

Technical note re questionnaire "A" (CL 2548 Annex II)

1. There are ambiguities in Questionnaire "A" which may give rise to misleading and inconsistent returns and will raise questions about the validity of the consolidated quantitative analysis.

2. The explanatory note annexed to CL 2548 sheds some light on the problems, but leaves several matters of interpretation unresolved. The present note is accordingly designed to ensure consistency at least within the Canadian return, and perhaps to sound a note of warning about the interpretation of whatever statistics may be produced as a result of the exercise.

Translation problems

3. Question 2 refers to "adéquation à l'objectif" and this is translated into English as "relevance". The two notions of adequacy and relevance are by no means identical; the first has an operational connotation, while the second may imply only an abstract conceptual linkage. Thus in short, a given programme action may be relevant without being adequate, while a given appropriation may be adequate although spent on activities which are not relevant.

The difficulty is compounded in the column headings, where "relevant" appears as "satisfaisante". Here again the notion of "relevance" seems to relate largely to the intent of the action, while the judgement of whether or not it is satisfactory directs attention to the conduct and results of the given set of projects.

4. Since the purpose of the questionnaire is presumably to assist the Director-General in preparing a draft 20 C/5 including those activities which will "make the greatest contribution to the achievement of the established targets" (19 C/100 para 28(a)) the questions have been answered in the Canadian return in accordance with the French text: i.e., in terms of practical utility and cost benefit judgements, rather than in terms of conceptual relationships.

Ambiguity in the Replies to Question 2

5. Without interpretation, the replies to Question 2 can hardly help but be ambiguous, for it is unclear whether activities are to be judged with or without reference to the financial allocations provided under each theme.

In other words, inconsequential but inexpensive activities may be a "très satisfaisante" symbolic response to a theme deserving only minor emphasis. Increased effort and investment in this area would imply a reduced rating of "assez satisfaisante" or "pas satisfaisante". Alternatively, and with equal logic, it could be held that no programme can be satisfactory if the theme to which it is addressed is of only minor interest, and the indicated reply would accordingly appear in column 9.