## Departmental Information Needs

4.31     The Finance and Management Services Bureau acquired the services of an information systems specialist responsible for the definition of management information system requirements, i.e., overall corporate systems planning; this official reports directly to the Director General.   The Bureau is in the process of defining his responsibilities and, consequently, the eventual relationship between him and the Division is not yet precisely known.   The project will encompass all the Department's information systems: financial systems, financial administrative systems, personnel systems, programme-related financial systems and programme-related systems.

4.32     The individual tasked to identify overall information needs must, in the view of the Task Force members and some system specialists, have a background and perpective different from that of the systems developer.   The former studies matters related to the broad strategic orientations of the Department and of the technology, whereas the latter must focus on problems of a technical and more immediate nature.   Some (but not all) specialists believe that systems development tends to follow organizational lines rather than functional ones; keeping the systems planning function separate ensures that the competing arguments are assessed objectively.   In the view of Task Force members, the system planners must not be unduly influenced by the short term expedients that systems developpers must inevitably adopt from time to time; moreover, systems planners must be as close as possible to the central Departmental planners.   The lack of past involvement of the Department's central planning coordination staff in information systems can be traced to the fact that they have not been charged with the responsibility for overall information system planning.

Recommendations.   The Task Force recommends that:

23. The Management Services Division be assigned the P-Ys required for a complete review, consolidation and updating of the Department's publications.

24. The function of defining Departmental needs for information systems and the Bureau official tasked with this responsibility be transferred to the Branch of the ADM Policy Co-ordination in the Department's new organization so that the incumbent may have ready and full access to the broadest Departmental planning issues.