UNITED NATIONS MANAGEMENT AND DECISION-MAKING PROJECT

Project Description

The U.N. Management and Decision-Making Project, a two-year research program of the United Nations Association of the USA (UNA-USA), is dedicated to strengthening the effectiveness of the United Nations and its immediate affiliated organs by offering constructive criticism regarding the management, governance, and role of the world organization. Financed by a grant from the Ford Foundation, the project reflects an effort to identify ways of making the United Nations work better in an era of increasing interdependence and of growing demands on the world body.

The project consists of two parts. Its centerpiece is a high-level, 23-member international panel that unites individuals with senior political experience and those with outstanding managerial skills. This panel will publish a final report in the summer of 1987 that sets out a rationale, priorities, and feasible agenda for the United Nations for the remainder of the century and proposes the type of changes in structure, procedures, and management that are necessary to carry out such an agenda. A preliminary report entitled U.N. Leadership: The Roles of the Secretary-General and the Member States was released in early December 1986.

Second, in addition to the meetings and reports of the Panel the project staff will produce several research papers over the course of 1986 and 1987. These papers will provide a background for the deliberations of the Panel and will serve as a source of information and analysis for the wider policy-making public in the United States and other countries. As with all of the staff papers that will appear over the next several months, this study reflects the view of its author. It was reviewed by the panellists before publication, but does not necessarily represent the views of the Panel as a whole or the position of any individual member.

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INTRODUCTION

U.N. programs and budgets are today an object of controversy. The U.S. government and the other large contributors contend that the level of the U.N. budget is too high, and that it finances too many activities that are obsolete or of marginal usefulness, while developing countries believe that a lack of resources keeps programs from reaching their threshold of efficiency.

This controversy is not new: It has been reflected in the debates of the General Assembly since the creation of the U.N., and particularly since the 1960s. But it is less well known, in general, that important efforts have been made by member states to settle these differences of opinion – i.e., to develop procedures and mechanisms for facilitating the establishment of priorities, defining precise and reasonable objectives, monitoring the execution of the programs, evaluating the results obtained, and drawing lessons from these evaluations. Unfortunately, this modern and sophisticated approach has not worked: It has not yet facilitated the establishment of a broader agreement on the content and level of the budget. The present crisis is additional proof of this failure.

An analysis of why and how the planning, programming, budgeting, and evaluation system was established and why it has not been able to solve the U.N. 's persistent problems may help us to understand better the nature of the present crisis and the reasons for misunderstandings among member states concerning the role the U.N. must play in 1987 and in the next decade.

Such an analysis reveals that:

- the program planning, budgeting, and evaluation system, which has not been yet fully implemented, can be improved at a number of points; and
- the process of reform thus undertaken could contribute to a new and more realistic conception of the role of the U.N. in the modern world.

PART I

HISTORY OF THE SYSTEM OF PLANNING, PROGRAMMING, BUDGETING, AND EVALUATION

In the mid-1960s, the need for a better system of programming was first felt in the U.N. Not surprisingly, this need was expressed on the occasion of a financial crisis. The crisis was due to the events in the Congo from 1960 to 1964.[1] A large deficit occurred when some member states, notably the USSR and France, refused to pay their share of the expenditures of the United Nations Operation in Congo (ONUC),[2] which included civilian operations and an international armed peace force (UNEF).[3]

The financial situation of the U.N. at that stage was the following: The total budget (gross) of the U.N. in 1960 was $65.7 million. This amount doubled from 1960 to 1966, the figures being respectively $71.6 million in 1961, $85.8 million in 1962, $92.8 million in 1963, $102.9 million in 1964, $108.4 million in 1965, and $121 million in 1966.[4]

The budget of the U.N. was at that time presented annually by object of expenditures. It comprised 20 sections (travel, meetings, salaries, buildings, equipment, printing, field service, etc.) and contained very little programmatic description. Section III on salaries and wages and Section 4 on common staff costs were the most important sections, accounting for approximately 57 to 60 percent of the total budget.[5]

In light of the difficult financial situation, the General Assembly at its 16th Session in 1961 authorized the Secretary-General to sell up to $200 million worth of U.N. bonds to governments, national banks, and approved non-profit institutions. Final receipts of the bond issue totalled $169,905,679, representing purchases by 64 countries.[6]

The total expenditures authorized for ONUC (including UNEF) for the period July 14, 1960-September 30, 1965, amounted to $392.8 million ($48.5 million in 1960, $120 million in 1961, $120 million in 1962, $83.7 million in 1963, $18.2 million in 1964, $2.4 million in 1965). It is to be noted that in 1961 and 1962 these annual expenditures were significantly larger than was the budget of the U.N. itself.[7]

The amount of the deficit – resulting mainly from unpaid assessed contributions – was not known in 1965. In order to clarify the situation and, in particular, "to obtain information giving a clear and accurate picture of the financial situation of the Organization, including a detailed description of its commitments," and to make "a detailed examination of the procedures for preparing and approving the budgets and a review of the procedures for controlling the execution thereof," the General Assembly, in Resolution 2049 (XX) of December 13, 1965, decided to "establish an Ad Hoc Committee of Experts to examine the finances of the U.N. and the specialized agencies consisting of 14 member states."[8] Paragraph 6 of the resolution explicitly mentioned the necessity of examining "the entire range of the budgetary problems of the U.N. and the organizations brought into a relationship with it, notably their administrative and budgetary procedures, the means of comparing and if possible standardizing their

budgets, and the financial aspects of their expansion with a view to avoiding needless expenditures, particularly expenditures resulting from duplication." It also mentioned the need for "rationalization and better coordination."

The Ad Hoc Committee, known as the "Committee of 14," issued two reports. The first report (U.N. Document A/6289 of March 28, 1966) concerned the U.N. financial situation as of September 30, 1965.[9] The second (U.N. Document A/6343 of July 19, 1966), which dealt with budget preparation, presentation, and performance; standardization of budget documents and of financial regulations; the budget cycle; program planning and evaluation; and coordination, is a fundamental document insofar as it established the basis of the system of planning, programming, budgeting, and evaluation that has been progressively developed over the past 20 years.

The second report offered numerous recommendations and suggestions concerning the presentation of approximate estimates of the budget one year in advance, uniform budget presentation by the Organizations of the U.N. system, reporting on budget performance, standardization of financial regulations, the possibility of establishing a biennial budget cycle, standardization of nomenclature, establishment of an inspection unit, development of planning, programming and budgeting processes (effective long-term planning in each organization, establishment of a program budget, synchronization of planning and budget cycles in each organization, evaluation process), and reconstitution of a special committee on coordination by the Economic and Social Council.

A reading of the 1966 document raises the question of why it has taken 20 years to implement only partially the solutions that were recommended in the report. In fact, only one recommendation has been implemented: the creation in 1967 of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU), composed of eight inspectors "chosen among members of national supervision or inspection bodies or from among persons of similar competence in charge of drawing, over their own signature, reports for which they alone would be responsible and in which they should state their findings and propose solutions to problems they have noted." The JIU began its operations on an experimental basis on January 1, 1968.

At about the same time, the Committee on Coordination (referred to in Paragraph 90 of the Report of the Committee of 14), which was created in 1962, was given the name of Committee on Program and Coordination (CPC) by Resolution 117 (XLI) of ECOSOC in 1966. No other recommendation was implemented until the JIU took up the problems of planning, programming, budgeting, and evaluation. Nevertheless, beginning in 1969, a thorough cooperation between JIU, ACABQ,[10] and CPC led to the establishment of the planning and evaluation cycle.

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In a 1969 report on "Programming and Budgets in the U.N. Family of Organizations" (U.N. Document A/7822 of December 3, 1969), the JIU recommended the presentation of the U.N. budget by program, the establishment of the program budget for a two-year cycle, the general adoption of medium-term programming, and the establishment of a United Nations programming service. It took three years for these recommendations to be implemented. The U.N. Secretariat and the agency secretariats were resistant to change, but the JIU had the advantage of following up its recommendation by establishing new notes and new

reports – assisting the Secretariat, for example, in the preparation of an outline of the new program budget and explaining to delegates the usefulness and the practicality of the new methods.

