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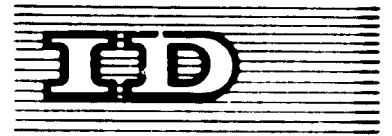
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Agenda item 6(d)

PROPOSALS FOR EXPEDITING AND IMPROVING
THE RECRUITMENT OF PROJECT PERSONNEL

We regret that some of the pages in the microfiche copy of this report may not be up to the proper legibility standards, even though the best possible copy was used for preparing the master fiche.

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General considerations

1. The present document is submitted in compliance with Industrial Development Board resolution 9(II), paragraph 6(b), which asks the Executive Director to "submit proposals to its third session, in order to accelerate the recruitment process, on possible modifications of current arrangements for the recruitment of experts and advisers to serve in the field under the different technical co-operation programmes for which the United Nations Industrial Development Organization has operational responsibility, taking into account the desirability of recruiting experts who have high qualifications and represent a wide variety of experience in countries at various stages of development and with different forms of social and economic systems".

2. The request made by the Board regarding proposals for improving recruitment procedures resulted from the well known difficulties of recruiting experts, difficulties which are affecting most of the technical assistance programmes and which are particularly prominent in the field of industry. At the time of the second session of the Board, UNIDO was already facing considerable difficulties in the recruitment of experts for two main reasons: first, the large number of requests received from countries for assistance under the SIS programme; second, procedural and practical difficulties arising from the fact that the conventional procedures did not match the accelerated system of the SIS programme. Moreover, the transfer of the headquarters of UNIDO from New York to Vienna, while the recruitment services remained in New York, introduced an additional cause for delay. At the time of the second meeting of the Board, the situation was giving rise to serious concern in spite of the efforts made by UNIDO, TARS and the national committees to correct it.

3. Urgent measures had to be taken to remedy the situation. First, the existing system had to be corrected, and, at the same time, a more effective long-term solution had to be planned. Action had to be taken as rapidly as practicable even before proposals could be submitted to the third session of the Board. SIS requests continued to come in; the number of UNDP/SF projects nearly doubled; and many new projects were expected under the continuous programming procedures of the UNDP/TA component. For these reasons the Executive Director presents to the Board a report of measures already taken during 1968 as well as proposals to improve and accelerate the recruitment

process in the future. Among the measures already taken are the establishment of a recruitment unit for SIS projects at UNIDO headquarters in Vienna as well as the establishment, also at headquarters, of a contracting unit for services of consultants and consulting firms and for the procurement of equipment.

4. Another step was the establishment of a recruitment planning unit. The function of this unit is to examine, well in advance, the expected needs for experts in the various sectors in which UNIDO is called to provide assistance, so that advance measures can be taken to secure the required experts. This unit also programmes the utilization of experts according to an acceptable schedule so that highly qualified experts can be used continuously in a succession of missions in a more efficient way than at present. Such planning will be of particular importance for the SIS programme which, to a large extent, consists of a number of short-term missions. Within the previously applied procedures, this kind of planning was not possible as job descriptions were circulated independently for each post. With the needs existing in many countries for well-qualified experts in industry, it is extremely difficult to recruit experts for short or medium-term missions; some specialized sectors are particularly affected by this problem. For some highly qualified experts the difficulty of leaving their regular employment for longer periods of time is obvious. With adequate advance planning, it would be possible to offer employment to a number of experts on a longer-term basis to carry out successive missions in various countries, a prospect that may be more attractive to them. A further activity of the recruitment planning unit will be to identify cases for which a subcontract with a firm of consultants may be more suitable. Appropriate planning would also be undertaken in the utilization of consulting firms.

Present system of recruitment

5. In the subsequent paragraphs, details are given of the action taken so far and of procedures which have already been put into force on the recruitment of experts. The recruitment of experts has traditionally been a complex matter in view of the involvement of numerous national committees, many of which observe different procedures; the various attitudes of recipient

countries, and the necessity of observing United Nations personnel rules. It is hoped that with the new procedures that are being applied, considerable improvement can be made as regards the time element.

6. From the point of view of a requesting Government, recruitment covers the whole process between the government request for assistance and the arrival of the expert in the field. This includes programming and budgeting in addition to the issuance of job descriptions and the prospection, interviewing, assessment and appointment of experts either to fill particular posts or for registration in a roster of candidates for possible future appointment. Recruitment also includes the selection and acceptance by the requesting Government of the expert to be appointed from among the list of candidates which is usually submitted for the consideration of the Government.

