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PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE REPORT 1982-1983

Note by the Executive Secretary

84-0184

1. Reporting on programme performance in the United Nations was introduced in General Assembly resolution 33/118. The concept of programme performance in the United Nations refers to the process of determining the status of implementation of the approved programmes on the basis of their planned output. The programme performance exercise does not focus on the quality or the impact of completed planned output. That is examined more closely under the evaluation exercise. This report is prepared in accordance with the specific instructions and guidelines of United Nations Headquarters and will be reviewed by central legislative organs such as the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (CPC), the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) and the General Assembly during the course of 1984.

2. With the establishment of the ECWA Standing Committee for the Programme and considering the fact that none of the ECWA member States is a member of CPC, the secretariat considers it appropriate that the ECWA Standing Committee for the Programme should be apprised of matters pertaining to ECWA's programme performance and that through the commission it should submit its views and recommendations to the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination at Headquarters. Since this is the first exercise of its kind in the Commission, it would appear that a summary report with overall conclusions is relevant at this time.

A. Criteria for determining the status of programme implementation

3. In order to determine the status of programme implementation, the secretariat, on the basis of General Assembly instructions, uses the following categories of final output.

(a) Output implemented as programmed: Under this category is any output undertaken in line with the General Assembly approved programme budget and texts.

(b) Output significantly reformulated but implemented in full: Under this category is any output whose scope and nature differ considerably from those included in the General Assembly approved programme budget. The reasons for reformulation might be dictated by operational and/or programme circumstances.

(c) Output postponed to the next biennium whether commenced or not: Under this category is any output which has not been completed during the biennium and will be carried over to the next biennium. The reasons for postponement can be due to a variety of reasons, operational as well as programme-related.

(d) Output terminated: Under this category, is any output considered obsolete, of marginal usefulness or ineffective, if it is not commenced or work has ceased before being completed and when there is no intention to recommence activity.

(e) Output added by the secretariat but required by legislation: Under this category is any output which was carried over from the previous biennium and for which there is a legislative mandate and/or any output required by new mandates of the Commission.

(f) Output added at the initiative of the secretariat: Under this category, is any output for which no legislative mandates exist but which the secretariat deemed appropriate to undertake.

B. Status of ECWA programme implementation

4. The overall status of ECWA programme performance for the biennium 1982-1983 based on a division of all the final output according to the above categories is reflected in annex.

5. The implementation of the ECWA programme 1982-1983, which included 131 planned outputs, can be characterized as follows:

(a) A limited number of outputs (46 or 35.1 per cent) were completed as initially planned.

(b) The total number of departures from the work programme constituted 101 outputs or 65 per cent of the total number of outputs undertaken by the secretariat. These departures are subdivided as follows: 17 outputs (or 13 per cent) of total planned outputs were significantly reformulated but implemented in full; 31 outputs (or 23.7 per cent) of total planned outputs were postponed to the next biennium; and 37 outputs (or 28.2 per cent) of total planned outputs were terminated.

(c) A large number of outputs (16) were added by the secretariat but required by legislation (11 per cent of the total number of outputs undertaken during the biennium 1982-1983).

6. The implementation of the 1982-1983 programme of work expressed in percentage classes* indicates that of the 14 major substantive programmes ECWA had undertaken:

Food and agriculture)	
International trade)	had a class A rating
Natural resources)	
Development issues)	
Public finance)	
Science and technology)	
Social development)	had a class B rating
Statistics)	
Transport, communications & tourism)	
Transnational corporations)	
Industrial development)	had a class C rating
Population)	
Human settlements)	had a class D rating
Labour, management & employment))	

C. Factors affecting the ECWA performance

7. The total ECWA performance for the biennium 1982-1983 has been calculated as 54 per cent (Class B). The listing of the total number of outputs under the various categories (annex I) is the result of an analysis of the reasons for reformulation, postponement and termination of outputs. The secretariat, in view of the low percentage of total performance, considers it appropriate to apprise the Committee of the findings of this analysis so that it may make the appropriate recommendations to the Commission leading to (a) a more complete implementation of the work programme and (b) an increase in the effectiveness of the work programme. In the following paragraphs the reasons for programme departures are examined under the various categories.

