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UNITED NATIONS  
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Distr.  
LIMITED

E/CN.14/CAP.4/5  
2 August 1972

Original: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Conference of African Planners  
Fourth Session

Addis Ababa, 4-13 October 1972

REPORTING AND EVALUATION OF DEVELOPMENT PROGRESS AT THE NATIONAL  
LEVEL

Paper prepared by the Centre for Development Planning, Projections  
and Policies

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## I. ROLE OF SYSTEMATIC REPORTING AND EVALUATION OF PROGRESS

In the past two decades or so a great many plans of economic and social development have been formulated in the developing countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America. Undoubtedly, with the passage of time, a significant amount of experience has been built up. In a number of countries, the successive generations of development plans have incorporated into their moulds certain lessons of past experience - a process which has helped to inject elements of both realism and strength into the more recent development efforts. Yet, looking at the broad spectrum of planning endeavours of the developing world, it would appear that the remarkable agility shown by developing countries in drawing up national plans has not been matched by vigour and success in implementing these plans. Despite the experience accumulated in the past years, plan implementation remains greatly deficient in many developing countries.

Development plans have foundered for a variety of reasons. Prominent among the reasons - though not all present simultaneously - have been political changes, lack of realism in delineating goals and weaknesses of implementation machinery. <sup>1/</sup> Further, a major reason for the deficient implementation of plans is to be found in the inadequate attention paid by many Governments to the important role of review and appraisal of development progress to be carried out at frequent intervals. Such a review enables the planners to monitor the progress of the plan and take whatever corrective actions that may be necessary. When implementation authorities have full explanation about the nature of progress of any particular programme or project, it is possible to take the required remedial action, or, if necessary, to reorganize or restructure the programme for implementation in another place and at a subsequent period. Further, the experience gained in implementing a programme can be built into the formulation of subsequent plans - especially the formulation of the plan for the subsequent year.

The need for a systematic review and appraisal is not something which is linked exclusively with the planning exercise. Indeed, progress reporting, operational research and evaluation are indispensable tools of general development administration. In the context of implementation of development plans, however, such review and appraisal activities become critical. Development administration is a continuing and complex activity and it demands special skills and aptitude. It is not only difficult to manage development programmes without a well-organized system of information flow, but is also often wasteful.

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<sup>1/</sup> The experience in planning and plan implementation has been examined by the Committee for Development Planning at its earlier sessions. See Economic and Social Council Official Records: Forty-third session, Supplement No.7, Forty-fifth session, Supplement No.7, Forty-seventh session (E/4682). See also United Nations, Implementation of Development Plans: Problems and Experience (World Economic Survey, 1966 - Part One) (E/4363/Rev.1)

Unfortunately, many developing countries fall far short of this requirement. The most important reasons are: (a) failure to appreciate that a planning exercise is a continuing process and the past experience, current formulation and future perspective are integral parts of that process; (b) failure to recognize the constructive, purposeful and forward-looking role of the evaluation exercise through initiation of suitable follow-up actions. In addition, it is also not uncommon to find that the Government in power and the bureaucracy - especially the former - are reluctant to face the consequences of a scientific reporting and evaluation of plan programmes and projects. As a compromise, some sort of an "internal" appraisal by the ministries or government departments on the basis of very broad aggregative data is undertaken. Even this "internal" appraisal is rarely undertaken on a continuing basis; it often takes the form of a "post-mortem" appraisal long after the event is over.

The planning exercise has to start with a long-term perspective of economic and social development and proceed from this indicative approach to a more definite and operationally meaningful plan frame covering a timespan of four or five years. A well-articulated medium-term plan, which sets out the development tasks in some detail, is in itself a valuable aid to the process of implementation. The practice of translating medium-term plans into still more operational annual plans, which a growing number of developing countries are now adopting, provides further help to the implementation process. The long-term perspective plan, the medium-term plan and the annual plan are knit together with common objectives and aspirations. While the annual plan is prepared in the context of the medium-term plan and the latter in turn is drawn from the long-term perspective plan, these undergo frequent revision and reformulation in the light of the experience gained in the preceding planning phases. This backward and forward linking in the planning process makes it more realistic, adds dynamism and gives continuity to the entire planning effort. The establishment of close links between the annual plans and the annual budgets of Governments, especially through the adoption of programme and performance budgeting, gives additional strength to the task of implementation.

Often critics of planning in developing countries draw pointed attention to shortfalls in attaining the targets and objectives set out in development plans. It would be wrong, however, to conclude from such statements that planning has been a failure. The crucial aim of periodic assessment should be to draw appropriate lessons from the experience gained and utilize the lessons in numerous practical ways. It is in this framework that systematic reporting and evaluation of development progress need to be undertaken and followed by remedial action, wherever necessary, as an integral part of the planning process. Although based on a retrospective analysis, regular assessment has to be conceived as a forward-looking exercise.

In this broad frame of thought, the present paper deals with methods and organization of reporting and evaluation of progress at the national level. Section II discusses aspects of reporting and evaluation of progress in implementing individual development projects and programmes. Section III

touches on some questions relating to reporting and evaluation of progress at the economy-wide level. Section IV puts forward a number of proposals for an action programme designed to improve reporting and evaluation of progress in developing countries. The annex contains a case-study of the reporting and evaluation system adopted in India, a developing country with considerable experience in development planning.

## II. REPORTING AND EVALUATION OF PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES

Reporting and evaluation of progress in implementing projects and programmes are two distinct, though closely related, activities. It would be convenient therefore to discuss them separately.

### A. Progress reporting

The practice of reporting progress from time to time is as old as the initiation of systematic administration. This is a tool which administrators find extremely handy in taking stock of the situation at frequent intervals. Such progress data have mostly been in respect of the disbursement of budgeted funds at the sanctioning level and the accounting of receipts and expenditure at the operational level. These data were utilized to monitor the flow of funds and their proper utilization. In a few cases, these progress data on financial outlays were supplemented with those on physical achievements.

Even such a simple tool has not always been properly designed and utilized. The art of efficient progress reporting has been taken too readily for granted. The collection and the processing of progress data appear to be a simple mechanical task on the surface, but at the operational level the job is complex.

