SECTION 9.60

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

1980  **12th session (July/August):** ICSC considered the question of special management training programmes. It endorsed the principle that management training programmes be developed within the organizations of the common system in such a way that safeguards were provided for the interests of both staff and management. The following suggestions to be borne in mind when developing such management training programmes were identified: (a) basing the development of such programmes on an awareness of the three types of knowledge necessary for successful managerial performance: technical knowledge of the subject matter(s) to be managed; knowledge of the principles and theories of management science and human relations skills; (b) making greater use of on-the-job training through rotational assignments and lateral transfers; (c) basing eligibility to such programmes on merit and making them open to all staff members, regardless of sex, age, nationality, etc.; (d) ensuring that selection procedures for such programmes were objectively and efficiently administered; (e) ensuring that selection for such programmes did not constitute an automatic right of progression to management levels; (f) carrying out cost-benefit analyses to estimate and justify resources needed to implement such programmes; (g) instituting continuing evaluation programmes to determine the extent to which the objectives of the training programmes were accomplished so that the training or selection criteria may be modified in order to achieve better results [A/35/30, para. 294].

1981  **13th session (February/March):** ICSC considered two documents submitted by CCAQ in response to ICSC’s decision that CCAQ provide proposals on training policy. The subjects of those two reports were training policy and its relationship to career development (ICSC/R.254) and the elements of a model management training programme (ICSC/R.255). ICSC decided that training should be seen as fulfilling three purposes: the maintenance and updating of skills which each staff member needed in his or her current job; the development of skills required to perform different work at the same level of responsibility or to assume work at higher levels of responsibility; and, finally, the development of the staff members’ individual abilities, aptitudes and intellectual awareness. ICSC observed that there were currently three basic forms of training in the organizations, namely, on-the-job training, formal internal training and external training (including self-study). It found that the training activities in which the organizations were most active were, apart from language training, orientation and briefing [A/36/30, paras. 199, 202 and 203].

1981  ICSC recommended to all organizations that they should consider allocating greater resources for training but that operative or contemplated training activities should undergo a thorough evaluation of their utility to the organization and the tangible results they were
expected to achieve before they were extended or introduced. ICSC considered that another way in which the organizations could overcome the problem of inadequate resources was to further develop interagency co-operation. Joint planning of training activities was a measure of particular importance for the smaller organizations, which, because of their more limited staff and resources, had difficulty in offering even basic training opportunities. Increased joint funding of common activities would permit better advanced planning, but before such measures could be agreed upon further study was required in order to ensure that the differing needs and possibilities of organizations were taken fully into consideration. In order to define more precisely the role which it would play in common staff training programmes, ICSC instructed its secretariat to consult with UNITAR to determine what common training programmes it had or was in a position to carry out and to report back at the fourteenth session on the extent to which ICSC should be involved in common training programmes [A/36/30, para. 206].

14th session (July): ICSC considered the role it would play under article 14 of its statute, which states that it "shall make recommendations to the organization … on staff training programmes, including interorganization programmes". It considered a report prepared by its secretariat following consultations which had been carried out with UNITAR at ICSC’s request. The secretariat described the Institute’s statutory mandate and training programmes, examined the role of the Institute in providing common training programmes and concluded that, although UNITAR might provide training for staff members of the common system, that was not a priority activity, nor could it be expected to be, given the financial situation of the Institute [A/36/30, para. 210].

A preliminary analysis was also made of what needed to be done in the field of training within the common system. Four major types of training services required by individual organizations and the common system were identified and explained in detail: (a) development of training policy; (b) identification of training needs; (c) development and provision of training activities to meet identified needs; and (d) evaluation of training activities [A/46/30, para. 211]. ICSC observed that more emphasis had to be given to the purposes for which training was offered and, to that end, the identification of training needs was important. It was also true that little had been done by organizations in evaluating the effectiveness and cost efficiency of the training programmes offered. One of the major obstacles to providing those and other needed training services was the lack of sufficient funds earmarked for training. It decided therefore: (a) to note the common training activities that UNITAR offered and was in a position to carry out; (b) to note the four categories of training services required by individual organizations and the common system; (c) to instruct its secretariat to hold further consultations with CCAQ, UNITAR and FICSA on the proposals concerning the roles of organizational entities in the provision of training services in the common system and to study the possibility of establishing a common fund jointly financed by organizations to facilitate the provision of
such services. The results of those consultations would be reported upon by ICSC in its next annual report to the GA [A/36/30, paras. 215 and 216].