D. Outputs reformulated but implemented in full

8. The reformulation of programme elements concerns mainly the reduction of the scope and changes in the nature of the initial planned output. Reduction in scope was nearly in all cases dictated by special circumstances under which the secretariat was operating during the 1982-1983 biennium. Reasons for reducing the original output in scope or changing its nature include: (a) actual available extrabudgetary resources were less than was anticipated at the time of programme formulation; (b) staffing problems; (c) inavailability of data; and (d) inadequate or delayed establishment of support services.

E. Output postponed to the next biennium

9. This large category of outputs (31 or 23.5 per cent of total planned outputs) reflects the serious staffing problem the secretariat is facing. Out of the 31 final outputs postponed 23 were postponed because of staffing problems, i.e. vacant posts. Other reasons include inadequate data resources, delayed receipt of inputs from outside expertise, the need for synchronization of the activity with later planned activities and late commencement of work on the output due to carry-over activities from the 1980-1981 biennium.

F. Outputs terminated

10. This category with 37 outputs reflects, like the category above, the serious recruitment problems of the secretariat. Out of these, 26 were terminated because of vacant posts in various programmes. In addition, 7 outputs were terminated at the beginning of the biennium as being ineffective or obsolete or of marginal usefulness. Their termination was in line with General Assembly resolutions on the identification of such outputs. With regard to outputs which could not commence because of vacant posts, the secretariat has two options: their termination or their postponement to the next biennium. The secretariat considered it appropriate to terminate most of such outputs particularly when no follow-up activity was planned in the next biennium. Their integration into the next work programme would not only affect adversely programme performance during the biennium 1984-1985, but would also upset the programme priorities for that biennium. The secretariat is of the opinion that these priorities should be observed integrally and to the maximum extent. Hence, the highest priority programme elements should be implemented before the lowest priority elements. A large carry-over programme from previous bienniums would make such a policy impossible.

G. Additional outputs

11. The total ECWA performance as discussed above is adversely affected by the large number of additional outputs (16) the secretariat undertook. All these elements were required to be carried out by legislative mandates. All outputs carried over from the previous biennium (1980-1981) fall under this category. Outputs undertaken pursuant to new legislative mandates from the Commission itself also fall under this category. The main reason for undertaking additional outputs remains the delayed implementation of outputs from previous bienniums resulting from

the vacancy situation. The secretariat has no alternative but to complete such outputs in the biennium once they have been commenced and are not obsolete. This practice, however, as discussed above, upsets adversely the programme structure in a given biennium. Only a full staffing establishment can put an end to this situation.

H. Vacancy factor in performance on a programme-by-programme basis

12. As indicated in paragraphs 7-11 above, the vacancy factor has been a determinant of the overall low implementation rate of the ECWA programme during the biennium 1982-1983. The effect of this factor is elaborated upon below on a programme-by-programme basis:

Programme: Food and agriculture

13. This programme has had two professional posts from the regular budget and one professional post contributed by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) vacant during the entire biennium. One of the vacant posts, a P-5, has been temporarily utilized by the social development programme for 13.1/2 months to accommodate the head of that programme who was at the senior level. The sources budgeted for consultancy, \$US 19,400.00 had savings of \$US 1,185.00. Of the total resources in the amount of \$US 21,600.00 programmed for ad hoc expert group meetings, \$US 11,500.00 had not been utilized as at the end of the biennium. The resources for official travel were fully utilized.

Programme: Development issues and policies

14. A total of seven professional posts were approved for this programme. However, four of the seven posts have been vacant during the entire biennium. In addition two other posts have been vacant for more than six months, one of them for as long as ten months. One of the vacant posts, a P-4, has been utilized for 18 months by the programme of Administration to accommodate a staff member who was promoted. Resources approved for consultancy and official travel have been fully utilized.

Programme: Human settlements

15. A total of five professional posts from the regular budget and two professional posts contributed by UNCHS (Habitat) were approved for this programme for the biennium 1982-1983. Out of this total, two from the regular budget and the two contributed

by UNCHS have been vacant during the entire biennium. Two other regular budget posts were filled in mid-1982 and end-1982 respectively. However, all resources approved for consultancy and official travel have been fully utilized. There has been no redeployment of resources.

