



## THIRD ITEM ON THE AGENDA

**On-the-spot reviews of selected  
technical cooperation projects by  
members of the Governing Body:  
Options for discussion****I. Introduction**

1. As approved by the Governing Body at its 277th Session (March 2000), on-the-spot reviews of field activities were conducted in each year of the 2000-01 biennium. Each tripartite review team was made up of three members of the Governing Body from the regions concerned. The reports of the four reviews were discussed during a meeting in Geneva of the members of all four review teams immediately after the 282nd Session (November 2001) of the Governing Body. As suggested by the Officers of the Committee on Technical Cooperation, many of the observations were incorporated in the *Mid-term review of technical cooperation* that was presented to the 283rd Session (March 2002) of the Governing Body and the main findings of the exercise were provided as an appendix to the same document.
2. During the session of the Committee on Technical Cooperation in March 2002 proposals were made that the November 2002 session of the Committee should review past experience in order to decide the best way forward. Subsequently, the Officers and Regional Coordinators of the Committee met and decided, among other things, to meet during the International Labour Conference, 2002, to discuss the format and contents of a paper that would be required for discussions at the November 2002 session of the Governing Body. Given the Governing Body elections, assignment of new spokespersons for the groups, and time limitations during June, it was not possible to hold such a meeting.
3. The Office had been asked to prepare the current paper, which provides a synopsis of the experience with the on-the-spot review exercise and outlines the lessons learnt. It highlights the observations and conclusions of the November 2001 meeting of the members of the on-the-spot review teams; the observations and statements made during the March 2002 session of the Committee on Technical Cooperation; and some issues that may be considered for the way ahead. The three appendices indicate the costs incurred during the last set of exercises, list of persons undertaking the exercises and, at the request of one of the regional coordinators, information on the practice of field visits undertaken by

members of the Executive Boards of the United Nations Development Programme and of the United Nations Children's Fund.

## **II. The meeting of the members of the review team, November 2001**

4. Members of the review team identified a number of positive elements and pointed out some issues that need to be taken into account.

### **Positive aspects**

5. The tripartite exercise was considered to have been positive for a numbers of reasons:
  - (a) It provided the members of the Committee on Technical Cooperation with an opportunity to see and understand at first hand the operational aspects of projects and the many issues involved in development cooperation, thereby increasing the knowledge base of the Committee.
  - (b) The tripartite nature of the exercise illustrated that a common approach, focused on technical issues as opposed to differing views according to particular groups, could be taken in reviewing technical cooperation matters.
  - (c) The exercise provided members of the Governing Body with insights into the possible replicability of projects or pursuing similar projects in other regions on a pilot basis.
  - (d) The review exercise was welcomed by the beneficiaries, the management staff of the project and the field staff of the Office; it gave them some immediate visibility and constituted an incentive to pursue the work of the project.

### **Orientation and preparation for such exercises**

- (e) Measures should be taken to ensure that such exercises contribute to improvement in the governance of the technical cooperation programme; steps should also be taken to ensure that cost effectiveness is taken into account in the selection of reviews (number of projects and countries considered) and making sure that there is added value of the exercises for the Committee.
- (f) More preparation on the part of the tripartite teams would be helpful prior to the visits. In this connection, the Office should make information on projects available in a readily accessible form.
- (g) While still working as a team, the members could envisage dividing the tasks or field visits among themselves to gain the maximum coverage of a project and make the optimal use of limited time.
- (h) The on-the-spot reviews require improved integration with the work of the regional meetings. These reviews should provide a key input into the regional meetings and constitute a major item for discussion.
- (i) A gender balance in the composition of future teams would be desirable.
- (j) Measures need to be taken to hold costs to reasonable levels.

### III. Discussions at the Committee on Technical Cooperation in March 2002

6. The Employers' group fully supported the "on-the-spot" exercise. It felt that the exercise had brought good results. The group was of the opinion that participants and donors, including members from the industrialized market economy countries' (IMEC) group, had felt that the exercise had been useful; developing country governments were also sympathetic and in favour of carrying out these exercises. The Office was called upon to look into mechanisms of formally linking the exercise to regional meetings, bearing in mind that the reviews need to be topical, interesting and brief. On-the-spot review missions provided support to the field officers in their tasks and had been warmly welcomed by governments and donors who were encouraged by the direct interest and involvement of the Governing Body. The Workers' group felt that the on-the-spot reviews had benefited the Organization as a whole. The IMEC group had reservations on the usefulness of the on-the-spot reviews and there was a view that involvement in the on-the-spot review exercises constituted micro-management rather than strategic management. In addition, reservations were expressed on the benefit of the reviews to the work of the Committee, which should be the main concern, as opposed to any benefit that may have accrued to the participants. The African group supported the on-the-spot reviews.

### IV. Points for discussion

7. The first issue was:
- should the on-the-spot reviews be continued.
8. If they were to be continued then the following parameters should be considered:
- (a) the reviews should be linked to *regional meetings* to keep costs to a minimum;
  - (b) activities should be distributed under the terms of reference for the reviewers to achieve maximum coverage of issues;
  - (c) focus should be on specific issues rather than wide coverage;
  - (d) review teams should provide summary reports at the end of missions;
  - (e) the most effective manner of reporting back to the Committee on Technical Cooperation and to all concerned in the implementation of the projects should be determined, possibly by linking the reviews to discussions on thematic evaluations and/or to panel discussions with regional directors.
9. The second issue was:
- should on-the-spot reviews be replaced with interactive meetings with regional directors?