In fact, some of the specialized agencies had already adopted some form of program budget in the 1950s: WHO, UNESCO (1951); FAO (1952). There were biennial budgets for UNESCO beginning in 1953 - 54 and for FAO in 1958 - 59. ILO opted for a biennial program budget in 1971-72. The United Nations finally agreed to adopt a biennial program budget, effective 1974 - 75.

The agencies' adoption of medium-term plans started a little later – with the exception of WHO, which since 1952 has had a "program of work for a specific period" (of five years). UNESCO established its first Medium-Term Plan for 1971-76 and a second one for 1973-78. FAO and ILO adopted a plan for the period 1972-77, and ILO followed up with a second plan for 1973-79. The U.N. decided in 1972 to adopt its first Medium-Term Plan for a period of four years (1974-77).

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The adoption of the new programming and budgeting tools led to some important changes. The presentation of the Medium-Term Plan was made by "major programs, programs, and subprograms," thus facilitating understanding of the numerous and complex activities of the U.N. The presentation of the budget, although it did not correspond exactly to the list of major programs, permitted a better understanding of the relationship between the various departments and units, the volume of their staff, the level of their resources, and the list of various "program elements" composing the various "subprograms." A biennial program performance report permitted delegations to monitor the execution of the program.

The biennialization of the program budget had an important influence on the rationalization of the work of the General Assembly – or of the Fifth Committee at least. In the budget years, the attention of delegations concentrated on the questions of finance and program; in the off-budget years it became possible to devote more time to a number of other problems, particularly the problems of personnel.

But it soon appeared that the new tools had to be refined and that the Secretariat and the delegations had to be educated in their use.

The years between 1974 (the first year of the Medium-Term Plan and the program budget) and 1984 (the date of publication of the Regulations and Rules concerning program planning, budgeting, and evaluation) saw the evolution of mechanisms and the improvement of procedures for getting the system working. The results of this process are still theoretical and formal and the practice is not yet satisfactory, but important steps have been taken toward the definition of an efficient system. The developments that took place during those years can be summarized as follows:

The interest of delegations in the improvement of the methodology has increased since 1974, particularly in the Committee for Programme and Coordination and in the Fifth Committee. The preparation of four successive Medium-Term Plans (three four-year rolling plans 1976-79, 1978-81, 1980-83, and one six-year, fixed-term plan, 1984-89) and of biennial program budgets has allowed the Secretariat and the delegations to experiment with the proposed methods and to put them gradually into practice. Resolutions of the General Assembly have become progressively more precise concerning the manner in

which priorities, objectives, programs, and methods of evaluation should be defined. Successive resolutions on program budgets,[11] on medium-term planning,[12] and on evaluation[13] have refined the methodology to be followed. An important resolution on the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the U.N. (General Assembly resolution 32/197 of December 20, 1977) described in Parts VI and VII of its annex the role that the CPC should play in planning, programming, evaluation, and coordination; the nature of its cooperation with the JIU; the harmonization of plans and programs within the system joint planning; etc. General Assembly resolutions 37/234 and 38/227 defined regulations and approved the rules that govern program planning, program aspects of the budget, the monitoring of implementation, and the methods of evaluation.

The important work that has been done so far on program planning, budgeting, and evaluation is a result of the combined activities of the Joint Inspection Unit,[14] the Committee for Programme and Coordination,[15] the Economic and Social Council (which has also taken a number of resolutions on these questions), the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly, and (upon its creation in 1978) the Planning, Programming and Coordinating Office (PPCO) of the Department of International Economic and Social Activities (DIESA).[16] An exceptional contribution was made by the Committee of 25 Experts, convened in 1975, whose report, "A New U.N. Structure for Global Economic Cooperation" (E/AC.62/9 of May 28, 1975), formed the basis for the restructuring operation mandated in resolution 32/197.

The discussion of these problems – for which partial solutions have been found – related to the shape of the tools for program planning and budgeting (Medium-Term Plans and program budgets), priorities, coordination of the programs of the U.N. system, evaluation, and, finally, institutional mechanisms.[17]

The Medium-Term Plan

Because the establishment of a Medium-Term Plan for the U.N. was an entirely new exercise, it was quite natural that delegates and members of the Secretariat raised a number of questions concerning the utility of the plan, the comparability of planning for the U.N. and planning at the national level, the nature of the objectives, etc.

Although there has been important progress, confusion about the role of the new tools has yet to be resolved. The conception of "planning" tends to vary with national or cultural backgrounds, a fact which led some to oppose the Medium-Term Plan. Supporters of the plan stressed the need for clarity, the necessity for defining clearer objectives, the possibility the plan offered for deeper reflection on the role of the Organization, the rationalization of work, etc. The plan's adversaries stressed the impossibility of forecasting the evolution of world problems, the need for flexibility in U.N. activities, and the practical impossibility of planning the majority of the U.N. activities, particularly in negotiating activities, six-to-eight years in advance (taking into account the period of preparation). Among aspects of planning discussed at length were:

A "rolling plan" versus a "fixed-term plan." The supporters of the rolling plan favoured preparing a new plan every two years, which would contain a general orientation for a planning period of four to six years (the new plan would also cover part of the period covered by the previous one). Supporters of a fixed-term plan contended that in order to establish clear-cut and time-limited objectives,

it is necessary to establish a stable framework for the U.N.'s activities – including a calendar of operations – with the understanding that the objectives and orientations of the plan would be corrected, if necessary, every two years, to take into account new events that might affect the role of the U.N. The fixed-term plan was finally adopted, with a six-year planning period corresponding to three biennial program budgets.

Plan format and subdivisions.

The adoption of the notion of "major program"[18] (for example, concerning population, human rights, or drugs) and its division into various « programs » (for example, to analyze world population or to provide technical cooperation in the field of population) and "subprograms" (for example, to produce demographic analyses, demographic projections, or demographic policies) resulted from a number of studies and discussions, notably at the interagency level.[19] This format would allow precise and time-limited objectives to be defined at the subprogram level--in the program budget, subprograms would be divided into "program elements" that are often identical to "outputs" (studies, reports, symposia, etc.).[20]

Format and content of the narratives, identification of problems, description of "strategies," justification of the choice of objectives, definition and conception of objectives (both of the Organization and of the Secretariat), distinction between various types of activities, and the necessity and possibility of making in-depth, preliminary studies. Research on these and other questions allowed the Secretariat and delegates of member states to reach a better understanding of the economic, social, humanitarian, and operational activities of the U.N. and began to close the gap separating the day-to-day work of document preparation, studies, publications, and meetings from the Organization's final objectives.

The necessity was acknowledged of distinguishing between areas where joint action is made possible by the existence of some level of consensus and those areas where further negotiations are required to establish a common understanding of the issues to be addressed. Nevertheless, this distinction was not taken into account by the plan.

A clear differentiation was made between continuing activities that could not be time-limited because they corresponded to some permanent function of the Organization (for example, the establishment, on a regular basis, of demographic projections or the collection of world statistics) and activities that related to specific objectives (for example, the establishment of an institution for the training of a specific number of specialists).

Because the Secretariat found it difficult to understand this new methodology imposed from above and because there was no training program to help professionals use the new tools, the preparation of the plan was not taken seriously by the units concerned and the first plan they produced did not correspond to the intentions of the legislators. As stated in a report of the JIU published in 1979 after the presentation of the third Medium-Term Plan (1980-83): "anyone who has tried to read these texts must inevitably have been disheartened by the plethora of banalities, by the vague and general wording devoid of any information, by the lack of descriptions of policies and objectives, by the substitutions of lists of outputs for the description of strategies."[21]

The 1979 JIU report made a precise distinction between activities that can 'be programmed and those that cannot, proposing for the first time a precise methodology for defining "time-limited objectives." The report recommended as well the adoption of in-depth studies, a timetable for the preparation of the

Medium-Term Plan, and a new method of presenting policy descriptions for major programs. The JIU underlined the importance of the role of the Introduction to the Medium-Term Plan in the establishment of priorities.