Before an efficient progress reporting system can be established, the essential precondition is that plan programmes and projects are formulated unambiguously with specification for financial outlays and requirements of materials and personnel. The national plan is commonly prepared at the level of the Central Government for the country as a whole, with appropriations earmarked for individual sectors of the economy. These allocations are then subdivided among the constituent units of the Central Government. In large developing countries, with a federal form of Government, the allocations are divided among the authorities of individual regions within the country. Since the entire planning process usually works from "top downwards" and not from "bottom upwards", it has been criticized as unrealistic and unrelated to the needs and resources of the different regions and sub-regions. Currently, attempts to start the formulation of the plan from the lowest administrative unit may be observed in a few developing countries. These local plans become the basis for the formulation of regional (provincial/state) plans. How far this will be feasible has yet to be seen, but there is merit in attempt

-ing such an exercise in order to dovetail the needs and resources of fairly homogeneous units within the broad context of the regional or the national plan. In other words, the better method, perhaps, would be to start the exercise from both ends so that at some point, a fair compromise is struck between what is achievable at the national level and what should be attempted as a minimum based on the needs and available resources of different sectors, regions and groups. The time horizon and cost schedules of different programmes and projects have also to be specifically laid down. Finally, the expected results should, as far as feasible, be postulated at the time of the formulation of the plan. The actual achievements and problems associated with them can be evaluated only against the above specific details.

The second precondition is the availability of adequate and timely information. The situation in this respect is generally very unsatisfactory in developing countries. Often even the basic statistics remain to be built up, accurately and in time, from geographically dispersed measurements. Unless priority is accorded to the collection of required information, both plan formulation and plan implementation will remain weak.

The main elements of an efficient and up-to-date system of collection of progress data on the projects and programmes set out in a development plan should be as follows: (a) data on both financial outlay and physical achievements should be collected; (b) forms in which the data are transmitted should be standardized and overlapping of information should be avoided; (c) a strict time schedule should be laid down for the transmission of information to the respective layers of authority and supervision.

The data on financial outlay and physical achievements are not always easy to collect since these data cannot be cross-checked unless at the time of formulation of the programme or the project, a correspondence has been worked out and targets of physical achievements have been specifically and accurately determined. Further, these physical targets have to be broken down at the sub-national levels. Unless this is done, the data on the physical achievements often appear to signify very little. For example, it has been found that the definition of minor irrigation works or of rural electrification or of public health measures is not uniform from region to region and, therefore, the aggregated data at the national level give an incorrect and, sometimes, misleading picture. In the case of manufacturing sector projects, however, the determination of physical targets entails little difficulty of measurement.

The forms in which the progress data are transmitted need to be standardized and streamlined. Often, the collecting agencies are required to fill in a large number of forms for supplying similar types of information to a large number of departments; and in many cases, these agencies are not set up exclusively for doing this particular job, but have to carry out such tasks

in addition to their normal routine or, even sometimes, development activities at the ground level. Further, the required filling in and transmittal of these forms are so frequent that there is considerable waste of time and resources at all levels of execution of a programme. Apparently little attention has been given in the past to the preparation of standard forms along with the formulation of a programme or project. Rarely are all departments directly interested in a particular project brought together, their requirements of progress data ascertained and co-ordinated so that unnecessary duplication of forms and channels of transmittal can be avoided. The need for standardization and streamlining is all the greater in large developing countries with a federal form of Government, as in these countries the layers of governmental machinery are generally greater in number.

The usefulness of progress data for review and appraisal of development prospects and programmes depends to a large extent on their timeliness. The principal executives, the policy-makers and the planners will find these data of little use in discharging their respective functions, if they are received long after the event. It may be wiser to restrict the collection of data to a few essential items and at less frequent intervals, say, once a quarter rather than every month. Getting partial data accurately and up-to-date is better than getting all the details too late to be of any use in either monitoring or programme reformulation. It may be worthwhile to consider the phasing of the collection of different types of data both over time and among regions. In fact, it may be possible to build up the picture of the main sectors and important sub-sectors of the economy from time to time, by having recourse to the progress data of important plan programmes or projects in the respective sectors. Since conditions vary from country to country, each country has to prepare its own priority list of projects and programmes for the purpose of collection of progress data in time and with desired accuracy.

The plan may be prepared by a central planning agency in collaboration with the regional administrative units and the central ministries but the responsibility for implementation mainly rests with individual ministries and departments. In a federal set up, a large part of the plan is executed by the constituent units of the federation. These programmes generally fall in the field of agriculture, education, health and other social welfare activities. The system of progress reporting has to take into account the vertical and horizontal proliferation of governmental machinery.

In most developing countries, no appropriate machinery exists for undertaking the job of progress reporting methodically. There is an urgent need for setting up statistical cells in each important programme and project areas. In order that the time-lag between collection and transmission to each successive higher levels can be reduced to the absolute minimum, it may be necessary to arrange for some central authority to receive a copy of such progress reports directly from the primary unit of collection. For programmes and projects executed by the Central Government, such progress reports should come to the central executive ministry or department and may be passed on, after being processed and collated, to the central planning agency. The organizational arrangement may have to be tailored to the needs and resources of individual countries. Whatever the arrangement, serious attention needs to be paid and adequate resources earmarked for undertaking the important task of progress reporting.

While the decision to locate the responsibility of final receipt, processing and dissemination is dependent on the convenience and background of each country, it is desirable that those who are the main users of these data should have prior access to them. Thus an ideal arrangement would be to mail these reports directly to the department concerned with a copy simultaneously dispatched to the central planning agency.

At the central planning agency, the substantive divisions concerned should prepare the individual project files for important projects where all data relating to the initiation, implementation and, if completed, the impact of the project should be kept. This can be done manually through the Kardex system or through the data storage and retrieval facilities of the computer. It has been mentioned earlier that it may not be possible, because of the constraints of time and resources, to have a complete coverage of the analysis of progress data simultaneously. The important projects and programmes have to be listed and it will greatly help in monitoring the progress of the plan if the organizational arrangement could cover such a limited list to start with.

## B. Evaluation

### 1. Content

In essence, evaluation of a programme or project involves measurement of its impact or, to put it differently, of its economic and social effects. Evaluation is based on progress reporting, and it is a task which calls for the services of trained analysts. Evaluation brings out the success or failure of attempts at solving the problems arising in the execution of a programme or project. Drawing upon such evaluation, the legislative body of a country - usually through one of its subsidiary organs - is able to subject the activities of ministries or departments of the Government to critical scrutiny.

Evaluation of progress has to go beyond progress data and probe deeper. Real evaluation begins where progress reporting ends. The distinctive features of evaluation may be summarized as follows:

- (a) Analysis of the objectives of the programme under study, the approach to its formulation and target-setting at different levels and the system evolved for its implementation;
- (b) Examination of the suitability and effectiveness of the organization, methods, procedures and schedules used for its administration and execution at different levels;
- (c) Assessment, in the light of the programme objectives, of the impact through analysis of the flow and distribution of benefits and the use made of these;
- (d) Ascertainment of the factors and reasons underlying the differential impact - successes and failures - in different areas and groups and people's acceptance, co-operation and involvement at the level of execution;



- (e) Ascertainment of wastages of labour, materials and money, if any, and
- (f) Suggestions for improvement in programming, administration, organization, execution and extension.

