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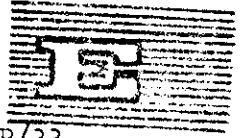
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UNITED NATIONS TECHNICAL  
ASSISTANCE IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
AND ADMINISTRATION

(Paper by Local Government Section,  
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UNITED NATIONS TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
AND ADMINISTRATION

1. This paper has two purposes; firstly, to inform Seminar participants how the United Nations helps Governments to improve their systems of local government and local administration; and secondly, to stimulate discussion of the types of technical co-operation and related activities that would be most helpful to participants and their Governments in the future.
2. Technical assistance in local government and administration forms part of a larger programme of United Nations technical co-operation in public administration. Good local administration is usually dependent on sound organization and operation of government at the national level; and improvements at the local level are likely to be more successful if they are part of a general programme of improvement in public administration. The United Nations assists Governments in formulating such a general programme and in establishing the agencies and institutions needed to make continuing improvements in the organization and operations of government, in personnel administration and training, and in financial policies and administration. Moreover, the various technical offices and the specialized agencies of the United Nations assist Governments in improving administration in their respective fields: planning, housing, health, educational organization and other activities of special interest to local government.
3. Within the Department of Economic and Social Affairs at United Nations Headquarters the Division for Public Administration has substantive responsibility for global programmes of technical assistance in the field of public administration; within the Economic Commission for Africa, a division, similarly entitled, is specifically concerned with these activities in Africa. The two divisions, that at Headquarters and that in The Commission, work in close harmony with each other and both collaborate with other technical offices of the Department and with the specialized agencies in joint efforts with the Governments themselves to improve public administration at all levels and in all major fields contributing to economic and social development.

4. There are also other sources of technical assistance in public administration (in Africa, these are mainly bilateral in character or come from private foundations) which are available to Governments. Non-governmental international organizations such as the International Institute of Administrative Sciences and the International Union of Local Authorities also have an important role to play in the professionalization of the public service and stimulate improvements in governmental administration. The United Nations seeks to collaborate with all such other sources of assistance and professional support for improvements in public administration.
5. With particular reference to local government, the United Nations offers various types of assistance to Governments. It assists in the conduct of surveys to define local government areas, to improve relationships between central government and local authorities, and to establish the organization, powers, functions, and method of financing such authorities.
6. The United Nations may also assist in the implementation of local government surveys, including the establishment and strengthening of ministries or departments of local government and other central agencies for improvement of local government. Special emphasis is placed on these central agencies because, through them, the Governments themselves can render assistance to local authorities. The United Nations has provided advisory assistance to capital cities and other municipalities at government request; as noted later, it is also collaborating in a programme of inter-municipal technical assistance. But the resources of the United Nations are not adequate to provide significant direct help to cities. It is better in any case to help Governments to organize and staff their own central agencies for the purpose. These central agencies may include a ministry or department of local government, a local government public service commission, arrangements for on-the-job training and institutional training, and a loan agency for local authorities, all of which the United Nations could help to establish if requested by the Governments concerned.
7. In addition to these agencies, a union of local authorities and one or more professional or staff associations of local government personnel can contribute in a special way toward improving local administration.

In some parts of the world, the unions of local authorities are important sources of assistance to local units. International non-governmental organizations, such as the International Union of Local Authorities, can advise on the organization of these bodies.

#### Forms of United Nations assistance

8. United Nations assistance in this field is available in the following forms:

- (a) Experts are provided to serve in an advisory capacity. They are normally attached to the ministry or department of government having primary responsibility for the task for which advisory assistance is requested (e.g. a ministry of local government). Experts may also be provided to serve as directors or instructors in training institutions such as an institute of public administration or a school of local government. United Nations experts in local government or in regional and local administration are working in Morocco, Niger, and Uganda and there is a request from Tunisia for a team to assist in preparing a reorganization plan for the capital city. Requesting Governments are expected to provide national counterpart personnel to each advisory expert appointed, so that the expert may impart training and experience to such counterparts. Advisory experts in public administration can either be provided within the framework of the United Nations Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance (EPTA) or from the supplementary funds available under the United Nations regular budget (General Assembly Resolution 723 (VIII)). Under the former (EPTA), requests form part of a country's over-all technical assistance programme, and must conform to rules regarding project planning and biennial programming. Thus initial appointments can be made for two years and may be subsequently renewed. Under the later Resolution (723 (VIII)) funds are specifically allotted to technical assistance in public administration. Since the budget is renewed annually, initial appointments are usually made for one year, with a view to early transfer to the general programme under EPTA if it is apparent the project will be long-term.

Resolution 723 (VIII) funds can thus be used in a flexible way for the support of new public administration projects that could not find an initial place under the Expanded Programme (EPTA). The procedures followed and criteria used for dealing with requests under either source of funds are the same, and all such technical assistance is subject to the Revised Standard Agreement for Technical Assistance.