But despite the importance attached to the definition of a better methodology by the Committee for Programme and Coordination and by the General Assembly, and despite the approval by the member states of the main thrust of the JIU's recommendations, these recommendations were implemented only partially – and, indeed, the next Medium-Term Plan was not really any better than the previous one.

The Problem of "Priorities"

The word "priority" is quite popular among delegations. The concentration of efforts on a reduced number of essential activities seems a logical means of addressing the U.N.'s mandate. Prioritization answers the need, generally felt, for the clarification and simplification of the role of the U.N. Unfortunately, priorities are set differently by each member state or group of member states, and even the concept of priority is not absolutely clear. At what level can priorities be set? Is it even possible to establish an order of priorities among peace, justice, human rights, and economic and social development – in other words, among major programs? Does setting of priorities mean the allocation of resources according to the importance of the objectives? These questions are difficult to answer, especially since the costs of programs are mainly related to the type of activities involved (the cost of helping refugees represents $400 million a year, while for human rights the U.N. spends only some $10 million).

An attempt was made by the CPC, taking into account various criteria, to rank major programs according to their importance or success and on this basis to assign a percentage of growth or decrease. This attempt was unsuccessful, despite its modest ambitions, because it was unaccompanied by a more thorough analysis by the Secretariat, by serious evaluations of the results already obtained, and by a firm proposal on priorities from the Secretary-General himself. But an acknowledgement of the need to set priorities did lead to the formulation of Regulation 3.7 on the Introduction to the Medium-Term Plan, which states:

The plan shall be preceded by an Introduction which will constitute a key integral element in the planning process and shall:
   a. Highlight in a coordinated manner the policy orientations of the United Nations System;
   b. Indicate the medium-term objectives and strategies and trends deduced from mandates which reflect priorities set by intergovernmental organizations;
   c. Contain the Secretary-General's proposals on priorities.

Unfortunately, the only Introduction prepared so far by the Secretariat under these guidelines has neither responded to expectations nor respected the requirement of Regulation 3.7. Nevertheless, it is to be noted that the setting of priorities still remains a permanent preoccupation of delegations. This preoccupation is reflected in the repetitive use of the word in a great many regulations. The matter of priorities was taken up again in the report of the Group of High-Level Intergovernmental Experts to Review the Efficiency of the Administrative and Financial Functioning of the United Nations.[22]

The word "priority" has been so overused that it no longer has any meaning.

In fact, this word must be replaced by two concepts:

- A better system of reflection for the consensus-seeking activities; and
- A better system of management for the joint activities of member states on which consensus exists.

Format of the Program Budget

Since the beginning of program planning, the program budget has been defined as an "installment of the plan." Resolution 31/99 (XXVIII) of December 18, 1973, states that "the Medium-Term Plan should provide the framework for biennial program budget." But the respective formats and contents of the Medium-Term Plan and the program budget remain to be defined and their respective roles fully understood. After a number of discussions it was resolved that the Medium-Term Plan would confine itself to major programs, programs, and subprograms, concentrating on narratives describing strategies at these levels-- although particularly at the subprogram level – and limiting mention of resources to the number of staff required to execute the programs. The program budget, on the other hand, was to be a very detailed document, enumerating all the program elements of each subprogram and providing not only the precise dollar figures for each but an equally precise account of the staff required for its execution.

In defining the format of the program budgets, particular attention was devoted to the description of program elements and outputs. The list of program elements – by subprogram – corresponds to the plan of work distributed to the units of the secretariats insofar as the completion dates and the primary users of each program element are indicated, and a typology of standard categories of outputs is established and approved. The presentation of the budget (which has improved over the years) has made possible the establishment of a "biennial program performance report," which indicates – to the General Assembly – the extent to which the programs have been implemented and the reasons for non-execution.

The Role of Evaluation [23]

The evaluation of program results is obviously an essential tool. Most delegations were in favor of the development of such a procedure, but evaluation techniques have taken a long time to develop, and the present situation remains far from satisfactory. The major problems were as follows:

Allocation of responsibility for evaluation. Many delegates were unable to draw the line between the responsibilities and rights of member states to pass judgement on the results of programs and the responsibilities and duties of the units and the technicians charged with preparing reports and evaluation studies. It was finally determined that only intergovernmental bodies (like CPC) would pass judgement and that evaluation units within the Secretariat, or the Joint Inspection Unit, would prepare reports.

Self-evaluation versus outside independent evaluation. Some delegations considered it necessary for the staff in charge of a program to conduct the evaluation of that program and to derive continual inspiration from the spirit of self-evaluation. Other delegations contended that the need for independent outside evaluation was obvious--and not incompatible with self-analysis.

Nature, size, and location of the units charged with preparing reports of evaluation. It was acknowledged that the amount of work involved in establishing evaluation studies was such that it would be necessary to allocate it not only to specialists inside the departments and units executing the program but also to a central evaluation unit inside the Secretariat and the Joint Inspection Unit. The JIU would be responsible for defining the principles and the methods of analysis and would make some ad hoc evaluation studies.

Difficulty of measuring program impact. The first evaluation studies showed clearly that, while it was relatively easy to monitor the execution of program elements and even to pass judgement on their quality and on the skillfulness of their utilization, it was more difficult to evaluate the impact of programs on national policies, on the advancement of ongoing negotiations, and on the process of development within a country. The definition and measurement of program impact was made more difficult by the fact that, in many cases, the U.N.'s role in the undertaking--as well as the resources involved--was marginal. In fact, evaluation studies have not yet developed to the point of usefulness.

The Relation Between Planning in the U.N. and Planning in the U.N. System

The idea of "joint planning" between the U.N. and the specialized agencies of the U.N. system was a very attractive one, and resolution 32/197 had given particular emphasis to this concept.[24] As indicated in our discussion of the Introduction to the Medium-Term Plan, the hope was to develop the U.N. plan in relation to the plans of the other agencies. Since 1978, DIESA's Programme Planning and Coordination Office (po) has prepared a number of studies comparing the activities of various agencies in a number of fields, and the majority of these studies--called COPAS (cross-organizational program analyses)--have been examined by CPC. The creation of the Coordination Committee on Substantive Questions (CCSQ), bringing together the people in charge of programs in the various agencies, has also allowed the development of a better knowledge of the content of the programs of the various agencies. Nevertheless, the results of all these efforts are still limited and "joint planning" remains an ideal.

The Institutional mechanisms

Establishing medium-term planning and program budgeting without creating a body empowered to deal with both program and budget has appeared somewhat paradoxical from the very beginning. Each agency in the U.N. system has an executive board that deals with both aspects of the program budget. Even when the executive boards establish subcommittees to deal separately with program and with budgetary matters, they keep the two areas under their control; and when they adopt a program budget, they have a complete picture of the activities of their organization. When it comes to the U.N. itself, however, the intergovernmental machinery dealing with these problems is more complex. At the level of the General Assembly, six committees (the First, Special Political, Second, Third, Fourth, and Sixth committees) deal with the definition of the programs, and one committee (the Fifth) deals with administrative and financial matters. The Economic and Social Council also deals with programs involving economic and social activities, as does UNCTAD's Trade and Development Board. In addition, two subsidiary organs of the General Assembly work separately on program and

financial aspects of the budget: the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC), a 21-member intergovernmental body that deals with program aspects of the budget and the Medium-Term Plan; and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), in principle a committee of 16 experts, that deals with the financial and administrative aspects of the budget.

The establishment of a single committee to deal with program and budget has been proposed ever since the early days of program budgeting. In his comments on the first JIU report on this matter, the Secretary-General mentioned that the examination of the program budget could be made "ideally by a single body" (AC.5/1429). Proposals for creating a subsidiary body of the U.N. by merging ACABQ and CPC or by replacing these committees with a single compact body have been made on several occasions by a number of delegations and by the JIU.[25] But these suggestions have not yet been accepted.