The potential benefits and costs of a project or programme are estimated at the stage of plan formulation; such estimation is part and parcel of pre-investment appraisal and the preparation of a report on the feasibility of the project or programme in question. When the projects and programmes are completed, it is instructive to reassess the benefits and costs to find out discrepancies and the reasons for these.

An ongoing project does not, however, lend itself easily to reassessment of likely benefits and costs at some intermediate stage of work. But in any event the work on an ongoing project needs to be assessed against the time schedules and outlays provided for at the stage of project approval. The "network" scheme and the "critical path" indicators are very useful for this purpose.<sup>1/</sup> This scheme provides for systematization of time schedules and costs at the time of project initiation, determination of time and cost status at intermediate stages of work, prediction of schedule slippages and cost over-runs, development of alternate time-cost plans and allocation of resources among various tasks. The "network" schemes or "flow charts" can be used for all types of development activities, though they are especially suited for the more complex industrial, transport, power, irrigation and other construction projects. Of course, much depends upon how well the "network" is set up initially by specialists who are familiar with the underlying intricacies and how good the subsequent reporting and analysis system is. A number of developing countries may find it difficult, at their present stage of development, to locate such expertise. Also, rural development programmes, apart from such entities as major irrigation projects, are not easily amenable to detailed "network" schemes; village activities are usually too scattered and insufficiently quantified. However, even in such cases, the basic logic - adherence to time schedules and cost plans - needs to be borne in mind.

Evaluation of progress requires adequate numbers of trained persons to do the job and a heavy input of time on their part. As such resources are generally scarce in developing countries, evaluation of progress in implementing development programmes and projects - as distinct from progress reporting - has to be selective. In this context, it would seem that at least the following types of activities should be regularly evaluated:

- (a) Projects and programmes of a pilot nature;
- (b) Programmes showing persistent shortfalls, lags, problems and difficulties in implementation;
- (c) Impact programmes of a "crash" nature like the intensive cultivation schemes;

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<sup>1/</sup> See, for example, M. F. Millikan, "Comments on methods for reporting and evaluating progress under plan implementation" in United Nations, Planning and Plan Implementation (Sales No: 67.II.B.14)

(d) Programmes and schemes involving large outlays and relying for their success on the co-operation and participation of the general public and private institutions; and

(e) Special programmes for the benefit of backward areas or weaker sections of the population.

The development process calls for far-reaching economic and social changes. Because of the many social and institutional factors involved, evaluation of progress in a number of areas calls for a multi-disciplinary approach, involving economists, cost accountants, sociologists and public administration experts. The end product of an evaluation study is informed judgement based on and supported by quantitative data, qualitative information and personal observations of experienced people. As already stressed, evaluation is not designed merely to indicate the extent of fulfilment of plan targets; its main purpose is to lead, through systematic analysis, to improvements in plan implementation and in subsequent plan formulation. It is also the purpose of evaluation to promote a dialogue on policy issues among higher echelons of the Government, thereby giving further impetus to economic and social development.

## 2. Methods and procedures

Evaluation studies at the programme level may not always take the form of a representative sample survey with elaborate statistical design for estimational purposes. It will, nevertheless, be useful to prepare their design in such a way as to arrive at an objective assessment of the situation. At times, it will be necessary to follow the case study method where the number of projects in the programme is small or where the method of aggregative approach to provide an overall picture is not applicable.

Further, in some cases, an evaluation study may have to be more intensive and purposive in nature than what is permissible through a "wider coverage" sample assessment. In that case, the study needs to be problem-oriented. For instance, if an evaluation analyst is required to find out how far the objectives of rural works programme have been achieved, then one cannot cover a large area and give the result in broad aggregative terms. The objectives of the programme may be creation of employment for the rural people during the slack season and creation of capital assets - for example, digging of wells and tanks, and construction of link roads. In such a context, it would be appropriate to take a few typical cases of rural works programme and then attempt to provide answers to specific questions.

Even then, the selection of the case types to be investigated should be based on a scientific sample. Whether it is of a restricted sample survey type or a case study, the objective conditions to be fulfilled are that (a) the sample units to be studied should contain within themselves the diverse situations present in the representative geographical regions and subregions in the country and, (b) a minimum background information of the area should be available to enable the drawing of a scientific sample design.

Evaluation is a practical job. The analyst has to develop a sense of objectivity through sheer experience of handling the job of evaluation. It is, therefore, of great importance that the tools of observation he has to handle should be adequate, scientific and practical. As mentioned earlier, the evaluation analyst has to start his work with the progress data collected by the ministries or departments. It has been found from experience that these progress data at times contain such discrepancies as to make them unusable. It may, therefore, be necessary to provide for checking these progress data in the design of the evaluation studies. Additional explanations may also have to be collected for supplementing the progress data.

It is well-known that a good deal of important information is contained in the administrative circulars and notes prepared at various levels. Most of this information is qualitative in nature. Nevertheless, it may be as objective as quantitative data. Further, the executives who are responsible for the implementation of a programme or project can furnish additional insight into the problems of implementation and the reasons for successful or tardy progress shown by the programme. It is true, however, that the observations made by these officials have to be sifted carefully so that the evaluation analyst can isolate, as far as practicable, the subjective elements. Similarly, others who may be connected with a programme where acceptance and public participation is a pre-condition for its successful implementation, may have to be interviewed in the course of carrying out the evaluation study. This is specially true in the case of social programmes - for example, education, health, housing development of backward classes in the community - and, at the lower levels of implementation, that is, at the district or village levels. Finally, the ultimate beneficiary of a development programme is an important source of information, not so much to know about its impact as to spell out his reactions with regard to the rationale and methods of implementation of the programme.

The methods generally followed to collect the diverse types of information - quantitative data, qualitative facts and observations and reactions of individuals concerned with either the implementation or the impact of a programme - are also of diverse nature. Forms and schedules of investigation are the usual instruments through which the quantitative data are collected. The questionnaire is used for eliciting the observations and reactions of officials, non-official and individual beneficiary. Sometimes, an experienced investigator needs a mere listing of points on which he should engage the officials.

In addition to the above sources of information and various instruments to collect data the utility of on-the-spot field notes prepared by investigating personnel may be very great. These field notes include, in addition to the views of the field officer on the accuracy and completeness of the data collected from various sources, his observations on the working and impact of the programme. In a way, these are, themselves, appraisal notes and are often found to be extremely useful by the analyst when he is engaged in the analysis of the quantitative data and attempting to draw appropriate inference from such data.

