and the United Nations Development Programme, to take the necessary action in that regard;

3. Expresses its deep appreciation to the Government of Japan for its generous offer to continue to serve as the host country to the Institute;

4. Expresses its confidence that the Institute will continue to function on a sound financial basis exclusively through voluntary contributions;

5. Requests the Executive Secretary to report to the Commission at its fifty-first session on the implementation of the present resolution.

758th meeting 13 April 1994

50/6. Regional preparations for the World Summit for Social Development6

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific,


Bearing in mind the Manila Declaration on a Social Development Strategy for the ESCAP Region Towards the Year 2000 and Beyond endorsed by the Commission in its resolution 48/5 of 23 April 1992,

Noting with concern that, despite relative improvements in the economic condition of some countries of the world, poverty continues to be prevalent in some parts of the Asian and Pacific region, resulting in particularly adverse conditions for such disadvantaged groups as women, children, disabled persons, ageing persons, minority groups, migrants and refugees,

Reiterating its commitment to the pursuit of social development in the Asian and Pacific region with a view to the eradication of poverty, the attainment of productive employment and social integration, the realization of basic human rights for all citizens and the fulfillment of the people's aspirations for social justice,

Mindful of the need for comprehensive and practical regional preparations for the World Summit for Social Development, to be convened in Copenhagen in 1995,

1. Welcomes the convening of the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Conference in Preparation for the World Summit for Social Development, which will have among its tasks review and assessment of the progress achieved towards attaining the aims and objectives of the Manila Declaration on a Social Development Strategy for the ESCAP Region Towards the Year 2000 and Beyond, which was adopted by the Fourth Asian and Pacific Ministerial Conference on Social Welfare and Social Development, held in Manila in 1991 and endorsed by the Commission at its forty-eighth session in 1992;

2. Calls upon all concerned donor countries, donor agencies and intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations to provide financial and technical support for the regional preparations for the World Summit for Social Development;

3. Requests the Executive Secretary to report on the status of implementation of the Manila Declaration at the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Conference in Preparation for the World Summit for Social Development.

758th meeting 13 April 1994

50/7. Update of the Jakarta Plan of Action on Human Resources Development in the ESCAP Region7

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific,

Recalling its resolution 274 (XLIV) of 20 April 1988 on the Jakarta Plan of Action on Human Resources Development in the ESCAP Region,

Recalling also its resolution 48/6 of 23 April 1992 on regional cooperation in the implementation of the Jakarta Plan of Action on Human Resources Development in the ESCAP Region, in which it requested, inter alia, that the Plan be refined, for consideration by the Commission at its fiftieth session, to take into account changing socio-economic conditions in the region,

Reaffirming its commitment to human resources development as an essential strategy for combating poverty in the region,

Recognizing that the further sustainable development of the Asian and Pacific region is closely dependent upon both the effective use of the region's human resources and their continued enrichment, through increased education, knowledge, skills and capabilities, improved health and nutritional status and health services, as well as other means,

Noting the importance that has been accorded by members and associate members to the Jakarta Plan of Action and the progress that has been achieved in its implementation,

6 See para. 338 above.

7 See para. 376 above.
Noting also the useful work undertaken by the ESCAP secretariat, and by other United Nations bodies and agencies, including the United Nations Development Programme, the International Labour Organization and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, in implementation of the Plan.

Noting further that, in implementation of resolution 274 (XLIV), the secretariat convened the Expert Group Meeting to Review the Jakarta Plan of Action on Human Resources Development in the ESCAP Region, in Bangkok in January 1994, and took into full consideration in its revision of the Plan the recommendations made by those experts,

1. Adopts the Jakarta Plan of Action on Human Resources Development in the ESCAP Region, as refined and updated in 1994, annexed to the present resolution, as a guideline to be applied by the Commission and its members and associate members in accordance with the differing economic and social conditions prevailing in the countries and areas of the region;

2. Urges all members and associate members to accord priority to the formulation and implementation of policies, plans and programmes to promote human resources development as an integral aspect of development;

3. Invites members and associate members that have not already done so to establish national focal points for human resources development to oversee the implementation of the Plan at the national and subnational levels, and to participate as active members in the regionwide ESCAP Network of National Focal Points for Human Resources Development;

4. Calls upon all development partners, both bilateral and multilateral, to extend effective support to the Commission’s efforts to further implement the Plan;

5. Urges the United Nations Development Programme and other funding agencies to provide adequate funding to support the further implementation of the Plan in the region in fulfilment of its human development policy objective;

6. Requests the Executive Secretary, within available budgetary resources, to intensify his efforts to promote the further implementation of the Plan, particularly in the following areas:

   (a) Targeting the rural and urban poor, in particular the unemployed, women, youth, the landless, disabled persons, the elderly, and minority groups, as the primary beneficiaries of the secretariat’s human resources development activities;

   (b) Enhancing national capabilities through promoting human resources development policies that are compatible with economic growth and promote flexibility and continuous skills development;

   (c) Promoting gender equity and women’s empowerment as primary considerations in all human resources development policy formulation, planning and programming, monitoring and evaluation;

   (d) Strengthening intersectoral cooperation between government, non-governmental organizations and private enterprise in the human resources development process;

   (e) Facilitating intraregional exchange of experience and expertise through the ESCAP Network of National Focal Points for Human Resources Development;

   (f) Enhancing the skills of government and non-governmental personnel in the planning and delivery of human resources development services through the provision of training;

7. Further requests the Executive Secretary, subject to the availability of budgetary resources:

   (a) To prepare an inventory of centres of excellence in the region and to promote the use of the expertise available in those centres, on the basis of technical cooperation among developing countries, to enhance the quality of human resources throughout the region;

   (b) To convene an ad hoc expert group meeting in 1996 to advise the secretariat on the direction of its work under phase III of the Jakarta Plan of Action, covering the period 1994-2000;

   (c) To submit to the Commission in 1997 a report containing a mid-point review of progress achieved under phase III of the Plan.

758th meeting
13 April 1994

Annex

JAKARTA PLAN OF ACTION ON HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT IN THE ESCAP REGION, AS REVISED IN 1994

Background

Part One

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

I. THE CORE CONCEPT

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C. The role of government and other enabler groups
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Background

1. Human resources development was the main focus of discussion at three consecutive annual sessions of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), from 1986 to 1988. Those deliberations culminated in the adoption, on 20 April 1988, of resolution 274 (XLIV) on the Jakarta Plan of Action on Human Resources Development in the ESCAP Region.

2. The Jakarta Plan of Action was adopted partly in response to the growing awareness in Asia and the Pacific that development in too many cases had been successful only in narrowly defined terms, and that even that success had often bypassed the majority of the people in the region. It was simultaneously a reaction to the widespread perception that development policy, planning and programming had often had inadequate immediate human relevance and impact. Further, it arose out of the concern over rising human redundancy in many developing countries, owing to the reduced need under conditions of continued economic growth for the full utilization of the available human resources endowment.

