

RAF/91/006/4/01/31). Additional funds for these two items could be provided through, but not necessarily be limited to, setting up a special Trust Fund.

F. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS AND FINAL COMMENTS

In order to facilitate having quick access to the main recommendations of the evaluation mission, these are brought together and summarized in this final section of the report. A few additional general remarks are also included at the end, to address some specific issues of concern about the project raised by UNDP/RAB's members of staff after a discussion of a preliminary draft of the report.

F.1. Summary of findings and recommendations

- (1) No major changes are recommended neither in the general objectives of the NLTPS project nor in the global approach and implementation strategies adopted so far.
- (2) It is the mission's opinion that during the design of the project the efforts involved in the preparatory process (in particular phases I and II, as stated in Annex III of the Project Document) were grossly underestimated, both in time and resources. Also, given the structure and time and resources allocated to the project, some of the expected outputs defined by the Project Document are considered to be too ambitious and most likely will not be achieved by the project (see point (6) below).
- (3) It seems advisable to recognize that certain important and essential assets of the project design (such as its participatory nature, its emphasis on the national efforts, and its aim to develop endogenous human resources and to strengthen the institutional capacity building process) have posed and will continue to pose certain intrinsic practical limitations on the development of the project (see section E.2). The evaluation mission believes that most of these limitations were misjudged or underestimated when the project was conceived.
- (4) Given the nature and scope of the project, the evaluation mission recommends that it be judged not only in terms of its specific products but also as a (social) process. It should be borne in mind that the project is being developed in an environment dominated by short term views and in general terms non-conducive to long term envisioning and planning (see F.2. final comments, point 1).
- (5) A more modest and realistic claim regarding the expected outputs of the project is advisable. The project should be seen as a first and very much needed essential step towards building Africa's endogenous capacity for long term thinking. However, it cannot and will not solve all past omissions and deficiencies in these areas in the African countries involved in the project. Building a tradition of futures studies and

long-term strategic thinking will need many more sustained efforts than just this single NLTPS project.

- (6) As for the specific outputs expected from the project, the mission considers that:
- (a) An adequate conceptual and methodological framework for national long-term prospective studies has already been developed.
 - (b) The regional information system on these topics presently under development is still relatively weak and needs strengthening.
 - (c) In several countries the NLTPSs are likely to be completed by the end of the project.
 - (d) The project will only have a limited impact on the introduction and dissemination of strategic planning techniques within the societies and governments involved (as should have been expected from the start). On the other hand, its contribution to develop a small core of African professionals with a reasonable expertise in futures studies, and long-term policy analysis and strategic planning and management, could be substantial. However, for this core of human resources to achieve the critical mass it would need to become self-sustainable and/or to become institutionalized, further provisions would have to be taken after the end of the NLTPS projects (see also F.2. Final comments, point 2).
 - (e) Detailed National Plans of Action will be difficult to obtain as a result of the project. It is recommended that these plans be elaborated by the appropriate government agencies (and not by the NLTPS national teams). These Plans should be based on the long term perspectives developed within the NLTPS project, but be part of a follow up effort.
 - (f) The mission considers that regional coherent prospective images of Africa based on the NLTPS studies will be difficult to obtain. Within the structure of the project, the most which can reasonably be expected is the development of a single regional scenario based on the regional integration principle, and that only if the national teams do develop scenarios under common assumptions on the future evolution of the external environment and the modalities of regional integration, which the mission considers unlikely.
- (7) It seems advisable that the difficulties found in many countries in setting up the appropriate NLTPS structures to carry out the national efforts in the best possible conditions, not be judged lightly as a sign of lack of interest from the individual countries to pursue the exercises. The mission found that in most cases these difficulties were mainly due to practical operational considerations.