The Establishment of Regulations and Rules Governing Planning Programming, the Program Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation, and the Methods of Evaluation

The process of codifying the planning, programming, budgeting, and evaluation (PPBE) methodology, gradually defined by the General Assembly over a period of 15-20 years, began with the approval of a recommendation by the JIU in its report 81/7 (A/36/171 of March 1981)·. General Assembly resolution 36/228 requested the Secretary-General to present proposals "enabling it to adopt official rules and regulations." The actual work of codification resulted from thoroughgoing cooperation between and among CPC, JIU, and the Planning, Programming and Coordination Office in the Secretariat. The Regulations, preceded by a preamble stating their aims, contain six articles (concerning applicability, instruments of integrated management, Medium-Term Plan, program aspects of the budget, monitoring of program implementation, and evaluation). They reflect the current understanding of the U.N.'s practice of planning, programming, and evaluation. But despite their codification, the regulations are widely misunderstood and incorrectly implemented. They fail to achieve their real purpose: to facilitate a better agreement among member states on the content of programs and on the financing of activities of the United Nations.

PART II

LESSONS TO BE DRAWN FROM THIS HISTORICAL EVOLUTION

The lessons one can draw from a history of the program planning, budget, and evaluation cycle depend on the philosophy that inspires one's analysis of U.N. achievements and failures.

Everyone acknowledges--and the present financial and political crisis makes clear--that the system has failed to facilitate a better agreement among member states on the content of programs and the financing of the activities of the U.N. Wordiness, which should have been reduced by the definition of precise objectives, is still flourishing in resolutions as well as in documents prepared by the Secretariat--particularly the Medium-Term Plan. The efficiency of the Secretariat does not seem much improved. Objectives are not defined in a more precise way and are not, as prescribed, time limited. So rare is the use of evaluation studies and so limited the use of program performance reports that these instruments have not made possible a regular improvement of the methods the U.N. applies to its work.

Achievements seem meager: A better understanding of what the U.N. does and of what it might accomplish is developing; a more widespread knowledge of the various activities of the U.N.--and their relative costs and importance--is spreading; delegations have documents that give them a precise overview of all activities; and the process of reflection on possible changes has begun. Specialized committees like the CPC are responsible for facilitating and nurturing this process. It has become possible to identify the fields in which, despite inevitable limitations, the Organization has been useful and has helped member states to make some progress--on population, environment, human rights, international law, law of the sea, the peaceful uses of outer space, etc. In addition, member states have been provided with descriptions of programs dealing with similar issues that are carried out by the various agencies of the U.N. system.

But these achievements still fall short of the real ambitions of the program planning, budgeting, and evaluation system, and a feeling of failure tends to prevail.

According to critics of the program planning, budgeting, and evaluation cycle, the problems facing the U.N. since the very beginning have been purely political--the result mainly of a "lack of political will" and thus impervious to technical solutions. According to this interpretation, sophisticated systems alone cannot help to solve a financial and political crisis. This simplistic conception of the U.N. limits the Organization's role to that of political forum, a meeting place for diplomats. It fails to attribute any real importance to the economic and social programs that are the majority of U.N. programs and, consequently, fails to recognize the necessity of improving their efficiency.

This paper supports a totally different analysis. It considers the U.N. in its entirety and not just as a meeting place. It affirms:

- that the General Assembly was right in trying to clarify the nature of U.N. activities and objectives and to define better methods of

> reaching agreement on the content of the programs and on the level of the resources
> - that the program planning, budgeting, and evaluation system is the only method at the disposal of the international community that might facilitate a better understanding of how the U.N. could playa more useful role in the modern world and help member states to identify and solve their common problems
> - that the reasons for the "failure" of the program planning, budgeting, and evaluation system are due to the fact that it has not yet been correctly implemented or even fully developed, and has not been permitted to reach its principal objective, which is to obtain a clear definition of the U.N.'s role at the end of the 20th century.

It is first necessary to acknowledge that the Regulations and Rules guiding the system are not correctly implemented.[26] The main points of the Regulations that have not been correctly implemented are: the use of the Introduction of the Medium-Term Plan as a tool for analyzing the world problems and indicating the U.N.'s main orientations, the establishment of fixed-term objectives, the drafting of understandable strategies for the Medium-Term Plan, the establishment of precise evaluation studies that can provide lessons for the future, and the organization of a calendar of meetings in order to facilitate consideration by the different intergovernmental organs of the relevant parts of the plan corresponding to their mandate.

Member states insist on obtaining better implementation of the PPBE regulations while trying to overcome the resistance of the Secretariat. These efforts have certainly to be pursued vigorously. The Secretary-General should be requested to report as soon as possible on the measures he intends to take for the full implementation of the Regulations, particularly the preparation of the next Medium-Term Plan; and the General Assembly should establish a procedure for monitoring the implementation of its decisions on this subject.

But this is not enough. In fact, the main advantage of the PPBE system is that it has begun to shed some light on the manner in which the usefulness of the U.N. could be increased. But to achieve this purpose fully, the reasons for the resistance of the Secretariat have to be analyzed and understood and the lacunae in the Regulations identified and filled in.

The resistance of the U.N.'s Secretariat to the new system can be explained as the usual attitude of bureaucracies toward change. It is never easy or pleasant to have to modify one's methods of work, to have to explain clearly one's objectives and policies, to be monitored and evaluated, or to be obliged to take on more responsibilities.

In a more general way, it is also more convenient and comfortable to stick to a traditional explanation of the U.N.'s situation than to try to find a new and more accurate one--for example, to give an idealized image of the institution's role in the areas of peace, development, or human rights and to attribute the defeat of this ideal to the vicious policies of a state or group of states rather than try to define the kind of changes that would permit the U.N. to cope with the real political, economic, and social problems of the world. It is always easier to indulge in wordiness than to make serious and realistic analyses. It is always more pleasant to state grandiose objectives to be implemented at some indefinite date than to state modest and precise goals and try to reach them by an assigned date.

The process of education toward realism, precision, and modesty of approach that was built into the PPBE process has not had time yet to develop or to bear results.

But it is obviously not only a question of time: The present Regulations and Rules are unclear on some important points, due in part to the tendency to subject very different types of activities to the same methodology. In fact, experience shows clearly that some gaps remain. The first and the most important is the absence of a distinction between the two main types of activities of the U.N., i.e., the search for a better consensus in a number of fields, on the one hand, and the joint management of activities on which some consensus exists, on the other hand.

The importance of this distinction can be understood only if one considers that the whole purpose of the PPBE system is to offer an opportunity for reflection and definition of the best possible and reasonable objectives for the U.N. and the best possible strategies for reaching them. There is no doubt that the authors of the Regulations were aware of these needs. The preamble of the Regulations and Rules clearly states that the main objectives of the PPBE cycle are:

- to afford an opportunity for reflection before the choices among the various types of action possible are made in the light of all existing conditions
- to associate in this reflection all participants in the Organization's actions, especially member states and the Secretariat to assess what is feasible and derive from this assessment objectives which are both feasible and politically acceptable to member states as a whole.

But such a formulation, despite its appeal as a collective intellectual endeavor, seems to suggest that all activities should be subjected to the same type of analysis, as if the types of problems existing in the areas where some consensus is present were the same as those in areas that require consensus-seeking.

What led to the confusion of the authors of the Regulations and Rules on this important point is obviously the comparison, rather unconsciously, between planning at the national level and planning in an intergovernmental organization like the United Nations.

At the national level, the purpose of a plan is to identify the sectors or types of investment that will receive preferential treatment and to define objectives accordingly. Planning in this case is done in a context of national consensus, and even in very poor countries with limited resources, planners can achieve reasonably concrete objectives.

Not only are constraints different in an international organization like the U.N., but the purposes of planning are different as well, both in the areas where limited consensus exists and in those where the search for consensus has yet to be completed.