7. Action to improve recruitment performance can be taken effectively only within the framework of the entire system which presupposes that recruitment be recognized as a joint activity involving three parties: the requesting Government, UNIDO and the countries nominating candidates for expert posts.

8. Within UNIDO itself, recruitment is a joint activity calling for co-operation between the Technical Co-operation Division (project programming and relations with requesting Governments and UNDP); the substantive divisions (review of projects, assistance with job descriptions and technical evaluation of candidates); Financial Services (budgeting and financial authorization); Personnel Services (prospection, interviewing and appointment of candidates and relations with national recruitment authorities); and the Technical Equipment Procurement and Contracting Office (contractual arrangements with firms).

9. The recruitment and appointment of experts to serve with UNIDO technical co-operation projects in developing countries have been handled so far on the side of the United Nations by the Technical Assistance Recruitment Service (TARS) of the Office of Personnel at Headquarters, New York, acting upon requests received from UNIDO, and in consultation with UNIDO substantive divisions through the Division of Technical Co-operation. These arrangements have given rise to two problems: first, the response from the developing countries to the SIS programme and the relatively rapid procedures for

submitting, processing and approving governmental requests have not yet been matched by the delivery of experts through the existing recruitment mechanism; second, the distance between the offices of UNIDO in Vienna and those of TARS in New York causes occasional difficulties.

10. Other problems have continued to hamper UNIDO recruitment: UNIDO is forced in obtaining experts to compete with governmental bilateral programmes of technical assistance as well as with the overseas activities of major industrial enterprises. In certain specialized fields there is a considerable shortage of available expertise, and some developing countries require "generalists" possessing a combination of skills which in highly industrialized countries, have already been divided among a number of specialists.

11. The status of recruitment of UNIDO experts at the end of November 1968 was that, out of a total of 714 approved posts in the technical co-operation programmes in which UNIDO participates^{1/}, 434 posts were filled by experts in the field; the remaining 280 posts, though under various stages of recruitment, were in fact still vacant.

12. An examination of the 280 vacant posts in all programmes revealed that 181 were in an advanced stage of recruitment. Candidates had been favourably evaluated, and submission of the candidatures to the requesting Governments was under way for 91 of these posts; for the other 90 posts, candidatures had already been submitted to Governments and UNIDO was awaiting the decision of the Governments. The remaining 99 vacant posts included 31 cases of "advance recruitment", i.e. posts approved by UNIDO but not yet by UNDP, 37 new posts added during November and 31 residual difficult cases.

13. The problem of the time lag in filling vacant posts is not unique to UNIDO and has been a matter of serious concern to all major international organizations for several years. An Inter-agency Meeting of Recruitment Officers was held in Geneva late in 1966 to discuss ways and means of improving the situation, and the UNDP Governing Council also examined this question. UNIDO was represented at a meeting of National Committees for Technical Assistance Recruitment which was held in Geneva in March 1968. The recruitment problem of UNIDO was a separate item on the agenda and the opportunity was taken by the representative of UNIDO to present this problem with particular reference to the SIS programme.

^{1/} i.e. UNDP/SF and UNDP/TA, OPAS, United Nations Regular Programme and SIS.

14. The report of that meeting^{2/} included the following conclusions in respect of recruitment for UNIDO: "(a) The National Committees were impressed by the statement on UNIDO's recruitment needs and offered all possible co-operation; (b) UNIDO should approach candidates only through National Committee offices; (c) SIS vacancies, instead of being uniformly placed in the urgent category, should normally have a one-month period for recruitment in order to stimulate prospectation for candidates and thereby increase the chances of achieving positive early results; (d) In the view of a number of National Committees the improvements proposed by UNIDO in its recruitment procedures should be implemented as rapidly as possible."

Measures taken to accelerate recruitment

15. Following the Geneva meeting of national committees, several measures were instituted at UNIDO headquarters in an effort to reduce and overcome the difficulties and problems of recruitment of technical assistance experts. A TARS unit was established in the autumn of 1968 in Personnel Services to perform three main functions: to issue job descriptions direct from Vienna, to establish a roster of candidates particularly for the SIS programme, and to plan the long-range transfer of other expert recruitment functions from TARS headquarters to Vienna.