The GA noted in resolution 36/233 ICSC’s consideration of training and requested ICSC to continue its studies of the development of interagency cooperation in the field of training with a view to the more efficient and economical use of personnel resources in the common system; and a thorough evaluation, in close collaboration with the organizations of the utility of current and proposed training activities in the UN system, with special reference to management and related training.

1982 **15th session (March):** ICSC drew attention to several recommendations it had previously made in respect of training. In particular, it recommended to the organizations that they stimulate an assessment of staff training needs by encouraging a dialogue between supervisors and staff members in order to identify realistic training objectives which should assist career planning and provide the organizations with the staff skills and knowledge needed to achieve their programme objectives. ICSC noted the views expressed by CCAQ and FICSA and also the many references to training in the Fifth Committee, culminating in GA resolution 36/233. It agreed that CCAQ should be requested to pursue its work in this area and that the existing mandate of the secretariat should be renewed to enable further consultations to be carried out in the light of the most recent developments in the field of training [A/37/30, para 315].

1984 **20th session (July):** ICSC considered the assessment of training needs by organizations of the common system on the basis of a paper prepared by its secretariat (ICSC/20/R.22). It decided: (a) to affirm that the determination of staff training needs was an important part of the human resources planning process; (b) to stress that, in order to justify the possible expenditures for training in an organization, the cost-effectiveness of proposed training activities should be demonstrated in the light of their expected impact on the organization’s work programme in comparison with other possible administrative decisions, paying special attention to the necessity of recruiting staff who fully met the basic criteria of efficiency, competence and integrity; (c) to note that the assessment of training needs linked to overall organizational objectives was a prerequisite for the evaluation of training since it provided the yardstick against which the effectiveness of training could be measured; (d) to reaffirm that the determination of training needs lay within the competence of management; (e) to request the organizations to consider the approach to the assessment of training needs outlined in the secretariat’s document in the light of their individual requirements and to report to ICSC at its 22nd session on the methods that they used to identify their training needs and on the feasibility of following the guidelines developed by its secretariat; (f) to request its secretariat: (i) to pursue its work on the development of training policies by elaborating an approach to the evaluation of training programmes in the context of the assessment of training needs, taking into account the views of ICSC set out in (a) to (d) above, in close consultation with the
organizations and staff representatives; (ii) to assess areas where inter-agency co-operation in training could be expanded, again in close consultation with the organizations and staff representatives; (iii) to report to ICSC at its 22nd session on the progress made on (i) and (ii) above [A/39/30, para. 226].

By resolution 36/39, the GA noted the intention of ICSC to pursue its work on the development of training policies by elaborating an approach to the evaluation of training programmes.

1985 22nd session (July): ICSC reviewed a document submitted by CCAQ in response to ICSC's request that the organizations consider a range of recommendations on testing, including the feasibility of an inter-agency proficiency examination and, inter alia, a reappraisal of the objectives of the language proficiency examination in the light of the functional requirements of the organizations. As to the feasibility on an inter-agency language proficiency examination for serving staff, ICSC concluded that the varying interpretations of language proficiency given by the governing bodies of the organizations, which ranged from understanding in a cultural sense to job-related language skills, did not allow for a comprehensive approach at the time. It decided, therefore, to request the organizations to coordinate and harmonize, to the extent possible, their language proficiency examinations for serving staff [A/40/30, paras. 253-157]. ICSC considered a document prepared by the secretariat (ICSC/22/R.15) and a document prepared by CCAQ.

The ICSC document was a progress report on activities undertaken in the area of training since the 20th session. It referred specifically to a paper prepared by an inter-agency task force on training evaluation that had been established at the 10th session of the CCAQ Sub-Committee on Staff Training, and presented some considerations on the content of training evaluation. The CCAQ paper reported on the acceptance by the organizations of the needs assessment model developed by the ICSC secretariat and approved by ICSC at its 20th session [A/40/30, para. 264].