Areas of Limited Consensus

In areas where a limited amount of consensus must be converted into useful results, the main constraint is the enormous gap that exists between the ambitious goals indicated in the mandates and the very limited resources allocated for reaching them. This situation is well known and has been described in a number of critical studies.[27] The objectives of programs and subprograms are often formulated in such term as "overcoming the bottlenecks and constraints facing the developing countries," "identifying critical issues confronting developing countries and

fostering and promoting cooperation and coordination regarding those issues of global interest," and "strengthening and enlarging mutual cooperation at the sub-regional, regional and inter-regional levels." But the manpower resources for reaching these "objectives" are, in the majority of cases, two or three professionals. It is therefore not surprising that the output of these programs frequently consists of a few publications of no great consequence, occasional meetings unrelated to the problems of the countries concerned, and occasional interpretations and ineffectual projects.

Among the broad areas where there is only limited consensus at the U.N. are those involving assistance in defining and implementing national policies, organization of international cooperation in a particular sector, collection and dissemination of information, and dissemination of norms approved by the General Assembly.

The degree of consensus in these areas varies. It is higher for the collection and dissemination of world and national statistics than for natural resources or science and technology. The level of consensus can be measured by the adequacy of the resources allocated to the pursuit of objectives. In the majority of cases, the gap between needs and resources remains enormous. Obviously, the units in charge of the various programs may take an easy way out by choosing to indulge in wordiness, stating ambitious and even unattainable objectives, and pursuing them from plan to plan and from budget to budget, with the obvious advantage of guaranteeing a long life to the unit itself. Delegations are accustomed to these practices and understand too well that it is not the fault of the unit if the outputs are inadequate.

If the regulation requesting precise and time-limited objectives has not yet been executed, it is because no serious attempt has been made to change the existing routine. To obtain a result of this importance, it would be necessary to define a typology of time-limited objectives for subprograms, to render compulsory its use for defining the content of the programs, and to organize some training for professionals who will put it into practice. This is perfectly possible. Examples of types of time-limited objectives can be given easily. A 1979 JIU report[28] offered the following examples:

- Preparation of a series of descriptive studies relating to a specific field
- Establishment of an information system
- Setting of a target level or stage to be reached in research in a particular field
- Establishment of an institutionalized research system
- Establishment of an intergovernmental research program
- Training of a specific number of specialists to be available to member states for implementation of a policy
- Establishment of institutions responsible for providing continuous training
- Setting the level of information for a specific subject, for an audience defined by composition and quantified order of magnitude
- Construction of a network of multipurpose institutions for use by member states to facilitate their implementation of a plan in a particular field
- Development of an instrument for cooperation in a regional area

- Definition, in consultation with a number of governments, of "concentration areas" for technical cooperation programs and establishment within the areas thus defined of specific social objectives.

It is not easy to determine which time-limited objectives are most in keeping with the general orientation of the programs and apt to be implemented in the allotted time and with the limited resources that are available.

For example, it is obviously easier to divide the major program on Public Administration into a six-subprogram structure that merely breaks down the program under headings as perpetual as the program itself [29] than to propose a two-subprogram structure that defines such precise, time-limited objectives as:

- Creation, over a five-year period, of a set of manuals (or handbooks) covering the various branches of public administration (with a supplementary target number of copies to be sold in various languages)
- Establishment, over a four-year period, of a standard ~ethodology for analysis of public administration problems.

The search for time-limited and precise objectives is obviously difficult, but if member states want realism, efficiency, and a more modest approach to prevail in the U.N., the regulations should be completed on this very important point and training should be organized along these lines.

Areas of Consensus-Seeking

In the areas of consensus-seeking--that is, where there is room for exploration of problems, discussions, and possibly at certain stages negotiations, it is clearly pointless to establish time-limited objectives or to fix a date for the completion of a convention. In the quest for peace, the development of international law, the adoption of conventions on human rights, the exploration of a common approach to international trade and the price of commodities, to world population, global migrations, and economic and social relations in general and the North-South dialogue in particular, it is obvious that suitable reflection cannot take place or strategies be defined at the program or subprogram level.

The primary task here should be to identify those problems the U.N. can help to solve--by making a contribution to mutual understanding and by defining how best to go about exploring their resolution. The process of identification that has been used thus far in the U.N. for this purpose has not been a systematic one. It relies mainly upon initiatives taken by delegations or by individuals in the Secretariat. The existing programs of research, discussions, and negotiations in the U.N.--such as those concerning the Law of the Sea, transnational corporations, and commodities--have been established on personal initiative rather than by a rational process. The exercises in collective research and discussion--like the ritual discussions every year on the "World Economic Survey" and the decennial "International Development Strategies"--have remained formal and have not led to a real identification of problems on which the U.N. could usefully conduct research and negotiations.

The main objectives of the Medium-Term Plan in the areas of consensus-seeking should be to try to rationalize and to improve this process and to organize a kind of global watch for the U.N. This was obviously the purpose for creation of the Introduction to the Medium-Term Plan. Yet we have seen that no use has been

made of the opportunity the Introduction affords. Here again, experience reveals the necessity not only of reiterating the need for a useful Introduction but of further reforming and developing the whole process of preliminary reflection, in order to obtain a better system for identifying global problems that it will be useful for the U.N. to try to tackle. To this end, the Regulations should describe more precisely:

- The type of preliminary studies that are necessary for this identification
- The methods for establishing them
- The calendar for preparation and examination of these studies.

In particular, serious consideration should be given to (a) replacing the traditional studies that are ritually presented to the Economic and Social Councilor to the Trade and Development Board--and even the International Development Strategies--with studies that are more oriented toward identifying world problems, and (b) entrusting such studies to the best centers of research and reflection, rather than rely on the Secretariat alone to prepare them.

Evaluation

A good system of evaluation should be an integral part of a system for identifying world problems that it is useful for the U.N. to tackle. But the functioning of such a system requires the recruitment of competent people in the relevant fields, not to mention a greater allocation of resources. Independent evaluations should be developed, for example, by allocating the necessary manpower to the Joint Inspection Unit. Special sessions of the Committee for Program and Coordination should also be devoted to the examination of evaluation studies.

Calendar of Preparation of the Medium-Term Plan

Were the Medium-Term Plan to become the main policy directive of the Organization, as required by the Regulations, it seems obvious that it should serve as a framework for all the decisions taken by intergovernmental and expert organs. This implies that these organs should be fully associated with the process of preparation. Such is not the case at present, despite the existence of Regulation 3.12, which states that "the chapters of the proposed Medium-Term Plan shall be reviewed by the relevant sectoral, functional, and regional intergovernmental bodies, if possible during the regular cycle of their meetings prior to their review by the Committee for Programme and Coordination, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly." The existing calendar of preparation has never allowed interested organs to receive a draft of the relevant parts of the proposed Medium-Term Plan in timely fashion.

The calendar has to be reorganized carefully, and the process of preparation, which occurs every six years, should start sufficiently in advance of that period to permit delegations in all intergovernmental and expert committees to be actively engaged in defining the objectives of the Organization. The present overlap between resolutions defining mandates, on the one hand, and the Medium-Term Plan, on the other, should be eliminated. The preparation of the relevant parts of the Medium-Term Plan by the various intergovernmental organs, and their approval by the central organs, should replace the use of resolutions for taking decisions   and   defining   mandates.

Procedures for Preparation of the Program Budget and the Restructuring of the Intergovernmental Machinery

The creation of a single committee to deal with both the definition of the program content and the allocation of resources has now become a political problem.[30] To the logical argument in favor of such a committee (see the final sections of Part I, "The Institutional Mechanisms" and "The Establishment of Regulations and Rules") is now added the necessity of finding a way to facilitate the building of consensus on the level and content of the program budget, which is at the heart of the present crisis.