3. A basic premise of the Plan was that the further sustainable development of the Asian and Pacific region would be closely dependent upon both the effective use of the region's human resources and their continued enrichment, through education, skills formation, improved health and nutrition, and other means. A reorientation in national development policies was therefore necessary to put a human face on development. The Plan proposed a set of coordinated policy guidelines for Asian and Pacific countries for the development of the full potential of their citizens. It outlined measures to be taken by the region's developing countries in upgrading their human resources to meet emerging economic and social development options and opportunities. It proposed action to facilitate broad-based participation by all the people in the human resources development process, focusing particularly on special provisions to enhance the status of the disadvantaged groups in society.

4. During the six years since its adoption, the Plan has proved to be a useful tool for Asian and Pacific Governments in pursuit of human resources development. The acid test of any such plan lies in its practical implementation by Governments. In that regard, the value of the Plan in stimulating national-level action has been evident. Some of the tangible results have included the following:

   (a) Development of national plans of action on human resources development using the Jakarta Plan of Action as a blueprint;

   (b) Incorporation of the recommendations contained in the Plan in national socio-economic development plans and policies;

   (c) Formation of national inter-ministerial committees and other high-level bodies to coordinate the implementation of the Plan;

   (d) Establishment of national focal points for human resources development for the pursuance of a coordinated inter-ministerial and intersectoral approach to national implementation of the Plan;

   (e) Implementation of the Plan's proposals for action by government agencies involved in specific aspects of human resources development;

   (f) Establishment of national information systems on human resources development;
5. Regional support for the above national-level action was provided by ESCAP as well as other concerned United Nations agencies, including the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Health Organization (WHO). ESCAP activities in support of the Plan included the establishment and coordination of the ESCAP Network of National Focal Points for Human Resources Development; the organization of intergovernmental meetings, seminars and training workshops for both government and NGO personnel on various issues covered under the Plan; the conduct of research studies on critical human resources development issues; the establishment of the ESCAP Human Resources Development Award; service as a depository of information on human resources development activities in the region; and regionwide dissemination of information on human resources development through such publications as the ESCAP HRD Newsletter.

6. Since the adoption of the Jakarta Plan of Action in 1988, the Asian and Pacific region has experienced far-reaching changes, politically, economically and socially. Longstanding geopolitical and ideological schisms have given way to pragmatic approaches to cooperation. Throughout the region, Governments have initiated political reform, economic liberalization, social revitalization and subregional cooperation. Such changes demand new responses and priorities in human resources development.

7. It was with the above considerations in mind that the Commission, through resolution 48/6 of 23 April 1992 on regional cooperation in the implementation of the Jakarta Plan of Action on Human Resources Development in the ESCAP Region, requested the secretary to revise the Plan to ensure its continued relevance to changing conditions in the region. In compliance with the Commission's request, the secretariat convened the Expert Group Meeting to Review the Jakarta Plan of Action on Human Resources Development in the ESCAP Region, at Bangkok in January 1994, with a view to revising the Plan for submission to the Commission at its fiftieth session for consideration and adoption.

8. As a result of a careful review, the Plan has been revised, incorporating the findings and recommendations of the Expert Group Meeting, to make it more relevant to the changing conditions and needs of the region and to ensure the suitability of its recommendations for direct implementation. The main changes in the revised Plan are summarized in the following table.
Table. Main changes in the revised Jakarta Plan of Action on Human Resources Development in the ESCAP Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jakarta Plan of Action, 1988</th>
<th>Jakarta Plan of Action, Revised, 1994</th>
<th>Changes</th>
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<td><strong>PART ONE: INTRODUCTION</strong></td>
<td><strong>PART ONE: ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT: THE CORE CONCEPT</td>
<td>1. THE CORE CONCEPT</td>
<td>The section on the core concept has been strengthened to provide a more rigorous theoretical framework, clearly identifying the components of human resources development as investment in human resources, utilization of human resources and enhancement of the quality of life.</td>
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<tr>
<td>II. ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK</td>
<td>II. KEY ISSUES</td>
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<td>A. Dimensions of human resources development</td>
<td>A. Components of human resources development</td>
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<td>C. Enablers of human resources development</td>
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<td>D. Demand-focused versus supply-focused approaches</td>
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<td>E. The problem of uncertainty</td>
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<tr>
<td>F. National issues in the regional context</td>
<td>III. PRINCIPLES</td>
<td>The list of principles has been retained largely intact. Technical changes have been made to reflect refinements to the core concept and the changing priorities of the Commission.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PART TWO: RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROPOSALS FOR ACTION</strong></td>
<td><strong>PART TWO: FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>I. POLICY AND PLANNING</td>
<td>I. PROMOTING HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT</td>
<td>The recommendations have been merged with the proposals for action to eliminate redundancy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Investment in human resources</td>
<td>A. Investment in human resources</td>
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<td>B. Utilization of human resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>II. INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING</td>
<td>II. MANAGING HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT</td>
<td>The classification of the proposals into major sections has been revised to separate substantive from procedural concerns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. EDUCATION AND TRAINING</td>
<td>A. Policy, planning and programming</td>
<td>The number of proposals has been reduced to focus on the more practical, higher-priority items.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS</td>
<td>B. Institutional strengthening</td>
<td>The wording of many proposals has been revised to reflect the changing development priorities and socio-economic conditions in the region.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. INFORMATION SYSTEMS</td>
<td>C. Research and information</td>
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<td>VI. MONITORING AND EVALUATION</td>
<td>D. Monitoring and evaluation</td>
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<td>E. Regional support</td>
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<td><strong>PART THREE: ARRANGEMENTS FOR IMPLEMENTATION</strong></td>
<td><strong>PART THREE: ARRANGEMENTS FOR IMPLEMENTATION</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. PARTICIPATION</td>
<td>I. PARTICIPATION</td>
<td>The section on participation remains basically intact. That on priority-setting has been updated to reflect changing regional circumstances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. COORDINATION</td>
<td>II. PRIORITY-SETTING</td>
<td>The section on coordination at the national level elaborates the role of the national focal points established under the Jakarta Plan of Action, 1988. The section on coordination at the regional level clarifies the role of ESCAP based on experience in implementing the Plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. At the national level</td>
<td>A. At the national level</td>
<td>While the time-frame has been updated, the original phasing has been retained.</td>
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<td>B. At the regional level</td>
<td>B. At the regional level</td>
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<tr>
<td>III. PRIORITIES</td>
<td>IV. TIME-FRAME</td>
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<td>IV. TIME-FRAME</td>
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Part One

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

1. THE CORE CONCEPT

9. The concept of human resources development introduced in the Jakarta Plan of Action presents a human perspective of the development process as a whole. Human resources development is a continuing and iterative process comprising three interdependent components: (a) investment in human resources to enhance productive capabilities; (b) the utilization of those human resources to produce increased output; and (c) the participation of the human beings who embody those human resources in the benefits arising out of that increased output through an enhanced quality of life. The essential interdependence of the components of human resources development is shown in the following diagram.