- (8) The regional team in Abidjan has been and should be expected to continue to be an essential piece of the project, both in design and at the operational level. Without doubt the team should be maintained and supported. However, it would be advisable that some of its function and activities be adjusted and/or strengthened as recommended below, to improve its effectiveness. As to the regional team's internal structure, no major changes are felt necessary. If financial resources would allow it, perhaps an additional member with a sound background in the hard sciences or technology would be a valuable addition to the team.
- (9) The mission recommends that new means and settings be found and translated into action to strengthen the support given to the country efforts by the local offices of the sponsoring agencies (in particular those of UNDP and the World Bank). This could include, but is not limited to, finding ways for them to reinforce the synergy between NLTPS and other projects with long-term implications being done in the respective countries or on a regional basis. The role of country officers of UNDP, the World Bank and other stakeholders in sensitization tasks, maintaining the governments interest in long term strategic planning and in providing contacts with other projects would be very valuable. Other specific areas of collaboration could be, for example, the provision of relevant statistical data bases, sectorial or national diagnostic studies, identification of national experts, evaluation studies of big investment projects, technology assessment studies, and the organization of joint seminars. A more creative approach for the National teams to take full advantage of the very important asset represented by these officers should be devised by the regional team.
- (10) It is recommended that the regional team reviews and strengthens all its strategies concerning information flows. These have probably been thus far the weakest point of the implementation process. This recommendation covers the regional team's strategies regarding:
 - (a) The development of a regional information system on prospective studies and strategic planning and its use. Particular attention should be paid to statistical information and to studies on global and regional long-term views. A specific strategy to better disseminate the information already available should be put into place. Means should be devised to facilitate a more frequent and easier access to the data base by the National Teams.
 - (b) The information exchanges with all parties involved in the project or potentially interested in it. It would be advisable to design a strategy which could allow the regional team to produce information specifically targeted for, at least, the national teams, the consultation committees set up to help these teams, the officers of sponsoring agencies (both local and at their central offices), government officials (not only those directly involved with the projects), and other social bodies involved or interested in the projects.

- (c) The information flow from the regional team towards the national teams, particularly regarding methodological issues and information related to the global trends and issues being discussed internationally and their possible implications for Africa or for specific sub-regions and countries.
 - (d) The direct exchanges of information and experiences among national teams and other bodies involved in the exercises.
 - (e) The fast dissemination of the activities and results obtained both at the regional and national levels as they are produced, particularly among all the stakeholders directly or indirectly involved in the project.
 - (f) Communications between the regional team and the sponsoring agencies and donors. In this respect, concerted efforts by all parties seem to be needed. Given the complexity and scope of the project, it seems advisable that the UNDP and the Sponsors Committee make an effort to clarify with the regional team the proper authority and/or procedural channels to be used regarding the different aspects of the project.
- (11) Although the methodology being used was found to be very sound and solid, the evaluation mission considers that the following recommendations could help to improve its implementation process:
- (a) The long-term strategic planning elements of the methodology for the last phases of the projects should be reinforced and further documented. This would be particularly important in order that the long-term prospective images aimed at, and the questions posed during the whole process by the national teams, be geared towards a better definition of key issues, actors, alternative programmes of actions, etc, which could later facilitate the development of National Plans of Actions.
 - (b) The methodological guidelines could be complemented with more ample documentation on how to handle the transition between the different consecutive phases defined in them. This documentation should be made available to the national teams and be discussed with them.
 - (c) The regional team should develop (or compile and adapt, as appropriate) and provide to the national teams more detailed documentation on the specific tools and methods proposed in the methodological guide, including selection criteria, advantages and disadvantages, and detailed descriptions and practical implementation procedures (do's and don't's) and examples of the methods and tools.
 - (d) The regional team should review and reinforce its strategies to ensure that the national teams make a balanced use of both qualitative and quantitative methods and tools, and it should take the necessary measures to induce them

to introduce systematically as many quantitative elements as possible in their long-term prospective images.

- (e) The regional team should also strengthen its actions directed to develop African, regional and sub-regional long-term prospective frameworks of reference to be provided to the national teams. This will be of particular relevance if the expectations for producing regional prospective images derived from the national exercises are retained as part of the project outputs.
 - (f) The mission also strongly recommends that the regional team responds promptly and critically in writing to all documents being produced by the national teams, providing a quick technical feedback so that needed corrective actions be taken.
 - (g) As far as possible, a tougher position during the negotiation of the institutional arrangements with countries interested in doing an NLTPS study seems advisable. This will have later important repercussions on the possibilities available to the regional team to care for the technical rigor of the project.
 - (h) More advanced NLTPSs should be fully documented and used as inputs to guide those country exercises which are at an earlier stage of implementation.
 - (i) The implementation of a permanent sensitization program for the National Futures Commissions, or the equivalent consultative bodies, and government officials, as to the importance, possibilities and limitations of long-term futures and strategic planning studies, in general, and the methodology selected and the NLTPS projects, in particular, is advisable.
- (12) The evaluation mission recommends that the decision as to the number and selection of countries where NLTPS projects are to proceed be left to the regional team.
 - (13) The mission also recommends that either the Technical Advisory Board (TAB) of the African Futures project be abolished or its functions and operating procedures be redefined. Under the present conditions, the TAB will not be able to fulfill its original assignment.
 - (14) With respect to the current financing scheme of the project, the mission recommends that, in spite of the operational problems posed by it, no changes should be made during the present project period up to mid-1995.
 - (15) The mission strongly recommends that the project be extended beyond its present termination date of mid-1995. If the project was to stop then, its rate of return would be relatively small.
 - (16) If the sponsoring agencies approve an extension of the project, two further recommendations seem appropriate with respect to financial issues: