



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 51st MEETING

Chairman: Mr. DIETZE (German Democratic Republic)

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The meeting was called to order at 11 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 79: OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT (continued) (A/38/3 (Part II), A/38/106, 494)

- (a) OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/38/258 and Add.1 and Corr.1, A/38/276, 333)
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1. Mr. BAKALOV (Bulgaria) said that technical co-operation within the United Nations system played an essential role in promoting multilateral co-operation among States of different socio-economic systems, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) played an important role as the central organ for promoting such co-operation. The report of the Administrator of UNDP to the Governing Council at its thirtieth session (DP/1983/6) confirmed the importance of United Nations technical co-operation and highlighted the positive results of UNDP activities, particularly in channelling technical assistance to developing countries. Nevertheless, at a time when UNDP lacked the financial resources to complete the implementation of approved projects, it was incomprehensible that a significant part of the resources which it did have available were left unused. The utilization of all available resources, whether convertible or not, would greatly improve the financial basis of the programme and also strengthen the principle of voluntary participation in UNDP. His Government had taken measures to ensure that Bulgaria's voluntary contributions could be fully used, and its participation in the work of a number of United Nations specialized agencies demonstrated that if the United Nations administrations were willing to find the means, all available resources could be used for operational goals.

2. The consensus set forth in the annex to General Assembly resolution 2688 (XXV) of 11 December 1970 and the guidelines on new dimensions in technical co-operation, as set forth in the annex to General Assembly resolution 3405 (XXX) of

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(Mr. Bakalov, Bulgaria)

28 November 1975 were texts of major importance for UNDP which emphasized the importance of the principles of universality and voluntary participation. Those principles should continue to be observed, and the co-ordinating role of the Programme should be maintained and guaranteed, especially at a time when increasing resources were being devoted to new funds, thus encroaching on the central role of UNDP. In that connection, one way of enhancing the effectiveness of the Programme would be to exercise much greater circumspection in the use of available resources.

3. His delegation viewed with particular concern any attempt to link UNDP's technical assistance activities to the infusion of private capital into developing countries under the pretext of strengthening the Programme's financial base or expanding its operational activities. The Governing Council should not allow transnational corporations and other Western financial institutions to use UNDP activities for their own purposes.

4. Bulgaria had always maintained close co-operation with the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), and various national activities were being carried out in preparation for the International Conference on Population to be held in Mexico City in 1984. In particular, a European regional meeting on population activities held in Sofia had made a substantial contribution to the preparations for the Conference.

5. He noted with appreciation that the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) had increased its aid to children in countries fighting for independence and against colonialism and aggression. In participating in the activities of UNICEF, Bulgaria consistently sought new forms of promoting international co-operation, for example through the further promotion of the "banner of peace" movement.

6. Mr. SEKULIC (Yugoslavia) welcomed the commitment undertaken by a number of developed countries at the 1983 United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities to increase their contributions to United Nations operational activities by 14 per cent or more. It was also significant that many developing countries had decided to increase their contributions, even though they faced extremely adverse economic conditions. Such support should lead to the stabilization of present levels of project delivery and even permit growth commensurate with the needs of developing countries. UNDP's resources were still below the level at which it could function effectively, and a more substantial increase in the flow of real resources was urgently needed if programming levels were to be raised to 100 per cent of the indicative planning figures which had been so drastically reduced.

7. The further improvements needed to make United Nations operational activities fully responsive to developing countries' needs should be based on such fundamental principles as equity, particularly in the distribution of resources among developing countries, the integration of assistance with the development priorities of the country concerned, universality, the voluntary nature of contributions and country programming, as well as other principles embodied in the consensus set

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(Mr. Sekulic, Yugoslavia)

forth in the annex to General Assembly resolution 2688 (XXV) and Governing Council decision 80/83.

8. There should be increased support for the development efforts of the least developed countries so as to enable UNDP to fulfil its responsibilities under the Substantial New Programme of Action for those countries. Technical co-operation among developing countries, particularly in regard to operational activities, should also receive greater assistance from UNDP and the United Nations development system as a whole.

