

The Colombo Plan was framed to cover the period June 1951 to June 1957. At the annual meeting in Karachi in 1952, the first year's operations were reviewed and a further review took place at the New Delhi meeting last October. Because several additional countries have joined since the original plan was drawn up in 1950, it was possible at these later meetings to include assessments of the economic needs and development requirements of most of the countries of South and South-East Asia, and to review the progress these countries are making. Some of the countries, particularly those in which conditions are still unsettled, are faced with special problems and have therefore reached varying stages in the formulation and implementation of fully planned development programmes.

The Colombo Plan is not a single "master" plan but is made up of the various development programmes of member countries. It is based on development activities originated in and carried on by the countries of South and South-East Asia themselves; at the same time it brings them together in a co-operative association with other countries which desire to help them to help themselves. The Plan is not centrally administered; assistance is arranged bilaterally between member countries. The annual meetings of the Consultative Committee reach no collective decisions binding on members. However, the meetings enable all member countries to gain a broader perspective on current economic trends in South and South-East Asia. They also assist member countries to assess what has been accomplished and what remains to be done to achieve the objectives of the Plan. This year, as in previous years, the Consultative Committee's annual report on the Plan will be published after the meetings have been concluded.

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