Programme: Industrial development

16. Seven professional posts from the regular budget and two professional posts contributed by UNIDO were approved for this programme for the biennium. Of this total of nine posts, two from the regular budget and one of the posts contributed by UNIDO were vacant for most of the biennium. In addition one of the professional posts encumbered by the Chairman of the Staff Union could, in accordance with United Nations procedures, not be effectively utilized for implementation of the work programme. Resources budgeted for consultancy, \$US 27,800.00, and ad hoc expert group meetings \$US 17,900.00 showed savings of \$US 27,800.00 and \$US 15,000.00 respectively. The resources approved for travel were fully utilized. Additional activities mandated by legislation were undertaken through the use of extrabudgetary resources. There has been no redeployment of resources.

Programme: International trade

17. The two professional posts approved for this programme were encumbered during the entire biennium. The resources for official travel were fully utilized.

Programme: Labour, management and employment

18. Two professional posts, forty-eight work-months, were approved for this programme. However, only six of the forty-eight work-months were encumbered for programmed activities. The resources approved for consultancy, \$US 3,600.00 and travel \$US 2,800.00 showed savings of \$US 3,600.00 and \$US 1,461.00 respectively. With the acquisition of electronic data-processing services and with the approval of ACABQ, the last five work-months in the biennium of one of the professional posts was utilized for the Chief of the Electronic Data Processing Unit.

Programme: Natural resources

19. A total of nine professional posts, 216 work-months, were approved for this programme during the biennium 1982-1983. However, only 137 work-months were available for implementation of

the programme. To assist the implementation of the work programme, one professional post was taken out of the recruitment circuit and the resources released were redeployed to the consultancy object of expenditure code. The redeployed resources contributed significantly to the increase in the rate of implementation. However, none of the resources budgeted for ad hoc expert group meetings (\$US 20,200.00) were utilized. Savings from travel totalled \$US 1,600.00.

Programme: Population

20. This programme was authorized five professional posts under the regular budget and six professional posts funded by the UNFPA. Of the total of 120 work-months under the regular budget and 144 work-months from extrabudgetary resources, 53 work-months of regular budget resources and 39 work-months of extrabudgetary resources were not available for implementation of the work programme owing to vacancies. The unutilized resources were not redeployed.

Programme: Public administration and finance

21. The two professional posts, 48 work-months, approved for this programme were encumbered throughout the biennium. Consultancy resources budgeted at \$US 3,600.00 showed savings of \$US 1,100.00. The amount of \$US 2,100.00 allocated for official travel of staff was fully committed.

Programme: Science and Technology

22. Four professional posts, 96 work-months, were authorized for this programme for the biennium 1982-1983. However two of the four posts, 48 work-months, were vacant during the entire biennium. Funds allocated for consultancies, \$US 11,800.00, and for official travel of staff, \$US 4,700.00 were fully utilized.

Programme: Social development

23. Three established professional posts, general temporary assistance for the funding of one professional post for six months during the biennium for a special study, and one professional post funded by the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women constituted the total professional resources authorized for this programme. Out of this total of 102 professional work-months, only 69 work-months were encumbered. However, of the 69 work-months, six months were utilized for staff union activities. Resources allocated for consultancy in the amount of \$US 14,200.00 showed savings of \$US 2,300.00.

Official travel of staff budgeted at \$US 5,200.00 showed savings of \$US 1,834.00. There was no redeployment of resources.

Programme: Statistics

24. Four professional posts from the regular budget and one professional post from extrabudgetary resources were authorized for this programme. Out of this total of 120 work-months, 37 work-months were not available owing to vacancies. Included in this total are 13 work-months for the Chief of the Section. Out of the remaining total of 83 work-months, four work-months were not available owing to the extended sick leave of a staff member. Only 79 work-months were available for implementation of the work programme. The travel resources of \$US 9,700.00 were fully committed. There was no redeployment of the unencumbered resources.

Programme: Transport, communications and tourism

25. Seven professional posts (168 work-months) were authorized for this programme. Out of this total, 39 work-months were not encumbered due to vacancies. Resources allocated for consultancy and official travel of staff in the amounts of \$US 17,600.00 and \$US 15,700.00 respectively were fully committed. There was no redeployment of the unencumbered resources.

Programme: Transnational corporations

26. The Centre for Transnational Corporations provided two posts (48 work-months) during the biennium 1982-1983. The two posts were occupied throughout the biennium. Consultancy resources of \$US 40,700.00 were fully utilized. Of the travel resources authorized, \$US 25,000.00, \$US 21,945.00 were utilized.