![Diagram of Human Resources Development Process]

10. Sustainable human resources development must involve all three components. At the national level, investment in human resources must be translated into the effective utilization of those human resources if national output is to be increased on a sustained basis. At the individual level, investment in human resources to improve earning capabilities through employment or self-employment increases the incentives for individuals (and their families) to undertake further human resources development. It also increases their capability to finance future such development.

11. The concept of human resources development presented in the Jakarta Plan of Action emphasizes the synergistic congruence — particularly strong in developing countries — between investment in human resources and improvements in the quality of life. Improvements in nutrition, health and education are key elements of an improved quality of life and thus must be considered important investments in human resources. Conversely, the increased job satisfaction and sense of personal worth arising from increased productivity constitute an important contribution to the quality of life.

12. Participation and choice are also key elements of this holistic view of human resources development. The financial reward obtained from participation in productive activity is the principal means by which individuals are able to participate in the quality-of-life benefits that are created by development. The enhanced capabilities created by development enlarge the choices available to both individuals and nations, while the individual nature of many aspects of human resources development makes individual choice a key element in the process of such development.

13. Human resources development emphasizes the concept of sustainability. In an economic sense, at the national level the development is sustainable only when it contributes to an increase in national product, thereby creating the resources required to maintain and finance further human resources development. The sustainability of human resources development is also dependent on its impact on the natural resource base. For example, in countries where natural resource endowments are limited, either on an aggregate or per capita basis, a combination of rapid depletion of resources and rapid population growth can exacerbate pressure on human resources development and lead to a deterioration in the quality of life and the conditions underlying poverty. For the development to be sustainable, economic and social systems need to be managed in a way which optimizes the benefits available in the present without jeopardizing the potential for similar benefits in the future.

14. At the individual level, human resources development is a dynamic process that can be described in terms of a modified form of the cost-benefit framework developed in human capital theory. The essential element in that process is the net benefit or return on investment. This provides the incentive that motivates the individual to improve human resources and, over time, provides the increased resources that enable human resource investments to be undertaken and maintained. The cost-benefit framework (benefits - costs = returns) encompasses all three components of human resources development. The costs relate to the investments in improving the productivity of human resources, while the benefits are produced when those investments are subsequently utilized in production. The returns (net benefit) obtained, usually, but by no means solely, identifiable in terms of increased income, provide beneficiaries with an opportunity to improve their quality of life.

15. Any decision to invest in human resources development involves both costs and benefits, both monetary and non-monetary. For instance, most investments in human resources (for example, undertaking a course of education or training) involve not only financial outlays but also considerable time, an important component of the total investment cost being the opportunity cost (that is, the notional income that could have been earned during that time if the individual
had not been engaged in the course). Although conventional economic applications of cost-benefit analysis tend to emphasize the monetary costs and benefits, the non-monetary costs and benefits are also important, possibly even more so. Non-monetary costs include social and psychological injury, such as the social disapproval or stress that individuals may experience as a result of particular lifestyle, career or other such decisions. Similarly, non-monetary benefits such as personal satisfaction, prestige or enhanced social status may be important in motivating individuals to invest in human resources development.

16. The cost-benefit framework emphasizes that the critical consideration which motivates the individual’s decision to invest is the return on investment. As the poor are generally unaware of or otherwise constrained from realizing the net benefit to be derived from investments in human resources development, their investment incentives are likely to be weaker than those of other social groups. That decision-making weakness implies the need for a demand-oriented approach that focuses on the means of increasing the motivation of the poor to undertake human resources development.

17. Applied at the aggregate or national level, the cost-benefit framework must be modified in two critical respects. Whereas an increase in individual income is a sufficient incentive for an individual to consider a given investment in human resources development to be efficient, at the national level efficiency requires that the total national product be increased. These may not be equivalent conditions. For example, if investments such as higher education do not enhance productivity but merely improve individuals’ access to jobs, the net impact of such investments on national income may be zero or even negative.

18. At the aggregate level, the cost-benefit framework must also be modified to take account of externalities, or the costs and benefits of human resources development to society as a whole as distinct from the personal costs and benefits to individuals. The distinction is important because the benefits of many improvements to human resources are even larger for society as a whole than for the individual. In view of the strong positive externalities, the comparatively weak individual incentives to invest in many aspects of human resources development suggest that Governments should play a major role in ensuring that such development is vigorously pursued.

19. While the critical importance of human resources for development is not a new idea, the concept of human resources development as perceived by the Commission goes further. The Commission has recognized that human resources development is a broad concept encompassing both the means and ends of development and that it is equally essential for both economic and social progress. The interrelationships between human resources development activities within as well as among sectors require sustained attention if their positive potential for development is to be harnessed effectively. Likewise, the opportunities provided by human resources development should facilitate broad-based participation by the people in the development process, with special consideration to the participation of the poor.

II. KEY ISSUES

20. Implementation of a plan of action on human resources development for the ESCAP region requires a common understanding of the key analytical issues to be dealt with by all countries. The basic issues associated with the analytical framework developed for the Jakarta Plan of Action are as follows.

A. Components of human resources development

21. Human resources development is a multidimensional, dynamic concept that encompasses the dual roles of people as inputs into the development process and as the ultimate beneficiaries of that process. The essential elements of human resources development are (a) investment in human resources, (b) utilization of human resources, and (c) enhancement of the quality of life. These three components form a set of complementary, interdependent relationships. No individual component can be fully examined without reference to the others; yet each provides unique insights into the nature of the overall problem of human resources development and the means whereby it can be resolved effectively and efficiently. Together they provide an integrated framework for examining the human resources development process. The priority issues to be considered under each component are as follows.

1. Investment in human resources

22. Investment in human resources focuses on the processes by which the productive capacity of human resources can be increased by upgrading their quality. While better nutrition and health are important means of improving the quality of human resources, particularly in developing countries, it is generally agreed that the most critical processes for increasing the productivity of human beings are education and training. The proposals for action contained in the Plan embody a comprehensive view of education, encompassing the formal education system at all levels as well as lifelong education in the form of adult and continuing education programmes. Training is similarly broadly conceived to include skills development through post-school vocational and technical training, on-the-job training, retraining and community-based training. International economic trends and new technologies make it extremely difficult to predict the kinds of expertise that will be needed in the medium and long terms. Therefore, education and training efforts should be focused on creating broad-based productive capabilities
rather than a narrowly skilled workforce. A strong basic education, it is well recognized, can enhance lifelong adaptability, flexibility and mobility and can serve as sound preparation for training in specific skills. It can generate broad social benefits and provide the poor with access to opportunities that would be undreamed of otherwise.