9. His delegation continued to believe in the principle of the voluntary nature of contributions; efforts to place those contributions on a predictable and continuous basis should be continued, perhaps by the holding of informal consultations before the annual Pledging Conference.

10. He welcomed the steps that had been taken in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 37/226 to examine the possibilities of further co-operation between UNDP and the World Bank regarding utilization of facilities available to the two organizations.

11. His delegation was increasingly concerned about the practice of tying assistance which, if it continued, would lead to the emergence of a new type of bilateralism within a multilateral framework. As far as United Nations operational activities were concerned, the fundamental principles of multilateral aid must be preserved.

12. Greater cost effectiveness should be promoted through such measures as the use of national experts and institutions, the use of local materials, equipment and services and government execution of projects. Greater use should also be made of experts and equipment from developing countries.

13. His delegation had supported the establishment of the central evaluation unit and hoped that that would lead to the development of agreed evaluation policies through closer co-operation with field offices, executing agencies and the Governments concerned. However, the sole purpose of evaluation, co-ordination and similar activities should be to ensure optimum use of resources.

14. Yugoslavia had announced a contribution to UNDP, subject to parliamentary approval, which exceeded the 14 per cent target, and it had also announced contributions to other global and special purpose funds. Yugoslavia would continue to support the activities of virtually all United Nations technical assistance programmes.

15. Mr. SLIM (Tunisia) said he agreed with the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation that multilateral co-operation allowed for a distribution of resources that met the requirements of equity and distributive justice and that the polycentric United Nations system allowed for a flexible response to the range and variety of requirements of the developing countries (A/38/258, annex, para. 2).

(Mr. Slim, Tunisia)

16. Operational activities represented an excellent instrument for multilateral co-operation and must therefore be carried out in strict conformity with the principles of universality, non-conditionality and quality of service, which were the basic principles of multilateralism. The main aim of operational activities was to enable recipient countries to make the best possible use of their own human, financial and natural resources, and it therefore followed that technical co-operation by United Nations system organizations must constantly adapt itself to the developing countries' requirements. Special attention should of course be given to the least developed countries, but, in accordance with the principle of universality, operational activities should continue to assist the development programmes of all developing countries.

17. If the United Nations system was to respond effectively to the ever-increasing need for technical co-operation, it was essential that the resources available for operational activities should be placed on a predictable, continuous and assured basis. Respect for the voluntary principle in contributions should not, however, be used as an excuse by certain developed countries whose contributions were far below their potential.

18. There should be a more equitable distribution of the cost of financing operational activities, based on a country's capacity to contribute. In that connection, he supported the Director-General's appeal for a resumption of growth in the resources of the United Nations system so that contributions to future United Nations funds and programmes could remain constant in real terms. It was particularly necessary to put the finances of UNDP on a more assured and predictable basis.

19. He was concerned by an increasing tendency towards bilateralism to the detriment of multilateral economic co-operation, and even more so by the fact that certain donor countries tied their contributions to the procurement of goods and services in the donor country. Such aid was contrary to the very basis of multilateralism and a denial of the right of the recipient country to choose the technology or equipment best suited to its needs. It could also lead to an increase in the cost of a project, since it left no room for international bidding.

20. It was important in such a diverse system of activities to ensure that programme quality was maintained and to make a continuous assessment of the cost-efficiency of operational activities. The use of appropriate technology and trained national personnel and the selection of projects in the light of the country's priorities would ensure the projects' success. It was equally important, however, that operational activities should be adapted to South-South co-operation, which was the new reality in the developing world. United Nations programmes should include projects which would strengthen economic and technical co-operation between developing countries.

21. The reversal at the recent Pledging Conference of the downward trend in pledges to UNDP was a positive step towards putting the Programme's finances on a sound basis. He noted with satisfaction that of 99 announced pledges, 28 had

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(Mr. Slim, Tunisia)

achieved or exceeded the target annual increase of 14 per cent, and it was noteworthy that 23 of those 28 were from developing countries. A further 28 countries, 24 of which were developing countries, had also exceeded the 14 per cent target in terms of their national currency. He also welcomed the decision of the United States of America to increase its contribution to UNDP by 14.3 per cent, thereby associating itself with other major donor countries such as Finland, France, Italy and Spain.

