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UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMMES FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTENCE
IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

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I

1. A well organised and efficient administrative machinery is a primary requisite for the successful implementation of any measures to further economic development and social welfare and the need for administrative improvement therefore requires priority attention. For the newly independent countries, the question is not merely one of reorganizing and improving what exists; they have the additional problem of creating new departments and providing new services to meet expanding demands. While these problems are being tackled the business of government has to go on. It cannot be suspended until prolonged studies and analyses are completed and the full complement of administrative and technical personnel required are recruited and trained. The governments have therefore to manage as best they can with the men and means they have and to build and improve on this with the aid of such advice and additional manpower and knowledge as they can get from outside. United Nations programmes in this field are accordingly designed to make this aid available in two ways:

- (a) provision of advisory services and training facilities, including fellowships and seminars both under the Expanded programme of Technical Assistance and under the United Nations Regular programme or General Assembly Resolution 723(VIII) funds; this is a way of transferring knowledge of "what" needs to be done and "how" it should be done; and
- (b) the provision of operational, executive and administrative personnel (Assembly Resolution 1256 (XIII)); this is a way of making available, not only the knowledge of "what" and "how" but also the men who will do the job themselves until local personnel is sufficiently trained to take over.

These two types of programmes are dealt with in more detail in the paragraphs which follow.

II

2. Provision of Advisory Services and Training Facilities, including Fellowships and Seminars (Res. 723 (VIII)). The following types of assistance are available under these programmes:

- (a) Preliminary surveys, carried out by a single expert or a team of experts of wide experience and proved competence. Such surveys can be of great assistance to governments in identifying the areas where technical assistance is most needed and in planning the relevant programmes and requests. The optimum period required for such surveys would vary from country to country but less than six weeks will hardly suffice and more than three months is unlikely to be needed anywhere. A typical example of such a survey would be a preliminary survey made in Sudan by Messrs. R. O. Nischoff and Angus with a view to assess the needs of the country in the field of Civil Service training. Their recommendations to establish an Institute of Public Administration were accepted by the Government of the Sudan and an institute has already been established with further United Nations technical assistance. Another example would be the preliminary survey of public administration made in Saudi Arabia on behalf of the United Nations by Dr. Ramzi, Director, Cairo Institute of Public Administration, at the request of the Saudi Arabian Government.
- (b) Advisory experts. The services of such experts can be obtained for periods varying according to need between six months and two years. Experience has shown that where the administrative machinery is not very well developed, the experts can function with the best advantage in broad fields such as governmental Organization and Methods, Personnel Administration, Personnel Training, Fiscal Administration, Budget and Accounts, etc. Expert assistance for improvement in more limited and localized fields can only be of real and lasting use if an adequate degree of efficiency has already been reached in the basic broad fields. Thus experts have been provided in Organization and Methods and Civil Service Training to Ghana and in General Public Administration to Morocco, Libya, Tunisia and Somalia.
- (c) Fellowships and Scholarships for training abroad. If used in a carefully planned manner, fellowships form an extremely valuable element in the drive towards greater administrative efficiency. The best results are obtained where the candidates for fellowships and scholarships are selected on the advice of the outside experts and are trained abroad to continue on their return the very work for which the outside experts have laid foundations.
- (d) Training programmes and training institutions. It is axiomatic that an efficient administrative machinery should have within itself the necessary facilities for ensuring a continued supply of the trained personnel required for the different administrative tasks. United Nations technical assistance has already been devoted in a number of countries, such as United Arab Republic (Egyptian region) and

Libya, Ethiopia, Sudan and Ghana, in Africa, to establishing institutes of public administration which can serve both by giving in-service training to the government personnel of the different grades and also by undertaking detailed studies and solutions in the administrative problems of the different ministries and agencies. Where the political and cultural traditions and the administrative systems of two or more countries are broadly similar, it would not be impossible for them to pool their resources and with the assistance of the United Nations to establish such training institutions on a joint and co-operative basis.

- (e) Seminars and workshops. A form of technical assistance which, though somewhat indirect is nonetheless valuable, is provided by the organization of seminars or workshops at which the working officials of the different countries concerned with the same or allied branches of administration, can come together and, with the assistance of United Nations experts, study their common problems and compare and profit by each other's experiences. Thus a "Budget Workshop", a seminar in Budget reclassification has been planned for Africa in 1961. Similar workshops have already been held for countries of Asia and the Far East and Latin America.