ICSC noted with satisfaction the CCAQ paper reporting on its examination of the needs assessment model proposed by ICSC. The CCAQ findings endorsed the approach recommended by ICSC: (a) advocating the direct involvement of top management at the policy level as well as of line managers, supervisors and staff representatives; and (b) stressing the importance of conducting needs assessment linked to overall organizational objectives and within the context of human resources planning. ICSC decided therefore to recommend that the model be adopted by all organizations as a general framework for determining training needs. It expressed the hope that a corresponding training evaluation model could now be developed, based on the preliminary work already carried out at the inter-agency level. It therefore requested CCAQ to submit detailed recommendations to the twenty-fourth session [A/40/30, para. 268].
1987 26th session (July): ICSC had before it a document on the evaluation of training deferred from its 24th session (ICSC/24/R.12). The document presented some general considerations and outlined four basic approaches to evaluation: (a) reaction; (b) learning; (c) application or implementation; and (d) impact, and pointed out that responsibility for the first two types rested with the trainer and for the remaining two with the manager. Attached to the document was a questionnaire developed by the secretariat on the evaluation of training, which had been formulated in consultation with the organizations and circulated to them for reply. At the time of the session most, although not all, of the organizations had provided information to the ICSC secretariat [A/42/30, para. 306].

In view of the importance of staff training, ICSC regretted that this topic had been deferred and progress in this area had therefore been held up. ICSC requested its secretariat to pursue consultations with CCAQ. Depending upon their outcome, ICSC would be in a position to consider the training evaluation model at its 28th session [A/42/30, para. 309].

By resolution 41/213, the GA had requested the SG to transmit a number of recommendations of the “Group of 18” to ICSC for advice. ICSC reiterated its previous recommendations regarding training, which should be used as guidelines for the implementation of recommendation 48 [A/42/30, para. 45 (i)].

By resolution 42/221, the GA took note of the Commission’s advice.

1993 37th session (March): In the context of its consideration of appraisal and recognition of performance, ICSC noted that a number of common system organizations had expressed interest in the development of a generic performance appraisal training module. An important element in ensuring effectively functioning performance appraisal systems was that all staff understand fully the objectives and benefits of those systems. It was equally important that managers and others responsible for carrying out performance appraisal be trained in skills and techniques to enhance the process. ICSC therefore requested its secretariat to develop for its 38th session a training module for performance appraisal that could be adapted by organizations to suit their individual needs [ICSC/37/R.18, paras. 194 and 198].

38th session (July): ICSC undertook a review of the status of its work in the area of training (ICSC/38/R.18) and considered how it might most usefully carry forward its mandate in that regard in the future. It also had before it proposed guidelines for the evaluation of training which had been developed in conjunction with the organizations' training specialists. ICSC recalled that in 1981 it had identified four major types of training services as being required by individual organizations and the common system: (a) development of training policy; (b) identification of training needs; (c) development and provision of training activities to meet identified needs; and (d) evaluation of training activities. In reviewing the work done in each of those areas, it noted the desirability of an active partnership being continued between its secretariat and
training specialists of the organizations, as a means of optimizing scarce resources. Regarding (a) above, ICSC recalled that over a decade earlier it had elaborated a series of policy statements on the role of training in career development and human resources management. Those statements were equally valid today. The issue was therefore not so much the development of further work at the conceptual policy level as the translation of policy statements into practice. Regarding (b), ICSC recalled that in 1984 it had recommended to the organizations a model for the assessment of training needs. It reiterated the importance of assessment training needs as a prerequisite for training programmes, and strongly encouraged the organizations to use such mechanisms (either the model recommended by ICSC or some other). ICSC was interested in receiving feedback from the organizations on their practical experience in that area. With regard to (c), ICSC welcomed the strengthened collaboration between its secretariat and the organizations. It took note of the ongoing and planned activities by its secretariat in the areas of (i) general information and briefing (workshops on job classification, seminars on conditions of service); (ii) development of training and other human resources management tools; and (iii) participation in inter-agency training programmes. ICSC had no difficulty in endorsing the proposed direction of the activities proposed [A/48/30, paras. 228-230].