22. He welcomed the adoption by the Governing Council at its thirtieth session of decision 83/5 on measures to mobilize increased resources for UNDP on an increasingly predictable, continuous and assured basis, which recommended that all Governments should make their best effort towards the maintenance of the real value of their contributions to UNDP from year to year.

23. Mr. MUELLER (German Democratic Republic) said that his delegation supported the developing countries' position that the operational activities of the United Nations system could only be effective if they were consistent with the development priorities established by the recipient countries. UNDP played a key role in those operational activities, and the consensus set forth in the annex to General Assembly resolution 2688 (XXV) and the guidelines on new dimensions in technical co-operation, as set forth in the annex to General Assembly resolution 3405 (XXX), formed the only possible basis for UNDP's activities, implying as they did the need to observe such key principles as universality, voluntariness and respect for recipient countries' sovereign rights.

24. In 1983, the German Democratic Republic had continued to make substantial voluntary contributions toward a wide variety of United Nations funds, including UNDP, yet only half the total amount thus contributed had been used. In those circumstances, demands for an increase in contributions were unrealistic.

25. In order to reduce its unused voluntary contributions to UNDP, his country had again decided to make available one million marks, initially earmarked for UNDP, to the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) in 1984, being satisfied that UNIDO, like other United Nations organs receiving voluntary contributions from the German Democratic Republic, used them in the interests of developing countries. Within the scope of its possibilities, his country was trying to assist developing countries by providing additional funds, for example to UNICEF, or by enhancing the effectiveness of current activities, as is the case of the United Nations Environment Programme.

26. The failure to use the voluntary contributions of the German Democratic Republic and the other socialist States involved a number of factors. Firstly, those persistently raising the question of voluntary contributions from socialist countries were seeking to discredit those States' performance in giving development aid. However, technical assistance always involved such concrete matters as deliveries, services or training, and the money served only as an instrument of accounting and planning, so that the question of the currency in which voluntary contributions were provided was not critical. The voluntary contributions of the

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(Mr. Mueller, German Democratic Republic)

German Democratic Republic could be used without restriction for any kind of supplies or services for UNDP which the country was in a position to provide; the funds were not tied to any specific projects, or any particular experts or the delivery of any particular equipment.

27. Secondly, the attempts to disparage the aid provided by the socialist countries might well be designed to distract attention from the cause of the difficult financial situation of UNDP, which was primarily due to the crisis in the capitalist world economic system; for example, between 1980 and 1983 UNDP had suffered a loss of about \$730 million because of exchange rate fluctuations in the capitalist monetary system.

28. Thirdly, the attacks against the voluntary contributions of the socialist States were designed to achieve a fundamental change in UNDP's democratic principles of universality, sovereignty and voluntariness which were the basis of his country's co-operation in the Programme.

29. Fourthly, attempts were being made to use UNDP to assist for private capital and transnational corporations in their drive for neo-colonialist exploitation. He noted suggestions by the Administrator of UNDP that the Programme's machinery might be made available for the implementation of bilateral projects, but he disagreed fundamentally with that approach; UNDP must not be turned into a commercial institution manipulated by private capital.

30. The UNDP administration must take practical steps to ensure the effective utilization of voluntary contributions from his and other socialist countries. An increase in contributions on "an automatic and predictable basis" and the introduction of "international taxation" and other such measures were not suitable means of resolving the financial problems of UNDP.

31. His delegation joined the developing countries in urging a change in the practice of procuring supplies and services from firms of certain Western countries. In 1982, five leading Western countries had accounted for 60 per cent of the equipment for UNDP, almost 40 per cent of its subcontracts and one third of its specialists.

32. There were a number of practical possibilities for enhancing the efficiency of UNDP operations, including improved co-operation and co-ordination, the harmonization of procedures and the avoidance of duplication, the improvement of the overall quality of work and a reduction in the number of meetings and the volume of documentation. Such measures would also help to restore confidence in UNDP.

33. With regard to the possible establishment of a programme committee within the framework of the Governing Council of UNDP, his delegation considered that such an organ would duplicate the work and diminish the importance of the Governing Council. It would also increase the possible interference of donor countries in the preparation of country programmes.

