

Henry Ford II, a member of the American delegation, knew this when he said that on "these grass root functions the United Nations may well stand or fall."

What do these organizations of the Economic and Social Council do? Take what the U.N. calls its "Expanded Program of Technical Assistance" as an example. Most Americans have heard of "Point IV," the program of their government for helping the development of less fortunate countries by supplying technological assistance and some financial help. But how many know that through the U.N.'s technical assistance program over 60 nations--are working to build and safeguard peace in an international effort of the Point IV variety? This is the work of the Technical Assistance Administration and its related specialized agencies.

The Expanded Technical Assistance Program--we might as well save space by calling it ETAP hereafter--operates on a very simple plan. Any nation which has a problem affecting its people's livelihood or living conditions can apply to the U.N. for help. The U.N. never goes where it is not asked. In almost every case, the nation aided bears most of the local expense. When it goes, it usually sends only a few technicians to size up the situation and to make recommendations. Then, if the government launches pilot projects, the U.N. will supply experts to help get these running properly. At the same time, it will help train people on the spot to carry on when the pilot projects are expanded into national programs. The idea is for the U.N. to recruit the technological knowledge of the world to help nations and regions use the resources of man-power and of materials they already possess to gain the improvements in living which hitherto have eluded them because of their lack of what Americans call "know-how."

That's the theory. How does the theory work out in practice? Well, Afghanistan asked the U.N. if it could do anything to help stop the famines which periodically afflicted that country tucked away in the mountains of central Asia. So TAA sent a Haitian agricultural expert at the head of a small team. He was picked because it was felt that his experience in a relatively simple agricultural society would fit Afghanistan's situation. He showed the Afghans how to increase their cotton crop two-and-a-half times and how to harvest their grain in a fifth of the time it was consuming, thus making possible the cultivation of much more land. How did he do it? By bringing in tractors and combination reaper-binders? Nothing of the sort. He showed how much more effective a scythe is than a sickle, a hoe than a mattock, and planting cotton properly instead of in the haphazard way it had been done. That was all, but it brought an economic revolution to Afghanistan! All it took was maybe half a dozen U.N. technical advisers with most of their local expenses joyously paid by the Afghans.

Haiti sent an expert to help the Afghans. But Haiti herself asked for help. Her people were suffering from lack of the higher proteins in their diet. Where did ETAP find the technical assistance Haiti needed? In Indonesia! For centuries Indonesia has developed fish-farming, often raising the fish to supply needed protein to supplement its basic rice diet right along with the rice in the wet paddy fields. So the Indonesian "know-how" is now being applied to the dietary needs of Haiti and of Thailand and soon will be to those of Israel. Fish can be raised cheaply; they will make up for many countries' most pressing nutritional needs; no elaborate machinery or great army of experts is required.