This required:

- (a) identification of areas in which the Committee on Technical Cooperation would wish to benefit from such meetings; for example, programmes in a specific technical area and successes and problems faced; United Nations coordination at the country level; experience with millennium development goals reports;

- (b) bringing in officials from the regions to report to the Committee in an open dialogue, through a panel discussion;
- (c) either of the two above proposals could be linked to the *thematic evaluations* that are undertaken each year for discussion at the March sessions of the Governing Body.

10. Since the proposals above are not necessarily mutually exclusive, consideration could be given to a combination or both.

#### **IV. Forthcoming Regional Meetings during the present biennium**

11. The two following Regional Meetings are scheduled in 2002-03.

*Americas:* Fifteenth Regional Meeting, 10-13 December 2002.

*Africa:* Tenth Regional Meeting scheduled for the second half of 2003.

#### **V. Costs and provision of funds**

12. A breakdown of costs incurred during the previous exercise is provided in Appendix 1. The Programme and Budget for 2002-03 does not include provisions for such a review. The Committee on Technical Cooperation will have to make a proposal to the Governing Body Programme, Financial and Administrative Committee for approval of a financial arrangement should Governing Body members decide to undertake a similar review exercise in the present biennium.

Geneva, 10 October 2002.

## Appendix 1

### Expenditure incurred for the exercise

1. The Programme and Budget for 2000-01 did not include provisions for such a review, and financial arrangements were made separately, approved by the Governing Body in March 2000.<sup>1</sup> The cost estimated for the review was US\$54,000 which was financed from savings in Part I of the budget.

A total of \$US42,940 was expended on the review missions, broken down as follows:

Americas:	US\$11,550
Europe:	US\$12,940
Africa:	US\$13,400
Asia:	US\$5,050

2. These figures exclude costs related to the November 2001 meeting of all the members in Geneva of US\$12,160 comprising of daily subsistence allowances for the members and interpretation services. Total expenditure of the review exercise was therefore US\$55,100.

3. Additional costs that might be imputed would include: three person-weeks of staff time at the field level to organize and assist the review mission; and, two weeks of staff time at headquarters to service the whole exercise, including providing lists of projects meeting the criteria for reviews, obtaining necessary agreements from all parties, arranging travel plans, preparing project-specific terms of references, consolidating and/or drafting reports as required, servicing the whole exercise. This staff time at standard costs represented about US\$14,000.

<sup>1</sup> GB.277/10/1.

## Appendix 3

### Projects visited and team members

#### Africa, United Republic of Tanzania

Project title:	IPEC programme in the United Republic of Tanzania
Composition of the team:	Mr. Agyei Ms. N. Lusenga Mr. Sanzouango

#### Americas

Project title:	MATAC – Modernización de la administración del trabajo (Modernizing the labour administrations of Central America, Belize, the Dominican Republic and Panama); PROMICRO – Proyecto Centroamericano de apoyo a Programas de Microempresa (Central American project to support promotion of micro-enterprise in Central America)
Composition of the team:	Dr. Zoilo Núñez Salcedo Mr. Bingen de Arbeloa Mr. J. Olivio Miranda Oliveira

#### Asia and the Pacific, Nepal

Project title:	SAVPOT (Project on promoting tripartism and sound industrial relations in South Asia and Viet Nam)
Composition of the team:	Ms. Sarmiento Mr. Suzuki Ms. Yacob

#### Europe, Moscow

Project title:	Development of modular skills training (Russian Federation)
Composition of the team:	Lord Brett Ms. Lidija Horvatic Ms. Natalia Quintavalle

## Appendix 2

### **Country and programme visits undertaken by Executive Board members of the UNDP and UNICEF**

#### ***UNDP***

1. Executive Board members make annual visits to two countries (from different regions) per year. The number of Board members participating is decided by the Board itself. The United Nations Development Programme pays only for members from LDCs. The objective is to have a direct assessment of how the directives of the Executive Board are being implemented in the field. They especially focus on project results, coordination with other donors and host country perception of the usefulness of programmes. They meet a wide cross-section of people (governments, NGOs, CSOs, academia, etc.). They present a report which goes to the Executive Board and is discussed.

#### ***UNICEF***

2. In consultation with the Executive Director and the host governments, field visits are carried out by representatives of Board member countries. This is with the consideration that field visits of representatives of members states of the Executive Board will contribute to the functioning of the Executive Board, and in particular of the Programme Committee, by providing better insight into United Nations Children's Fund work in the field. Participants of field visits submit reports to the Programme Committee at the subsequent regular sessions of the Executive Board. The Executive Director arranges and services up to two field visits (no more than two countries per visit) per year, each for an average of six members of the Executive Board. The expenses of participants from developed countries are paid by those countries themselves while expenses of participants from other countries are covered on a sliding scale from the United Nations Children's Fund administrative budget.