2. Utilization of human resources

23. Effective utilization of labour is vital in order to ensure incentives that are strong enough to elicit initial investments in human resources development and a level of economic growth high enough to provide adequate resources for sustained investment in human resources development. While many countries in the region continue to face strong restructuring pressure that results in high levels of unemployment and underemployment, others that have achieved high levels of economic growth are beginning to experience labour shortages in specific sectors. Past, and in many developing countries continuing, rapid increases in population have resulted in a rapidly growing labour force throughout most of the region. In a number of countries, rapid population growth has also contributed to the generally low prevailing levels of education and skill. Changes in the composition of global demand for goods and services have made it imperative for developing countries to reduce their dependence on the production of labour-intensive primary commodities and emphasize the production of more skills- and capital-intensive modern industries and services. As a result, serious unemployment and underemployment situations have arisen in some cases in the agrarian sector and unskilled labour market. For many developing countries, additional problems have appeared with respect to matching labour demand and supply, associated with unstable or deteriorating domestic and international demand conditions. Under such circumstances, policy changes are required to create an economic environment providing adequate employment opportunities, efficient labour market signals and a structure of incentives that will enhance labour utilization and investment in training. Many countries in the region are also focusing increasingly on the potential of self-employment, entrepreneurship and the expansion of the informal sector, as well as international labour migration, to utilize their human resources better.

3. Enhancement of the quality of life

24. The evident inability of the development process to generate substantial improvement in national and international equity or eradicate poverty in many developing countries has little likelihood of being overcome unless carefully coordinated remedial strategies, policies and programmes are introduced in a number of key sectors, including education, health, population, urbanization and the environment. Tapping the potential of the underutilized human resources represented by the poor would generate significant socio-economic progress while simultaneously enhancing the quality of life of the people in greatest need. Conversely, improvements in the quality of life of the poor would have a significant impact on their productive capability. Practical measures for improving the living conditions of the poor and increasing their level of participation in society will need to be identified and implemented vigorously if these benefits are to be realized.

B. Priority concerns

25. The revised Jakarta Plan of Action identifies four priority areas of special concern for human resources development: targeting the poor, enhancing competitiveness, developing women’s human resources, and harnessing science and technology.

1. Targeting the poor

26. The productive capabilities and resilience of individuals, communities and organizations to deal with rapidly changing economic and social circumstances must be strengthened at all levels and among all sections of society if the Plan is to succeed in upgrading the region’s human resources. However, no national or regional development plan can hope to have a direct influence on every individual, community and organization, especially in the presence of the severe physical and financial resource constraints prevalent in developing countries throughout Asia and the Pacific. It is therefore necessary that target groups for human resources development be identified.

27. Target groups should be selected on the basis of cost-benefit criteria, including the prospective linkages and multiplier effects, of the human resources development programmes directed at them. The poor form the obvious first-priority target for human resources development, not only because of the egalitarian and humanitarian ideals that would be served thereby but, equally important, because of the high long-term returns on investment that would be achieved.

28. The poor, by no means a homogeneous group, bear different costs and receive benefits depending on the human resources development programme as well as the particular segments of the poor population most directly affected. Targeting is therefore essential for effective programme delivery. Furthermore, in the absence of careful targeting, human resources development programmes intended for the poor are likely to be captured by the non-poor. Targeting requires the identification of specific subgroups among the poor, such as the absolute poor, the unemployed, women, youth, disabled persons, and minority groups, so that programmes can be adapted to the specific characteristics and circumstances of the individual subgroups.
29. The rationale for identifying target groups under the Plan coincides with the Commission's priorities under its revised conference structure as delineated in resolution 48/2 of 23 April 1992. Under that resolution, the Commission established three thematic committees, one of which was to deal with issues specifically related to poverty alleviation. The terms of reference of that thematic committee (contained in annex V to the resolution), which oversees the Commission's activities in support of human resources development, refer specifically to vulnerable and disadvantaged social groups as the focus of its attention.

2. Enhancing competitiveness

30. With the growing importance of international trade, capital flows and technology transfer for national development throughout the region, strategic approaches to the creation of national comparative advantage in specific areas of production are being increasingly sought. Human resources development, which is the most adaptable, energy-efficient and self-sustaining form of capital, is an essential element of such an approach.

31. Efforts to enhance national competitiveness in particular activities require human resources development policies that are compatible with economic growth and promote flexibility and continuous skills development. Human capital formation through formal and informal education and on-the-job training is critical. Investment in improving the education and skill levels of the population is likely to be the most important determinant of long-term national economic performance.

32. The structure of incentives is a key to effective and efficient skill development. The most successful programmes place high priority on the design of incentives that maximize the rewards to individuals for effort, initiative and creative ability in response to market forces. The challenge is to move from rigid and supply-oriented training policies and programmes financed and provided by Governments to more adaptable, demand-oriented, employer-sponsored training, while establishing appropriate, complementary roles for the State. A second priority is to empower the people with the knowledge and skills necessary to take advantage of opportunities for their own economic and social advancement. Paramount among the means of such empowerment is investment in education, complemented by investment in nutrition and health.

3. Developing women's human resources

33. The development record shows a persistent bias against investment in women's human resources. It also reveals a consistent pattern of underutilization of those resources. Furthermore, women throughout the region enjoy a lower quality of life than do their male counterparts. Recognition of the essential interdependence of the three components of human resources development is particularly important in the case of women. Their lower level of human resources development compared with that of men is an important factor in the overall development situation in the region.

34. Women have lower levels of human resources development than men in part because development programmes have failed to take account of the influence of gender on the costs and benefits of human resources development. Therefore, it is essential that gender equity be accepted as a primary consideration in all policy formulation, planning and programming for such development. To achieve that objective, the specific roles, interests and concerns of women should be identified through gender analysis; increased participation of women should be ensured in decision-making; and gender-sensitive data should be used in order to enhance women's human resources development and their participation in development as beneficiaries and agents of change.

4. Harnessing science and technology

35. Rapid accretions to the international fund of science and technology continue to revise the agenda of development opportunities in Asia and the Pacific. Unless vigorous steps are taken to adapt human resources to the new realities, the development potential embodied in modern science and technology may be lost to the region's developing countries. New technologies must also be adapted to the region's labour-dominant factor proportions. Furthermore, the new technologies are also useful for addressing the region's pressing human resources investment needs; attention can be turned to both the generation of skilled personnel for the promotion of science and technology and the utilization of science and technology to upgrade the full range of human resources, including those of the poor.

C. The role of government and other enabler groups

36. Over the past half-century, many countries in the ESCAP region placed considerable reliance on the public sector, confident that government would be able to guide the course of economic and social development. Mounting problems in the application of that development strategy, however, have in recent years generated far-reaching changes throughout the region. Yet, the primary responsibility for human resources development remains the province of government because of externalities of much human resources investment and problems of access for the poor. Increasingly, however, the role of government has come to emphasize the human resources development aspects of macro-policy and the provision of a physical and social environment conducive to individual initiative. The human resources development role of business enterprises, NGOs and other economic and social institutions has expanded correspondingly.
37. The decentralization of political authority which has accompanied the process of liberalization in many countries has provided an opportunity for the people themselves increasingly to influence the economic and social forces that shape their lives. A new configuration of organizations has emerged in that context to complement the role of government as agent of development. The Plan classifies all those actors, including the agents of government, as enablers of human resources development, whose own human resources must be upgraded in order to implement effectively the programmes and projects called for under the Plan.