16. By October 1968, the continuing difficulties of filling vacant posts more quickly, the increase of SIS projects, and the problems stemming from the separation of the TARS headquarters in New York from the UNIDO headquarters in Vienna led to a further decision to make arrangements for UNIDO to assume the responsibility, as soon as practicable, for recruitment and appointment action in all regions outside the Western Hemisphere in respect of all UNIDO technical co-operation programmes. UNIDO's area of direct responsibility, in numerical terms, will therefore represent about two thirds of the total UNIDO recruitment for field posts.

17. After consultation between United Nations Headquarters in New York, and UNIDO, it was decided that the transfer of responsibility should commence with the SIS programme and would be based on the issue of new SIS job descriptions direct from Vienna. The target date for this action to commence was set at 1 January 1969.

^{2/} Document TARS/58/18: GE. 68-6681.

18. From this date, the division of responsibilities is as follows:

UNIDO expert posts

UNIDO Personnel Services issue all UNIDO job descriptions direct from Vienna.

Nominations of candidates for all UNIDO posts from recruitment sources outside the Western Hemisphere are addressed to UNIDO, Vienna, with copies sent to TARS headquarters in New York and to TARS in Geneva. After evaluation, a copy of the evaluation report is sent by UNIDO to TARS headquarters in New York and to TARS in Geneva.

TARS headquarters in New York prospects for candidates in the Western Hemisphere for all UNIDO posts and, as previously, forwards candidatures to UNIDO for evaluation.

SIS posts

UNIDO Personnel Services centralize recruitment operations for SIS appointments in respect of the new SIS job descriptions issued from Vienna as of 1 January 1969. Central responsibility in respect of SIS job descriptions issued by TARS headquarters in New York, up to 31 December 1968, will be assumed by UNIDO Personnel Services not later than 31 August 1969.

TARS headquarters in New York takes appointment action on behalf of UNIDO for accepted candidates residing in the Western Hemisphere. TARS headquarters continues to carry full responsibility for recruitment and appointment operations in respect of SIS job descriptions issued by TARS up to 31 December 1968, until central responsibility for those posts is transferred to UNIDO not later than 31 August 1969.

UNIDO Special Fund, Technical Assistance and Regular Programme posts

UNIDO Personnel Services will consult TARS headquarters in New York in the course of 1969 concerning the transfer of major responsibility for recruitment and appointment operations in this sector.

TARS headquarters in New York continues for the time being to carry full responsibility for recruitment and appointment operations in respect of UNIDO expert posts under UNDP/SF, UNDP/TA, OPAS and the Regular Programme. The transfer of responsibility to Vienna for these categories of posts will be effected as and when the Professional Recruitment and Placement Section of Personnel Services, UNIDO, is ready to take this over.

19. In planning this action, the following factors were considered:

The presence of recruitment teams, substantive divisions and technical co-operation sections in one location, under the roof of UNIDO should simplify and speed up the administrative arrangements;

Vienna is well situated for developing close contacts and working relationships with TARS in Geneva and with the European national committees and other recruitment sources;

The arrangements enable the establishment of a fully integrated professional recruitment section within UNIDO which would improve the quality and the efficiency of three areas of work - recruitment of experts, recruitment of professional staff for the UNIDO secretariat and the operation of the consultant programme;

The proposed method of hand-over of responsibilities (via the job descriptions) takes into account the period of time required to locate, appoint and train the staff who will carry out the operations from Vienna.

20. Although implementation of this plan of action has been handicapped somewhat by problems of staffing and office space which are inseparable from the rapid growth of UNIDO and the limited availability of temporary accommodation, it is nevertheless expected that the new responsibilities of UNIDO in the sector of technical assistance recruitment can be substantially met in 1969 and that the performance in this crucial area will improve.

21. Certain other additional measures have been, or soon will be, introduced and they are expected to reinforce the benefits accruing from the transferral of recruitment responsibility to Vienna.

22. The system of technical evaluation of candidates will be revised and improved so as to ensure a more careful assessment while simultaneously reducing the workload carried by the substantive divisions in this respect.

23. The possibilities are being explored of concluding contractual arrangements with industrial enterprises and institutions for the provision of expertise to UNIDO SIS projects. A model contract and a standard letter of understanding have been prepared for use with firms which will then be provided with job descriptions. For the initial exploration of this new source, certain job descriptions are "blocked" - i.e. are not circulated through normal channels of recruitment - in order to avoid the confusion which would otherwise ensue from duplication of effort between contractual arrangements and normal individual recruitment. When a decision is taken to offer certain job descriptions to industrial undertakings, those job descriptions are not placed in normal circulation until the enterprises have had a fair chance to formulate and submit their proposals and the requesting Government has commented on them.