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(Mr. Mueller, German Democratic Republic)

34. In view of the importance of UNICEF activities, particularly in developing countries, his Government had been actively supporting the work of UNICEF and had provided the Fund with considerable assistance in addition to its annual voluntary contributions.

35. The view of his and other socialist countries on the vast amounts of resources squandered on the ongoing arms race was well known. The few voices bent on curtailing discussion of that subject belonged to the representatives of those States which were escalating the arms race by deploying United States medium-range missiles in Europe, thus jeopardizing the foundations of peaceful coexistence and economic co-operation.

36. Mr. WORKU (Ethiopia) said that, while his delegation concurred with most of the suggestions made by the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation, there were still some areas which needed further elaboration. Although there had been encouraging signs in the mobilization of resources for operational activities, the situation still left much to be desired. In recent years, the declining support for multilateral development co-operation had seriously affected the position of UNDP. The resulting critical financial situation was still having an adverse effect on the development efforts of many countries, in particular poor countries like his own which had been forced to shelve many of their important development projects. None the less, his Government's support for United Nations operational activities for development was unequivocal. The international community should make a concerted effort to increase resources for operational activities on a predictable and assured basis, and all countries in a position to do so should increase their contributions. In the case of UNDP, countries should make an earnest effort to maintain the present level of resources in real terms as a minimum objective, in accordance with Governing Council decision 83/5.

37. His delegation considered that it was important to assign priorities to various programmes and activities of the United Nations system and that UNDP should concentrate on the needs of the poor and least developed countries. The selection of priority areas in no way contravened the philosophy underlying the establishment of UNDP. The decisions of the General Assembly or the UNDP Governing Council should not culminate in the introduction of structural changes violating such basic principles of UNDP as universality, the voluntary nature of contributions and the responsibility of recipient countries for elaborating their national development plans.

38. His delegation did not subscribe to the practice of attaching conditions to contributions, in particular tying contributions to the procurement of goods and services from donor countries, since that practice limited the options of the recipient countries.

39. With regard to the question of co-ordination, UNDP must operate in a coherent manner and work towards interagency co-ordination at the country level to enhance the multidisciplinary elements of technical co-operation. His delegation therefore

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(Mr. Worku, Ethiopia)

urged the full implementation of General Assembly resolution 32/197. Working in concert with the beneficiary countries and co-ordination were keys to the success of operational activities.

40. In order to maximize benefits from available resources, an efficient evaluation system was also of paramount importance. However, the goal of such evaluation should not be to increase the inflexibility of the United Nations development system but rather to broaden the latitude of the recipient countries in the elaboration of programmes. Evaluation must be based mainly on feedback from the recipient countries channelled through the Resident Representatives.

41. UNICEF had a special role to play in providing for the well-being of the citizens of tomorrow. The involvement of UNICEF in medium-term and long-term activities to improve the situation of children throughout the world was commendable. Had it not been for the timely response of UNICEF, the condition of many children in his own country, especially in the drought-affected regions, could have been disastrous.

42. The economic malaise from which developing countries were suffering was partly caused by high rates of population growth. One means of solving the economic problems of the developing countries was to ensure proper management of population size. His country therefore sincerely appreciated the tremendous efforts made in that regard by the United Nations Fund for Population Activities. It looked forward to the International Conference on Population to be held in 1984 and was prepared to do its utmost for the success of the Conference.

43. Mr. STARACE (Italy) said that the United Nations system for development continued to achieve important results, in spite of its economic difficulties over the past years. He reaffirmed his country's commitment to that system, which had proved to be an efficient means of ensuring co-operation among the developed and the developing countries. That commitment had recently been reconfirmed at the Pledging Conference for Development Activities, at which his country had once again endeavoured to make a pledge which was in line with the recommendation for yearly increases in real terms.

44. However, much remained to be done in order to ensure a better balance between the efforts made by donor countries and the actual benefits accruing to recipient countries. Greater efficiency, rationalization and co-ordination of operational activities were essential in order to reverse the current trend from multilateral to bilateral co-operation. His delegation was confident that the work done by the UNDP evaluation unit would lead to a definite improvement in the quality of programmes.

45. With regard to the efficiency of programmes, it was gratifying that the system's major agencies had been making efforts to contain their administrative expenditures. It was to be hoped that the introduction of the ex post facto reporting system on agency support costs would be helpful in evaluating the system's efficiency. In that connection, the Director-General's plan to begin

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(Mr. Starace, Italy)

consultations on the possibility of delegating more authority to the field level should also be considered.

46. In order to review, improve and, if necessary, reform the system's operational activities, it was essential to proceed from complete and clear data and documentation. Such a review, which would be a complicated and time-consuming process, should be open to innovations and new approaches. Thorough documentation was also essential for the mobilization of financial resources. In seeking a more predictable and assured basis of financing, the system should not renounce any possibility but should rather be imaginative and flexible in seeking additional sources of financing. His delegation was of the view that additional resources must be sought on the basis of two premises. First, UNDP must remain the centre of the system for operational activities and its pivotal role should be strengthened. Second, the basic principles of multilateral development assistance must always be safeguarded.

47. Those premises provided a solid basis for dealing objectively with the controversial question of tied contributions. Excessive recourse to such contributions could create problems, but it was possible to find a satisfactory balance between tied contributions and general resources, provided that such contributions did not result in reductions in general contributions and that the priorities and needs of the recipient countries were respected. It was necessary, therefore, to continue to work towards the formulation of adequate regulations for that type of additional financing, the advantages of which should not be ignored. Furthermore, efforts to increase the volume of financial contributions should depend not only on the traditional major donors but also on all other countries with a capacity to contribute, above all those which had so far contributed in non-convertible resources. His delegation noted with satisfaction that, at the Pledging Conference, countries which were not major donors had increased their commitment and, more important still, the recipient countries had also done so.

48. Mr. DE SILVA (Sri Lanka) said that the question of the inadequacy of resources had dominated discussions of multilateral co-operation in recent years. In fact, while contributions to the World Bank and other development funds had increased considerably between 1979 and 1982, contributions to the funds and programmes covered by the United Nations Pledging Conference had increased by only 15 per cent. In 1982 contributions to UNDP had stagnated for the third consecutive year, and most funding for programmes covered by the Pledging Conference had reflected a decline in real terms. It was therefore gratifying to see the positive results of the 1983 Pledging Conference. In spite of its resource constraints, his own Government had consistently increased its contributions to the United Nations system.

49. In view of persistent economic difficulties, a policy review would necessarily have to consider ways and means of increasing the mobilization of resources in order to maintain a level of assistance commensurate with the priority needs of the developing countries. A consensus must also be achieved on the criteria to be followed by the international community. His delegation endorsed the principles of

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(Mr. De Silva, Sri Lanka)

the voluntary character of operational activities, the equitable sharing of costs according to capacity to contribute, the restriction of the tying of contributions to the procurement of goods and services and the co-ordination of the programmes of the different funding sources in order to respond to the priorities and needs of recipient countries.

50. His delegation noted that action was being taken by the Director-General to explore further ways and means of achieving greater inter-agency co-operation and co-ordination, increasing cost-effectiveness and improving evaluation. It also noted the proposed implementation of the recommendation made by the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination on the preparation by the Resident Co-ordinators of annual country reviews. Conditions in developing countries were changing, and the United Nations development system should therefore be flexible enough to adapt itself to the changing development needs of countries. His delegation expressed its support for the United Nations system and its appreciation for the efforts made to mobilize resources during the world economic recession.

51. Mr. BA (Senegal) said that the effectiveness of operational activities for development should be measured not solely in financial terms but also in terms of the qualitative goals set by the recipient countries. Greater attention should be given to substance in order to see what was being achieved in such areas as rural development, industrial development and training. The Resident Co-ordinators should work in close co-operation with the representatives of the specialized agencies and with government officials in order to pool the resources channelled to various countries. Accordingly, the system of Resident Co-ordinators should be more fully developed. Resources for operational development activities should be sufficient at least to meet the basic needs of the developing countries in the areas of health, education and food. At present, there was a considerable gap between available resources and needs.

52. Consideration should also be given to how far the activities undertaken by the United Nations system met the real needs of the developing countries. That was not easy to determine, and it should, in any case, be left to the developing countries to say whether they were satisfied with what they were getting. The resources made available to the developing countries must of course be used rationally, productively and in a manner that benefited the entire population.

53. The changing needs of the developing countries should be kept under constant review so that new measures could be adopted as appropriate. Assistance should be viewed as a whole and should take account of the socio-economic realities and of the level of education, training and development of each country. In other words, it was necessary to ensure the complementarity of technical and capital assistance.

54. Many resources, particularly financial resources, could be utilized more rationally. The needs of the developing countries were becoming increasingly diverse, and that diversity called for a high degree of flexibility on the part of the United Nations system in order to meet the needs of each country effectively. Organizations such as UNICEF already had the necessary flexibility and could act with maximum effectiveness.

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(Mr. Ba, Senegal)

55. The various proposals concerning ways of financing development assistance should be analysed in greater detail in future reports on operational activities. The international community must recognize the interdependence of all nations and the need for all countries to contribute to the development of the least developed countries. If all were committed to that goal, it would be possible to ensure the financing of operational activities for development on a continuous and assured basis, as recommended in UNDP Governing Council decision 83/5.

56. His delegation endorsed the proposal made by the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation concerning the establishment of an intergovernmental committee of experts. Such a committee should be composed of experts from both developed and developing countries, selected for their practical experience in the field.

57. South-South co-operation should not be seen as a threat to North-South co-operation for, although it was designed to end the dependence of the developing countries on the developed ones, it would emphasize the interdependence of all nations.

58. His delegation attached great importance to implementation of the Caracas Programme of Action and the Buenos Aires Plan of Action concerning economic and technical co-operation among developing countries. Such co-operation required the support of the entire international community in order to mobilize the resources needed for regional and interregional programmes.

59. The food situation in Africa was causing increasing concern; indeed, 22 countries, including his own, were threatened with famine. He therefore appealed to the international community for financial support in order to implement a new food strategy in those countries.

60. Mr. BHANDARI (Bhutan) said that the operational activities of the United Nations system were crucial to the national development process, as they provided inputs without which capital investment could not be productive. Multilateral co-operation must therefore be further enhanced. Unfortunately, there was a growing tendency towards bilateralism at the expense of multilateralism. Resources provided for operational activities had generally stagnated, and at the same time resources channelled through United Nations development programmes were increasingly being tied to conditions concerning procurement of goods and services. That must not be allowed to continue. Resources for operational activities should be channelled in a manner in keeping with the principle of multilateralism and due regard should be paid to the central funding and co-ordinating role of UNDP.

61. The overall resources available for operational activities continued to be a matter of serious concern. The shortfall in resources available to the United Nations development system had made it necessary to curtail development activities to such an extent that developing countries had been forced to abandon key projects and the credibility of the United Nations development system was in jeopardy. His

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(Mr. Bhandari, Bhutan)

delegation hoped that the political support enjoyed by operational activities would be reflected in increased financial contributions. All countries should maintain the real value of their contributions, so that development programmes could be kept at least at their present level.

62. Growth in resources alone would not necessarily eliminate all the difficulties faced by the United Nations development system. All parties concerned must monitor the implementation of programmes and be sensitive to the evolving needs of the recipients. A certain amount of flexibility in implementation would always be essential.

63. More attention was being given to strengthening mechanisms for monitoring assistance evaluation, and proper evaluation would not only improve the quality of programmes but would constitute a proper use of scarce resources. However, evaluation was not an end in itself but simply a means towards an end.

64. Co-ordination of activities in the field and the promotion of inter-agency co-operation also required continuing attention, and Governments had as important a role to play as the organizations of the United Nations system in improving co-ordination. In that connection, he drew attention to the need for full implementation of General Assembly resolution 32/197 and clear recognition of the central funding and co-ordinating of UNDP. It would seem that the test of the United Nations development system would increasingly lie in its ability to mobilize, integrate and co-ordinate the existing pool of resources and expertise within the system. The role of the Director-General in that regard was essential.

