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UNIFIED APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENT ANALYSIS AND PLANNING:
A PROGRESS REPORT

Prepared by the
United Nations Research Institute for Social Development

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Introduction

In cooperation with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs in New York and the Economic Commission for Latin America, the Institute has been working on a project entitled "Unified Approach to Development Analysis and Planning". This study is concerned with problems created by the uneven and spotty nature of the development that has been taking place in recent years and its frequent failure to involve and benefit the poorest groups in the developing countries. The project arose from resolutions of the Economic and Social Council (Resolution 1494(XLVIII)) and the General Assembly (Resolution 2681(XXV)), which referred to: "The need for a unified approach to development analysis and planning which would fully integrate the economic approach with the social approach in the formation of policies at the national and international levels."

In terms of basic objectives, the point of view underlying the project is the same as that expressed in the United Nations General Assembly's "International Development Strategy" (proclaimed on 24 October 1970), namely: "The ultimate objective of development must be to bring about sustained improvement in the well-being of the individual and bestow benefits on all. If undue privileges, extremes of wealth and social injustices persist, then development fails in its essential purpose. This calls for a global development strategy based on joint and concentrated action by developing and developed countries in all spheres of economic and social life: in industry and agriculture, in trade and finance, in employment and education, in health and housing, in science and technology."

A progress report on this project (E/CN.14/CAP.4/11) was prepared for the Fourth Session of the Conference of African Planners. The following

notes generally seek to avoid repetition of the contents of that report and summarize supplementary material and more recent conceptual formulations. A final report will be issued at the end of this year for consideration by the Commission for Social Development and the Economic and Social Council in 1975.^{1/}

Overall Approach

The "unified approach" is a call for a re-orientation in the field of development. It implies a definition of development not in terms of an abstraction called the "national product" but in terms of what is happening to the population of a country. Economic growth is a fundamental instrument of development but there are other instruments as well such as institutional change.

There can be no simple universal model of unified development. Different countries will have different "styles" of development depending on their natural circumstances (size, resources, population density), their value systems, etc. A unified approach correspondingly calls for less emphasis on pre-conceived models and more emphasis on techniques of developmental diagnosis for application in particular circumstances.

While a single model that would integrate the distributional and growth aspects of socioeconomic progress for all developing countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America is out of the question, it is nevertheless possible to identify certain relatively common needs and problems:

1. Development, as a process of change in the conditions of life of people in low-income areas, commonly involves progress in such elementary matters as food, housing, health care, clothing, water supply, sanitation, basic education, access to facilities, employment and opportunity to advance occupationally. Progress in terms of such components means change not only in aggregates or averages but also in distribution

^{1/}A "Report on a Unified Approach to Development Analysis and Planning: Preliminary report of the Secretary-General" (E/CN.5/477) was issued to the Commission and the Council for their 1973 sessions.

or spread, in relation to different regions or localities of the country and different categories of the population.

2. The forces of autonomous as well as planned growth in low-income economies today seem to bring about structures of production, employment and income that effectively confine the benefits of development to a small part of the population. In the absence of a broadly based purchasing power, investment, following profitability considerations, gets directed more and more to industrial products consumed largely by high income categories of the population. Such products often have a low employment component, both direct and indirect. At the same time in the rural sector the better-off farmers, who have the means to purchase the necessary inputs, tend to adopt new technologies of production ("green revolution"), with consequent increases in productivity, while the poorer farmers often become marginalized or left aside by progress.

3. A process of growth having a narrow base of participation will be reinforced by prevailing inequalities in the socio-political structure.

4. Since the obstacles to participative development are mainly structural, considerations of the composition or structure of development assume central importance in a unified approach. A compositional approach, in economic and other fields, is basic not only to the achievement of broad participation but also to the effective integration of sectors.

5. Participative development can be brought about partly by re-orienting the structures of production and of effective demand towards commodities and services of basic consumption (food, clothing, primary housing, sanitation, water supply, feeder roads, primary education, etc.), which can generate sizeable employment consistent with efficient production. Such a re-orientation may be attempted by means of taxation and credit policies as well as by trade policies, direct governmental investment and institutional changes. It should contribute simultaneously towards broadening the structure of effective demand on the one hand and increasing the supply of goods and services of basic consumption on the other hand.