3. In the newly independent countries special consideration deserves to be given to the desirability of requesting for a short-term preliminary survey mission as described at (a) above. Alternatively, or in addition, governments could ask for longer-term missions consisting of two or three public administration experts who would, between them, cover the broad fields mentioned in subparagraph (b) above and serve, simultaneously, to make more detailed studies and to advise on the steps needed for effecting improvements, as well as to assist in the establishment or development of in-service training programmes for administrative personnel of different grades.

III

4. Provision of Operational, Executive and Administrative Personnel (OPEX) (Resolution 1256 (XIII)). Technical assistance in the form of advisory services has certain limitations. The experts sent to advise a government can only explain what needs to be done and how it should be done.

It remains for the government, with the aid of its local personnel, to carry the advice into effect. A number of countries, especially those which have recently achieved independence, face difficulties, through lack of skilled local manpower, in assimilating the advice given by United Nations experts and in successfully implementing the measures which they recommend. What such countries need is experts who would not only advise them on what to do but would also do the work themselves until the local staff has been trained sufficiently to take over.

5. The OPEX programme has been designed to meet this very real and pressing need. Under it, the requesting country is enabled to obtain from the United Nations the services of experts in the different fields of technical or professional specialization for the performance of such executive, operational or administrative duties as the government may assign to him. The principal difference between the status and conditions of service of the OPEX expert and the advisory expert are as follows:

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

6. Another important difference between the two types of programmes should also be noted. Advisory services of public administration experts under the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance (Economic and Social Council Resolution 222 (IX) and regular programme (General Assembly Resolution 723 (VIII)) can only be obtained from the United Nations in the rather restricted range of fields which are generally understood to be comprised in the phrase "Public Administration", i.e., General Public Administration, Personnel Administration, Organization and Methods, Budget and Financial Control, Tax Administration, Postal Administration, etc. Governments requiring advisory assistance in the more technical and specialized departments and services such as Agriculture, Education, Health, Civil Aviation, Meteorology, etc., have to seek such assistance from the appropriate Specialized Agency. On the other hand, assistance under the OPEX programme can be sought from the United Nations even in the fields which fall within the purview of the Specialized Agencies. In considering and meeting requests for the services of OPEX officers, the United Nations acts in close consultation and co-operation with the Specialized Agency or Agencies concerned, but the request is addressed to the United Nations and the officer is supplied by the United Nations, utilizing the funds provided from the United Nations budget under General Assembly Resolution 1256 (XIII). The following examples of OPEX officers already provided to a number of governments give an idea of the wide range of fields and functions which can be covered by assistance under the OPEX Programme: "Air Traffic Controller"; "Manager, Posts and Telecommunications"; "Hydrological Engineer"; "Director, Fisheries Operations and Techniques"; "Manager, Industrial Development Corporation"; "Chief Statistician"; "Finance Officer, Ministry of Education"; "Engineer, Department of Eaux et Forêts", etc.

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

- (a) Every request for the services of an OPEX expert has to be with a view to his appointment to a distinct and identifiable post, carrying a specific designation, duties and responsibilities, and not merely for work in some general field or activity;

- (b) The duties of the post must be essentially executive, operational or administrative in character and not merely advisory;
- (c) To the extent to which such duties and functions require the officer to make decisions, issue orders, sanction expenditure, make disposition of property or material and to control subordinate personnel, the necessary powers and authority has to be clearly and expressly conferred on the OPEX officer;
- (d) One or more local officers have to be earmarked from the beginning to work with and to be trained by the OPEX officer, so as to be able to replace him as soon as they have acquired sufficient training and experience;
- (e) The necessary budgetary and financial provision has to be made for payment to the officer of that portion of his salary which is payable by the employing government.

8. Governments desiring assistance under the OPEX Programme have to enter into a separate agreement with the United Nations on the lines of a model agreement specially prepared for this purpose.

9. As of 1 November 1960, 79 requests had been received from 11 countries in Africa and appointments of experts had been made in 10 cases. These are, in chronological order, beginning in April 1959:

- (a) Air Traffic Controller, Tunisia
- (b) Economist, Ministry of Finance, Libya
- (c) Director, Posts and Telecommunications, Libya
- (d) Engineer, Departments of Water and Forests, Guinea
- (e) Deputy Assistant Director, Geodetic Survey, Sudan
- (f) Chief Engineer, Department of Land Use and Rural Water Supply, Sudan
- (g) Chief, Olive Oil Bureau, Libya
- (h) Chief Electronics Officer, and
- (i) Assistant Electronics Officer, Meteorological Office, Sudan
- (j) Finance Officer, Ministry of Education, Ethiopia

IV

10. In the operation of these two types of programmes, great care is taken to see that the experts provided by the United Nations do not approach their task with pre-conceived impressions or dogmatic ideas regarding the way in which the machinery of government should be designed, manned and operated. The experts are ever conscious of the fact that administrative forms, structures and procedures do not land

themselves to a simple process of duplication or transplantation and that in the last analysis each country has to evolve its own solutions, appropriate to its own political, historical and cultural context. The expert's role is that of helping local officials to study their problems and to find such solutions. He is not sent simply to give ready-made answers to stock questions.