65. The statement made by the Administrator of UNDP had been encouraging and he hoped that the increase in UNDP's resources would be at least in the order of 7.5 per cent so that current programming levels could be maintained. The objective should be to increase programme delivery to 80 per cent of IPFs as soon as possible. His delegation generally supported the measures outlined in Governing Council decision 83/5, since those measures should contribute towards improving UNDP's long-term financial situation.

66. In spite of increased support to some of the special funds of interest to the least developed countries, the overall ability of such funds to support development programmes remained quite limited. He had been disappointed to hear that the resource level of the United Nations Capital Development Fund was expected to be lower in 1984 than it had been in 1983. All countries should contribute to that Fund.

67. His delegation had noted with satisfaction the efforts made by UNICEF and UNFPA to expand their resources and improve their programme delivery. It particularly welcomed the decision of the Executive Board of UNICEF to use infant mortality rates in addition to per capita GNP as a guide for the allocation and content of UNICEF activities in developing countries. That would help UNICEF to accord appropriate priority to individual countries and sectors.

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68. Mr. GIHANI (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that operational activities for development reflected the fulfilment by the international community of its collective responsibility for solving economic and social problems. The fundamental goal of such activities must be to respond to the needs of the developing countries, with due respect for the views and concerns of Member States. Operational activities should proceed in an atmosphere free from the possibility of political or economic interference, recipient States should participate fully in the process of the allocation of resources and the principles of fairness and equitable distribution should be observed. His delegation was concerned about the role of operational activities in the strengthening of South-South co-operation. Such co-operation was essential in order to reduce the reliance of the South on the North, as well as for mutual exploitation of the integration of economic and technological capacities, and it would ensure greater participation in the world economy. Such co-operation could also provide common expertise in the development field, which would make it possible to implement the principle of collective self-reliance. Although the responsibility for promoting and strengthening such co-operation lay with the developing countries themselves, the continued support of the international community and the United Nations system was necessary for its success and advancement.

69. The problems facing the developing and the least developed countries included a lack of natural resources, a limited capacity for saving, remoteness from markets, high international freight rates and difficulties relating to technology, financing, energy, trade, industrialization and food production. The United Nations system should, through its operational activities, provide support to help those countries to overcome the problems standing in the way of the development. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya hoped that the Trade and Development Board, in co-operation with the United Nations Development Programme, the regional commissions and other organizations, would play a positive and effective role in the implementation of the decisions adopted by the developing countries at Arusha in 1979 and at Caracas in 1981, decisions aimed at the promotion of their social and economic growth, the development of their human resources and the attainment of the goal of collective self-reliance.

70. His delegation had appreciated United Nations operational activities in recent years because of the positive and humane role which they played in support of development. Over the past 10 years the assistance provided by the system in the field of operational development had increased by 40 per cent. Operational programmes had been established in some 150 countries and on a regional basis, so that the number of current projects financed by the system was more than 5,000. In that connection, he welcomed General Assembly resolution 35/81, which provided for a three-yearly comprehensive policy review of operational activities, starting from 1983.

71. The world economic recession was exerting a negative effect on the international food situation, which was imbalanced and unstable. Increasing production costs and rising interest rates had seriously impeded the efforts made in many countries to accelerate food production. Accordingly, the developing countries, and the least developed countries in particular, must accord great

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attention to the restructuring of the food sector in their countries and the laying of a sound foundation for modern technology in that area.

72. His delegation noted with satisfaction the report of the World Food Council on its ninth ministerial session (A/38/19), which emphasized that a large proportion of material and human resources was still being devoted to disarmament and stressed the relationship between peace and security on the one hand and development on the other hand.

73. He drew attention to the grave problems of the African States - most of which were least developed countries - in the area of food and agriculture. Even though those States were making efforts to the extent of their technological, human and financial capacities within the framework of the Lagos Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Monrovia Strategy for the Economic Development of Africa and with the assistance of the World Food Programme, the results were still negative, and that was due to the current depressed economic situation, the lack of economic resources and the inadequacy of the financial and technical assistance provided by the various programmes and financial institutions, as well as the negative attitude of the developed countries. As a result, the food situation in Africa had deteriorated over the past two decades from food self-reliance to a growing food deficit. He called upon the international community and the various United Nations organizations and activities to provide prompt food aid to Africa to help it to overcome that problem.