In this regard, the report of the Group of 18 High-Level Intergovernmental Experts to Review the Efficiency of the Administrative and Financial Functions of the United Nations shows that, on this point, important progress has been made, even if a final agreement is not yet possible. After having acknowledged the

importance of the present Regulations and Rules governing the planning cycle, and having recommended that they be strictly-applied by the intergovernmental organs concerned and by the Secretariat, the Group considered it "necessary to rectify the deficiency of the present planning and budget mechanisms," explaining that "the present methodology of the preparation of the program budget does not allow for the participation of members in the process of definition of the program budget. A procedure must therefore be developed which makes it possible for member states to exercise at the very beginning of the planning and budget process, as well as throughout the whole process, the necessary intergovernmental leadership, particularly regarding the setting of priorities within the resources likely to be available."

In fact, this procedure would imply the presentation by the Secretary-General, in the spring of the non-budget year, of an "outline of the program budget" for the next biennium, based on the Medium-Term Plan, with an indication of the resources that the Secretary-General expects to be available.

The study and discussion of this outline should allow the Committee for Programme and Budget to try to reach a consensus and, on this basis, to give advice to the General Assembly.

The function, powers, and composition of such a committee were the subject of intensive negotiations in the Group--and in the General Assembly. The "major contributors," who pay more than 80 percent of the budget, argued from the outset that there should be a way to ensure that their views regarding the amount and content of the budget are taken into account, since the two-thirds majority required to pass on the budget (Article 18, paragraph 2 of the Charter) is readily formed by other member states. They requested the creation of a compact Committee of Programme and Budget, which would be authorized by the General Assembly to decide on budgetary matters. Decisions would be made either by consensus or by vote; in the latter case the composition of the committee would be such as to give major contributors a "blocking minority."

The opposing argument was that there was no reason to modify the current decision-making methods with regard to the budget--based on the provisions of Articles 17 and 18 of the Charter--and that the new procedure of examination of an outline of the program budget a year in advance could be used within the present setting of auxiliary bodies: the CPC and ACABQ.

Ultimately, the members of the Group of 18 offered three competing proposals to reinforce the present intergovernmental machinery dealing with budget and program. The first of these solutions gives to a renewed CPC of 21 members the responsibility for advising the General Assembly on the content and the level of resources of the budget. Here, the CPC would be renamed Committee for Programme, Budget and Coordination. It would examine the Medium-Term Plan and would receive--in the spring of the non-budget year--an outline of the program budget for the next biennium, as prepared by the Secretary-General. Its members would be elected on the basis of expert capacity, but the committee would keep its intergovernmental character.

The second solution reinforces the CPC in the consideration of the program aspects of the budget and of the Medium-Term Plan without giving to it a right to advise the General Assembly on the level of the budget. The second solution, like the first, would request the presentation of an outline of the program budget, and it recommends setting the same requirements for the appointment of the members of the CPC. The ACABQ would remain unchanged.

The third solution entrusts the function of advising the General Assembly on the budget and the program to a single committee that has the right to determine the overall limit of the future budget. The CPC and ACABQ would be replaced by this single committee.

The three solutions recommend the presentation of an outline budget in advance and a stronger cooperation between the delegations and the Secretariat in the preparation of the budget and program. The first two solutions recommend a reinforcement of the CPC. The first and the third favor a single committee dealing with both programming and budget.

This brief analysis shows that differences were limited, particularly between the two first proposals. In fact, the first solution was a compromise between the initial positions of the two groups of negotiators.

On December 19, 1986, the General Assembly finally adopted a fourth solution. The Committee for Programme and Coordination will receive the outline of the program budget presented by the Secretary-General one year in advance and will "submit its conclusions existing practice of reaching decisions by consensus" (A/Res/41/213). But it is stressed that the General Assembly will continue to take its final decision on the program budget "according to the provisions of the Charter" (Articles 17 and 18). The system for appointing members of the CPC is not changed.

Despite interpretations given by some delegations that the U.N. budget would henceforth be established "by consensus," there is no provision of this kind in the resolution. The CPC presents a report which--as has always been the case in the past--may reflect divergent views of its members--if they have not succeeded in establishing a consensus. One may wish that the new formula will facilitate the establishment of such a consensus in the future, but very much depends on the goodwill of all delegations.

Furthermore, the problems that arise from the present deficiences of the intergovernmental U.N. structure will not be solved simply by a change in the budgetary process. The obstacles which have hampered the development of the planning, programming, budgeting, and evaluation system have clearly shown their durability.

We have enough data on the problem posed by the structure of the intergovernmental machinery of the U.N. to understand that the creation of such a

committee would be only a first step. The difficulties of developing the planning, programming, budgeting, and evaluation (PPBE) system within the present intergovernmental structure has helped to reveal the deficiencies of that structure. Particularly in the economic and social fields, the intergovernmental machinery is too complicated, needlessly divided along various lines without having direct communication (General Assembly, ECOSOC,

UNCTAD), and was not conceived to facilitate either the discussions and negotiations among all categories of member states or joint management in areas where some consensus exists. A thorough study of the possibility of a restructuring is badly needed. A recommendation made by the Group of 18 in this regard (Recommendation 8 of its report) has been approved by resolution 41/213, and this study has been entrusted to the Economic and Social Council.

PART III

Recommendations and conclusions

The development of the planning, programming, and evaluation cycle continues to play an important role in the present process of reflection on the U.N. It has not only shown that a process of change is possible, but it allows the identification of direction for future changes that will help to improve significantly the efficiency and effectiveness of the United Nations.

The process of reform has been slow, but it has been continuous. As the first part of the present paper shows, some ideas have been adopted relatively rapidly (for example, the creation of the program budget and the Medium-Term Plan, the performance reports, standardization of nomenclature), while some have been favorably considered without being implemented (evaluation, joint planning, use of the Introduction of the Medium-Term Plan). Others, like the creation of a single committee on program and budget, are still waiting for adoption. And still other new ideas are emerging.

Since the pace of reform in the U.N. could accelerate as a result of the present crisis, it is necessary to formulate precise recommendations for improvement in the planning, programming, and budgeting area. But it is also necessary to understand that <u>only if the changes recommended are clearly understood and implemented will they help to redefine the role of the U.N. in the modern world.</u>

Recommendations that flow from the present analysis are the following:

<u>Recommendation 1</u>: Full implementation of the existing Regulations and Rules by the Secretariat should be vigorously requested by member states and a reporting and monitoring system should be organized by the General Assembly.

Improvement of the present Regulations and Rules (Recommendations 2, 3, 4, and 6) and the existing practices (Recommendations 5, 7, 8, 9) should be obtained through the following recommendations:

<u>Recommendation 2</u>: A clear distinction should be made between programs aimed at the search for a better consensus and those aimed at converting a limited consensus into useful results. This distinction should be taken into account in the design of the Medium-Term Plan and the definition of programs.

<u>Recommendation 3</u>: For programs dealing with joint management in the areas of limited consensus, a typology of time-limited objectives should be established and its use rendered compulsory.

<u>Recommendation 4</u>: In order to strengthen the U.N. global-watch function and to promote consensus-building, the process of identifying problems that the U.N. could usefully address should be better organized by (a) use of the Introduction to the Medium-Term Plan to pinpoint those emerging issues requiring collective response in which a U.N. role is feasible; (b) adoption of regulations describing the type of global-watch studies to be conducted, the means for deciding upon them, and the calendar for their preparation and review by member states; and (c) establishment of a list of international centers of research and expertise that, in

addition to relevant secretariats of the U.N. system, could contribute to a global-watch function.

Recommendation 5: The necessary resources should be allocated to establish a workforce of a reasonable size for preparing evaluation studies. Independent evaluation should be developed, for example, by allocating the necessary manpower to the Joint Inspection Unit.

Recommendation 6: The calendar for the preparation of the Medium-Term Plan should be organized in order to permit all intergovernmental and expert bodies to participate in the preparation of the relevant parts of the Medium-Term Plan. Approval of the Medium-Term Plan should replace the usual process of definition of mandates through resolutions.