38. Enablers are drawn from among those which come into direct contact with the disadvantaged sections of society. Particularly important are government agencies responsible for local-level public administration, where the weaknesses of human resources development policy implementation are often most keenly felt; agencies responsible for the delivery of essential services at the local level, including primary schools; local health offices and agricultural extension bureaux; business firms, which are not only responsible for providing employment but are also sources of technological and other expertise; NGOs, whose voluntary efforts play a critical role in encouraging popular participation, developing public understanding, filling gaps and supplementing government efforts at the grass-roots level; and the mass media, which provide the increasingly powerful knowledge, information and communications networks indispensable to modern economic and social life. The personnel staffing these enabler organizations themselves require appropriate education, training, awareness-raising, provision of incentives and other means to ensure that they fulfill their special role.

39. The human resources embodied in enablers are vital to human resources development, and many vital enabler organizations require only minimal budgetary support. Although budgetary and material resources remain critically important, Governments should not overlook the great potential for human resources development inherent in the effective utilization of their own personnel. Human resources, including those available within the family, the community and voluntary groups, are more important than financial resources in dealing with such special social concerns as delinquency, crime, drug abuse and acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS), and health problems such as malnutrition that may seriously undermine human resources development.

D. Change and uncertainty

40. One of the major lessons of past attempts at development planning by countries in the ESCAP region has been that, no matter how refined the analysis of economic and social conditions and no matter how sophisticated the techniques used, the unexpected usually intervenes. Consequently, directive development planning has fallen into disfavour, and even indicative planning is being handled with increasing care.

41. Nowhere has this problem been more evident than in human resources development planning, where the relevant time-span is the medium to long term and where the policy environment is becoming increasingly complex. The numbers of organizations, power groups and kinds of beneficiaries with direct interests in these policies have grown dramatically over the years. The economies of countries in the ESCAP region have become more diversified and market forces are now playing a greater role in the allocation of resources. Economic and social change is accelerating through the forces unleashed by such factors as technological advance, industrialization, urbanization, and increasing international and intercultural interaction.

42. Given the uncertainties and ever-growing complexity of the human resources development environment, as well as the extent of intercountry variation in the region, the revised Jakarta Plan of Action has been formulated to permit application under a broad spectrum of possible scenarios.

43. With these concerns in view, the Plan limits its prescriptive content primarily to the development of human resources at the basic level. In dealing with longer-term issues, it is more indicative in nature. The Plan’s proposals for action and the institutional mechanisms for implementing them provide for built-in flexibility to respond to change and to enhance the adaptability and strengthen the resilience of the specified target groups in the presence of evolving development challenges.

E. National issues in the regional and international context

44. The ESCAP region is unique in the heterogeneity of its economic and social situation as well as its political and cultural conditions and geophysical features. Given the broad diversity of the region’s national development experience, the Plan seeks to ensure sufficient scope and flexibility to accommodate the full range of national circumstances and feasible human resources development responses. In the final analysis, the Plan must be implemented at the national level.

45. Action at the regional level can play a supportive role. Regional analysis and technical assistance, regional cooperation among developing countries, and regional coordination of responses to emerging economic and social issues — all such approaches to human resources development among countries complement and supplement the broad range of programmes and projects that must be undertaken within countries to resolve critical issues relating to the human resources development process.
46. International assistance for financing the necessary investment to support national policies requires a long-term perspective. Donors will need to bring their individual objectives and programme interests together so that national human resources development strategies may receive the coherent and flexible support they require.

47. The international context in which developing countries must pursue their human resources development goals also needs to be recognized and addressed. The debt crisis, declining international commodity prices, dwindling external resource flows and persistent protectionism weaken the developing countries’ capacity to embark on necessary investment programmes and socio-economic adjustment and restructuring strategies. Efforts to improve the global setting for human resources development through such means as the North-South dialogue are therefore necessary to complement the internal efforts of individual developing countries.

48. The degree of commitment to human resources development objectives in the implementation of structural adjustment programmes is critical to the pace at which some of the developing countries of the ESCAP region pursue their human resources development goals. Specific human resources development issues, such as the provision of social safety nets for the vulnerable and disadvantaged sections of the population, the maintenance of adequate levels of investment in human resources to ensure sustainability, and the provision of adequate social services to permit a minimum quality of life need to be considered in the context of restructuring. In this context, the role of international financial institutions is again significant, as their sponsorship of human resources development can influence sharply the development policies and strategies adopted by developing countries in the region.

III. PRINCIPLES

49. The Jakarta Plan of Action is founded on the following principles:

(a) The human factor plays a decisive role as a productive agent in development; at the same time, it is the people who are the intended beneficiaries of development. Human resources development thus serves as both an essential means and the ultimate end of development.

(b) The three major dimensions of investment in human resources, utilization of human resources and enhancement of the quality of life constitute a comprehensive framework for the effective planning and execution of human resources development in the ESCAP region.

(c) Human resources development can contribute significantly to the eradication of absolute poverty. In the planning and execution of such development, priority must therefore be placed on poverty alleviation, with particular emphasis on specific disadvantaged sections of society.

(d) The interaction between human resources development and all facets of economic and social progress requires a carefully coordinated approach to the planning and execution of human resources development, involving the active participation of all sectors and groups.

(e) Gender equity should be a primary consideration in policy formulation, planning and programming for human resources development. Women’s particular interests and concerns should be mainstreamed in all human resources development policies, plans and programmes in order to increase their access to gainful and productive employment and enhance their participation in national development processes, as both beneficiaries and agents of change.

(f) While primary responsibility for the implementation of human resources development plans and programmes rests with national Governments, much scope exists, especially at the local level, for involving other enabling groups, which can often exert a direct catalytic effect on the human resources development of specific target groups.

(g) Conventional supply-focused human resources development strategies, which emphasize investment in human resources, must be balanced by demand-oriented strategies, which involve the elimination of socio-cultural and other constraints to the productive utilization of human resources.

(h) Uncertainty concerning future economic and social development trends requires that built-in flexibility, including a focus on indicative rather than prescriptive content, be emphasized in human resources development planning and execution.

(i) In designing regional approaches to the planning and execution of human resources development, due attention must be paid to the diversity of national experiences and situations, including the special needs of the least developed, land-locked and island developing countries.

(j) The formulation and implementation of national strategies, policies, plans and programmes for human resources development are the sovereign right and responsibility of each member and associate member of ESCAP, to be carried out within the context of its specific national development needs and objectives.

(k) Regional cooperation and technical assistance in support of national strategies, policies, plans and programmes for human resources development make an important contribution to the enhancement of human resources endowments.
Part Two

FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

50. This framework for action consists of two sets of proposals. The first comprises 30 proposals in promotion of the three components of human resources development: investment in human resources (13 proposals), utilization of human resources (8 proposals) and enhancement of the quality of life (9 proposals). The second set comprises 32 proposals for the effective management of human resources development: policy, planning and programming (5 proposals), institutional strengthening (6 proposals), research and information (7 proposals), monitoring and evaluation (4 proposals) and regional support (10 proposals). It is expected that countries will set their individual priorities in implementation of these proposals in accordance with their respective development situations.

