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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 47th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. DIETZE (German Democratic Republic)

later: Mr. GIBSON (New Zealand)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

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

- (a) OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/38/258 and Add.1 and Corr.1, A/38/276, A/38/333)
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- (i) TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/38/172 and Add.1; DP/1982/18 and Add.1 and 2)

1. Mr. JAGUARIBE (Brazil) said that Brazil had always attached great importance to operational activities for development and continued to do so, particularly at the present time when the needs of the developing countries were so great and when the multilateral system of economic co-operation was going through such an extremely difficult period. Analyses of the present situation all tended to point to the shortcomings of operational activities and to the generally unhealthy financial climate. That state of affairs could be attributed to a combination of adverse economic factors; however, other factors must be taken into account also, particularly the complexity of multilateral co-operation which, coupled with the meagre results obtained recently in that area, had raised questions about the validity of the entire structure.

2. Brazil was unequivocally committed to the idea of multilateral co-operation and to its implementation through the United Nations system; it was very much concerned at the new tendency to tie resources in multilateral programmes to specific bilateral arrangements and to link contributions to procurement in the donor countries. The shortfall in financial resources was not irreversible; it was important not to engage in structural modifications that contravened the basic principle of universality or failed to take into account the voluntary nature of contributions and the exclusive responsibility of the Governments of the recipient countries to elaborate their own development plans and to choose the technologies that were appropriate to their needs. That did not mean that the system should remain static; his delegation was ready to work with other delegations in adopting realistic measures that would end the skepticism with which the United Nations development system was currently viewed.

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(Mr. Jaguaribe, Brazil)

3. In the past, when development formulas were simpler and projects less intricate and more autonomous, the compartmentalization of the system had not been so detrimental to its effectiveness. At present, there was a clear need for better co-ordination of the projects included in the country programmes approved by UNDP and those implemented as part of the technical co-operation programmes of other agencies. The best way of ensuring such co-ordination would be by achieving full harmony between all the programming cycles. Guidelines could also be elaborated in order to enhance the co-ordinating role of UNDP resident representatives. Greater flexibility in the exchange of information between regional offices of UNDP was also needed as it would stimulate technical co-operation among developing countries. At present, contacts were always made through Headquarters causing delays in the delivery of information and in the taking of decisions.

4. Technical co-operation and capital assistance should also be explored in greater depth. According to paragraph 64 of the report of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation (A/38/258) "ACC had been exploring the possibility of expanding the role of the relevant organizations of the system in the implementation of the technical co-operation components in loans advanced by the World Bank, the regional development banks and IFAD". In order to allow for greater flexibility and efficiency it might be useful to take a programme-oriented rather than a project-oriented approach to that role as it might prove very fruitful. It would also be very helpful to ensure greater integration of the financial agencies with the technical co-operation mechanisms by organizing annual meetings between UNDP, the World Bank, the regional development banks and the International Fund for Agricultural Development.

5. He agreed that there was a need for a sound evaluation system for operational activities. That was the best way of guaranteeing feedback from projects and determining what future adjustments would be needed. However, evaluation must always be in line with the basic principles of the system, that was to say, it must be based primarily on feedback from the recipient countries channelled through the resident representatives. UNDP and the other agencies would obviously have general criteria for evaluation; those criteria would have to be flexible so that they could be adapted to widely differing situations.

6. He hoped that other delegations would agree with him and that measures could be taken that would allow for the full expansion of the United Nations development system.

7. Mr. HOEJERSHOLT (Denmark), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, said that the comprehensive policy review of the operational activities of the United Nations system should lead to progress towards the establishment of overall guidelines and system-wide priorities for action. It should also contribute to maximum programme efficiency and relevance so as to ensure the best possible utilization of available financial resources and improved conditions for a steady increase in the flow of resources; the latter depended in the long run, on the political support of the contributing countries. The policy review conducted by the Economic and Social Council at its second regular session of 1983 had been

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(Mr. Hoejersholt, Denmark)

inconclusive; he hoped that the debate at the current session of the General Assembly would be more focused and would lead to greater efficiency and effectiveness of operational activities and improved resource prospects for that important part of multilateral development assistance.