In the case of quantitative data, the impact of any programme may be measured in terms of well-known techniques of cost-benefit analysis or with the help of specially defined economic and social indicators. In some cases, it may also be possible to apply the "factor analysis" technique in order to isolate the relative importance of different variables in bringing about the desired results. For instance such a technique has been used in India in sorting out the important factors which explain the differential adaption ratio of the programme relating to high yielding varieties of seeds between different areas and different crop regions. Similarly, it has also been used to highlight the important variables which led to the sustained motivation in the adoption of the family planning programme.

But the search for an appropriate technique of processing and analysis of qualitative data baffles many a time an evaluation analyst. These qualitative data are, to a large extent, the product of a mixture of objective facts and subjective interpretation. In most cases, the subjective elements predominate such a mix. There is no simple agreed measure of social progress. The evaluator has to ask, for example: "Are the rural people more receptive to new ideas, techniques or values and less reluctant to adopt them and make the necessary changes in human relations"?

However, it is not always practicable or convenient to measure the impact of the programme in terms of the ultimate criteria. The evaluator may have to be satisfied with what is called intermediate indices. For example, he may have to fall back on changes in the quantities of seeds and fertilizer used rather than in the gross output of the farm or the net real income of the farmer as measures of the economic impact of the programme. He may, similarly, have to rely on various indirect evidences of the growth of community spirit and of forward look among village people - for example, their contribution to projects of common benefit, and the creation and the working of institutions which require co-operative effort. The analyst should however, use the intermediate indices with great care.

By way of illustration, it may be useful in this context to describe briefly the methods and procedures followed in the evaluation of two major programmes in India to which reference was made earlier - namely (a) the high yielding varieties (HYV) programme in the field of agriculture and (b) the family planning programme in the field of population control. 1/

1/ For a more detailed description, see India, Planning Commission, Programme Evaluation Organization, Evaluation study of the High Yielding Programme - Report for the Kharif - 1967, (New Delhi, August 1968, PEO Publication No.62); and Family Programme in India: An Evaluation, (New Delhi, April 1970, PEO Publication No.71)

Since the expectations from these two national programmes were high, they were subjected to detailed assessment. The HYV programme was initiated in the year 1966/67 and the family planning programme was stepped up substantially from the same year. In 1967/68, 1968/69 and 1969/70, three extensive surveys were conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the HYV programme, an action programme incorporated in the fourth five year plan of the country. The evaluation study of the family planning programme was undertaken in 1968/69.

The main issues relevant for the studies on the implementation of HYV programme in India were:

- (i) examination of the federal and state policies relating to this programme;
- (ii) the approach to planning and programming of the schemes with particular reference to the principles laid down in the selection of areas and farmers, fixation of targets for different crops and the basis for the fixation of such targets;
- (iii) measures contemplated for the timely and adequate supply of required inputs such as quality seed, fertilizer, pesticide and credit and an examination of the extent to which these were made available to the programme areas;
- (iv) technical aspects of the programme, such as the development of crop strains, conduct of experiments, trials and demonstrations, in determining the suitability of the varieties recognized as high yielding under varying agroclimatic conditions; and finally
- (v) The extent of adoption of practices and reasons for non-participation.

While the main objectives of these studies remained the same, additional emphasis was given, in the 1968/69 study, to two areas of enquiry: (i) the programme of research and field trials of new varieties and, (ii) the extent to which participating farmers adopted the package of inputs and practices recommended by the HYV programme. The financial aspects of the HYV programme became the main focus of the 1969/70 study.

Data were collected at two main levels; (a) in the villages from village officials and farmers, and (b) from community development block, district and state officials and institutions. The following instruments of observation were used in the studies:

- (i) State Level Schedule for collecting the quantitative data regarding the coverage of area, quantity of inputs supplied, institutional arrangement made, etc.
- (ii) State Level Questionnaire for collecting the qualitative facts regarding the policy issues, the organizational aspects and the co-ordination between the different departments of a state.
- (iii) District and Block Level Schedule and Questionnaire for the above purposes at the district and block levels.

- (iv) Village Level Schedule and Questionnaire for collecting the aggregate data regarding land holding, cropping pattern, land use, agricultural practices, production, prices, etc.; and finally
- (v) Participating and Non-Participating Farmers' Schedules mostly for collection of quantitative data regarding the acceptance or otherwise of the programme.

In addition, field notes were prepared at each level of investigation which summarized the reactions of field officers about the spread of the programme and the various problems associated with it.

The main findings of these studies were utilized to reformulate or re-emphasize certain aspects of the programme - both policy implications and programme content at the state or district level. For instance, it was found that (a) the selection of suitable seed variety was defective in many places; (b) that the recommended dosage of fertilizer use was unrealistic; (c) that no effective arrangement for storage and marketing was contemplated, and (d) that credit was not a major bottleneck in the spread of the programme to wider areas. These findings were fed back to the central planning agency, state and federal departments of agriculture and prompt corrective actions were initiated in appropriate situation and context. The results have been rewarding. The HYV programme is spreading in India on its own momentum after the initial problems have been successfully located and resolved.

The main objectives in the evaluation study of family planning programme in India were as follows:-

- (i) to study the extent of availability of services and their utilization;
- (ii) to examine the approach and effectiveness of mass education and communication programmes;
- (iii) To assess the knowledge, attitude and reactions of both those practising and not practising family planning;
- (iv) to find out the popularity of the different methods advocated and the reasons for not adopting them;
- (v) to review the arrangements for training of staff; and
- (vi) to study the problems of implementation of the programme at different levels.

In addition to the above major issues, a few additional hypotheses were framed and tested. Some of these were: (a) whether the spread of the programme was related to the various economic, social and religious groups in the community; (b) whether the level of modernization was positively correlated with the acceptance of the programme and (c) who was the most successful motivator in this programme - the governmental machinery, the local leaders or the neighbour?

In addition to the usual sets of instrument of observation at the state, district, clinic and village levels where both quantitative data, qualitative facts and subjective observations were collected, both the partners of the selected couples who had come into the fold of the programme were interviewed separately by male and female enumerators.

Apart from indicating some positive achievements, the report reveals some serious deficiencies needing immediate corrective action. These relate to aspects such as inadequacy of the training programme, under-utilization of services, need for continued extension efforts to create the demand for the services, delay in detecting and treating after-effects (real or fancied), and ineffective supervision and guidance to field workers. The usual hypothesis that better educated and economically well-off couples practise control of their families was not supported from the field data.