I. Conclusions and recommendations

27. The programme performance of ECWA for the biennium 1982-1983 has not been satisfactory; difficulties in recruiting and keeping staff, the high vacancy rate, unavailability of data, disruptions due to the physical transfer of the Commission three times during the biennium, carrying forward of programmes from previous bienniums, together with a number of other factors have contributed to this situation.

28. The programme structure of the secretariat has revealed serious weaknesses which have had a negative effect on programme

performance. The total number of outputs included in the programme of work for 1982-1983 was 147. Of these 131 were planned and 17 were additional ones included by the secretariat but which were required by legislation. If the number of outputs (147) is offset against the number of authorized work-months, both regular budget and extrabudgetary, for substantive programmes (78 professional posts or 1,872 work-months), it becomes clear that each output planned in the 1982-1983 programme biennium had little over 12 work-months allocated for its implementation. This implies that each staff member would have had to carry out 2 outputs during that biennium. The structure of the 1984-1985 biennium does not differ very much in this respect of in-depth coverage, and an integrated approach to the development issues tackled under the work programme is hardly possible.

29. To improve delivery of services, the timely completion of planned outputs and the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the work programme of the Commission, the secretariat recommends that:

Recommendation 1:

The number of programme elements and corresponding outputs be reduced considerably and be tailored realistically to the availability of resources both regular and extrabudgetary.

Recommendation 2:

An annual report relating to outputs and resource availability should be submitted to the Standing Committee for the Programme.

Recommendation 3:

The outputs of programme elements should be made more technical in nature so as to benefit member States to a greater extent rather than to be conceived of as reports to the Commission on studies, as is the case at present.

Recommendation 4:

In follow-up to the Commission's resolution 116 (X), maximum efforts should be exerted to reduce the high vacancy rate.

Recommendation 5:

An annual report should be submitted to the Commission, through the Standing Committee for the Programme, on the staffing situation in the secretariat and its effect on programme performance.

Recommendation 6:

Mailing lists for end-users of all completed technical studies should be developed; increased contact should be established with end-users within the context of appraisal and evaluation exercises on the impact of outputs.

Recommendation 7:

An annual report should be submitted to the Standing Committee for the Programme providing details on inavailability of data and information for programme implementation.

Recommendation 8:

Future biennial programme performance reports should be submitted to the Standing Committee for the Programme.

*Final output in the United Nations refers to any of the following:

- (a) Organization of intergovernmental meetings including support of negotiations;
- (b) Reports to intergovernmental bodies;
- (c) Peace-keeping and humanitarian operations;
- (d) Technical publications including periodicals, computer print-outs and tapes;
- (e) Public information services;
- (f) Technical co-operation projects;
- (g) Grants and fellowships.

- * Class A = 75 - 100 per cent implementation of all outputs
- Class B = 50 - 74 per cent implementation of all outputs
- Class C = 25 - 49 per cent implementation of all outputs
- Class D = 0 - 24 per cent implementation of all outputs

Annex. Programme Performance 1982-1983
(Number of Outputs)

Programme	As programmed in 1982-1983 (1)	Implemented as programmed (2)	Departures from Work Programme				Added by legislation (6)	Added by secretariat (7)	Percentage implementation (2 plus 3 plus 6 over 1 plus 6) (8)
			Reformulated but implemented (3)	Postponed to 1984-1985 (4)	Terminated (5)	Added by legislation (6)			
1. Food and agriculture	9	3	4	2	-	-	-	A	78
2. Development issues	6	1	2	3	-	-	-	B	50
3. Human settlements	11	1	-	7	3	1	-	D	17
4. Industrial development	15	6	-	1	8	2	-	C	47
5. International trade	4	3	-	1	-	1	-	A	80
6. Labour, management and employment	3	-	-	-	3	-	-	D	0
7. Natural resources	15	7	4	-	4	2	-	A	76
8. Population	22	5	2	9	6	3	-	C	40
9. Public finance	6	-	3	1	2	-	-	B	50
10. Science and technology	6	3	-	-	3	-	-	B	50
11. Social development	8	3	1	1	3	1	-	B	56
12. Statistics	11	7	-	2	2	1	-	B	67
13. Transport, communications & tourism	10	5	1	1	3	-	-	B	60
14. Transnational corporations	5	2	-	3	-	5	-	B	70
Total	131	46	17	31	37	16	-	B	54

* Class A = 75 - 100 %
 Class B = 50 - 74 %
 Class C = 25 - 49 %
 Class D = 0 - 24 %