8. The Nordic countries felt that system-wide priorities could serve as general guidelines for both donors and recipients. Establishment of such priorities would require further elaboration and discussion of the concept of "priority area requiring special attention". While agreeing with the priorities enumerated in the report of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation (A/38/258) the Nordic countries maintained that in multilateral development assistance priority should be given to the poorest countries and, in particular, to the least developed countries as well as to the poorest segments of the population. Another equally important principle they wished to stress was the need to ensure that development co-operation was in conformity with the priorities set by the developing countries.

9. The five Nordic countries, which contributed approximately one quarter of all voluntary contributions to the funds and programmes covered by the United Nations Pledging Conference, were extremely concerned at the stagnation in the resources allocated to the United Nations development system. They were particularly concerned about financing for UNDP, and saw decision 83/5, on measures to mobilize increased resources on an increasingly predictable, continuous and assured basis, adopted by the UNDP Governing Council at its thirtieth session, as a step in the right direction. They agreed with the suggestion of the Director-General for Development and International Co-operation (A/38/258, para. 98) that concerted consultations might be held between donors, recipients and the organizations participating in the Pledging Conference in order to attain a more equitable sharing of the costs of financing the organizations and to seek a distribution of resources among programmes in a manner that reflected the priorities of the developing countries. They also wished to draw attention to the conclusion drawn in paragraph 99 of that report that an accelerated growth of the programmes concerned was not likely unless the present pattern of burden-sharing was rendered more equitable. There was broad public support in the Nordic countries for multilateral development assistance, but a more equitable sharing of costs would help consolidate that support and maintain contributions at a high level.

10. The Director-General had referred to new modalities for financing technical assistance. The Nordic countries preferred the more "classical" methods of financing technical assistance within the United Nations system. They believed that the principle of central funding should be maintained, which implied that voluntary contributions to UNDP should be the central element in the financing of the operational activities of the United Nations development system. They cautioned against the proliferation of funds but expressed support for the central funding and co-ordinating role of UNDP. They opposed on principle the policy of tying contributions for operational activities to the procurement of goods and services in donor countries and noted that contributions in non-convertible currencies had the same effect as tied aid. Tied aid and special purpose contributions should, in so far as possible, represent a modest portion of general

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(Mr. Hoejersholt, Denmark)

contribution to the organizations in question and to the system as a whole. The reason why those new modalities had been put forward should be borne in mind. For example, one might ask to what extent the specialized agencies themselves had encouraged the tying of contributions and whether that tendency was not the indirect result of many years of inequitable distribution of procurement within the United Nations system.

11. The question of the quality and cost-effectiveness of operational activities was fundamental. In the current financial crisis, efforts should be made to make optimum use of available resources by enhancing the efficiency of programmes and reducing administrative costs. The Nordic countries, which had repeatedly stressed the importance of adequate evaluation arrangements, were pleased to note the progress made in that direction. However, it should be determined whether access to evaluation results might not be facilitated, for example by making evaluation reports available upon request. The cost-effectiveness of operational programmes might also be improved. That task should continue to be entrusted to the Director-General and should also be given high priority by the executing agencies. The General Assembly might reaffirm its former resolutions in that area and urge the various funds and programmes to co-operate in that respect with the Director-General. The question of support costs should also be looked into further. Improved transparency of support costs must be ensured to enable Governments to feel confident that the resources placed at the disposal of executing agencies were being used efficiently. There was also a need for the General Assembly to consider in greater depth how Governments might gain better insight into the utilization of extrabudgetary resources, including support costs.

12. With regard to improved co-ordination at the country level, the Nordic countries wished to single out the essential role of the resident co-ordinators. Although the system of resident co-ordinators had been functioning for only a short time, it could be strengthened. The Nordic countries would have welcomed more specific suggestions from the Director-General to that end. In particular, they would have liked to see the measures enumerated in paragraph 151 of the Director-General's report, concerning the role of resident co-ordinators in enhancing the United Nations system at the national level, described in greater detail. The deliberations of the Second Committee might also benefit from the experience of the resident co-ordinators themselves. Information and co-ordination were closely linked. In paragraph 23 of General Assembly resolution 37/226, the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination had been requested to "develop, within a year, the register on development activities in conformity with Economic and Social Council resolution 1982/71". The Nordic delegations wished to see the register become operational without any further delay.