74. He endorsed the statement in the report of the World Food Council on the work of its ninth ministerial session (A/38/19) that peace and disarmament were prerequisites to improved economic conditions and enhanced food security and that food was a universal human right that Governments endeavoured to guarantee their people. He also welcomed the reaffirmation of the Council's belief in the general principle that food should not be used as an instrument of political pressure.

75. His country was proud of the tremendous efforts made by the developing countries to establish and implement a more integrated strategy in the sector of agriculture in order to meet the food needs of their peoples. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya believed that collective self-reliance was an important element in national sovereignty. It therefore accorded great attention to the sector of agriculture within its five-year development plan. It spared no effort in co-operating with United Nations bodies, particularly the Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Food Council. He stressed the importance of calling upon the developed countries to give more support to both those bodies and to the International Fund for Agricultural Development, because the development of the food sector was a fundamental and dynamic way of ensuring a prompt cure for the economic problems of developing regions. Food was a political right of every human being, and Africa's great challenge was to increase food production to outpace population growth. Africa would soon have to feed 800 million hungry people.

76. In his statement, the Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund had clearly indicated the financial problems facing UNICEF, in spite of the

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30 per cent increase in external resources. He had made an urgent appeal to all States, international organizations and development institutions to support UNICEF, inasmuch as the available financial resources of UNICEF were less than 1 per cent of the resources necessary to meet the needs of children in developing countries. The Executive Director had indicated what UNICEF was doing for the children of today and tomorrow and had pointed out that the world had been going through an economic débacle since 1935, which did not bode well for the children of the world.

77. He urged the prompt acceleration of development for the poorest billion of the world's inhabitants in order to improve their children's lives and eliminate the worst obstacles of poverty and backwardness which killed a child every two seconds. He appealed to the United Nations, through its various activities, to assist the developing countries in the speedy achievement of the social objectives of the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade and to construct a safety net to protect the weakest of the world's poor, namely children and their mothers. As indicated in the reports of UNICEF the cost of achieving those noble humanitarian objectives was far less than the amounts spent on alcoholic beverages each year or the amount the world spent annually on tobacco or monthly on the maintenance and boosting of military capacity for the purpose of embarking on wars which took the lives of more than 40,000 infants and young children every day. Stability and peace could not be established except in a world where there were no more hungry or deprived children.

78. His delegation had welcomed General Assembly resolution 31/169 proclaiming the year 1979 International Year of the Child, for children were the most precious human resource, and it supported the General Assembly's exhortation to UNICEF - in resolution 35/79 - to respond imaginatively and vigorously to its important responsibilities in the follow-up activities of the International Year of the Child. It commended the Fund's co-operation with related United Nations bodies.

79. He also welcomed the initiative taken by the Executive Director of UNICEF in establishing machinery for consultation between United Nations bodies to follow up the activities of the International Year of the Child. It was appropriate that UNICEF should retain its independent identity, its method of work and its separate operational structure and should play its unique role in meeting the needs of children and realizing their hopes and aspirations.

80. His delegation noted with satisfaction the Fund's extensive activities in developing countries in implementation of the medium-term plan for the period 1982-1986, which was aimed at promoting the living standards of children and mothers, assisting liberation movements in South Africa for the improvement of living conditions and training workers in refugee groups in health and social services, in co-ordination with the Liberation Committee of the Organization of African Unity. He commended the Fund's role in the recent events in Lebanon and its assistance to the Palestinian and Lebanese peoples during the Zionist invasion of south Lebanon.

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81. His delegation attached special importance to UNICEF and its humanitarian role because of his country's concern for children and the need to ensure a decent life for them in all respects. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya was concerned also with the intellectual, emotional and social needs of children and the growth of their potential. It had opened day nurseries and provided schools in rural and urban areas alike. Education was free of charge at all levels.

82. His country was co-operating with UNICEF in the planning and implementation of immunization programmes for many African countries in order to eliminate the epidemics and diseases which afflicted the children of that continent. In conclusion, he commended the positive role played by UNICEF in connection with the International Year of Disabled Persons. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya accorded great importance to the question of disabled persons and had established a sophisticated modern centre for them, with every comfort and the latest technical equipment.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.