Similarly, religious taboos present in the Muslim and Catholic groups did not have any significant effect on the spread of this programme among these groups. These findings helped the Planning Commission and the Ministry of Family Planning in India considerably to re-orient the content of the family planning programme in the fourth five year plan of the Country. Larger outlay has been earmarked for provision of equipment - both extension and clinical - and to upgrade the quality and quantity of extension work. The sole pre-occupation with the achievement of targets in terms of so many thousands of couples sterilized or using loops, pills or contraceptive devices has been given minor importance as a result of the evaluation study.

### 3. Organizational aspects

It would be appropriate to entrust the task of evaluating individual programmes or projects, and the subsequent appraisal at the economy-wide level, to a unit which is concerned with neither the formulation of programmes nor their implementation. Such a unit can function effectively by being attached to the central planning agency. The need for objectivity and independence which are so essential for scientific evaluation work will be better served through such an arrangement. If resources permit, such an organization should have adequate staff not merely at headquarters to handle the job of analysis and reporting, but also at the field level to do the collection of additional progress data, check the progress data normally collected by the implementing agencies and, occasionally, to undertake some field studies. In many developing countries, the statistical agency has its own field staff engaged on the collection of basic official statistics. If the same cadre of personnel is engaged on the collection of progress of evaluation data, the result may well be data that are incomplete and imperfect or funny. In addition, timeliness may well suffer.

While a separate evaluation unit or organization would have the necessary technical competence, this, by itself, will not necessarily ensure that the suggestions or recommendations are accepted and followed up. The policy-makers, the planners and the heads of implementing agencies should be involved in the process of selecting programmes and projects to be specially evaluated, and also in the follow up actions to be taken afterwards.

An evaluation advisory board may be useful in this connexion. Further, once the appraisal report is accepted by the concerned ministry or department, it should be transmitted to the legislature for the information of its members and published for the information of the general public. An open discussion of development progress reports by the elected representatives of people and by the press may go a long way in influencing both the policy-makers and the planning agency to take appropriate and prompt remedial actions or in helping to mobilize additional resources for formulating a more ambitious plan.

In many developing countries, the job of systematic progress reporting and evaluation of development progress has to be initiated with a handful of trained persons and the cadre has to be built up gradually through learning on the job. While practical job experience is more important than formal training, arrangements need to be made for training evaluation personnel on the basic concepts, technical design and methods of economic and social analysis in addition to the understanding of the planning process - that is formulation and implementation of plans. Training in social behaviour and public administration is also desirable for an evaluation analyst.

The availability of mechanical data processing resources may help substantially in the processing, collating and dissemination of the progress data and other relevant statistical data quickly and with the desired accuracy. Such an arrangement however, will not permit storage of data and their retrieval from time to time. The electronic data processing system has revolutionized the handling of such information. To most developing countries, the cost would be prohibitive. Further, many developing countries entertain an uneasy feeling that the introduction of such a fast data processing machine may adversely affect the already unfavourable employment situation. Developing countries need to weigh seriously the costs and the benefits of a fast data processing system for the reporting and evaluation of plan programmes and data.

### III. REPORTING AND EVALUATION OF PROGRESS AT THE ECONOMY-WIDE LEVEL

Reporting and evaluation of progress in implementing individual development programmes and projects, dealt with in the preceding section, are crucial for efficient planning. Assessments of individual programmes and projects do not, however, provide by themselves a picture of the progress of the economy as a whole. It could be argued that ideally, through aggregation, individual programme or project reports, should lead to an overall view. But, as has been emphasized earlier, because of limitation of resources and time it is not usually possible to evaluate at fixed intervals each of these activities. Besides, the activities in the private sector of the economy are not typically amenable to evaluation of the type discussed in the preceding section.



Yet, for rational and efficient policy-making, it is vital to have a periodical assessment of progress at the economy-wide level. Such an assessment serves as a critical counterpart of short-term operational plans and government budgets. It is through national evaluation of progress that the legislative and executive organs of the Government as well as the general public find it possible to sift the underlying trends and view the emerging developments in their totality. National evaluation of progress is a prerequisite of a coherent and rational development policy.

#### A. Elements of national evaluation of progress

Economic and social development is a complex process; it does not lend itself to measurement in the form of a unique single indicator. It is necessary to look at a range of economic and social indicators in order to evaluate development progress at the nation-wide level. Through such indicators national evaluation needs to bring out whether the country is significantly expanding and diversifying its production; whether productive employment and social amenities crucial to improved levels of living are increasing reasonably rapidly; whether domestic resources are being well deployed in enlarging productive capacity; whether external economic forces are helping or thwarting the process of development; and, above all, what new areas of policy action are required.

##### 1. Growth and structure of the economy

It is convenient to look first at the development of the economy in terms of national accounts. In this connexion, the compilation of national accounts data needs to be improved and speeded up. Data on gross product and national income need to be built up in as much detail as possible in order to bring out not only the growth of and structural changes in the economy but also the allocation of resources among different uses. As it is necessary to examine the trends in real terms, special attention needs to be given to the collection of reliable and up-to-date price statistics. Price data are also required to analyse the state of internal balance in the economy.

For evaluating the course of production, it is necessary to go beyond the national accounts data. Indices of production in major sectors and sub-sectors of the economy, although strictly not comparable with sectoral data in national accounts, provide a helpful notion of the productive performance of the economy, especially since such indices commonly become available earlier than the interlocking set of national accounts. Despite improvements of recent years, the number of developing countries which compile indices of agricultural and industrial production is still astonishingly small. The processing of production data in suitable forms should be a matter of high priority.

To analyse the course of production, it is also important to compile relevant information on inputs and the working of major policy measures. For instance, in the rural sector, information on such inputs as improved seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, irrigation, tools and implements and rural credit is

essential for throwing light on the process of agricultural development. In this connexion, especially from a long-term point of view, it is also desirable to analyse the trends in land tenure and land distribution. Similarly, in the industrial sector, the impact of government policies needs to be examined as closely as possible.

## 2. Employment and levels of living

As the ultimate purpose of development is to provide opportunities for a better life to the people, the national evaluation of progress must focus attention on all those elements which yield tangible improvements in the levels of living. These must include growing employment opportunities, rising and better distributed income, expanding supply of basic necessities of life, a healthier and prolonged life, and better housing. Obviously, therefore, national evaluation has to encompass examination of progress with regard to all such elements.