13. In conclusion, he reminded the Committee that the Nordic countries had welcomed the proposal which the Director-General had made to the Economic and Social Council regarding new arrangements for intergovernmental reviews of operational activities. They agreed that the General Assembly was the appropriate forum in which to carry out a review of overall strategies, policies and priorities and that new measures must be taken to enable the Second Committee to discharge its responsibilities effectively, the Nordic countries were willing to play their part in the elaboration of concrete proposals in that respect.

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14. Mr. LEE (Canada) said that operational activities for development constituted one of the most significant components of the international technical co-operation system run by the organizations of the United Nations system. During the second regular session of 1983 of the Economic and Social Council, his delegation had drawn particular attention to questions related to the coherence of the system, priority activities, the efficiency of management and the level of resources. At that session, emphasis had been placed on structuring the system around the central role of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

15. Turning to the report of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation (A/38/258), he said that the main problem facing operational activities was insufficient resources. It was true that some signs were cause for optimism. At the most recent Pledging Conference and afterwards, certain countries had removed the freeze which they had imposed on their pledges; similarly, the developing countries had demonstrated strong support for operational activities and the work of UNDP. As table 1 of document A/38/258/Add.1 indicated, contributions for United Nations operational activities for development had risen by 37 per cent from 1981 to 1982. Moreover, the OECD countries members of the Development Assistance Committee had increased their official development assistance by 9 per cent during the same period. However, it could be seen that the allocation of funds favoured the World Bank and IFAD, contributions to which had increased by 71 per cent between 1979 and 1982. Voluntary contributions to the specialized agencies for operational activities and to WFP had increased by 37.8 per cent during the same period, while contributions to the funds and programmes covered by the United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities had grown by only 15.4 per cent; as for UNDP, it had experienced a stagnation in revenues, and thus a reduction in real terms.

16. The question that had to be asked was how the situation of the central funds could be improved as that would also improve their effectiveness. On the administrative side it was essential that the bulk of resources be used effectively for development purposes in other words with the greatest efficiency possible. On the political side, it was necessary to make available information concerning the system in order to convince populations and parliaments of the necessity of maintaining and increasing support for the operational activities for development of the United Nations system.

17. Turning to specific points he recalled the attachment of his Government to multilateralism, to the voluntary nature of operational activities and to the predominance of budgetary resources over extrabudgetary resources. So far as the coherence of the system was concerned, the development system was an entity composed of several elements. A systematic approach was therefore required in order to define the relations between them and to make sure that they sought the same goal, namely, development and the promotion of the dignity of man. That required a system of programming that was truly responsive to the needs and priorities of the recipient countries, central bodies that fully discharged their key role and executing agencies that used their recognized expertise to achieve the common goal. Finally, the whole system must be effectively and efficiently managed in order to draw on past experience to improve present and future performance.

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(Mr. Lee, Canada)

Only a coherent and co-ordinated system along the lines of that set out in General Assembly resolutions 35/81, 36/199 and 37/226 would enable the recipient countries to succeed in their quest for self-reliance.

18. In that respect it must be recognized that whereas the sections of those resolutions which were the responsibility of the funds, programmes and organizations administered by the General Assembly were being implemented fairly well much remained to be done in respect of those areas under the control of organizations which did not report to the General Assembly. The Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation had mentioned some concrete measures which merited consideration as, for example, the institutionalization of inter-agency co-operation, co-ordinated programming by UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP and the preparation of annual reviews by the resident co-ordinators. The Director-General had also mentioned, in paragraph 151 of his report that the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC) had decided "that the practice of periodic meetings between the resident co-ordinator and agency representatives should be further strengthened". Such meetings should be given official status perhaps under the title of Committees on Co-ordination whose aim should be to co-ordinate ongoing activities in order to avoid duplication and improve efficiency. It would also be very useful for all members of the Committee to receive, as soon as possible, a copy of the synthesis of reports received from resident co-ordinators as mentioned in paragraph 61 of the annex to document A/38/276.