24. Firms are generally offered those job descriptions which, from experience, have proved to be difficult to fill by normal methods because of the qualifications required, the particular field of activity, the short notice or the short duration of the assignment. In order to identify such types of posts, studies are being undertaken on the relative speed of filling vacancies for various kinds of expertise in different branches of industry. The aim is to offer firms those job descriptions which are least likely to be filled expeditiously through individual recruitment, so that contractual arrangements can make a positive impact on the vacancy situation.

25. Arrangements are being made to promote strategic recruitment of individual candidates in certain fields of activity for which Governments frequently request expert assistance. For this purpose, a study of priority fields, based on an analysis of government requests, is being undertaken. National committees will be informed of these fields and asked to prospect for candidates, who could then be brought together for joint interviewing by the national authorities, a representative of TARS and a representative of UNIDO who would be a specialist in the relevant substantive field. In this way, it is hoped to improve and extend the roster of candidates for UNIDO expert posts, i.e. candidates who have been already evaluated as fully qualified and suitable, and who are known in principle to be interested and available.

26. On several occasions UNIDO substantive officers have already accompanied TARS interviewing officers on visits to the European national committees in order to explain the special needs of UNIDO and to prospect for, or interview, candidates for particular posts. These joint UNIDO/TARS missions, aimed at tactical recruitment, will be further pursued and extended in 1969.

27. It is also intended that senior officers of the UNIDO substantive divisions should stimulate and promote the supply of candidates by means of contacts with their counterparts at the national level, in professional associations and institutions.

28. Inside UNIDO, an early warning system has been introduced to facilitate the possible re-assignment to other projects of UNIDO experts, currently serving in developing countries, whose contracts are expiring.

29. To accomplish the aim of UNIDO of getting highly qualified experts into the field quickly to staff viable UNIDO projects, a joint venture is required involving continuous intensive co-operation between UNIDO, TARS, the national recruitment authorities and the requesting authorities of developing countries. The formulation of useful development projects, the preparation of effective job descriptions, the stimulation of new sources of recruitment, the prospecting and nomination of suitable candidates, the accurate and speedy evaluation of these candidates and quick action by requesting Governments on the candidatures submitted to them - all these collectively represent a complex and challenging task. Over the coming year, the UNIDO secretariat will pursue its concentrated efforts to accelerate and simplify the accomplishment of this task.

Proposals

30. It is felt that these measures which have been taken by the Executive Director concerning the recruitment of experts, the transfer of the functions connected with the contracts for consultants and services and for equipment, and the establishment of a recruitment planning unit will effectively contribute towards the fulfilment of UNIDO's technical assistance programmes and the aims pursued by the Board in resolution 9(II) paragraph 6(b).

31. In addition to the measures already taken, the Executive Director wishes to suggest that the Board examine certain additional measures that may further contribute to the improvement of the delivery of the operational projects, and take such action as it may deem appropriate.

32. Delays often occur in obtaining approval of experts from recipient Governments. The availability of suitable candidates is very often limited to a certain period of time, and the expert may no longer be free unless action is taken rapidly after his availability has been ascertained. It is in the interest of the recipient countries to act with all due speed in approving or rejecting the expert candidates. A recommendation to this effect may be made to recipient Governments.

33. In certain cases national committees have found it difficult to act rapidly in the recruitment of SIS experts. National committees and offices

concerned with recruitment of experts could be asked by the Board to take steps designed to respond to the particular needs of this programme.

34. The Board is aware of the procedure of programme appointments that was used some time ago for the UNDP/TA programme, under which specialists with high qualifications in their respective fields were recruited under long-term contracts so as to be available for missions in various requesting countries. This procedure, which sought to overcome the difficulties of ad hoc recruitment for individual projects, proved to be successful in a number of cases; it has, however, been discontinued because of difficulties encountered in providing a reasonably continuing period of employment for some of the experts. In view of what has been stated in the preceding paragraphs,^{5/} the Board may wish to authorize the Executive Director to study the advisability of re-introducing, on an experimental basis, the procedure of programme appointments in certain industrial fields which offer possibilities of continuing employment. Should the study produce conclusive results, the Executive Director would make definite proposals to that effect.