Recommendation 7: The study of the restructuring of the intergovernmental machinery dealing with economic and social problems should be undertaken with a view toward the creation of a system that goes beyond the mere passage of resolutions and has a real effect on the outcome of the problems with which they are concerned.

Concluding Remarks

Apparently, there is a long way to go before these recommendations can be adopted and implemented. The main obstacle to overcome is a conceptual one--the illusion that there is enough consensus in the international community to allow the U.N. a central role in the international system. The fading of this illusion has not yet given way to a new conception of the world organization. This same illusion has fostered an exaggerated belief in the ability of the Organization to maintain peace and security and to "achieve international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character" (U.N. Charter, Article 1.3).

Forty years of experience have shown how misconceived a role this was. The failure to succeed at it has given rise to various attitudes, the most popular being that the U.N. has been reduced -to a political forum and that the lack of political will has restricted its ability to produce results. Some ideas of reform are now developing; however, they are, in general, limited to the idea that better management would improve the Organization's efficiency.

Yet it has not yet been acknowledged that the whole conception of the U.N. has to be changed and that the basic concepts on which it has been built have to be reconsidered, including its capacity to maintain peace and its capacity to solve development problems.

The essential problem in the present world--which is characterized by a growing acknowledgement of the interdependence of member states--is to find a system for building progressively better consensus on questions of common interest. The Charter has assumed that the initial level of consensus was high, and its articles have built the institution on the basis of this assumption.

Such an assumption unfortunately cannot be made. The level of support for the world organization is and always has been very low, as is clearly shown by the permanent financial difficulties of the Organization and by the reluctance of member states to pay their assessed contributions or to accept their growth.

A new conception has to take the place of the old – one based on the idea that the low level of existing consensus can, with patience, be elevated over time.

The development of the PPBE system could help in this endeavor by showing that the quest for peace requires, first, a patient and inevitably lengthy search for a better consensus on the nature and on the solution of world problems; and, second, an attempt to convert, as much as possible, the consensus gained through this search into modest but useful results. If this understanding of the role of the U.N. were adopted, it would be easier to implement the recommendations listed above and to make real progress toward a new and more efficient United Nations.[31]

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NOTES

PART I

[1] Disorders and mutiny after the proclamation of independence of the Republic of Congo (and the capital, Leopoldville, renamed Kinshasa) on July 1, 1966, led to a mass exodus of Belgian administrators and technicians. On July 12, Congolese leaders requested military assistance from the U.N. and asked the U.N. to put an end to the secession of the province of Katanga. The Security Council authorized Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjold to provide military and technical assistance to the Congo. The Secretary-General's response was to set up ONUC (the acronym derived from the French formulation, Operations des Nations Unis aux Congo).

Among the major events in the Congo from 1960 to 1964 (when the U.N. military force was withdrawn):

July-August 1960: withdrawal of the Belgian troops and their replacement by the U.N. military force

August 1960: entry of U.N. forces into Katanga--the first contingent led by Dag Hammarskjold himself--and the re(usal of Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba to cooperate with the Secretary-General a constitutional crisis in the Congo, resulting in the replacement of Mr. Lumumba by Mr. Ileo and the taking of power by Colonel Joseph Mobutu

January 1961: murder of Patrice Lumumba

February 1961: refusal of USSR to recognize Dag Hammarskjold as Secretary-General formation of the national unity government of Mr. Adoula secession of Katanga under the leadership of Mr. Tshombe; intervention of ONUC to round up mercenaries in Elizabethville; and attack on U.N. forces by the Katangese "gendarmerie"

September 17, 1961: death of Dag Hammarskjold and seven U.N. staff members in the crash of an aircraft en route to Ndola in northern Rhodesia

November 1961: appointment of U Thant as acting Secretary-General August 1962: proposal by the new Secretary-General of a plan of national reconciliation

February 4, 1963: end of secession of Katanga June 30, 1964: withdrawal of U.N. forces November 1964: the "Stanleyville operation" by Belgian paracommandos carried by U.S. aircraft.

[2] The military arm of ONUC--the U.N. Emergency Force (UNEF)--was made up of contingents from states other than the great powers and reached a maximum strength of about 20,000 soldiers. It was the second UNEF:

The acronym was used for the first time in 19S6 for the first UNEF sent to the Suez Canal and the Sinai Peninsula.

[3] The Assembly took the position that the expenses involved in ONUC for 1960 were "expenses of the Organization" within the meaning of Article 17, paragraph 2 of the Charter and that, therefore, member states had binding legal obligations to pay their assessed shares. This view was upheld by a majority opinion of the International Court of Justice handed down on July 20, 1962.

The Assembly subsequently decided that the extraordinary expenses of ONUC were essentially different in nature from those covered by the Organization's regular budget, and that, therefore, a different procedure for meeting them was required. The Assembly noted in this connection that the five permanent members of the Security

Council had a special responsibility for contributing to the cost of peacekeeping operations. Accordingly, the Assembly devised a special formula under which developing nations were given a substantial reduction on their assessments, with the difference to be made up by voluntary contributions from the developed countries. Twenty-six countries were subsequently designated as "developed" by the Assembly, but a number of these countries did not contribute to the peacekeeping operations.

The Assembly later appealed to members in arrears to make their payments, without prejudice to their respective political positions, and set up machinery and guidelines for special methods of financing peacekeeping operations that involved heavy expenditures, such as those for the Congo and the Middle East (Everyone's United Nations, March 1968 edition).

[4] Op. cit.,p. 476.

[5] In 1960, the number of staff was 4,215 (1,731 professionals; 2,484 general services and local level staff). In 1966 it reached 5,651 (2,245 professionals; 3,406 general services and local level staff). See U.N. Document A/6289, Add. 2 of May 31, 1966.

[6] The bonds, issued for a 25-year period, bear an annual interest rate of 2 percent. Between 1963 and 1987 interest charges and principal were to be paid in annual installments averaging $8.7 million; in 1988, 1989, and 1990, would come final installments of $2.5 million, $0.9 million, and $0.06 million respectively.

[7] A financial report issued by the Secretary-General in 1966 showed that the actual cash expenses incurred by ONUC by September 1965 totalled $337.4 million, with unliquidated obligations amounting to $30.8 million.

[8] In 1965 there were 118 U.N. member states.

[9] This report notes that "according to the Committee judgment of the difference between the current obligations and the currently available assets which can be secured to meet them," there would be an estimated $52-73.4 million "deficit for which voluntary contributions were originally requested."

[10] The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) since its inception has been the body of experts that deals with budgetary and administrative problems in cooperation with the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly.

[11] Resolution on the program budget: 3043 (XXVII) of 1972, 3534 (XXX) of December 17, 1975, J2/210 and 32/211 of December 21, 1977, 33/203 of January 29, 1979.

[12] Resolutions on the Medium-Term Plan: 3199 (XXVIII) of December 18, 1973; 31/93 of December 14, 1976; 33/48 of December 19, 1978; 34/224 of December 20, 1980; 37/234 of 1983; 38/227 of 1984.

[13] Resolutions on evaluation:
Resolution of the Economic and Social Council 222A (IX) of August IS, 1949, paragraph 6.a, Resolution 1042 (XXXVIII) of 1964, Resolution 1092 (XXXIX) of 1964, Resolution 1263 (XLIII) of 1967, Resolution 1364 (XLV) of 1968. General Assembly resolution 32/206, 33/118, 35/9 and other resolutions dealing with Medium-Term Plans and budgets already quoted.

[14] During this period the JIU has established the following reports and notes on these matters:

JIU/REP/69/7 – Report on Programming and Budget on the United Nations

JIU/NOTE/70/2   Interagency cooperation in programming

JIU/NOTE/70/3--Presentation of an outline program budget for the United Nations

JIU/REP/74/1 – Report on Medium-Term Planning in the U.N. system JIU/NOTE/7S/1 – Harmonization of program budget presentation Comments on the report of the group of experts on the structure of the U.N. system (E/AC/62/9)

JIU/REP/76/19 – Reports on country programming as an instrument for coordination and cooperation at the country level

A/28 – Note on the concept of objective in international organizations in the context of Medium-Term Plans and program budgets

JIU/REP/78/1 – Report on programming and evaluation in the United Nations

September 1978 – tentative mock-up of a presentation of a program in the Medium-Term Plan JIU/REP/79/S--Medium-Term Planning in the United Nations

JIU/REP/81/7--Report on the Setting of Priorities and the Identification of Obsolete Activities at the U.N.

