaken in a number of phases. Given the staff constraints, lack of widespread commitment to population as a priority concern among sectoral ministries and the initial problems of co-ordination, the establishment of the Population Policy Implementation sub-committee comprising sectoral members responsible for programme implementation should be considered an intermediate term goal. However, it is strongly advised that the establishment of the IEC sub-committee be pursued vigorously as a priority on the Population Unit's initial work programme.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE DIRECTION  
IN INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE

133. There is need for an in-depth evaluation of the institutional arrangements, especially the co-ordination role of the population unit, under varying conditions, before further assistance is provided for establishment of population units in other countries.

134. International agencies should continue with the provision of assistance to training, research and dissemination activities with the aim of accelerating the population-development integration process.

135. Effective co-ordination and implementation requires that research activities place greater emphasis on the modus operandi for translating population policies into national programmes and projects. Donor agencies should also consider increasing the number of projects concerned with the implementation aspects of population and development policies at both the sectoral and community levels.

136. More studies are needed on the organizational determinants of programme success or failure. Moreover, assistance should be provided for analyses of the kinds of institutional networks best suited to various socio-economic-political settings as well as different policy thrusts. In this regard, a far more detailed survey on the institutional aspects of implementation and country experiences would serve to improve knowledge on the most appropriate institutional mix.

137. In view of the essential role of information, dissemination and awareness creation for successful policy formulation and implementation, the international community should consider providing assistance to countries in the design and implementation of more effective communication strategies. In this respect, consideration should be given to the provision of assistance for the setting up of an information, education and communication system (IEC) as a separate institutional component of the formulation and implementation organizational structure for population policy.

138. Following on the WPPA recommendations, consideration needs to be given to more innovative mechanisms for strengthening the co-ordination function of population policy implementation. In this respect, assistance should be provided for the organization of population policy implementation seminars aimed at establishing a multisectoral interdisciplinary population policy implementation sub-committee. Technical assistance could be provided for the development of background documents, training materials, operational frameworks, and general guidelines for the legal institutionalisation of this committee.

139. Successful monitoring, evaluation as well as co-ordination of population policies also requires the existence of a central information bank on all population-related programmes existing in the country. Moreover, some sort of national 'blue print' for multisectoral action - a 'Population Policy, Implementation Plan' - is an essential prerequisite for successful policy implementation. International agencies should therefore consider providing assistance to the formulation of a Population Policy Implementation Plan. In addition, technical guidelines should be provided for the conduct of a population policy implementation plan survey. Assistance would also be needed in the development of methodologies for interpretation and analysis of this implementation plan survey data as well as its utilisation for programme monitoring and evaluation. This is in keeping with the WPPA recommendation that the international community should give particular emphasis to "implementation of monitoring and evaluation systems in order to ascertain the effectiveness and impact of programmes and their continued responsiveness to community needs." (paras. 100-106).

NOTES

1/ UNITED NATIONS, Review and Appraisal of the World Population Plan of Action 1984 Report. New York, 1986. (ST/ESA/SER.A/99). p. 22.

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3/ The literature in this category is far too large to cite here. However, interested readers should especially review: Horlacher et. al. op. cit., Bilborrow, R.E. "The Integration of Population in Development Planning: Some Methodological Issues and Suggestions," IUSSP International Population Conference, Florence, 1985. See also UNFPA: "Report of the UNFPA Expert Group Meeting on Population and Development, New York, 22-24 January 1985

4/ United Nations, Review and Appraisal of the World Population Plan of Action, op. cit., p.23

5/ Farooq, Ghazi, "Needs for the Approaches to Integrated Population, Human Resources and Development Planning: The ILO Experience" in ILO Workshop on Approaches and Methodologies for Population, Human Resources and Development Planning, Geneva, 20-24 May 1985

6/ Heisel Donald, "Institutional Arrangements and the Use of Demographic knowledge in the Formulation of Population Policies," IUSSP International Population Conference, Florence, 1985.

7/ Ibid., p. 335

8/ Ibid., p. 339

9/ For a review of UNFPA assistance to institution building projects see Siddiqui, Habib R., "Population and Development Planning: A Review of UNFPA Experience," (UNFPA, mimeo, New York 1985).

10/ Ibid.

11/ UNFPA Report of Expert Group Meeting 1985, op. cit., p.18

12/ For a detailed review of functions see Horlacher et. al. (1981) op. cit. Bilborrow (1985) op. cit., and Farooq (1985) op. cit.

13/ UNFPA (1985) op. cit., p. 21

14/ Pante, Jr. Filologo, "Integration of Population and Development Planning in the Philippines," prepared for the UNFPA Expert Group Meeting on Population and Development Planning, mimeo, New York, 22-24 January 1985.

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16/ Heisel op. cit., p. 334

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18/ United Nations Fund for Population Activities, "A summary of the Report on the Evaluation of Mex/79/P04 Integration of Population Policy with Development Plans and Programmes," July 1984.