6. In the agricultural sector, special problems of participation of the mass of small farmers in new agricultural technologies may be met by dealing with the questions of kind and amount of inputs in relation to the capacities of the small farmers, and by promoting institutional arrangements that will effectively mediate between the small farmers and the technological complex.

Styles and Strategies of Development

In the different styles of development, economic and social factors are brought into different kinds of quantitative and qualitative relationship. The style of one country may involve heavy investment in infrastructure, rapid economic growth, rapid urbanization, and widening inequalities between regions and classes. In another country, there may be extensive participation of broad strata of the population in the political process, extensive social services and redistributive measures but poor economic progress because of heavy reliance for economic growth on foreign trade, the terms of which are deteriorating.

A style of development that gets set up tends to persist, possibly blocking more desirable forms of development, because it involves a wide array of interrelated activities and interests (political, economic and social; domestic and foreign; producer and consumer), which tend to support and maintain or at least accommodate each other, to the exclusion of other arrangements. Thus, industrialization in the form of domestic manufacture of expensive durable goods such as automobiles and electrical appliances, once introduced (perhaps for import substitution reasons and often by multi-national corporations), demands an income distribution that will maintain and expand the market - a market that cannot possibly embrace the mass of the population today in developing countries but must depend on high-income receivers with consumption interests similar to those found in the rich countries. Dependency on various imported inputs (parts, fuels) is established, with implications for foreign exchange. Pressures mount for certain kinds of infrastructure. Workers who produce the manufactured goods - usually representing a labour elite in the country - organize to protect and advance their interests (although the mass of the poor who work in city or countryside generally have no such organisation).

Obstacles to equitable distribution and to full participation of the population in development are evident in a style of development that relies heavily on such a form of industrialization - the process of modernization under such circumstances excludes the low-income population. This would contrast with forms of industrialization that concentrate on basic consumption items, on products of use to small farmers (fertilizers, sprays, water pumps, cement, etc.), on means of mass transportation, on cheap hand and power tools for artisan and repair work, and on other products that will serve to raise the level of skill, output and welfare of the ordinary workers. It is possible therefore to identify a "product strategy" in a unified approach to industrialization.

Some highly modern and expensive items like combine-harvesters, aeroplanes, computers and heavy military equipment are quite beyond the capacity of developing countries to produce, but are imported for various reasons. These items are also quite outside the scope of consumption of the low income masses of the population and in some cases their use creates unemployment.

Tendencies towards uneven or even development, between and within sectors, are crucially dependent on action by the state in so far as it regulates, opens up or restricts opportunities to participate in productive activity. By favouring the one-sided growth of the industrial sector, it may unintentionally disfavour the development of agriculture; or by supporting within both sectors particular interests (e.g., "modern" industry, "modern" farming), it may contribute to the marginalization of the other groups, as a rule the weaker ones which have no political leverage and little access to the State in view of their general condition of poverty, and their social and cultural circumstances. In such a way the State may increase the gap between a limited modern high productivity sector and a stagnant low productivity sector.

It follows from the above observations that a unified approach to development is not, or not only, a matter of building up redistributational and related social programmes to counteract the effects of economic processes. For the most part developing countries do not have the capacity

to lay on extensive and effective income redistribution programmes, and relevant social objectives must be realized to a considerable extent by being built into economic and technological development.

Conversely, it is essential that economic development considerations be incorporated as far as possible in social programmes. In a field like education, a strategic approach is required not only to ensure greater equity in education but also to ensure that the educational process will fit into and promote the economic process. Neither of these objectives will be attained through an educational system that serves primarily to orient youth towards prestige and status functions.

A strategic approach involves preoccupation not only with amounts (How much growth of industry? How much growth of agriculture? How much growth of education?) but also with kinds: the kind of industrialization, the kind of agricultural development, the kind of education, the kind of health facility, etc. The question of the amounts of growth in the different sectors in their relation to each other (the question of proper proportions) and the question of the kinds of growth in relation to each other (the question of proper linkages) lie close to the heart of the unified approach. Neither of these questions is dealt with in an approach that concentrates on growth of the national product.