19. Turning to project and programme delivery he reaffirmed the need for integration of the field offices and harmonization of procedures in order to reduce administrative costs and produce more effective action at the country level. The annual report on operational activities should contain a progress report on that specific question. He was pleased to note, however, that the Director-General was reviewing the subject; the main thing was to ensure that procedural differences of various agencies did not impede the programming process. The need for better systems of evaluation imposed a greater burden on UNDP because of the large number of organizations and agencies with which UNDP had to deal. The Director-General should fully exercise his mandate both in terms of the leadership he had to provide for the various components of the United Nations system involved in development and international economic co-operation, and the co-ordination he had to bring about in that system. The objective was to achieve an overall multidisciplinary approach by promoting effective management of development activities financed by both regular and extrabudgetary resources.

20. When seeking to improve the operation of the United Nations development system it was essential to bear in mind that the ultimate purpose of operational activities was to help the least favoured countries. The system must be able to adapt to the changing needs of the recipient countries. It must pave the way for a real transfer of resources, knowledge and skills, give priority to countries where the needs were greatest and recognize the central role of human resources development in the overall development process.

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21. Mr. GRANT (Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund) recalled that, after three decades of unprecedented improvement during which infant mortality rates in the low-income countries had been halved, the serious deterioration of the economic situation did not augur well for the hundreds of millions of children already trapped in the day-to-day "silent" emergency caused by the conjunction of extreme poverty and underdevelopment which brought death or disability to more than 40,000 children every day. It was now clear that, in the absence of special measures, many more would die in the decade ahead than had been thought likely at the start of the 1980s. Special measures continued to be the exception - neglect the rule. A central moral - and economic - issue of the mid-1980's was whether the world community would change that rule. Under the auspices of the United Nations it had changed a similar rule of neglect with respect to disasters. The positive, swift response to the emergencies in Lebanon, Kampuchea and the Sahel contrasted sharply with the indifference shown to the Bengal famine in 1943. Fortunately, the restrictions imposed by the world economic recession had stimulated the search for innovative solutions and for more cost effective utilization of resources. In those dismal circumstances when financial resources were limited the key to effectiveness must lie in the refusal to accept any limitation upon what could be achieved with those resources.

22. Drawing from the experience of recent years, the Executive Board of UNICEF had adopted a series of measures which should enable UNICEF to contribute more effectively to improving the situation of hundreds of millions of children. Those measures aimed, inter alia, at increasing the effectiveness of UNICEF assistance in improving child health and survival. UNICEF intended to realize the real potential for accelerating child survival and development which existed in many countries through increased attention to particular aspects of basic services and primary health care to which a special thrust could now be given. That idea had first been expressed in the report The State of the World's Children, 1982-1983 and had been enthusiastically endorsed by many Governments and parliamentarians. The Executive Board had also decided to strengthen UNICEF's capacity to deliver programmes in the most adversely affected, least developed countries, particularly in Africa where the core staff would be strengthened by approximately one third in the next two years. In addition the criteria for allocating resources had been changed. Infant mortality rates as well as GNP per capita were now being used to guide the allocation and the content of programmes. In order to increase the efficiency of UNICEF's internal operations and permit maximum emphasis on programme delivery the procurement staff had been largely consolidated in Copenhagen; that consolidation would enable UNICEF to increase the proportion of its staff serving in field posts to 82 per cent. Lastly, attempts had been made to consolidate and increase the financial resources which had increased significantly between 1981 and 1982. However, contingency margins had been introduced into financial planning in order to deal with unexpected changes.