I. PROMOTING HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

A. Investment in human resources

(1) As perhaps their single most significant means of supporting human resources development, Governments should strengthen their efforts towards the realization of universal basic education, where this has not yet been achieved, and in facilitating access to secondary education for all who qualify.

(2) Recognizing that effective pursuit of the ideal of education for all requires the collaboration of all sectors, Governments should define clear procedures and standards to promote the establishment and strengthening of private and other non-governmental educational institutions.

(3) In order to provide an effective basis for lifelong education in a rapidly changing economic and social environment, curriculum development should be undertaken on a continuous basis to enhance the quality of education at all levels.

(4) Strong literacy and numeracy skills, emphasizing the acquisition of problem-solving abilities rather than rote knowledge alone, should be imparted by basic education programmes to provide a foundation for the skills required in a world advancing rapidly under the influence of modern science and technology.

(5) The relevance of secondary education programmes should be enhanced through an increased focus on skills for independent learning and the application of scientific principles, critical thinking and effective communications, stressing the application of knowledge to local problems and conditions.

(6) Adult education programmes should be promoted to teach basic literacy and numeracy skills and elementary science to all persons with little or no formal education, especially women, as a critical means of improving their employment prospects and enhancing their quality of life.

(7) Continuing education programmes should be designed to support lifelong education, particularly to facilitate the upgrading of underutilized human resources and enhance the capacity of individuals to adapt to rapidly changing social and economic circumstances.

(8) Women’s educational self-help networks should be supported to provide women, especially those wishing to enter the labour force, with access to basic education and training.

(9) Vocational and technical training should be made relevant to both current and prospective employment conditions by applying a broad and flexible approach to human resources development that fosters the capacity of skilled labour to adjust to changes in labour demand.

(10) Vocational and technical curricula should be broadened to inculcate entrepreneurial values and should include exposure to the full range of skills required for the operation of small-scale enterprises.

(11) Work-study programmes, work attachments and apprenticeship schemes should be incorporated in vocational and technical training programmes to increase their relevance to actual employment conditions.

(12) Business firms should be encouraged, through incentives and technical support, to expand and improve their on-the-job, employment-related training capacity as well as provide opportunities for continuing education for their employees in outside training institutions.

(13) Innovative training approaches and instructional techniques should be developed to upgrade the employment and self-employment skills of the poor, particularly those in the informal sector, who would not ordinarily seek formal training opportunities even if these were available.
B. Utilization of human resources

(14) Recognizing that increased employment stems largely from policies that promote labour-utilizing investment, Governments should promote a positive investment environment, with preference given to employment-oriented investment in both the public and private sectors.

(15) Macroeconomic distortions that inhibit the full and productive employment of all those ready, willing and able to work should be modified or removed.

(16) Governments should improve the efficiency of the labour market by devising mechanisms to disseminate information about job opportunities to job-seekers and information about job-seekers to employers, and should promote the involvement of the private sector and community and non-governmental groups in such activities.

(17) Policies that support the informal sector and small-scale and cottage industries, which tend to be relatively labour-intensive, should be adopted specifically to increase employment opportunities for the poor.

(18) Programmes should be developed to promote self-employment and entrepreneurship, particularly in the informal and service sectors, through the provision of a supportive legal framework, appropriate infrastructure and services, and access to credit, as well as training in business skills.

(19) Special consideration should be given to the means of enhancing the employment contribution of small-scale and cottage industries, and industrial regulations and administrative procedures should be rationalized to facilitate the formation of linkages between enterprises in the informal and formal sectors.

(20) Urban planners should develop supportive facilities and provide essential services to enterprises in the informal sector, as that sector has the potential to employ large numbers of the urban poor.

(21) The possibilities of appropriate land reforms should be re-examined and the extension of economic infrastructure and delivery of economic services to rural and isolated areas should be pursued to create a more supportive environment for the full and productive utilization of human resources in rural areas, where a large share of the poor are typically located.

C. Enhancement of the quality of life

(22) In the allocation of public expenditures, greater recognition should be given to the fact that expenditures on the quality of life are also investments in human resources. Particular efforts should be made, on that basis, to increase the share of government budgets allocated to quality-of-life expenditures and, during periods of fiscal stringency, structural adjustment or economic reform, to preserve that share.

(23) Governments should encourage employers to take into full account the positive influence on productivity of improvements in the quality of life of the workforce and to take appropriate action, particularly in relation to working hours, working conditions and occupational health and safety.

(24) In view of the fact that improvements in the status of women contribute significantly to the quality of life of the population at large, human resources development programmes should give priority to improvements in the status of women, especially women in the workforce.

(25) Social service delivery programmes should be designed to provide adequate social infrastructure and effective service delivery in areas of greatest need, including isolated rural villages and urban slums, with effective back-up support from higher levels.

(26) Social services should be delivered to the poor through the coordinated action of the public, private and non-governmental sectors, and the delivery of those services should be rationalized through realistic programming, in-service training, and other means of ensuring that the designated target groups receive the intended benefits.

(27) The responsiveness of social service delivery systems to the needs and interests of the poor should be enhanced through the strengthening of links between the government agencies involved and other concerned institutions, particularly voluntary agencies, people’s associations, community organizations and private enterprises engaged in the delivery of basic services.

(28) Affirmative action programmes should be targeted more effectively to the poor by adopting a demand-oriented approach that focuses on increasing public awareness of programme benefits and reducing socio-
cultural and other constraints to participation.

(29) The capacity of institutions engaged in scientific research and development to improve the quality of life should be strengthened so that the benefits of the new technologies can reach the people, including the poor.

(30) Effective strategies should be devised to ameliorate the potentially negative impact on families of domestic and international labour migration, especially the migration of women. In particular, agencies providing services such as health care, education and counselling should adapt their delivery strategies to the special needs and circumstances of families affected by migration.

II. MANAGING HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

A. Policy, planning and programming

(31) Each Government, as part of its national development strategy, should set clear-cut goals in respect of each of the Plan’s three components of human resources development and should identify appropriate policies and programmes for attaining those goals within a specified period.

(32) Within the context of its national development strategy, each Government should pursue macroeconomic policies that promote human resources development, paying particular attention to the need to ensure that those policies have a beneficial impact on the poor.

(33) The comparative advantage of private enterprise, NGOs, the community and the family as vehicles for human resources development should be utilized by Governments in their development of a multisectoral strategy for such development.

(34) Gender-sensitive approaches to human resources development policy formulation, planning and programming should be adopted. In particular, women’s active participation in decision-making, including national policy formulation and planning, should be encouraged through special programmes to enhance women’s human resources development at senior and managerial levels.

(35) Governments should consider the potentially positive impact of the devolution of administrative and financial responsibility and authority, accompanied by training of local-level personnel and rationalization of the institutional arrangements under which they function, in enhancing the effectiveness and outreach of human resources development programmes.