11. Past experience has shown, however, that in the effort towards increased efficiency in public administration, a centralized and integrated approach to the problem yields the most successful results. Another important requisite for success that the initiative for administrative reform must come from within. The most competent adviser or OPEX expert will fail in his mission if local initiative is not present. But the most important lesson derived from past experience is that real success depends on express and consistent support from the highest political levels in the government. Where, at the summit of the political and administrative power, the Head of the government and his Cabinet colleagues take and demonstrate an active interest in administrative improvement, technical assistance projects are most fruitful. Where such interest is not present, the best efforts are liable to fail.

12. It is realized that the extent to which the different newly independent countries would wish to seek United Nations technical assistance in public administration would vary from country to country and from time to time. Subsisting arrangements with the former metropolitan or trust powers and the amount of aid sought or received from other bilateral or multilateral sources would be important and relevant factors. It is also realized that the governments of the newly independent countries would need some time to examine their own needs and priorities before deciding how much assistance they should seek from which sources.

13. In forwarding requests, reference may be made to Annexes I and II which indicate the type of information which the United Nations require before a project is established and recruitment of the experts can be taken up. Ordinarily, it is the practice in each case to take the specific approval of the requesting governments to the terms of the detailed job description

circulated for the purpose of recruitment. Much of the time taken up in this process can be saved where the government is prepared to content itself with giving a general indication of the type of expert required and of the fields or subjects he will have to cover and authorize the United Nations to draw up and circulate the appropriate job description without further reference to the government.

E/CN.14/89

Annex I

ANNEX I

United Nations Technical Assistance

Provision of Executive and Operational Personnel

OPEX Appointments - Check List

Information needed for consideration of requests

Designation: What will be the title of the post ?

Duty Station: What will be the normal station of duty ?
Is any travelling involved? If so, the extent and nature of such travel.

Duration: Probable duration of assignment.

When Required: The preparedness of the requesting government should be kept in view.

Duties: Indicate the exact duties that will have to be performed by the expert. Compliance with the OPEX Resolution (General Assembly Resolution 1256 (XIII)) is essential to see that the duties are primarily of executive/operational nature and not merely of an advisory character. Information should also be given on the extent of responsibility of the expert to train his counterpart.

Qualifications: Educational, professional experience, regional knowledge and other qualifications necessary or desirable.

Language: Essential and desirable

Background Information: State the nature and objective of the project on which the official will work. Also indicate a brief history of the project and details of any assistance for the project received or requested from other sources.

Designation of immediate supervisor: Mention of the person or authority to which the OPEX officer will be immediately responsible.

Administrative and financial obligations of the government:

Indicate:

1. The local salary of the post with grade (initial salary, annual increment and the maximum).
2. Details of all allowances in addition to salary, together with an indication of the respect in which these are payable, e.g., whether for wife, and/or children, whether for cost of living or for working as an expatriate.
3. Total emoluments from all local sources. (Total of 1 and 2 above).
4. Net income to the Officer (after deduction of income tax, etc.) from the government. If exact calculations are not possible, estimated net income should be indicated.
5. Whether any housing allowance is payable or whether housing is provided.
6. Annual and sick leave admissible to the officer on par with a national civil servant of comparable status.

Any other significant information:

ANNEX II

United Nations Technical Assistance

Provision of Advisory Experts

Check List of Information Needed for Consideration of Requests

- General field:** Overall field of advice, e.g., Public Administration
- Specific field:** More specific indication of the specialist advice needed, e.g., Organization and Methods, Civil Service Training, Personnel Management, Financial Administration and Budgeting.
- Duration:** Probable duration of assignment and of any possible extension.
- When required:** This should be specific (e.g., "July next") or more general (e.g., "urgently").
- Number of Experts:** This should indicate whether the expert will work alone or as one of a team.
- Duty Station:** The normal duty station; any likely travelling should be indicated.
- Duties:** These should be described in detail.
- Qualifications:** Educational and professional qualifications should be stated in full, together with any special requirements.
- Language:** Essential and desirable.
- Background Information:** The nature and objective of the project, as well as some indication of its history and its relationship to other technical assistance projects.

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