

3.38 To ensure that Posts have direct and immediate access to information about their local expenditures, the following applications must continue to be maintained at the Posts either on a manual or on an automated basis;

- a) budget;
- b) commitments;
- c) expenditures - local payments;
- d) salaries - locally engaged staff;
- e) advances; and
- f) other applications as deemed necessary.

3.39 Similarly, Headquarters Responsibility Centers will continue to report on the status of their budgets, expenditures, commitments, advances and other programme - related information.

3.40 Once captured, the data would be electronically transferred to the FMS (or, when that would not be possible, by mailing tapes or diskettes) for processing and further distribution of information as may be required by the OPF (e.g. by programme, activity, sub-activity, project, geographic area, etc.) and ultimately for entry in the DRS. This flow of information would ensure the control of local expenditures at Posts and eliminate the necessity of entering data twice. This concept is illustrated in Annex I to this Chapter.

3.41 It must be emphasized that the recommended system in its fully automated configuration is proposed as an eventual goal to be reached after an evolution of several years; moreover, it must be expected that, at some Posts, it may never be practical to automate the processing of financial data. It is important, however, that a long term objective in this regard be approved at this time when the Department is in the process of developing an OPF which will require specific provisions in the financial data processing system. This topic is discussed in detail in paragraphs 3.42 to 3.51, below.

Recommendation. The Task Force recommends that:

5. The Department integrate its accounting system with a financial management information system so that the two elements will function as one in support of the OPF, the eventual goal being to achieve full electronic processing and transmission of this information to serve Headquarters and the Posts.

COMMITMENTS - CONTROL AND LEVELS OF REPORTING

3.42 An effective commitment system performs two functions: it permits the control of transactions and reports on them. Simply stated, the control function enables users of the system to plan expenditures, record and amend commitments, and pay for services and goods. Users can usually determine immediately the status of their commitments.