19/ UNFPA Report (1985) op. cit., p. 20

20/ International Labour Office Report of the Informal Inter-Agency Expert Group Meeting on Methodologies for Integrated Development Planning, Geneva, 21-24 May 1984 (ILO, Geneva) 1984.

21/ United Nations Fund for Population Activities (1984) op. cit.

22/ World Population Trends and Policies, 1983 Monitoring Report, Vol. II: Population Policies (United Nations no. 84 XIII.11)

23/ Ibid.

24/ McIntosh, C.A., and Finkle, J.L., "Demographic Rationalism and Political System," IUSSP International Population Conference, Florence, 1985.

25/ Ibid

26/ Heisel, op. cit., p. 335

27/ Miro, Carmen and Potter, Joseph, 1980. "Population Policy: Research Priorities in Developing World", Frances Pinter Ltd, London. p. 171.

28/ UNFPA Report (1985) op. cit., p. 35

29/ Miro and Potter (1980) op. cit., p. 171

30/ Ibid., p. 172

- 31/ UNFPA Report (1985) op. cit., p. 46
- 32/ Bilsborrow (1985) op. cit., p. 359
- 33/ Siddiqui (1985) op. cit.
- 34/ UNFPA Report (1985) op. cit., p. 47
- 35/ For a discussion on the programmatic implications for agricultural change see Robinson, W. "Demographic Issues in Development Planning in Asia, with special reference to Agricultural Change." in Population Policy and Development Planning Units in Asia. The Population Council, 1980.
- 36/ Ibid.
- 37/ World Bank (1984) op. cit.
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- 40/ For a discussion on the workability of these informal committees see UNFPA Summary Report July 1984. op. cit.
- 41/ McIntosh and Finkle (1985) op. cit.
- 42/ For examples of the operations of these grassroot organizations see Hussien Abdel-Aziz Sayed, "Integration of Population and Development Planning in Egypt," and Bedh Prakash Upreti "Integration of Population and Development Planning in Nepal." Prepared for UNFPA Expert Group meeting on Population and Development Planning, 22-24 January 1985.
- 43/ Ibid.
- 44/ Ibid.
- 45/ Ibid.
- 46/ United Nations (1986) op. cit.
- 47/ RAO, Sethuramiah, L. N., "UNFPA and Training in Population and Development (UNFPA, mimeo, New York) 1985. For an excellent discussion on levels and types of training.

48/ Ibid.

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50/ RAO (1985) op. cit.

51/ Bilsborrow (1985) op. cit.

52/ For more information on types of patterns see Moore, R., and Hong, S., "Organisational Models for Population Policy Systems" in Population and Development Planning Units in Asia, Population Council, 1980.

53/ Also see Horlacher et. al. op. cit., p. 212

54/ Moore and Hong, op. cit.

55/ Horlacher et. al., op. cit.

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57/ See Planning Institute of Jamaica "Terms of Reference of the Information, Education, Communication Sub-Committee of the Population Policy Co-ordinating Committee." Jamaica. 1986.

58/ Ibid.

59/ Ibid.



### Appendix I

#### **Guidelines for Establishment of Information, Education, Communication (IEC) Sub-Committee**

1. The composition of the IEC Sub-committee differs from that of the other institutional components in that, in contrast to the multisectoral emphasis, it aims at harnessing the efforts of the various communications agents concerned with population-related issues for the purpose of strengthening the programmatic thrust, tailoring the themes to population policy in development planning and avoiding duplication of efforts or contradiction in programme messages.

2. The institution responsible for information, education and communication would function as a sub-committee directly under the aegis of the National Population Council with an IEC expert from the Population Unit performing the role of Secretariat. This organizational structure should facilitate the resolution of any problems with respect to deadlocks that may arise among the participating agencies especially as a result of the sensitive nature of certain messages.<sup>57/</sup>

3. The sub-committee should comprise representatives from the government agencies containing units responsible for the conduct of population information and education activities such as Ministries of Health, Education, Youth Affairs and Community Development, Family Planning Board, Library Service, Radio and television services and data collection sources such as Statistical Offices.<sup>58/</sup> Members of the private sector agencies involved in communications should also be co-opted.

4. In an effort to create an informed, sensitive, motivated public, supportive of the population policy strategies, the IEC sub-committee would be responsible for the following: inform about the population policy and on-going population-related activities; sensitise to population issues and strategies of policies; educate on the interrelations of population and the socio-economic planning process; disseminate data, research findings, journals, reports and other information relative to population; monitor and evaluate population information being disseminated by other agencies.<sup>59/</sup>

5. The major task of the sub-committee would be to formulate the broad guidelines of a national IEC plan for population policy formulation and implementation which would be executed through the IEC programmes of the different agencies. This would require strong co-ordination as well as the organization of financial resources from both government and donor agencies.

6. Success of these programmes will depend on the degree of awareness creation achieved at the different levels of the target groups which include: political directorate; planners, policy-makers; policy implementors; community leaders; education officers; non-government organizations (women's organizations, youth groups, labour unions); the church.

