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UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMMES FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE  
IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

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I

1. A well-organized and efficient administrative machinery is a primary requisite for the successful implementation of any measure to further economic development and social welfare and the need for administrative improvement therefore requires priority attention.

2. The idea within the United Nations of helping Governments to improve administrative practices is as old as the technical assistance programme itself. Its continued expansion coincides very closely with the growth of the programme of technical assistance. As early as 1948, the Economic and Social Council recognized that training in public administration was an indispensable corollary of aid to developing countries in the economic and social field. The General Assembly endorsed the setting up of an International Centre for Training in Public Administration.<sup>1/</sup>

3. The following year marked a significant expansion in the concept of the programme, as the recognition of the need for assistance shifted from the idea of centralized training by provision of "international facilities" to a programme that carried activities into the countries requesting assistance.<sup>2/</sup>

4. In 1950 the Economic and Social Council recommended that governmental requests for assistance in training in public administration should be considered under the expanded programme,<sup>3/</sup> and this was confirmed by the General Assembly.<sup>4/</sup>

5. In 1953 the General Assembly recognized the increasingly important role of governmental administration in programmes for the promotion of economic development and social welfare and approved a revised programme of public administration<sup>5/</sup> comprising (a) the provision, at the request

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<sup>1/</sup> General Assembly resolution 246 (III), 4 December 1948.

<sup>2/</sup> General Assembly resolution 253 (IV), 1949.

<sup>3/</sup> Economic and Social Council resolution 292 (XI), 5 July 1950.

<sup>4/</sup> General Assembly resolution 518 (VI), 12 January 1951.

<sup>5/</sup> General Assembly resolution 723 (VIII), 23 October 1953.

of Governments, of technical assistance related to public administration through: (i) the advisory service of experts; (ii) fellowships and scholarships; (iii) training institutes, seminars, conferences, working groups and other means; (iv) the provision of technical publications and (b) the collection, analysis and exchange of technical information in the field of public administration. In 1956 the General Assembly further extended the scope of the programme by putting special emphasis on preliminary surveys and on co-operation with other agencies.<sup>6/</sup>

6. In 1958 the General Assembly formally approved an extension of technical assistance in public administration with the adoption of resolution 1256 (XIII) covering the provision of personnel to perform duties of an executive and operational character (OPEX); this programme was later put on a continuing basis <sup>7/</sup> with an annual appropriation of 850,000 dollars.

7. The budget appropriation for the Regular Programme in public administration was increased in 1961 to 1 million dollars, and it remained at the same level in 1962 and 1963.

8. The lesson learned from more than ten years of technical assistance in technical co-operation is the acute awareness of the economic, social and administrative interdependence. In the words of the Secretary-General "the moment seems to have arrived to accord public administration a seat of high priority. The progress that would be made in the field should help to overcome in a substantial measure the numerous shortcomings of structures and procedures. Furthermore, an enhanced technical contribution supported by adequate financial means will certainly increase the effectiveness and productivity of the global international effort. The total public administration of a country is not just the equivalent of the sum of all its parts. It is the common trunk which sustains and nourishes the many branches which are the individual disciplines. It provides the structural and procedural framework to bring forth, energize and harmonize the entire network of special services which the modern state needs in the implementation of the decade of development."<sup>8/</sup>

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<sup>6/</sup> General Assembly resolution 1024 (XI), 21 December 1956.

<sup>7/</sup> General Assembly resolution 1530 (XV).

<sup>8/</sup> ILO, General Review of the Development, Co-ordination and Concentration of the Economic, Social and Human Rights Programmes and Activities of the United Nations and the Specialized Agencies as a whole (E/3630), ch.VIII.

9. The Administrative Committee on Co-ordination, in reviewing the above report, was "keenly aware of the fundamental importance of solid administrative structures as a prerequisite for economic and social development."<sup>9/</sup>

10. The Economic and Social Council, having examined the above report, recognized that "solid administrative structures and sound public administration are essential prerequisites for the progress of the developing countries" and further recognized "the interrelationship between the various sectors of public administration."<sup>10/</sup>

11. As a result of many years' experience in technical co-operation and of studies related to public administration, the latter has come to be viewed in a new and more fruitful perspective. Far from being an end in itself, it has been recognized as a component part of economic and social development. In practice, the stress is being laid on a comprehensive approach in the surveying, planning and programming phases, which have to be strictly related to the national development plans.

12. The Secretary General's proposal for action in the United Nations Development Decade <sup>11/</sup> drew attention to the fact that "in the field of public administration progress must be achieved on a broad front. If an attempt is made to reorganize one sector of the administration neglecting the others, orderly development will become impossible. National effort and technical aid from outside must be fully and carefully integrated and co-ordinated. Thus there must be a focal point for administrative progress and reform."

## II

13. At United Nations Headquarters the Division for Public Administration deals with the substantive aspect of public administration programmes and, for the OPEX programme, with the operational side also. The Division:

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<sup>9/</sup> United Nations, Twenty-sixth Report of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (E/3625), para. 140.