23. In taking those measures, UNICEF had had in mind the goals set by the General Assembly in 1980 for the Third Development Decade, including the goal of reducing the infant mortality rate to 50 or less per thousand births by the year 2000. If existing trends continued, some 62 countries, or more than one third of the Members of the Organization, would still have mortality rates of over 60 per thousand by

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(Mr. Grant)

the year 2000. That would be a particularly disheartening tragedy given that the possibility of reversing the trend existed already. As had been recognized by a group of experts from specialized agencies, bilateral agencies and private institutions convened by UNICEF in 1982, the formula of community-based services and primary health care was the correct approach. The time had come for a new thrust in that field. The potential existed for a revolutionary improvement in the well-being of children in Asia, Africa and Latin America that would be as momentous as the green revolution had been in terms of increasing grain production in many Asian countries in the late 1960s. Paradoxically, a "survival and development revolution", which should prevent the deaths of 6 to 7 million infants each year by the end of the century, would probably result in a decline in the number of births by as much as 20 million per year.

24. UNICEF and other agencies had attacked the main causes of infant mortality, which were factors contributing to malnutrition as well, and had concentrated on simple approaches which cost little and which had the advantage of increasing the self-reliance of low income families. Those techniques had for many years been integral parts of UNICEF health and nutrition programmes; recently, however, they had been improved and their value was now better understood. Every six seconds a child died of dehydration associated with diarrhoea, a child which could have been saved by very simple treatment carried out directly by the mother and consisting of an injection of a mixture of salt and sugar dissolved in water. Tetanus, measles, poliomyelitis, whooping cough, diphtheria and tuberculosis killed or put at risk between 10,000 and 15,000 children every day although the children could be vaccinated at very little cost. Nevertheless, less than 20 per cent of the 80 million children who would be born that year in the developing countries would be fully immunized. Moreover, breast feeding, which was the best means of protecting infants against infection, was increasingly being abandoned in the developing countries in favour of artificial feeding which was costly, unsanitary and lacking in nutritional benefits. In the industrialized countries, educated women were increasingly returning to breast feeding. Also, mothers did not pay sufficient attention to the growth rate of young children, which they could easily do by means of growth charts such as those already used by two and a half million Indonesian mothers to detect the early signs of malnutrition in time and remedy it. Special attention should also be given to family spacing of births, food supplements and female education. That would contribute significantly to improving the health and nutrition of mothers and children. Those measures were, however, more difficult to apply and more costly.

25. To that technical progress should be added the growing success of the basic services and primary health care approaches - advocated at the Alma Ata Conference in 1978 and vigorously stressed by WHO and UNICEF - with health care professionals and health authorities in most countries. In addition, there had been a dramatic increase in the past 10 years in social services reaching low income categories: the number of health clinics had grown; training was given to health auxiliaries on a large scale; a great many organizations had been set up to help low income families; literacy had increased, particularly among young mothers; and there had been a spectacular development of communications media. That evolving network of social and administrative infrastructure provided considerable potential for spreading health information among the poorest strata of society.

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(Mr. Grant)

26. All those factors combined could, if that was what was wanted, save many children who were currently condemned and improve the health of millions more. For that hope to be realized, Governments must undertake at the highest level to accelerate the supply of basic services and primary health care with the participation of all relevant sectors, the international community must promote that effort and make the necessary resources available to countries, the vast array of media, religious institutions, non-governmental organizations and private enterprises must contribute to the effort, planners and implementers must remember that efforts to guarantee child survival and development would only succeed in the long-term and the ultimate goal must be to make parents capable of taking care of their families using simple but effective methods. In the final analysis, the greatest obstacle to be overcome was the ignorance of parents, communities and even some health professionals about the means currently available for nurturing life.

27. It was encouraging to note that the mobilization of resources had started. For example, 3,000 participants in the International Pediatrics Congress recently held at Manila had resolved to devote themselves to reducing childhood mortality and morbidity and to collaborate at all levels, particularly with UNICEF and WHO, to bring about a "child survival revolution". In Colombia, a new programme of health information for parents had been launched in parishes, and in Venezuela a very successful radio and television campaign had been launched to eliminate poliomyelitis in 1983. In Indonesia, several thousand imams were actively participating in UNICEF health and nutrition programmes, quoting widely from the Koran.