B. Institutional strengthening

(36) Governments which have not already identified a national focal point for human resources development should designate an appropriate institution or body to coordinate multisectoral policy-making, planning, programming and monitoring of human resources development.

(37) To enhance its effectiveness, each national focal point for human resources development should be strategically linked to the highest policy-making levels of government and provided with operational and budgetary autonomy.

(38) Concerned government agencies, NGOs and private enterprises should be provided with ready access to the national focal point for human resources development and with the means of active participation in its coordinating activities.

(39) Each national focal point for human resources development should prioritize the recommendations in the revised Plan in the light of its country’s specific national conditions and needs and should take action to ensure that those prioritized proposals are acted upon effectively.

(40) Government agencies involved in human resources development policy formulation and programme implementation at subnational levels should be encouraged to adopt a participatory approach to human resources development that involves both beneficiaries and non-governmental enabler groups.

(41) Governments should establish standard procedures to facilitate cooperation with NGOs, including community groups, as a means of ensuring their effective coordination and participation in the implementation of human resources development at the grass-roots level.

C. Research and information

(42) Among the broad range of policy issues on which research should be conducted to advance human resources development, the following should receive priority attention:
(a) The interface between macroeconomic development policies and human resources development processes, to identify the human resources development implications of different policy options;

(b) The means of increasing the responsiveness of the workforce to changing labour market conditions, including the scope for private skills training;

(c) The effects of different skills training regimes on labour productivity, and the links between skill development, productivity and compensation;

(d) The role of gender in education, particularly in science and technology education and vocational and technical training, and the formulation of strategies to enhance women's access to these critical areas of human resources development;

(e) The role of gender in the workplace, particularly in relation to gender differentials in the higher echelons of government service and the private sector, as a basis for the development of affirmative action programmes to increase women's participation in human resources development;

(f) The role of NGOs in enhancing the quality of life of the poor through successful approaches to the planning and delivery of essential services targeted at low-income groups;

(g) The role of the private sector in supplementing government efforts to develop and implement more adaptable, demand-oriented training programmes, especially targeted at the poor.

(43) Down-scaled research and development focusing on the technological and managerial upgrading of small-scale, labour-intensive, local resource-based enterprises should be encouraged as a means of enhancing economic opportunities for the poor.

(44) The differential costs and benefits, particularly the social and other non-monetary costs and benefits, of specific aspects of human resources development for particular disadvantaged groups should be identified through interdisciplinary and qualitative research strategies, to assist in the development of more effective means of raising their human resources status.

(45) The activities of the many agencies involved in the collection of human resources development data should be standardized and the dissemination and utilization of those data should be improved to facilitate regional analysis.

(46) Data processing facilities for human resources development should be upgraded and training of qualified personnel for human resources development information processing and analysis should be conducted.

(47) The information dissemination capabilities of the mass media should be fully used to generate public awareness of the critical role of human resources development, with particular attention to its role in poverty alleviation.

(48) Human resources development information and training materials should be disseminated in readily accessible form, in local languages where appropriate, to enabler and target groups at the grass-roots level.

D. Monitoring and evaluation

(49) Appropriate aggregate, sectoral and target group-specific indicators should be designed to permit the monitoring and evaluation of changes in each of the three components of human resources development, and to identify the precise impact of human resources development programmes.

(50) Reporting systems should be instituted to provide regular information flows from the grass-roots level to the centre to facilitate human resources development monitoring, and evaluation mechanisms for feedback from the centre to the grassroots should be set up to permit responsive adjustments.

(51) The reports of human resources development programme monitoring and evaluation exercises should contain quantified statements on progress achieved, using the indicators developed, and should be disseminated widely in order to increase awareness as well as transparency of the entire human resources development effort.

(52) Private sector involvement in human resources development, particularly in education and training, should be monitored to ensure complementarity between public and private programmes and to provide a basis for appropriate public sector policy and planning adjustments.
E. Regional support

(53) The ESCAP Network of National Focal Points for Human Resources Development, under the coordination of the ESCAP secretariat, should be strengthened and extended to include all ESCAP members and associate members.

(54) A human resources development trust fund should be established within ESCAP for regional and national projects and activities in implementation of the Plan.

(55) In order to enhance the effectiveness of the national focal points for human resources development, all concerned United Nations bodies and agencies working on such development in the region should keep the national focal points fully informed of their in-country activities.

(56) A review of the activities of the national focal points for human resources development should be undertaken by the ESCAP secretariat as a basis for providing guidance on their further development.

(57) A study of the special human resources development circumstances and needs of countries in the region with economies in transition should be undertaken and technical assistance requirements in the areas identified should be provided.

(58) Technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC) should be encouraged among training institutions in the region to promote skills training, with particular attention to the development of employment, self-employment and entrepreneurial skills among the poor and to the expansion of on-the-job training programmes.

(59) Government agencies and other concerned institutions in countries that have implemented human resources development programmes successfully should be encouraged to invite representatives of other countries in the region, on a TCDC basis, to participate in in-country seminars, training courses, study tours and other relevant events to share their achievements on a regional basis.

(60) The ESCAP secretariat, in collaboration with UNESCO, should explore effective measures to promote the regional development of distance education, including modalities such as intraregional exchanges among national institutions, including the possible establishment of a regional open university, with a view to extending human resources development opportunities to a wider public.

(61) The ESCAP secretariat should implement regional and subregional training programmes for government and non-government personnel designed to enhance their awareness of the special needs of the poor and upgrade their capabilities in conducting human resources development programmes for particular subgroups of the poor, including the absolute poor, the unemployed, women, youth, disabled persons and minority groups.

(62) The ESCAP secretariat should focus attention on the particular human resources development needs of working women in the region and undertake projects designed to assist women in developing leadership, managerial and entrepreneurial skills to promote their full participation in public office, government service and private enterprise.

Part Three
ARRANGEMENTS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

I. PARTICIPATION

51. The various participants, at both the national and regional levels, must play closely coordinated and complementary roles in the execution of the Jakarta Plan of Action if it is to continue to have a significant influence on human resources development in the region.

52. First and foremost, at the national level Governments will, where they have not done so, need to devise national plans of action in pursuance of the proposals contained in the Plan. They will need to ensure adequate budgetary and other resource inputs for the implementation of the national plans of action. Further, if they have not already done so, they will need to establish the necessary institutional infrastructure, including planning and executing bodies and national coordination mechanisms, to permit the full and effective discharge of their national responsibilities in accordance with the provisions of the Plan.

53. Second, private enterprises and NGOs, as well as the public at large, must continue to be mobilized to play supportive roles in the formulation and execution of the national plans of action. Procedures to enlist the regular participation of these sectors in the execution of such plans should be established. The various concerned sectors should continue to be encouraged to develop projects in support of those plans. Such multisectoral participation is essential not only because it ensures the most effective use of scarce resources but also because the various sectors possess accumulated
54. At the regional level, the continued participation of intergovernmental organizations, including the United Nations bodies and agencies active in the region, is required to support national efforts. Specific activities must continue to be devised by these organizations to support the human resources development efforts of Governments. In addition, activities need to be developed by these organizations to promote further regional cooperation, including TCDC. Finally, it will be necessary for the ESCAP secretariat to continue to serve as the regional focal point for coordinating the implementation of the Plan, in addition to its role as an executing agency for implementation of the Plan at the regional level and support for activities at the national level.

