



**Technical cooperation among
developing countries**

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CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS OF THE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE
UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

SUMMARY

The present document is submitted in compliance with paragraph 11 of decision 10/1 B and paragraphs 3 and 6 of decision 10/2 of the High-level Committee on the Review of Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries regarding:

(a) The implementation of the guidelines for the review of policies and procedures by the United Nations development system concerning technical cooperation among developing countries (decision 10/2, para.3);

(b) Organizational and supportive arrangements for technical cooperation among developing countries, such as administrative, legal, informational and financial arrangements (decision 10/1 B, para. 11 and decision 10/2, para. 6).

* TCDC/11/L.1.

I. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GUIDELINES FOR THE REVIEW OF POLICIES
AND PROCEDURES BY THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM
CONCERNING TECHNICAL COOPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

1. In its decision 10/2, the High-level Committee requested the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to carry out consultations on the guidelines for the review of policies and procedures concerning technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC) with the organizations and agencies of the United Nations system, taking into account the views expressed by Member States and the new directions strategy for technical cooperation among developing countries, and to submit the recommendations on the subject to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session, through the Economic and Social Council, for further consideration and approval, with a view that recommendations would be submitted to the fifty-third session of the General Assembly in the context of the triennial policy review of operations activities for development of the United Nations system. The aforementioned actions were taken and the revised guidelines¹ have been disseminated to the agencies and organizations of the United Nations system, which have been encouraged to ensure their effective implementation. The account below summarizes the revisions and the status of implementation of the revised guidelines.

2. The revised guidelines are, for the most part, an affirmation of the earlier version which were approved by the Administrative Committee on Coordination and have been applied on an experimental basis since 1993. However, some modifications have been made in order to render them more consistent with the strategic orientation and focus of the new directions for technical cooperation among developing countries,² prepared at the request of the General Assembly in 1994, and to incorporate the views expressed by various organizations and agencies of the United Nations system. Other revisions have their source in policy-related directives issuing from recent decisions and resolutions of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the High-level Committee on the Review of Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries and the UNDP Executive Board.

3. Major changes in the international economic system in recent years - principally the movement towards a more liberalized trading regime resulting in the globalization of markets and production structures - have underlined the continued validity of TCDC as an instrument enabling developing countries to participate fully in the newly emerging economic order. Against this backdrop of an altered global economic and political environment, the revised guidelines for the review of policies and procedures concerning TCDC provide a strengthened framework for the expansion of South/South cooperation.

4. The overall goal of the revised guidelines is to mainstream the TCDC modality into the operational activities for development of the organizations and agencies of the United Nations system. The major elements in this modified framework require the organizations and agencies to undertake a number of measures whose collective effect would be to facilitate the use of TCDC as a matter of first consideration in the design, formulation, implementation and evaluation of programmes and projects they support or implement. There are several key elements to this objective. First, there should be a focus on

strategic initiatives - high priority issues - that are likely to have a major development impact on a large number of developing countries. Secondly, there must be a system-wide policy to promote closer operational integration between TCDC and economic cooperation among developing countries (ECDC) in order to ensure that TCDC serves as a strategic instrument in the service of wider schemes among developing countries. Thirdly, "pivotal" developing countries should serve as catalysts in the promotion of TCDC within particular regions as well as interregionally. Fourthly, programmes must establish links with non-governmental organizations and the private sector for the promotion of TCDC. Fifthly, all parties in the development effort should promote innovative funding modalities such as triangular cooperation arrangements in support of TCDC activities. Sixthly, an expanded effort to develop and disseminate TCDC information systems and data banks is crucial to the wider use of TCDC. Seventhly, to promote a greater awareness and understanding of the comparative advantages of TCDC, more intensified training activities should be undertaken. Finally, it is essential that the TCDC focal points of the organizations of the United Nations system be strengthened.

5. The overall response of organizations and agencies of the United Nations development system to the revised guidelines has been positive. There is general agreement in their reporting on TCDC activities undertaken during the biennium 1997-1998 that the revised guidelines provide an improved framework for enhancing the TCDC elements in their programmes and projects.

6. As reported by the agencies and organizations of the system, the operational integration between TCDC and ECDC has made significant strides in nearly all development areas, including food and agriculture, health, gender in development, education, trade, and investment and industrial research. Organizations of the system are assisting developing countries to articulate national policies on ECDC/TCDC and have received substantial contributions from a number of developing countries in support of ECDC/TCDC activities.

7. The revised guidelines appear to have created a widespread recognition that fuller utilization of TCDC depends to a great extent on enhanced awareness of its advantages and benefits, together with greater familiarity with the operational mechanisms and procedures involved. Organizations and agencies of the United Nations development system have been carrying out activities such as staff orientation and briefing sessions to enhance in-house capacity to promote and support TCDC as well as assisting developing countries' institutions to improve their own capacities in this regard. Agency publications on TCDC play an essential part in sensitizing staff and collaborating partners regarding ongoing TCDC activities, new trends and opportunities as well as disseminating lessons of outstanding experiences and successful case studies which can be replicated.

8. There is a general consensus within the United Nations Development Programme, as expressed by the respective regional bureaux, that the guidelines have stimulated the accelerated use of the TCDC modality. The designation of "pivotal countries" has been especially effective in spreading "best practices" among developing countries; private sector partnerships have also increased as a result of emphasis placed on closer operational integration between TCDC and ECDC.

II. ORGANIZATIONAL AND SUPPORTIVE ARRANGEMENTS FOR TECHNICAL COOPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, SUCH AS ADMINISTRATIVE, LEGAL, INFORMATION AND FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

9. In paragraph 11 of its decision 10/1 B, the High-level Committee called upon the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme to ensure that the separate identity of the Special Unit for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries within UNDP was maintained and decided to review periodically the impact and functioning of the Special Unit in promoting, monitoring and coordinating technical cooperation among developing countries on a system-wide basis. In paragraph 6 of its decision 10/2, the High-level Committee requested the Administrator of UNDP, in relation to the mandated functions and increasing responsibilities of the Special Unit, to ensure that the Special Unit was adequately staffed to enable it to execute its responsibilities effectively.

10. During the biennium 1997-1998, the Special Unit functioned with its budgeted staff complement of seven Professional and nine General Service posts. Working within the framework of the new directions strategy, the Special Unit adopted a more focused approach, emphasizing longer-term partnerships with such entities as the South Centre and the Third World Academy of Sciences. It has continued initiatives to strengthen the use of information technology as a means of fostering wider use of the TCDC modality and accelerating more effective delivery of United Nations system-supported TCDC/ECDC efforts. Of particular interest is the re-tooling of the TCDC information referral system (INRES), now designated as INRES-WIDE (Web of Information for Development), to facilitate greater access to experiences, skills and know-how available in developing countries.

11. In its decision 95/3, the Executive Board of UNDP allocated 0.5 per cent of UNDP core programme resources to the promotion of TCDC during the current programme period (1997-1999). The Special Unit also had approximately US\$ 1.3 million carried over from the previous programming cycle (1992-1996). However, due to the overall resource situation within UNDP, it was subsequently decided that the above-noted allocations should cover the period 1997-2000. These resources enabled the Special Unit to formulate a distinct programme beginning in 1997. The programme focuses on strengthening developing countries' capacities to intensify cooperation among themselves in strategic areas through exchange of knowledge and networking among institutions of the South.

12. In addition, \$8 million were made available by the Japanese Human Resources Development Fund for the promotion of TCDC; \$300,000 were provided by the Government of the Republic of Korea to the Voluntary Trust Fund for the Promotion of South/South Cooperation; and the Government of Ireland made a project-specific contribution of approximately \$40,000. Actual expenditure during 1997 was \$4.53 million; projected levels of expenditure for 1998 and subsequent years of the cycle are expected to adhere to this expenditure trend.

13. The above-mentioned situation is brought to the attention of the High-level Committee for Information.

Notes

¹ See E/1997/110.

² See TCDC/9/3.
