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OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

UNITED NATIONS VOLUNTEERS PROGRAMME

Report of the Secretary-General

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 2659 (XXV), requested the Secretary-General and the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to report to the General Assembly at its twenty-sixth session, through the Governing Council of the Programme and the Economic and Social Council, on the experience gained from the operation of the United Nations Volunteers programme in implementing that resolution and to make such proposals as they deem advisable to enable the United Nations Volunteers to serve better the aims and ends in view.
2. The Secretary-General submits herewith a report on the United Nations Volunteers programme prepared by the Administrator of UNDP in his capacity as Administrator of the United Nations Volunteers. The Administrator is presenting a similar report to the Governing Council at its twelfth session.
3. The Administrator of UNDP submitted his proposals for the initial period of the United Nations Volunteers programme, which were approved in principle by the Governing Council at its eleventh session (E/4954, para. 142).
4. As an initial step, the Administrator completed arrangements concerning the establishment of a central co-ordinating office of the United Nations Volunteers in New York within the framework of UNDP. In addition to the co-ordinator, the United Nations Volunteers office consists of a principal officer, a professional officer and three general service posts for secretarial assistance. In the light of discussions at the eleventh session of the Governing Council, a liaison office in Geneva, staffed by a senior professional officer with secretarial assistance, is also being established.

5. With a view to finalizing organizational and procedural arrangements relating to the operation of the programme, a number of meetings between the Co-ordinator of the United Nations Volunteers and representatives of specialized agencies and other organizations in the United Nations system were held.

6. These consultations were aimed at establishing appropriate procedures covering all stages of the work of United Nations Volunteers in development projects in the field, with the assistance of agencies and organizations in the United Nations system. These stages include the initial request by a Government for the assignment of Volunteers, their recruitment and placement and the final completion of their term of assignment. In this context, the primary objective was to define the responsibilities of clearing-houses of international volunteer organizations, agencies and organizations in the United Nations system, their regional representatives and the resident representatives, as well as sponsoring organizations and recipient Governments.

7. Extensive consultations were held with representatives of the two international volunteer organizations: the International Secretariat for Volunteer Service and the Co-ordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service. On 5 May 1971 the Administrator signed an agreement with the International Secretariat for Volunteer Service establishing the conditions and procedures for mutual co-operation. It is hoped that a similar understanding will shortly be reached with the Co-ordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service regarding its co-operation in the programme. Further, the Global Meeting of Resident Representatives held in New Delhi from 14 to 28 February 1971 provided an appropriate opportunity to inform the resident representative, at a personal level, of the objectives and developments of the United Nations Volunteers programme and to consult them with regard to the degree of government interest in requesting the assignment of volunteers within the UNDP-supported projects. At the same time, the resident representatives were informed of their own role in future operations of the scheme.

8. Further measures in the implementation of the United Nations Volunteers programme have been aimed at reaching an understanding with recipient countries concerning conditions under which Volunteers would be accepted by them, and those under which Volunteers would serve in these countries. In this context, certain

basic obligations of recipient countries were defined. The rules of conduct and conditions of service of United Nations Volunteers have also been formulated (see annex).

9. The United Nations Volunteers has also undertaken to arrange for group life insurance and appropriate medical coverage for Volunteers.

10. In the procedures relating to the United Nations Volunteers programme, due recognition is given to the principle that requests for Volunteers should emanate from recipient countries. The programming of Volunteers is seen primarily as a function of the requesting Government. It is also recognized that, in the initial period of the United Nations Volunteers, the placement of Volunteers will be limited to projects supported by the United Nations system. The assimilation of Volunteers into projects assisted by the United Nations system means that the volunteer component of a project will be programmed by the Government and assisted by the resident representative and the United Nations agency concerned, in broadly the same way as experts are programmed. As a general rule, recipient countries will be requested to meet the local costs for the volunteer component. When circumstances do not make this possible, however, such costs will be defrayed from the project budgets concerned.

Special Voluntary Fund

11. The Co-ordinator of the United Nations Volunteers has been in consultation with certain Governments in connexion with the Special Voluntary Fund to which, under the terms of General Assembly resolution 2659 (XXV), Governments of States Members of the United Nations or members of specialized agencies, international non-governmental organizations and individuals were invited to contribute. As of 11 May 1971, contributions have been pledged or made as follows:

Denmark	\$10,000
Holy See	\$1,500
Iran	\$10,000
Turkey	\$2,500
United States	\$200,000

12. At 1 May 1971, in pursuance of requests for Volunteers from the Governments of Iran and Yemen, the United Nations Volunteers plans to send an initial group of approximately nineteen volunteers to Yemen and a group of approximately thirty volunteers to Iran before the end of 1971. Arrangements concerning the assignment of volunteers to United Nations assisted projects in the Ivory Coast, Jamaica, the Niger and other countries are at the moment being negotiated with the respective Governments and participating and executing agencies and organizations in the United Nations system.

13. In the case of the assignment to Yemen, the local costs of Volunteers will have to be defrayed against the project budgets of the following projects: Highlands Farm Development (YEM 9) approved by the Governing Council at its ninth session (DP/SF/R.9/Add.105), and Farm Development of the Midlands (YEM 12) recommended to the Governing Council for approval at the present session (DP/SF/R.12/Add.66).

14. In case of the assignment of Volunteers to Iran, the Iranian Government has offered to bear almost all the local costs involved.

15. From the experience gained in the relatively short period of five months which has elapsed since the United Nations Volunteers commenced its operations, it can be said that the programme stands a fair chance of success, provided the Governments and agencies concerned with development continue to lend their support.