ICSC then considered the proposed guidelines for the evaluation of training. It noted that the guidelines had evolved from a request by the GA, in resolution 36/223 (1981), for a thorough evaluation of training activities in the United Nations system. It viewed the guidelines as an essential corollary to the needs assessment model; by assisting organizations in their efforts to measure and quantify the results of training, they should help to generate increased support for effective training programmes. It therefore endorsed the guidelines.

ICSC then turned its attention to how it could assist, in a more general sense, in enhancing awareness of the importance of training. It recalled, in that regard, that training, which was an integral part of human resources planning, should serve both the needs of management for improved organizational efficiency and the career development needs of the staff. In the drive for enhanced managerial effectiveness, the training needs of staff should not be overlooked, for a frustrated workforce was not an efficient one. It acknowledged at the same time that staff members themselves bore part of the responsibility for their own development. ICSC decided: (a) to reiterate the importance of training as a means of assisting organizational efficiency and enhancing the career objectives of staff; (b) to endorse the direction proposed by its secretariat for future work in the area of training, and to invite the secretariat to consider ways in which awareness of the value of training could be enhanced; (c) to approve the guidelines for the evaluation of training (see A/48/30, annex. XII) and recommend their application in the organizations [A/48/30, paras. 230-235].
1994 40th session (June/July): ICSC had before it three generic modules for training in performance appraisal that had been developed by the secretariat in cooperation with a working group of the CCAQ Sub-Committee on Staff Training. The modules developed, which were intended for different target audiences, were: Module I - operational briefing on the performance appraisal system; Module II - appraisal interviewing and feedback skills; Module III - performance management skills.

ICSC endorsed the modules for training in performance appraisal (A/49/30, annex VIII) as an integral part of the performance management package recommended to the organizations (see also section 9.70) [A/49/30, para. 346].

1998 47th session (April/May): At its 1997 forum on new directions in human resource management at Glen Cove, ICSC had identified key issues of the common system of the future, of which four were perceived to be high-leverage/low-cost issues that could be accomplished within a reasonable time-frame (ICSC/47/R/R.9.). One topic, entitled "Managing diversity", was capacity-building for change management, which included strengthening intercultural synergies and creating a better appreciation of cultural and gender diversity in order to improve resource management in a multicultural environment.

It also reviewed the broad outlines of a series of generic training/learning modules developed for that purpose. A best practice compendium on diversity initiatives had also been issued and was deemed by the Commission to be a useful reference source. ICSC considered that the usefulness of the modules would best be determined by the organizations for whom they were intended, noting that the programmes had been tried out as pilot projects prior to the session by the New York based organizations, which had reacted favourably to them. The programmes were modular, flexible and up-to-date technologically which permitted organizations to choose among the modules, tailor them to their individual needs and use them in whichever context was most appropriate. The organizations and in particular, the UN, endorsed the training/learning programmes. ICSC requested the secretariat, in close collaboration with the organizations and the UN Staff College, to continue to refine the training/learning modules to ensure that they met the needs of the organizations. ICSC wished to be kept informed by its secretariat about further developments and the use made of the modules.

1999 50th session (July): ICSC presented an oral report on the status of implementation of the training/learning modules by the organizations. In the first half of 1999, two train-the-trainer workshops were organized by the secretariat. The first workshop, hosted by UNICEF, was held in February for organizations based in New York (representatives from five organizations attended). In April, a similar workshop, hosted by UNESCO, was held in Paris for the European-based agencies (11 organizations were represented). The consultant who had worked with the secretariat to develop the programme presented the module intended for managers. It dealt with the ways in which culture contributed to, or inhibited, communication and showed that understanding and awareness of cultural differences was a key factor in effective interaction and communication and resulted in
increasing staff capacity. ICSC concluded that the training modules would help both managers and staff to deal with their cultural differences based on awareness and increased knowledge of diversity. As new people joined the United Nations system, the mosaic would be ever more diversified, creating an ongoing need for such training. The secretariats of ICSC and CCAQ were requested to collaborate on the design of assessment tools to evaluate the programme’s effectiveness in managing issues of cultural diversity and its impact on the working environment. ICSC considered that, to support its decision to allocate resources to this project, this training programme required particular follow-up with the organizations [ICSC/50/R.5, para.41].