- (b) The United Nations Programme for the Provision of Operational, Executive and Administrative Personnel (OPEX) enables Governments, with United Nations assistance, to secure the services of well-qualified personnel to perform operational and executive tasks, as the servants of Governments. The OPEX officer receives the local salary and emoluments of his post from the Government, supplemented by payments from the United Nations of a stipend and allowances which bring his total remuneration up to a level approximately equal to that of an advisory expert. Under an Agreement which each Government receiving this form of assistance concludes with the United Nations, OPEX personnel are recognized as having a "special international status" and cannot be required to undertake any activity contrary to the purposes of the United Nations. They also enjoy certain privileges and immunities in the performance of their duties. Nevertheless, while the experts referred to in sub-paragraph 7(a) above, are international civil servants and as such have advisory functions only, OPEX officers, as servants of Governments, perform operational, executive and administrative functions appropriate to the posts they hold and are responsible to the Government alone for the performance of their duties. Such duties may include responsibility for the direction of personnel, the management of material and property and the control and disbursement of funds. Finally, OPEX personnel are intended to be temporary and a prime function of each is to train a national of the country to take over his duties and responsibilities as rapidly as possible.

The OPEX programme was initiated in 1959, as an additional regular programme of the United Nations and placed on a continuing basis under the regular budget from 1961. In 1963, however, the General Assembly sanctioned the use of EPTA funds for this type of assistance, experimentally for the years 1964-1966. Thus operational (OPEX) assistance can now be financed from EPTA funds as well as from the regular budget under General Assembly Resolution 1256 (XIII).

- (c) Another important type of assistance is the provision of fellowships under either the EPTA or Regular Programme of the United Nations to enable officers of central government or local authorities to undertake advanced studies to observe local government systems in other countries, and to have internships or other forms of training in other countries. Priority is given under the Regular Programmes to fellowships for the understudies of technical assistance and OPEX experts. Study tours, such as that last year by senior African officers to study local government in Yugoslavia and India, is another method for broadening the experience of Africans in this field.
- (d) The United Nations Intermunicipal Technical Assistance Programme, which was established recently in collaboration with the International Union of Local Authorities, provides a means whereby cities in developing countries can, with the approval of their national Governments, obtain the services of senior officers and use of training facilities of cities in other countries. The donor cities continue to pay the salaries of officers whose services they make available without reimbursement for periods up to six months and the United Nations pays the travel and per diem costs involved. A municipality seeking assistance under this Programme should apply to the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA) in The Hague. IULA finds a city in another country that can provide the assistance requested and submits proposals to the United Nations for financing after technical review by the office concerned and approval by the member Government of the city requesting assistance.

Three experts have been appointed under this programme, two to advise the municipality of Bangkok on finance and planning and the third to assist the Iran Municipal Association in advising municipalities on budgeting techniques.

- (e) World-wide and regional research, workshops, and seminars are indirect but nevertheless useful forms of assistance. They facilitate the synthesis and exchange of information among countries on common problems and also contacts among officers of different countries who have similar responsibilities. World-wide studies provide documentation for regional meetings and are designed to help Governments to improve their systems of local government and administration. For example, world-wide studies on Public Administration Aspects of Community Development Programmes (UN Sales No. 59.II.H.2) and Decentralization for National and Local Development (UN Sales No. 62.II.H.2) pointed out the importance of central services to local authorities wherever Governments wish to increase the contribution of local government to development. A comparative study on the subject of central services was carried out by the International Union of Local Authorities for the United Nations and is being used at regional seminars such as this as a basis for developing guides applicable to countries in the respective regions. Simultaneously, separate world-wide studies of the following important central services are being undertaken or planned: on unified personnel systems, loans agencies and training institutions for local authorities in order to provide more specific guides to Governments in establishing such agencies or institutions.
- (f) Financial assistance for certain types of projects related to urban development may be obtained through the United Nations Special Fund, which was established for the purpose of financing pre-investment surveys, training and other projects that are expected to lead directly to increased productivity. For example, the Institute of Public Administration in Ghana is financed in part through the Special Fund.

The establishment of national (or regional) training institutions and other agencies for the improvement of local government and the financing of projects in the field of urban development that are essential for economic development could conceivably qualify for consideration. Special Fund projects are financed and administered pursuant to an agreement between the government concerned and the United Nations.

- (g) The World Food Programme, which is jointly administered by the United Nations and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, makes available food for use in projects related to economic development. The programme is still experimental but, through it, food is being used in a number of countries in Africa and elsewhere to reduce the costs involved in resettlement schemes, construction of community facilities and other projects in which local government units are involved.

9. In addition to the above, assistance is also available in the local government field through international loan programmes, bilateral and other multilateral agencies and non-governmental organizations including philanthropic foundations.

10. All requests for assistance from the United Nations must be initiated or approved by the Government concerned. In most countries a special national office has been designated to co-ordinate all forms of technical assistance and to serve as a channel for external assistance. In most African countries there are resident representatives of the Technical Assistance Board (UNTAB) who are accredited either to single countries or to two or more countries or territories. They assist Governments in programming and co-ordinating the technical assistance of the United Nations and the specialized agencies. The office of the UNTAB resident representative can provide additional information on technical and financial assistance available through the United Nations and the specialized agencies. If technical advice is needed



in order to formulate a request for assistance, arrangements can usually be made for the regional adviser in local government or one of the other advisers in public administration at the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa to visit the country.

11. It is suggested that the Seminar discuss the **types** of technical assistance in local government - world-wide research, regional studies and meetings, and country projects - that would be most useful to their Governments.