Annex

RULES OF CONDUCT AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE
FOR UNITED NATIONS VOLUNTEERS

I. Rules of conduct

1. The United Nations Volunteers constitutes a part of the common endeavour for the achievement of economic and social development and a better society to which the organizations of the United Nations system are collectively committed.
2. In keeping with the pledge of commitment, Volunteers shall discharge their functions and regulate their conduct with the interest of the United Nations only in view.
3. In accordance with the highest ideals of a volunteer service, Volunteers shall be guided by the sole motive of devoting their knowledge and abilities without regard to any financial benefit or gain to the realization of the broad objectives as laid down by the United Nations Charter for the economic and social advancement of mankind.
4. Volunteers shall not engage in any activity which is incompatible with the proper discharge of their duties or participate in any outside employment.
5. While Volunteers are not expected to give up their national sentiments or their political and religious convictions, they shall not engage in any political activity which might be inconsistent with the independence and impartiality required of a member of the United Nations Volunteers. Furthermore, Volunteers should avoid any action and in particular any public statement which might adversely reflect on their special international status as members of the United Nations Volunteers.
6. During the period of their assignment, Volunteers shall not without prior explicit approval of the resident representative issue statements to the press, radio or other agencies of public information, release any visual information for publication, or take part in mass communication activities such as film, radio or television productions which are in any way related to project activities or to the aims, activities or interests of the United Nations or the host country.
7. Volunteers shall at all times respect the existing laws and moral codes and traditions prevailing in the host country.

II. Conditions of service^{*/}

8. It is understood that the following conditions of service relate specifically to the duration of assignment in the field. Any obligations incurred prior to the arrival of a Volunteer in the country of service or following the completion of the term of his assignment shall be the responsibility of the sponsoring organization. Further, any prior contractual agreement between a Volunteer and the sponsoring organization shall be superseded during the course of his assignment by the provisions set out below in so far as they may conflict with that contract.

Arrival grant

9. An appropriate arrival grant shall be payable to Volunteers on their initial arrival at the country of assignment.

Living allowance

10. Volunteers shall receive a monthly living allowance in local currency.

Accommodation

11. Volunteers shall be provided with simple but adequately furnished accommodation free of any rental.

Travel allowance

12. Travel expenses in local currency shall be payable whenever Volunteers are called upon to undertake official travel within the country of assignment in the performance of their duties. Volunteers shall be informed of the conditions under which the above-mentioned expenses will be paid.

^{*/} Paragraph 8 relating to conditions of service shall not apply to Volunteers from developing countries who are unable to find appropriate sponsoring organizations willing both to assume the over-all responsibility of placing them in the country of assignment and to fulfil additional responsibilities on their return upon completion of their term of assignment. In such special cases the United Nations Volunteers may assume fully or in part the following obligations:

- (a) Pre-departure medical expenses;
- (b) Travel to and from country of assignment;
- (c) Modest resettlement allowance in the national currency of the Volunteer's domicile upon completion of assignment.

Annual leave

13. Volunteers shall be entitled to annual leave at the rate of two and a half working days a month, which they will be expected to take during their term of assignment. Such leave shall be arranged with the project manager and approved by the resident representative. No payment may be made in lieu of accrued leave. As a general rule, leave shall be restricted to the area of service. Exceptions will have to be approved by the resident representative who must also be informed of the Volunteer's address during periods of leave.

Sick leave

14. In the event of any absence due to illness, injury or public health requirements, the Volunteer shall be required to submit a report. Where the absence is for five consecutive working days or longer, it shall be supported by a certificate from a qualified member of the medical profession. During illness Volunteers shall not leave the area of the duty station without the prior approval of the resident representative or the project manager concerned.

Medical and hospital expenses

15. The United Nations Volunteers shall take the responsibility for medical and hospital expenses arising from injury or illness incurred by the Volunteer during the course of assignment. For this purpose, in the first instance, the government health services shall be made available to Volunteers free of charge. This provision shall include the following:

(a) All medical expenses caused by illness or accident during the period of assignment;

(b) Expenses for curative dental care;

(c) All expenses for medical examinations including immunizations and inoculations while in country of assignment;

(d) All transportation costs resulting from accident or illness including evacuation;

(e) All follow-up expenses for accident or illness incurred while under contract.

Compensation for injury or illness attributable to service

16. In the event of death, injury or illness attributable to the performance of official duties on behalf of the United Nations Volunteers, the Volunteer, or his dependants in the event of death, shall be entitled to compensation in accordance with the provisions established for the United Nations Volunteers.

Medical examination

17. Volunteers may be required to undergo periodic medical examinations including such immunization and inoculation or vaccination as may be necessary. Further they shall undergo a medical examination on the completion of their term of assignment and the report of this last examination shall be submitted to the United Nations Medical Director for review.

Privileges and immunities

18. The United Nations Volunteers undertakes to negotiate with the host Government concerning the provision of such limited privileges and immunities as are necessary for the proper performance of its functions.

19. The United Nations Volunteers may waive the immunity of any Volunteer where, in the opinion of the United Nations Volunteers, the immunity would impede the course of justice and can be waived without prejudice to the interests of the United Nations Volunteers.

20. The United Nations Volunteers reserves the right to amend the conditions of each engagement without prejudice to the rights acquired under it. The United Nations Volunteers also reserves the right to withdraw a Volunteer from an assignment after having informed the authorities concerned.

21. The engagement as a Volunteer may be terminated by either side on six weeks' written notice.

22. The United Nations Volunteers may summarily dismiss a Volunteer for serious misconduct.

23. Any controversy arising out of the observance or non-observance of an engagement shall be resolved through appeals procedures to be established for the United Nations Volunteers.