55. All concerned donor countries and agencies need to continue to give special attention to providing financial assistance for the effective execution of programmes and projects in pursuance of the Plan. In view of the magnitude of the task and the high priority placed by Governments on their promulgation of the Plan, it is urged that donor countries and agencies accord the highest priority to the allocation of resources in support of activities in implementation of the Plan.

II. PRIORITY-SETTING

56. While the Plan incorporates a holistic and coordinated approach to human resources development, it is not comprehensive in scope. Its 62 proposals for action represent a carefully developed set of guidelines designed to address key human resources development concerns in the context of changing socio-economic conditions in the Asian and Pacific region. In developing the guidelines, particular attention has been given to measures to enhance the human resources development needs of the poor.

57. Priorities should be set by each country, taking into account its national circumstances, including the stage of human resources development that it has reached. The diversity of levels of development in the region point to the special need for each country to identify its own priorities based on its own special circumstances. Conformity with the broad principles and guidelines of the Plan is, however, necessary in all cases. In this regard, each country should identify its human resources development priorities in terms of the three components of the Plan: investment in human capital, utilization of human resources, and enhancement of the quality of life, with special reference to the needs of the poor.

58. Priority-setting should be a shared responsibility of the concerned national agencies and organizations in both the public and private sectors. The national priority-setting exercise should be coordinated by the national focal point for human resources development.

At the regional level, priority-setting should be the collective responsibility of the various United Nations agencies and bodies and other intergovernmental organizations participating in the implementation of the Plan.

III. COORDINATION

A. At the national level

59. To ensure the full and effective coordination of the implementation of the Plan at the national level, each Government, if it has not already done so, will need to establish a national focal point for human resources development. The national focal point should be located at the highest possible policy-making level. It should oversee the coordination of all national activities in implementation of the Plan. It should be responsible for formulating a national plan of action on human resources development within the framework of the Plan. It should be empowered to promote the active participation of all sectors, including private enterprise, NGOs and other enabler groups and all social groups, as appropriate, in the implementation of the Plan. It should also serve as the national counterpart in and active member of the regionwide ESCAP Network of National Focal Points for Human Resources Development.

60. The majority of the 53 countries and areas in the region have already established national focal points for human resources development as called for in the original Jakarta Plan of Action. Experience in the implementation of the Plan has shown the effectiveness of national focal points that are located in strategic agencies able to influence national policy and planning. The effectiveness of the national focal points has also been enhanced where they have been given operational and budgetary autonomy. Governments should take into account these considerations and strengthen, where necessary, the capacity of their national focal points for human resources development to enable them to perform effectively their functions of coordinating the implementation of the Plan at the national level.

B. At the regional level

61. Overall responsibility for coordinating regional measures in support of the implementation of the Jakarta Plan of Action, as distinct from coordination of the implementation of national plans of action at the national level, rests with ESCAP. This is in line with General Assembly resolution 32/197 of 20 December 1977 on restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations, in which the regional commissions are directed to serve as the main general economic and social centres within the United Nations system for their respective regions. The General Assembly also calls on the regional commissions to exercise team leadership and responsibility for coordination and cooperation at the regional level. ESCAP fills this role for the Asian and Pacific region.
62. Important elements in the role of ESCAP in coordinating regional support for the implementation of the Plan include coordination of: assistance to countries in the formulation and implementation of national human resources development plans and policies; the provision of training to enhance the skills of government staff as well as personnel of NGOs in areas covered by the Plan; the conduct of research on regional human resources development issues; facilitating intraregional exchange of experience and expertise; the dissemination of regional information through the regionwide ESCAP Network of National Focal Points for Human Resources Development; and regular monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the Plan.

63. In order to promote regional cooperation in the implementation of the Plan, opportunities for the exchange of information and views on human resources development issues will be institutionalized by ESCAP. Studies on issues of direct concern to regional cooperation on human resources development will be undertaken and the results disseminated widely. Intergovernmental meetings and periodic consultations among the national focal points will be held. In addition, meetings of senior officials and ministerial conferences will be convened from time to time to consider special issues related to the implementation of the Plan. The participation of NGOs in these gatherings will be encouraged.

64. The concerned bodies and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, together with other intergovernmental organizations, will coordinate their various activities in support of human resources development in the region so as to ensure optimal utilization of resources. To facilitate this process, the Inter-agency Task Force on Human Resources Development chaired by ESCAP will meet periodically to strengthen cooperation and complementarity in the development and implementation of the work programmes of the agencies concerned.

IV. TIME-FRAME


66. Under phase I, the institutional framework for implementation of the Plan was laid through the establishment by Governments of national focal points for human resources development and through the setting up of the regionwide ESCAP Network of National Focal Points for Human Resources Development.

67. Under phase II, ESCAP, in cooperation with other United Nations bodies and agencies such as UNDP, ILO and UNESCO, implemented a series of human resources development pilot projects at both the national and regional levels in implementation of the Plan. Human resources development training programmes for the personnel of both government agencies and NGOs were also conducted. In addition, the ESCAP Human Resources Development Award was established to honour exemplary work in human resources development, advisory services were provided to Governments on request, research was conducted on various human resources development issues, and the publication of the ESCAP HRD Newsletter was initiated.

68. The current revision of the Plan focuses on the broader structural adjustments and institutional changes which were envisaged in the original Plan under phase III, initially intended to cover the period 1996-2000. The present revision of the Plan calls for the initiation of phase III in 1994. It is envisaged that, during that phase, Governments and other participating sectors will continue to work towards a more coordinated approach to human resources development, including the elaboration of comprehensive human resources development policies, plans and programmes in line with the new features of the revised Plan. ESCAP will continue to support such efforts, with particular emphasis on capacity-building at the national level, focusing on the training dimension.

69. Upon the completion of phase III of the Plan in the year 2000, the Commission will take stock of the progress achieved in its implementation, review the further work that may be required, and propose a new set of phased cycles in line with the region's changing needs and priorities.

50/8. Strengthening of subregional economic cooperation in North-East Asia

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific,

Recognizing the need to promote and strengthen subregional economic cooperation as a stepping-stone to regional economic cooperation for the overall development and sustained growth of the ESCAP region as a whole,

Recalling its resolutions 47/1 of 10 April 1991 on the Seoul Declaration on Regional Cooperation, 48/1 of 23 April 1992 on the declaration on enhancing regional economic cooperation, known as the Beijing Declaration on Regional Economic Cooperation, and 49/1 of 29 April 1993 on the implementation of the action programme for regional economic cooperation in trade and investment,

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8 See para. 230 above.