As indicated in national plans, the provision of adequate employment opportunities is a major objective in developing countries. There are, unfortunately, serious lacunae in measuring employment and under-employment in a large majority of them. Except in manufacturing and large-scale commercial activities, the employment data are by and large incomplete and outdated. Often the available data on employment and unemployment, especially those relating to agricultural and household enterprise activities, are nothing more than a guess. Further, even the unemployment data on registration at the employment exchanges do not usually provide a correct picture of the prevailing situation owing to partial coverage and inefficient operation of the employment exchanges. In the rural areas of developing countries, besides, there are hardly any employment exchanges. Nevertheless, given the importance of the employment problem, vigorous efforts have to be made to assess the employment situation. There is urgent need to maintain a stricter registration of the newly employed and unemployed. Sample surveys of households are particularly useful for throwing light on the employment problems. It is also desirable to scrutinize regularly whether governmental policies are sufficiently attuned to encouraging greater utilization of labour.

To form some impression about the improvement in the average standard of living, it is useful as a first step to examine the change in total output per head or in per capita national income, expressed in constant prices. A mechanical application of the population data to total output or income for this purpose will not, however, suffice. Along with the rising tempo of total production, it is necessary to see whether the pace of population growth has helped to accelerate or retard the per capita output or income. In other words, a review is required of how well the country is fering with regard to efforts for bringing about - if that is its conscious goal - declines in average birth rates greater than those in average death rates. Such a review, of course, is based on evaluation of family planning programmes, as discussed in the preceding section.

Like per capita income, per capita consumption also provides a rough measure of movements in the average level of living. Per capita total consumption is, however, too broad a measure, containing some components that are of little relevance to levels of living. Per capita private consumption, on the other hand is too narrow, in the sense that it does not include these elements of public consumption - such as educational and health services provided by the Government - which have a direct bearing on social welfare. It is useful therefore to supplement this very broad measure of the average level of living by information on the movement in per capita consumption of basic commodities. A continuing scrutiny should be made of changes in per capita consumption of items - major feed grains and cotton textiles, for example, which bulk large in the household budgets of the low-income groups in developing countries. Consumption of such items can be estimated in a rough and ready manner by aggregating production and net imports, with due allowance for changes in inventories. As a by-product, this approach should also provide an idea of the average caloric intake of food and protein, and thus prove particularly helpful where direct surveys of nutrition involving measurements of actual food intake of family groups are not available.

Among other major factors that contribute significantly to the level of living are education and training; they not only provide human satisfaction but also improve the earning potential of the person concerned and, by inculcating skills, strengthen the production capacity of the country. It is important, therefore, to scrutinize regularly data relating to enrolment in educational institutions - that is, the proportion of the various age groups attending primary, secondary, higher, vocational, technical and other institutions. Particular attention should be given to assessing the availability of skills that are vital for enlarging the productive capacity of the economy. From time to time these data should be supplemented by information relating to the proportions of adult population that are literate and have completed formal education at various levels.

Yet another important element of the level of living is the health of the population. While many indicators can be used in this connexion, for a broad over-all view attention may be focused on death-rates, infant mortality rates and expectation of life-span at birth. Useful supplementary information may be gleaned from the availability of medical facilities, such as the number of physicians, <sup>and</sup> nurses and hospital beds per 1000 of the population. Although these indicators of means rather than ends, they do help to throw light on the progress made by the country in raising levels of living.

Closely allied to the health services as an element of the level of living is the adequacy of housing. Information on this element is generally scanty in developing countries, and the data that are available are commonly collected as part of the decennial population censuses. In this area, too, sample surveys undertaken at frequent intervals can be particularly useful means of information.

### 3. Mobilization and allocation of resources

As part of the national evaluation, a systematic examination is needed of the efforts of the country to expand its capital formation and effectively deploy the available resources for enlarging the productive capacity of the economy. An examination is therefore required of not only the over-all level of investment but also of its sectoral distribution in order to judge the effectiveness of investment as well as of the ability to cope with the emerging imbalances.

Concurrently an examination needs to be made of the efforts for mobilizing domestic financial resources for development. The degree of success in tapping various sources of saving needs to be analysed. In examining the flow of government saving, the efforts in raising tax and other forms of revenue as well as in preventing unnecessary expansion in current expenditure (military expenditure, for instance) requires scrutiny. Similarly, policies and arrangements for mobilising private savings call for an assessment.

The impact of fiscal and other governmental policies also has to be looked at from the viewpoints of better distribution of income and such other ways as have a bearing on the productive capacity of the country. Land tenure systems, labour policies and laws governing business enterprises are obvious examples in this connexion.

The analysis of investment and domestic saving provides concomitantly information about the part played by inflows of financial resources from abroad in enlarging the productive capacity of the country. It is important to examine the utilization of external funds, in order to ensure that these are put to effective uses. A close watch is also required on the burden of external indebtedness.

The long run goal of a developing country must surely be self-sustained development, and it is therefore important to appraise the impact of the country's export and import policies. Too often the importance of the country's own efforts for enlarging foreign exchange earnings fails to get the emphasis that it needs. National evaluations of progress should rectify this shortcoming.

### 4. Other elements

The foregoing account of elements of national evaluation of progress is selective; it has touched rather briefly on the areas which call for urgent attention in developing countries. There are bound to be other elements, depending upon the prevailing circumstances, which require regular examination. As part of the general analysis of economic and social progress, a close watch should be maintained on the critical imbalances that may, in the absence of remedial action, jeopardise further progress. Undue inflationary pressures, serious disequilibria in the balance-of-payments

and acute social unrest are the types of issues that need to be appraised with a view to suggesting appropriate remedial action.<sup>1/</sup>

#### B. Organizational aspects

At the national level data are collected by a large number of departments and agencies. While the rôle played by the central statistical office of the Government is bound to be crucial, much depends upon the zeal with which individual agencies carry out their work on data collection. The work of all such agencies - ministries or departments, the central bank of the country and other financial institutions - with regard to compilation of information needs to be harmonized and put to the best possible use.

A mere reliance on the existing organizations and procedures will not, however, suffice in most cases. The requirements of planning and education of progress are such that a great deal of additional effort is called for in developing countries to improve the quantity and quality of economic and social data. Without vigorous measures in this respect the efficiency of planning and plan implementation will remain in jeopardy. In appropriate cases it should be possible to obtain international technical assistance for bringing about statistical improvements.

The work on national appraisals of progress need not be based exclusively on the data collected by official agencies. From time to time some useful empirical studies may be promoted through universities and private research institutes. Such studies can be particularly useful in illuminating problems of a longer-term nature - for example, land reforms and their impact, unemployment of the educated persons, implications of rapid urbanization.

An evaluation of progress at the economy-wide level should be prepared annually, so that the problems and shortcomings revealed by such evaluation can be tackled through coherent and consistent policies in the framework of the annual plan and the government budget for the coming year. As already noted annual plans are the operational instrument of a country's development plan which sets forth for a span of four, five or six years the basic national goals and objectives; it is therefore often useful to make a more comprehensive appraisal at the mid-point of the current development plan. Such a mid-term appraisal helps to re-orient, if necessary, the development priorities during the latter phase of the national plan.