<sup>10/</sup> Economic and Social Council resolution 907 (XXXIV).

<sup>11/</sup> United Nations Development Decade. Proposals for Action, United Nations Publication, Sales No.: 62.II.B.2, New York 1962.

- (a) Provides substantive advice and support to the experts in the field;
- (b) Provides fellowships in public administration;
- (c) Helps develop national institutes of public administration and supports several regional institutes;
- (d) Carries on a systematic programme of research and publications in the field of public administration.

To this effect the Division is organized on the basis of three major substantive lines of activity:

- personnel administration and training (including fellowships)
- organization and methods
- local government

and has a separate unit dealing with the OPEX programme.

14. Regional Consultants in public administration are being attached to the regional economic commissions with a view to strengthening the substantive competence of the Commissions. Such appointments, however, must adjust themselves to pre-existing leads and lags as well as to the circumstances. "The implementation of the decentralization programme must, perforce, proceed at a different pace in different fields of work and different regions."<sup>12/</sup> The appointment of the Regional Advisors who become integral part of the staffs of the regional economic commissions creates the possibility for many new forms of day-by-day collaboration at the regional level. This is a further realization in the field of public administration of the objectives set forth for the decentralization of the economic and social activities of the United Nations and the strengthening of the regional economic commissions as envisaged by the General Assembly.<sup>13/</sup>

A first Regional Consultant in public administration has been appointed in 1962 at the Economic Commission for Latin America.

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<sup>12/</sup> Decentralization of the Economic and Social Activities of the United Nations and strengthening of the Regional Economic Commissions (E/3643).

<sup>13/</sup> General Assembly resolution 1709 (XVI).

### III

15. Forms of technical co-operation. In the light of the basic approach outlined in Part I above, the following are the forms of technical co-operation available to member States.

- (a) Preliminary surveys: carried out by a single expert or a team of experts of wide experience and proved competence. These are short-term assignments, for which the Regional Advisors in public administration are particularly suited. Such surveys can be of great assistance to Governments in identifying the areas where technical assistance is most needed and in planning the relevant programmes and requests. The optimum period required for such surveys would vary from country to country but less than six weeks would hardly suffice and more than three months is unlikely to be needed anywhere. The preliminary surveys should lead to comprehensive plans, strictly related to national development plans, and call for a balanced progress in the various administrative sectors.

Co-ordination at the regional level is also desirable, in connexion with existing forms of regional co-operation.

- (b) Advisory experts: the services of such experts can be obtained for periods varying according to need between six months and two years. Experience has shown that the experts can function with the best advantage in broad fields such as governmental organization and methods, personnel administration, personnel training, local government, fiscal administration, budget and accounts, etc. Experts in more limited and localized fields may be usefully requested on the recommendation of the former.
- (c) Fellowships and scholarships: fellowships form an extremely valuable element in the drive towards greater administrative efficiency, if they are carefully planned and project connected. The best results are obtained where the candidates for fellowships and scholarships are selected on the advice of the outside experts and are trained abroad to continue on their return the very work for which the outside experts have laid the foundations.

/(d) Training

- (d) Training programmes: the necessary facilities for in-service training should exist within any efficient administrative machinery to ensure a continued supply of trained personnel for the different administrative tasks. United Nations technical assistance has already been devoted to establishing institutes of public administration which can serve both by giving in-service training to the government personnel of the different grades, and also by undertaking detailed studies in the administrative problems of the different ministries and agencies.
- (e) Training on sub-regional and regional level: where the political and cultural traditions of two or more countries are broadly similar, it would not be impossible for them to pool their resources and, with the assistance of the United Nations, to establish such training institutions on a joint and co-operative basis.
- A regional effort in 1962 with long term implications for the country projects of Central America was the re-formulation of the ESAPAC programme to make it serve more directly the purposes of the Economic Integration Programme for the sub-region. In addition to its continuing programme of seminars on certain aspects of economic integration, the co-operation of specialized agencies of the United Nations was enlisted to provide support for seminars in the administrative aspects of various functional operations of Governments of the region.
- (f) Seminars and workshops: the Secretary-General's proposals for the Development Decade 14/ stresses the fact that "countries of a region may have more to learn from one another than from outside countries." The assistance in this case is provided by the organization of seminars and workshops at which the working officials of the different countries concerned with the same or allied branches of administration can come together and, with the assistance of United Nations experts, study their common problems and profit by each other's experiences.

(g) Provision of operational, executive and administrative personnel (OPEX): the OPEX programme has been designed to meet the need for skilled local manpower in the various technical fields, both public administration proper and others, whenever such shortage affects one important sector of the administrative activity.

The performance of administrative and operational duties that the Government may assign to the OPEX officer, terminates as soon as the local staff has been trained sufficiently to take over.