For any proposed policy or programme, whether at the level of international trade or village improvement, it is necessary to ask not only what are the benefits but also: Who are the beneficiaries? More precisely who in fact will be able to participate or take advantage of the policy, programme or project? What parts of the population, in what parts of the country? Who will suffer what disbenefits? It is usually necessary, to go further, in a strategic approach, and seek to organize packages of programmes and measures, complementing and supporting each other, that will specifically benefit identified categories of the population (or identified regions) that are not participating in development. Thus package planning may be organized for small farmers mentioned above who do not participate in and benefit from the new technology of the "green revolution". This could include special provision for credit for small farmers as required for purchase of the necessary inputs, provision for

necessary water supply, education and information services on the new technology, arrangements to assist the small farmers in ordering the right inputs and in getting them delivered at the right time and in the right amounts, research aimed at adapting new seeds to the capacities of small farmers, etc.

Population and Employment

A major problem of development strategy in a good many developing countries today is posed by the well-known crisis caused by limited work opportunities in a situation of rapid population growth, resulting in growing unemployment or the spreading of limited work and income (e.g. on farms) among larger and larger numbers. The developing countries in this predicament are at a stage of demographic change where their mortality levels have dropped rapidly but not their fertility levels, while their economic growth, even if fairly rapid in terms of growth of national production, does not absorb very much labour. The problem is reflected in the great masses of youth coming onto the labour market many of whom have had some degree of education but can find no employment.^{1/} The crisis of population growth and employment raises issues of critical importance for any attempt at a unified approach to development. Fertility control is a long-term solution but the problem now exists and will continue to exist for some time to come on account of those already born.

On the economic and employment side, the difficulty in many of the countries in question is that they have now run out of land to absorb a growing population, while their new industries, following current patterns of the industrialized countries, tend to be capital intensive and labour saving. Much attention has therefore been given in recent years to the idea of a strategy concentrating on labour intensive technologies in these countries. To some observers this has meant that the developing countries should pursue a level of technology found in the West some time back, when it was more labour intensive. But many representatives of developing countries vigorously oppose this kind of industrialization. Others urge a combination of traditional, intermediate and modern techniques.

^{1/} Questions of this kind are being intensively pursued under the ILO World Employment Programme.

Overall generalizations in favour of either labour intensive or capital intensive processes are open to question because so much depends on the concrete circumstances, which require careful diagnosis. There are three key questions to ask:

1. Does the new industry or technological process actually cause a reduction of productively employed personnel, by introducing a labour-saving process in an activity now being carried out? Farm tractors may replace farm personnel but a factory for building radios will ordinarily not cause loss of work in traditional occupations. A modern industry such as a food-processing industry can in fact build up employment in more traditional activities by using as its main inputs the outputs of the traditional activities; or it may provide inputs for traditional activities, permitting expansion of work (e.g., water pumps and fertilizers for farmers). No matter how capital intensive a new industry may be, therefore, it need not necessarily have a negative effect on existing employment. The judgment, however, may be made in a specific situation that some other more labour intensive investment would have a more positive effect on employment without a serious loss of efficiency in production, assuming investment funds would be equally available.

2. How many workers are actually involved, within the country, in the construction and maintenance of an industrial product or mechanical device, including ancillary industries and services? A small truck, in toto, embodies much more human labour than does a camel or an ox, but if the truck is built abroad, depends on imported parts and fuels, and is possibly even serviced by foreign technicians, then its employment effect will be negative.

3. What is the overall effect on the development process? More particularly, what are the implications of the industrial project or process, compared with the implications of more labour-intensive projects, for further economic activity and employment? Some projects have few implications beyond themselves, others provoke or support further development. For example, building a road that goes nowhere, through manual labour and without machinery, will employ large numbers of individuals,

but when the road is finished no one may be much better off than before. A capital intensive tool industry that produces simple implements and equipment allowing farmers to increase the productivity of their soil or fishermen to enlarge their catch or artisans to set up shops, may have the eventual effect of expanding employment.

As emphasized above, different kinds of technology will have different implications but the implications will depend upon the specific contexts and should be the subject of diagnosis. To take an example, in a situation of high population density with limited land resources, the introduction of machinery in the form of farm tractors may reduce employment and aggravate income maldistribution. On the other hand, the introduction of mechanical processes in the form of water pumps for irrigation purposes is likely to increase fertility and increase employment. But even this analysis is too generalized. The introduction of farm tractors can be beneficial for production and for employment in circumstances where the tractors make possible a shortening of the time of harvesting of the crop or of preparations for the next crop and this in turn makes possible two crops a year rather than one.