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<sup>1/</sup> A more detailed discussion of the elements mentioned in section III is contained in another study prepared by the Centre for Development Planning, Projections and Policies. See United Nations, The Developing Countries in the 1960s: The Problem of Appraising Progress issued as the World Economic Survey, 1969-1970 (Sales No. E.71.II.C.1).

#### IV. ACTION PROGRAMME

A broad review of the evaluation activities of developing countries shows that, in general, the mechanisms for reporting and evaluation of progress leave much to be desired. Progress reporting is often incomplete and out-dated, evaluation of progress is either absent or inefficiently done, organizational arrangements are often weak and there is commonly a dearth of trained persons. Follow-up actions are frequently shelved or are inadequately taken at the field level because of insufficient delegation of authority. There are many deficiencies in national statistics and serious attempts at producing economy-wide annual appraisals of progress, as part and parcel of development planning, have been relatively few.

Clearly, this state of affairs needs to be changed. As circumstances differ widely in developing countries, no unique framework can be prescribed. Each country needs to adopt an action programme tailored according to its specific requirements and its capacity to undertake new tasks. Some broad remarks may, however, be useful in this connexion. For illustrative purposes, these remarks refer to two widely different situations. Naturally, the exact course of action can only be decided by the country concerned, taking into account its own concrete realities.

In countries where the statistical base is inadequate and the plan formulation is lacking in sophistication - for example, where a number of development programmes or projects may have been formulated without dovetailing them into a consistent plan frame - the following action should be considered:

- (a) At the time of the formulation of a given development programme or project, arrangement should be made to set up a progress reporting cell at the ground level.
- (b) This cell should be asked not merely to report, at fixed intervals, the progress in terms of financial outlay and physical achievement but also the status and quality of implementation of the programme or project with adequate evidence in support of observations made.
- (c) The supervisory officers should undertake frequent inspection on the spot and prepare their own reports regarding progress of specific schemes.
- (d) Till a plan progress and evaluation unit is set up at the apex, the ministries or departments of the Government should be asked to prepare quarterly progress reports of all programmes and projects under their direct control. These reports should be forwarded, without delay, to the central planning agency which, in turn, should present an over-all appraisal report to the chief executive authority in the country.

- (e) In the initial period, the assistance of relevant university departments should be sought for undertaking objective evaluation studies of important programmes and projects. These studies should particularly focus on the working of policy measures and the quality of implementation of plan programmes.
- (f) To start with, complete coverage may not be attempted. A list of important programmes and projects in the key sectors of the economy should be drawn and the appraisal focused on this limited field initially.
- (g) Simultaneously, action should be initiated in two directions:
  - (i) the statistical system should be gradually built up in order to provide the basic indicators of progress at the economy-wide level;
  - (ii) a suitable training programme for building up a core of trained evaluation analysts should be organized.
- (h) As the information about the functioning of the economy expands, the scope of the evaluation of progress at the economy-wide level should be enlarged.

In countries, where the information system and the planning machinery are comparatively well developed, the following action should be considered:

- (a) The type of progress data being collected should be thoroughly examined and sifted according to utility, cost involved, timeliness and standardization of forms. Co-ordination with the central planning agency should help in sorting out the relevant and important progress data from the unimportant ones. An information system should be built up for each important sector, sub-sector, programme and project.
- (b) Newer or more complex forms of information should be compiled as resources permit. Input-output data and detailed data on intra-economy monetary transactions are obvious examples in this connexion.
- (c) Arrangement should be made for taking follow-up actions in time. These follow-up actions should have sufficient authority. Steps taken should be intimated to the central planning agency.
- (d) An evaluation unit should be set up in the central planning agency, to undertake selective and purposive studies of important programmes and projects. In these studies, an attempt should be made to appraise the implementation of policy measures and, also, the methods and procedures followed by the implementing agencies.
- (e) Strict time schedule should be observed in bringing out the progress and evaluation reports. It may be necessary to evolve suitable machinery by which progress data and other evaluation materials flow

directly to the central planning agency. Depending on the availability of resources, and if considered appropriate in the prevailing circumstances, these countries should endeavour to set up data banks through computerization so that data storage and retrieval are facilitated.

(f) The annual evaluation of progress at the economy-wide level should be a true counterpart of the annual plan. In other words, the evaluation should be sufficiently detailed so as to be of material assistance in the formulation of the annual plan and the budget for the coming year. At the same time, it should be comprehensible to the legislators and the informed public so that the participation of various segments of the society in the development process is strengthened.



Annex

REPORTING AND EVALUATION SYSTEM OF PLAN PROGRAMMES IN INDIA: A CASE STUDY

The first five-year plan of India was launched in 1951. This was one of the early experiments among developing countries at comprehensive planning. The planning experience of India has attracted a great deal of attention, and a considerable body of literature has grown on this subject during the past twenty years. A brief description of the system of reporting and evaluation of plan programmes in India<sup>1/</sup> may be of interest in the context of the discussion presented in the main part of the paper.

An important function entrusted to the Indian Planning Commission by its terms of reference is "to appraise from time to time the progress achieved in the execution of each stage of the plan and to recommend the adjustments of policy and measures that such appraisal may show to be necessary".

The progress reporting and evaluation system in India has the following important features:

- (a) periodic submission of progress reports by the project and programme executing agencies on prescribed forms, indicating the progress of development expenditure, construction work, production and other benefits, key materials and employment;
- (b) special inspection visits to projects and investigations carried out from time to time by the members of the Planning Commission, its advisers and senior officers;
- (c) visit of central teams, especially constituted every year for each important project and programme area in order to diagnose lapses and resolve problems with a view to improving the plan formulation for the subsequent period;
- (d) specific project and programme studies undertaken by appointing special teams and by the programme evaluation organization at the federal level and by the State evaluation agencies at the state level;

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1/ Some of the information contained in this annex is drawn from Tarlok Singh, "Planning for economic development in India" published in United Nations, Planning for Economic Development, Volume II, Studies of National Planning Experience, Part I. Private Enterprise and Mixed Economies (Sales No.: 65.II.B.3); and M. Shaghil, "Implementation problems in Indian Planning - a case study", published in United Nations, Economic Bulletin for Asia and the Far East Vol. XVIII, No. 3, December 1967 (Sales No.: E.68.II.F.12).

(c) maintenance of an intelligence and plan progress room by the Planning Commission where the progress of the economy and of the plan is charted to facilitate assessment and regular watch on progress.