The principal difference between the status and conditions of service of the OPEX expert and the advisory expert are as follows:

- (i) the advisory expert is an employee of the United Nations and remains solely responsible to and under the control of the United Nations, which also pays his salary; he functions only in an advisory capacity; he is not required to have any authority over or responsibility for any personnel or property of the Government he is sent to advise;
- (ii) the OPEX expert, on the other hand, becomes temporarily an employee of the Government to which he is assigned and remains completely responsible to and under the control of that Government which, in return, has to pay him the same salary as a national of that country appointed to perform the same duties would receive. The United Nations supplements this payment by an amount calculated to bring the expert's total emoluments to the level appropriate for an international expert of comparable standing. The expert's duties and functions require him to exercise executive authority over personnel working under him and to accept operational responsibility for management of the material or financial resources relevant to his duties. He is also under the express obligation, as part of his duties, to train local personnel to take his place as soon as possible.

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From these distinguishing features of the OPEX programme, there follow certain conditions which have to be fulfilled before assistance under the programme can be fully planned and successfully utilized:

- (a) Governments desiring assistance under the OPEX programme have to enter into a separate agreement with the United Nations on the lines of a model agreement specially prepared for this purpose;
- (b) every request for the services of an OPEX expert has to be with a view to his appointment to a distinct and identifiable post, carrying a specific designation, duties and responsibilities, and not merely for work in some general field of activity;
- (c) the duties of the post must be essentially executive, operational or administrative in character and not merely advisory;
- (d) to the extent to which such duties and functions require the officer to make decisions, issue orders, sanction expenditures, make disposition of property or material and control subordinate personnel, the necessary powers and authority have to be clearly and expressly conferred on the OPEX officer;
- (e) one or more local officers have to be earmarked from the beginning to work with and to be trained by the OPEX officer, so as to be able to replace him as soon as they have acquired sufficient training and experience;
- (f) the necessary budgetary and financial provision has to be made for payment to the officer of that portion of his salary which is payable by the employing Government.

As of 15 February 1963 the following OPEX experts are serving in Latin American countries:

- Chief of Production, Sugar Industry, Bolivia
- Chief, Department of Studies and Advice, Revenue Directorate, Bolivia
- Internal Auditor Controller, Bolivia
- Supervisor of Government Inventories, Bolivia
- Head, Department of Supervised Mining Credit, Bolivia

/ - Director and

- Director and Chief of Operations, Sampling Department (Statistics), Bolivia
- General Manager, British Guiana Electricity Corporation, British Guiana
- Deputy Director, Statistical Institute, Haiti
- Co-Director of Tannery in Haiti
- Technical Director, Water Plant in Paraguay
- Meteorologist, Caribbean Meteorological Services

In the operation of these two types of programmes, great care is taken to see that the experts provided by the United Nations do not approach their task with preconceived impressions or dogmatic ideas regarding the way in which the machinery of government should be designed, manned and operated. The experts are ever conscious of the fact that administrative forms, structures and procedures do not lend themselves to a simple process of duplication or transplantation and that in the last analysis each country has to evolve its own solutions, appropriate to its own political, historical and cultural context. The expert's role is that of helping local officials to study their problems and to find such solutions. He is not sent simply to give ready-made answers to stock questions.

Past experience has shown that an important requisite for success is that the initiative for administrative reform should come from within. The most competent advisor or OPEX expert will fail in his mission if local initiative is not present. But the most important lesson derived from past experience is that real success depends on express and consistent support from the highest political levels in the Government. Where, at the summit of the political and administrative power, the Head of the Government and his Cabinet colleagues take and demonstrate an active interest in administrative improvement, technical assistance projects are most fruitful. Where such interest is not present, the best efforts are liable to fail.

The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records. It is essential for all departments to ensure that data is entered correctly and updated regularly. This will help in identifying trends and making informed decisions.

The second part of the document outlines the responsibilities of each team member. It is crucial that everyone understands their role and the expectations of their superiors. Clear communication and collaboration are key to the success of the project.

The third part of the document provides a detailed schedule of activities. This will help in managing time effectively and ensuring that all tasks are completed on time. Regular progress reports should be submitted to the management team.

The fourth part of the document discusses the budget and financial aspects of the project. It is important to stay within the allocated budget and to track expenses carefully. Any deviations from the budget should be reported immediately to the finance department.

The fifth part of the document outlines the risk management strategy. It is essential to identify potential risks early on and to develop mitigation plans. Regular risk assessments should be conducted throughout the project.

The sixth part of the document provides a summary of the key findings and recommendations. It is important to take action on these recommendations to improve the overall performance of the organization.

The seventh part of the document discusses the future outlook and the long-term goals of the organization. It is important to have a clear vision and to set realistic targets. Regular reviews and adjustments will be necessary to stay on track.

The eighth part of the document provides a list of references and sources used in the document. This will help in verifying the accuracy of the information and in providing further reading for interested parties.

The ninth part of the document is a conclusion and a call to action. It is important to reiterate the key points and to encourage all team members to work together towards the common goal.

The tenth part of the document is a list of appendices and additional information. This will provide more detail on specific topics and will be useful for reference.