The chief advantage of an industrial product over a traditional product serving the same end is usually that it is lower priced and can therefore become more readily an item of mass consumption. This is again a matter for particular enquiry. It has frequently been noted that in developing countries monetary, trade and even taxation policies (e.g. accelerated depreciation allowances on newly installed equipment) have caused an effective cheapening of capital, thus inducing a bias in favour of its use. When labour is abundant and capital scarce, economic policies (e.g. higher interest rates, realistic valuation of the exchange rate, elimination of payroll tax proportional to number of employees, etc.) should reflect relative scarcities of factors.

Transfer of Technology

The preceding discussion has suggested the importance of transfer of technology for a unified approach, and in particular the importance of a "selective technology" based on diagnosis. Generally speaking, a technical innovation or technical policy that has been successful in a developed country in promoting general progress does not necessarily transfer effectively to a developing country where the surrounding circumstances are different; or if it is transferable, the benefits may not go to the low-income categories, except by some remote "trickle-down" process; or benefits may accrue to low-income classes in some circumstances but not in others. Even projects that were designed specifically to benefit low-income groups in developed countries may have no effect or a negative effect on low-income groups in developing countries.

In an international context there are two ways of trying to deal with the problem of transfer of technology in relation to the unified approach:

1. In the first place, the various kinds of technical assistance projects and programmes should be subjected to systematic and severe scrutiny in terms of their transferability to different kinds of environment and in terms of the real benefits and real beneficiaries in these different environments. It should be possible to identify experiences in certain typical environments.

2. In the second place, much more attention needs to be paid to research for development carried out within developing countries - by indigenous personnel where possible - in order to promote adaptations and innovations suitable to local circumstances. More emphasis should be placed not on ready-made technical solutions to development problems but on assistance in finding or adapting solutions. Most technology applied to the poor countries is based on research in industrialized countries and does not take into account the particular circumstances of the former

countries.^{1/} The capacity for development should thus include an indigenous research capacity in this regard, as emphasized in a recent resolution of the General Assembly.^{2/} Much has to be done to build up such a capacity, however, and present technical cooperation programmes are not well suited to the objective.

The Problem of Security

While social problems of continued mass poverty, increasing income differentials and growing unemployment have been widely commented upon in the last few years in appraisals of the development process, less attention has been given to the problem of security in the context of unified development. Yet it is not the amount of production but the security of production that is often the issue of immediate and vital significance for low-income populations of developing countries. This is particularly important in the case of agricultural populations who live on the edge of subsistence so that a bad crop year or a series of bad crop years can mean starvation.^{3/} Because of drought they do not produce enough food for their own consumption, or, as agricultural

^{1/} The 1969 Pearson Commission Report argued that "Only too often the transfer of knowledge and know-how becomes a mechanical projection of the rich countries' own view of technology and education while low-income countries need new and different solutions to their unique problems." Partners in Development, Report of the Commission on International Development, Lester B. Pearson, Chairman, Pall Mall Press, London 1969 (pp.179-180).

^{2/} General Assembly Resolution 3168 (XXVIII), December 1973, following up the "World Plan of Action" prepared by the United Nations Committee for the Application of Science and Technology (United Nations Report No. A/9400).

^{3/} At the same time, conditions of insecurity of production are a major reason why low-income farmers living in areas with such conditions do not venture to adopt the more productive seeds and technology of the "green revolution".

labourers, they do not receive enough money to purchase food, the prices of which mount with shortage. It is typically the poorest groups in poor countries who are most vulnerable and suffer most from famines and their side effects - and from other natural disasters like floods and earthquakes.

The greater vulnerability of low-income populations to drought and other natural hazards contributes to the maintenance of poverty and to the increase of income differentials. Social security systems and crop insurance schemes of a type found in industrialized countries do not easily apply in this kind of situation - an illiterate, indebted, low-income farm population cannot make monetary contributions to a universal social security scheme and the government does not have the resources to run such a scheme on its own budget. National and international food banks and relief schemes are a partial answer, dealing with some of the most urgent needs, but not a sufficient answer. Loss of income, for example, is not covered. The problem is aggravated today by the continuous gross inflation with which the populations of many developing countries are afflicted, at a time when more and more of their livelihood depends on purchases rather than exchanges in the local community.