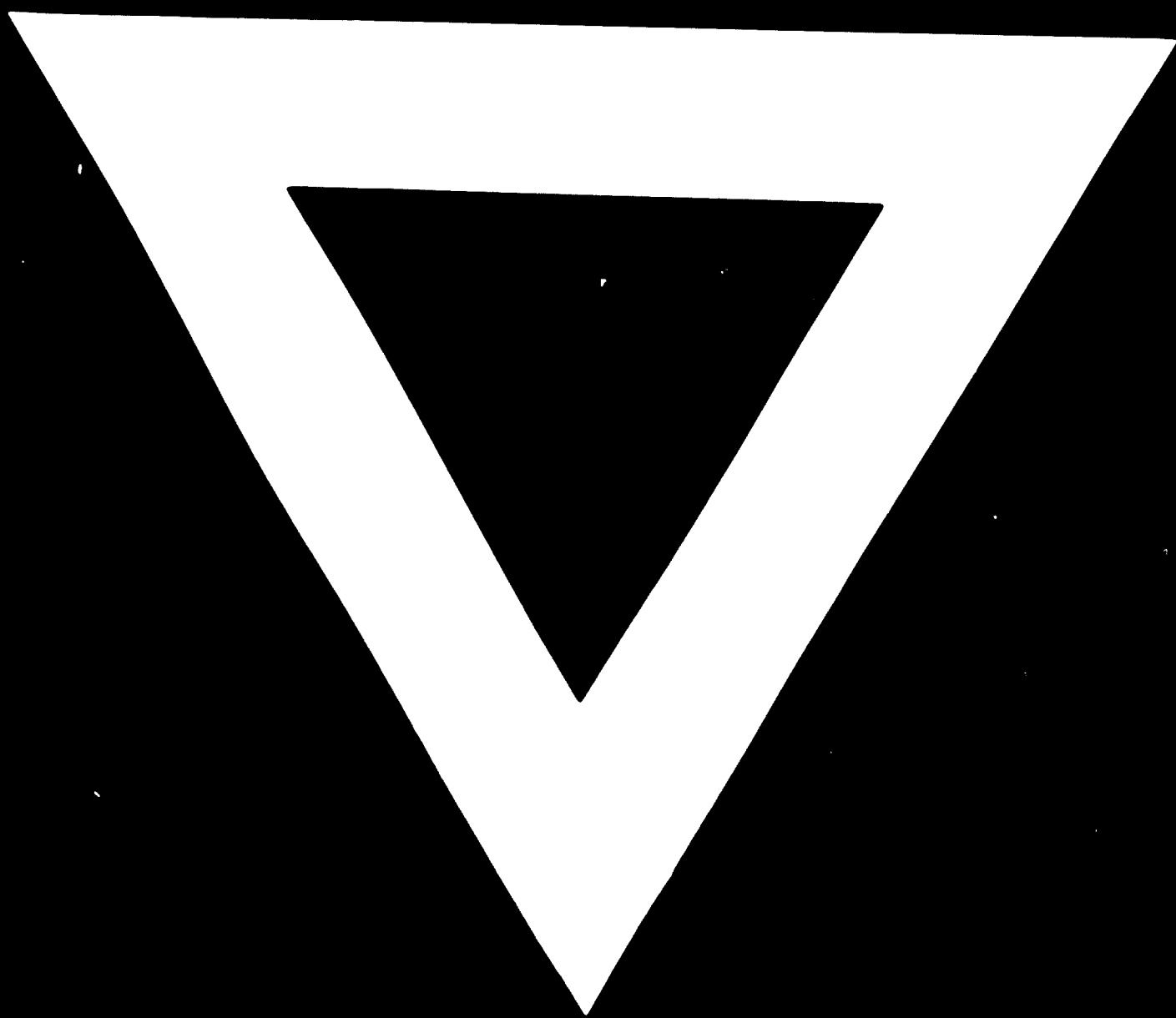
35. As an alternative to the above, the Board may wish to authorize the Executive Director to look into the possibility of employing high-level specialists on a retainer basis in areas of difficult recruitment. Individual experts would be offered a contract with a minimum guaranteed employment (say of three or four months a year), in consideration of which he would make himself available for missions during the rest of the year.

36. Finally, it has been suggested in the 1969 and 1970 programmes of work^{6/} that UNIDO explore with industrial consultant organizations the possibility of making special arrangements as regards the availability of consultants for missions during off-peak periods. Appropriate contacts will be established by the secretariat; the assistance of Governments could facilitate such contacts.



^{5/} See in particular para. 24 and 25.

^{6/} ID/B/26; ID/B/44.



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