JIU/REP/82/10--Report on the Elaboration of Regulations for the Planning, Programming and Evaluation Cycle of the United Nations JIU/REP/83/6--Second Report on the Elaboration of Regulations on the Planning, Programming and Evaluation Cycle of the United Nations.

The following JIU reports: Evaluation on the U.N. System (1977), Glossary of Evaluation Terms (1978), Initial Guidelines for Internal Evaluation Systems (1979), Status of Internal Evaluation in the U.N. System (1981), Second Report on Evaluation on the U.N. System (1982).

[15] In its annual reports throughout this period, CPC has regularly studied problems of methodology and has described and commented upon the various experiments made in evaluation, planning, and comparison of programs of the U.N. with those of other agencies (cross-organizational program analyses, or COPAS).

[16] It should be noted that after having been involved in the discussion of the establishment of the first program budget, the ACABQ has not participated in the establishment of this methodology.

[17] The present paper does not deal with programming at the country level of operational activities. Despite the fact that it is closely related with the pl~nning and programming activities of the U.N. and of the agencies of the U.N. system, "country programming" has been dealt with separately, particularly by the governing council of UNDP, ECOSOC, and the Second Committee of the General Assembly.

[18] The 24 "major programs" of the last Medium-Term Plan (1984-89):

Political and Security Council Affairs; Special Political Affairs and Special Missions; International Justice and International Law; Trusteeship and Decolonization; Disaster Relief; Human Rights; International Drug Control; International Protection and Assistance to Refugees; Information; Development Questions and Policies; Energy; Environment; Food and Agriculture; Human Settlements; Industrial Development; International Trade and Financing of Development; Natural Resources; Population; Public Administration and Finance; Science and Technology; Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs; Statistics; Transnational Corporations; and Transport, Communications and Tourism.

[19] The official definitions of these notions:

Major program: A major program consists of all activities, regardless of organizational location, conducted by the United Nations in one of the sectors listed in the Medium-Term Plan, e.g., all work on transport conducted by the United Nations. The major program on transport consists of the work in the sector conducted by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the Department of International, Economic and Social Affairs, and the Regional Commissions.

Program: A program consists of the activities within a major program undertaken by a department, office or division, e.g., work in the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific on transport in Asia and the Pacific.

Subprogram: A subprogram consists of all activities within a program aimed at achieving one or a few closely related objectives as set out in the Medium-Term Plan, e.g., work in the Economic Commission for Europe directed toward traffic facilities in Europe.

Program element: A program element consists of activities within a subprogram, addressing a specific and well-circumscribed subject matter, and is usually designed to produce one or a few final outputs per biennium, such as a publication, a meeting, or services of an advisory nature, e.g., within the traffic facilitation program in the Economic Commission for Europe, review of the implementation of the Convention on International Intermodal Transport.

Final output: In the United Nations a final output is a product or service delivered by the Secretariat to users external to the, secretariats of the organizations of the United Nations system. All Secretariat work needed to generate the final output is intermediate activity.

Delivery of output: An output is delivered when the service is completed or when the products resulting from a program activity are made available to intended primary user(s): e.g., in the case of services to a session of an intergovernmental meeting, when the final report of the session has been circulated to member states; in the case of a report or a technical publication when these have been circulated to member states, interested governments or other primary users; in the case of a sales publication, when it is placed on sale; in the case of a technical assistance project, when the final report following completion' of the project has been received by the recipient country; in the case of a grant, when the recipient has received the final payment; and in the case of a fellowship, when the recipient has completed the course of study.

Source: glossary of programming terms published as an annex of ST/SGB/204 of June 14, 1984.

[20] The list of standard categories is given in Rule 104: "Substantive services of intergovernmental meetings, including support of negotiations, report to intergovernmental bodies, peacekeeping and humanitarian operations, technical publications, public information service, technical cooperation projects including advisory services, financial contributions including grants and fellowship, other final outputs."

[21] U.N. Document A/34/84 of March 26, 1979, "Medium-Term Planning in the United Nations" (JIU/REP/79/S).

[22] U.N. Document A/41/49. The group made these remarks on the subject of priorities:

"The criteria for the setting of relative priorities are set out in the Secretary-General's bulletin entitled Regulations and Rules Governing Program Planning, the Program Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation (ST/SGB/204). These Regulations and Rules devote special attention to the application of priorities at all levels. Regulation 3.15, relating to the Medium-Term Plan, states that the establishment of priorities among both substantive programs and common services shall form an integral part of the general planning ••• process." The determining criteria are defined as being based on the importance of the objective to member states, the

Organization's capacity to achieve it and the real effectiveness and usefulness of the results. Regulation 3.16 defines the process according to which intergovernmental bodies formulate recommendations on priorities among the subprograms in their field of competence. The idea of priority is taken even further in Regulation 3.17, which calls for the establishment of priorities by the General Assembly among the subprograms, and in Regulation 4.6 relating to the program budget, which requests the Secretary-General to identify "program elements of high and low priority."

"These criteria are by and large satisfactory. The problems experienced regarding the setting of priorities are primarily related to the lack of application of these criteria by the intergovernmental machinery and the Secretariat."

[23] As defined by Regulation 6.1, the purpose of evaluation is

"to determine as systematically and objectively as possible the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and impact of the Organization's activities in relation to their objectives;

"to enable the Secretariat and member states to engage in systematic reflections with a view to increasing the effectiveness of the main programs of the Organization by altering their content and, if necessary, reviewing their objectives" (ST/SGB/204, pp. 22-23).

[24] See Resolution 32/197, Annex, paragraphs 43 and 52.

[25] Recommendation 15 of JIU Report A/36/171 of 10 April 1981:

"Exploration of the possibilities of establishing in the United Nations a single intergovernmental committee to review plans, programs and budgets."

PART II

[26] Two reports of the JIU--JIU/REP/82/10 of September 1982 and JIU/REP/83/6 of April 1983--give an account of the problems found and of the discussions that took place about the establishment of Regulations and Rules. See also Report of the Secretary-General (A/38/126) and the Annual Reports of CPC during the years 1981,'82, '83, and '84. The Regulations and Rules have yet to be published in the same form as the Personnel or the Financial regulations, despite the insistence of the CPC that this be done. They can be found in a bulletin of the Secretary-General (ST/SGB/204 of June 14, 1984).

[27] See in particular A/34/84 of March 26, 1979, A/36/171 of April 10, 1981, JIU/REP/82/10 of September 1982, and JIU/REP/8S/9.

[28] JIU/REP/79/S, "Medium-Term Planning in the United Nations," paragraph 60.

[29] The six subprograms in 1978-81:
Trends and development
Reform of public administration and management of development
Institutional and management techniques Budgeting and financial management Mobilization of financial resources Public enterprises
The manpower at the disposal of these programs for this period was 29 professionals and the situation is the same today (see for more detail JIU/REP A/34/84, paragraphs 64 and 65 and annex VI presenting a tentative mock-up of a presentation of a program in the Medium-Term Plan).

[30] For a description of many of the issues underlying the current debate over U.N. financial decision-making and the scale of assessments, see the UNA-USA research paper by Fred Lister, Fairnessand Accountability in U.N. Financial Decision-Making(December 1986).

PART III

[31] See the UNA-USA research paper by Peter Fromuth, The U.N. at Forty:

The Problems and the Opportunities(June 1986), p. 12. See also JIU Report A/40/988 of December 6, 1985, "Some Reflections on Reform of the United Nations," paragraphs 65-75.