Methods of Planning and Analysis

Development planning first arose in connection with material production. In such planning, targets are set, say an increase of output in steel production, the means are specified (increase of inputs of iron and coal by given amounts, construction of so many new factories, etc.), and the necessary material balances are worked out. For national development, planning models are widely used which relate macro variables (national aggregates or averages) by quantitative formulas of an input-output or "production function" variety, intended to show what inputs will achieve given output goals. It is an assumption of such planning that the objectives or "targets" are precisely defined and measured, that the causal relations, in particular the relation of means to end, are or can be clearly and precisely known, and that the future can be controlled

through the plan. In the last few decades, planning has spread to more and more fields of development activity, including social fields, but in the process objectives have become less amenable to direct measurement and causal relations have become more complex and obscure. Philosophic questions have arisen concerning control of the future when this involves the behaviour of people.

With the extension of planning activities into diverse social fields, attempts have been made in the name of integration to assimilate social issues to economic production models (people become "human resources") and to build up the concept of "comprehensive planning" as a means of ensuring integrated development; attempts have been made also to build up "social planning" to stand side by side with economic planning. But the concepts and methods of conventional planning, however appropriate in some contexts, do not extend readily to the relations between economic and social factors and to development as a whole. There are a number of serious problems in this context from the point of view of a unified approach, in addition to those mentioned above:

1. While rationality is desirable and planning is an eminently rational approach, it is not the only kind of rational approach to development and should not play too dominating or exclusive a role. The doctor or the teacher does not make "plans" or blueprints of the future like the architect but is equally rational. Similarly, at the society level, it is desirable to think in terms of a "Capacitating" operation which does not try so much to define and control the future as to establish present conditions or capacities which will permit a given society to meet its problems in the future. The emphasis in such an approach is not on setting future targets but on diagnosing current weaknesses and potentials, and finding appropriate policies. (This would no doubt involve substantial planning in certain respects, but the general approach would differ from that of conventional planning).

2. An example of such a "capacitation" activity would be structural or institutional change, which conventional planning usually does not deal with through its technical methods. Various structural and

institutional conditions are taken as given, even structures of economic production. Thus the question of composition of industry in relation to employment tends to be neglected in economic planning on grounds that the existing composition reflects "demand" which is treated as an absolute, although in fact demand reflects income distribution and employment conditions. Similarly, social transformations as a means of creating the capacity of a population to be more productive tend to fall outside the scope of orthodox planning, as do psychological transformations (changes in attitudes and motivation).

3. At the same time, conventional planning tends to lead to an over-emphasis on capital investments for physical structures and equipment, especially in social fields, since these are easier to handle under the methodology of planning than are various other kinds of activity that may be equally or more desirable for development, and also possibly cheaper (e.g., in a given set of circumstances, adoption and enforcement of certain public health laws rather than construction of a hospital).

4. While conventional planning is oriented towards the setting of goals and the identification of means to achieve these goals, it is not well equipped to handle situations of multiple economic and social objectives which must be fitted together in the most economically effective and socially desirable combination (style) - a combination that cannot be satisfactorily defined through input-output formulas, production functions or like means.^{1/}

^{1/} Where multiple sectors and multiple objectives are involved in the planning operation, the common tendency is to allocate funds to the different sectors without much exercise of rationality, and each sector draws up its plan within the limits of its allocation. The collation of these separate plans, after elimination of any evident inconsistencies, essentially constitutes the general development plan. One or two common themes may run through different parts, capital expenditures may be lumped together, and some joint projects may be included, but generally speaking there is little or no substantive integration. A series of different objectives are in effect pursued in separate fashion by different ministries or agencies of government, without systematic concern for benefits (linkages and supports) or disbenefits across sectors.