#### Programme reporting

The implementing agencies send the progress data at fixed intervals to the executing departments as justification for the expenditure already incurred and also for getting further sanctions for financial outlay. The ministry or department concerned collates these progress data and prepares its own appraisal report. Subsequently, these data and the reports are sent to the Planning Commission when it is engaged in the preparation of the annual plan for the next year. The Planning Commission, in turn, prepares its own progress report for the preceding year on the basis of the data transmitted by the executing ministry or department. It will appear that the progress reports prepared and sent by the programme or project authorities in charge of implementation constitute the foundation and the efficiency of monitoring the plan depends on the quality - that is, accuracy and timeliness - of the data sent by the implementing agencies.

Since the Planning Commission is ultimately responsible for monitoring the progress of plan programmes, it may be worthwhile to state, very briefly, the organizational arrangement that has been made within the Commission for the preparation of appraisal reports.

The Planning Commission functions through a series of divisions and sections. The various divisions may be broadly divided into two categories: (a) general divisions which are concerned with certain special aspects of the entire economy and (b) subject divisions which are concerned with specific fields of development. Within the general group, there are two divisions which are proximately connected with the monitoring of the plan. These are (i) Plan Co-ordination Division and (ii) Programme Administration Division. The former is concerned with the co-ordination of work and operation within the Commission and directly charged for the preparation of annual and mid-term appraisal reports. This division does not receive the progress reports directly from the executing ministry but through the respective subject matter divisions for example, the divisions dealing with agriculture, irrigation, industry and transport. The Programme Administration Division or State Plans Division normally co-ordinates and follows up the plans of the states and serves three high level officers, known as Programme Advisers, who keep in touch with the problems of groups of states and report on the progress of their development plans.

The states have planning departments which co-ordinate the work of other departments for the preparation of development plans and present reports on the fulfillment of state plans.

### Inspection visits to project sites and programme areas

On the basis of the progress reports received by the Planning Commission, and the findings of the project or programme studies undertaken by the programme evaluation organization, diagnostic notes are prepared by the concerned subject division. The members of the Commission, the Programme Advisers and other senior officers pay frequent visits to the problem areas in order to acquaint themselves, at first hand, with the reasons for the comparative failure in implementation. The tour notes of these officials provide valuable materials for the preparation of the annual or mid-term appraisal reports.

### Visit of central teams

At the time when the proposals for the following year's annual plan come up for consideration, which is usually during the period November-December of each year, the Planning Commission in collaboration with the important economic ministries constitutes several central teams and sends these teams to a group of states in different regions of the country. The membership of each of these teams consist of senior technical and administrative officials of the Commission and of the ministries. These teams make on-the-spot observations regarding the progress of important projects and programmes and hold discussion with senior state officials so that the framework of the following year's plan is prepared realistically in the light of the experience gained during the current year. The visits of the central teams have been helpful in drawing out the substantive content of the progress reports and making these data more meaningful for programming and policy formulation.

### Project and programme evaluation studies

Within the general organization of the Planning Commission, the Programme Evaluation Organization (PEO) has functioned, since 1952, as an independent agency for evaluating, in particular, rural development programmes at the field or community level. The PEO has about forty-five evaluation units located in different parts of the country and is increasingly devoting itself to studies and investigations bearing on specific problems. Recently, it has also begun to evaluate urban development programmes such as urban transport, milk supply, housing, large scale irrigation projects and rural electrification. It is using, more and more, the cost-benefit technique in ex-post studies of the impact of development programmes. Since 1965, state evaluation directorates have been set up with functions similar to those of central PEO. These units are attached, generally, to the planning departments in the states. Currently, the central PEO and the state units between them carry out evaluation studies of a large number of programmes and projects every year.

It is now possible to get a good coverage of the problem areas in most of the important programmes through the perusal of these evaluation studies. Till recently, there was another body closely associated with the Planning Commission and having similar functions to those of the PEO, called the Committee on Plan Projects, set up in 1956 by the National Development Council.<sup>1/</sup> The Committee has undertaken studies of various specific problems through specially appointed teams with a view to evolving methods and techniques for raising levels of efficiency and achieving economies, particularly in construction costs. But it has now been abolished and, instead, a management and project evaluation division has been set up.

The PEO, so far, has completed evaluation studies of more than one hundred programmes and projects and the findings of its reports, especially on social programmes, have been fruitfully utilized either in overhauling the programme contents or dropping the wasteful and lower priority programme. These studies are released to the press upon completion and published for general information. Recent evaluation studies on the adoption of new technology in agriculture, knowledge, adoption and practices of family planning measures and development of irrigation sources have helped the Planning Commission and the concerned ministries in restructuring the plan priorities.

In addition to these studies, the Planning Commission has commissioned through its Research Programmes Committee a number of ad-hoc in-depth studies on topics such as implementation and impact of land reform legislation, problems of urbanization and metropolitan transport planning from the research institutions and the universities. The subsequent formulation of the plan was greatly influenced by the findings of these studies. The functions of the Research Programme Committee have been taken over by a newly created body called the Social Science Research Council.

#### Intelligence and plan progress room

Similar to Malaysia's National Operations Room, a Project Information Room has been set up by the Planning Commission. For the presentation of significant information, certain models have been developed and displayed in the project Information Room in pursuance of the need which had been felt in the Commission for several years for a place where one could review the progress of various important projects at a glance and have up-to-date information. The Project Information Room has also been provided with a Kardex filing system and wall charts depicting key information for a number of projects. It is envisaged so that eventually almost all important projects included in the fourth five year plan will be covered. There is separate Statistics and Survey Division which helps in co-ordinating plan statistics and in maintaining the Project Information Room.

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<sup>1/</sup> The National Development Council consists of the Prime Minister of India and the chief ministers of the states within the Union of India. By virtue of the status of its members, the National Development Council may be characterized as the highest policy-making body in India.

The Indian case provides an example where, on the one hand, considerable thought and resources appear to have been devoted to the work of progress reporting and evaluation; but, on the other, as the country's own official documents have emphasized<sup>1/</sup>, they have not yielded sufficient dividends. The appraisal reports have often been insufficiently meaningful and tardy in appearing. The Administrative Reforms Commission reported in 1968 that it found the existing arrangements inadequate in a number of ways. The Commission made several recommendations for strengthening the system for reporting and evaluation of progress. Improvements are now said to be on the way. The progress reporting system has been partially streamlined, the information flow has been mechanized and, more and more, the project and programme evaluation studies and other research findings are being utilized in the preparation of the annual progress reports. In a large number of departments, the programme and performance budgeting method has been initiated. Finally, the Planning Commission has begun moves to computerize the information system and progress reporting.

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<sup>1/</sup> See, for example, India, Administrative Reforms Commission, Report on Machinery for Planning (Delhi, 1968), Chapter VI.