5. Conventional national planning has a tendency to avoid questions of distribution and participation by virtue of basing its analyses and projections on macro variables that conceal differentials. Furthermore, macro variables, and planning models constructed out of them, while suitable for certain economic purposes, are generally unsatisfactory for the analysis of the interrelations of social factors or of social with economic factors, since the nature of such interrelations (including the impact of one factor on another) is very much conditioned by the local context in which the factors interact.

A proper developmental analysis must take account of the variety of different micro situations, and must involve breakdowns and analyses by areas and by classes, without averaging or aggregating differentials out of existence. It might be claimed that national development work requires generalized models and cannot make rational use of a presentation of classified or particularized information or of a situation analysis given, say, by a kind of "development map". This point of view would make a unified approach to development analysis and planning extremely difficult.

For the purposes of a unified approach, certain kinds of research and analysis thus need to be built up in connection with policy and planning. As implied above, much more attention needs to be given in general to techniques of diagnosis (which is the analytic counterpart to the concept of style of development) - and perhaps somewhat less attention to the construction of models. By the use of (and regular reporting on) social indicators along with economic indicators, it is possible to compare trends across sectors, and also carry out pattern or profile analysis showing how different factors interrelate quantitatively at a given time and suggesting possible imbalances. This work is still at an early stage in application at the national and subnational levels. Work on qualitative relations across sectors - what has been above called "linkage analysis" - is equally important and at an equally rudimentary stage. Much useful information undoubtedly exists and could be collected on the implications of different kinds or compositions of development within a given sector for progress in other sectors. As emphasized above, however, cross-sectoral relationships of developmental factors must always

be seen in the relevant contexts - the significance of A for B may be quite different in one milieu from what it is in another milieu.

Because of the need in a unified approach for decentralized information covering different regions and different categories of the population, it may be opportune for the central policy and planning agency, in cooperation with the central statistical office or other information-providing body, to establish a development monitoring service consisting of outposts or observatories in different parts of the country. It would be the function of this service to collect relevant information on a series of key indicators of real progress and promptly advise the central planning office and decision-makers as to what is happening in the different localities and different categories of the population. It would keep a look-out on the implications of technological changes and other kinds of transformation at the local level, including implications in terms of economic potentials as well as various aspects of livelihood. This information would supplement macro data and help guide the planners in their efforts to achieve a more unified approach to socioeconomic development.^{1/}

Questions of Administrative Organisation

Several re-orientations in development planning are implied in the preceding discussion - re-orientations that would put more emphasis on analysis of styles and strategies of development, on diagnosis as a basis of project and policy selection, on institutional and structural change, on use of micro analysis systems, etc. Some of these functions go beyond what may be considered to be the proper functions of planners; several lead into troubled waters. It has been pointed out, furthermore, that a number of important requirements of development, identified under the term "capacitation", cannot really be achieved through the techniques of planning (unless the word "planning" is given a great deal of elasticity).

^{1/} A number of research institutes in developing countries are now cooperating with UNRISD in testing the idea of development monitoring services.

If this analysis is correct, it raises some basic issues about the future position of planning and planners. In general, however, it must be recognized that planners already do much more than plan and that they tend to know much more about development problems than most people. It is reasonable to conclude that they are best qualified to assume broader responsibilities, working in close association with the political decision-makers on the one hand, and with research personnel on the other hand. (It might perhaps be better to call the overall agency concerned not the "national planning office" but the "national research and development office". However these are matters of words.)

The unified approach implies a very close relation between technical and political decisions. It is common to consider developmental ends as matters of political decision and the means as technical matters, but, in the interdependent process of development, goals that are ends in themselves are also means to other goals, and the problem of decision making is ultimately one of choice among alternative possible combinations of means and ends - that is, between alternative styles of development.

The establishment of a development monitoring service has already been suggested; a build-up of diagnostic staff should be associated with it. To promote cross-sectoral integration and regional integration, some countries have established a planning management service which involves, among other things, the placing of representatives of central planning office in (a) different sectoral ministries and (b) different regions of the country. Another administrative arrangement for unified development has involved setting up planning and project review commissions whereby a body of experts with competence in social matters or environmental matters reviews economic proposals, economic experts review social proposals, etc. In developing countries a major problem is the scarcity of personnel to undertake the various functions indicated for a unified approach; planning offices are already overburdened. Training in cross-sectoral development analysis and planning is therefore an essential requirement, and calls for international support.