28. UNICEF itself was working with Governments to integrate all the new opportunities currently available into its existing activities. For the first time, it was offering greeting cards with a pictorial message and a written "spread the word" text with a series of health hints.

29. Thanks to the generosity of millions of private donors and many Member States of the United Nations, revenues had increased by 30 per cent in 1982. Unfortunately, the increases projected for 1983 and 1984 were more modest. Nevertheless, he wished to pay a special tribute to Prince Talal Bin Abdul Aziz Al Saoud, to the Nordic countries and to the Italian Government, whose generosity had been exemplary. A great many non-governmental international organizations, including the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and, more recently, the International Pediatricians Congress gave significant support. Close links were also maintained with United Nations agencies such as UNDP and WHO. He and the Director-General of WHO had recently held a long meeting with a view to co-ordinating the activities of the two organizations to achieve the goals of the "child survival revolution" and examining ways of bringing in other international agencies such as the World Bank, the regional banks and bilateral organizations. The forthcoming report The State of the World's Children would chronicle efforts being made in communities and countries on every continent to ensure the success of the revolution and would document the impact that could be made even if success was far from guaranteed.

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(Mr. Grant)

30. He recalled that 15 million children, or the equivalent of the entire child population of the United Kingdom, France, Italy, Spain and the Federal Republic of Germany died in silence every year. UNICEF had undertaken to speak in their name. In a world distracted by the pursuit of often illusory progress, it was not possible to refuse such truly human and civilized progress as ensuring the well being of children. All that was required was a modest amount of political will to seize the opportunities offered by recent social and scientific progress and attain the goal. He associated himself with the appeal of the Secretary-General that in the current times of strain Member States of the United Nations should take imaginative steps to heal the most tragic wounds of underdevelopment and poverty.

31. Mr. RUMECI (Burundi), supporting the suggestions in the Director-General's report, particularly as regards mobilization of resources, said that the effectiveness of tied aid was doubtful. He feared that multilateral co-operation would become a dead letter if tied aid became general. Co-ordination with the recipient country was the key to success in operational activities but, while national authorities had a major part to play there, the role of the resident representative was also decisive and it was therefore very important to make an in-depth study of his duties, as the Secretary-General had suggested in his note (A/38/276). In any case, co-ordination should be permanent and applied with flexibility and pragmatism.

32. The trust which third-world countries place in the United Nations system has likely to be severely shaken if, as had been the case for several years, the financial situation of UNDP and the special funds which it administered was such that vitally important projects had to be terminated. At the recent Pledging Conference, some Governments had made a great effort to give practical expression to their faith in multilateral co-operation, but there was a long way to go before the mobilization of resources could be placed on the increasingly predictable, continuous and assured basis, recommended in Governing Council decision 83/5.

33. There could be pride in the achievements of the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development but, without the solid backing of Member States and cost-cutting measures, its future was a matter for concern. In that connection, the use of skilled national personnel should be encouraged wherever possible.

34. The future of nations and of the whole world would be decided by the way in which the complex and interrelated problems of population were mastered; in future therefore, as a result of the International Conference on Population to be held in Mexico in August 1984, the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) would have a particularly active part to play and would need more than ever the support of all countries; Burundi would support it within the limits of its resources. The international exchange of experience on population questions was to be encouraged, and the United Nations Population Award, established for that reason, had been given for the current year to the Prime Minister of India and the Minister-in-Charge of the State Family Planning Commission of China. Burundi had been a member of the Committee for the award and had been able to appreciate the enthusiasm which the award had aroused; its significance could only grow in years to come.

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(Mr. Rumeci, Burundi)

35. His delegation expressed its appreciation to UNICEF and endorsed the recommendations made at the May 1983 session of the Executive Board regarding action in countries where infant mortality was particularly high. Moreover, his delegation considered that literacy and universal primary education made an appreciable contribution to the improvement of children's health and increased their chances of survival, and therefore supported any action by UNICEF, in co-operation with UNESCO, to provide backing for national measures to improve education in and out of school.

36. At a time when international tension and conflict seemed to expose the inability of the United Nations system to satisfy the deep aspirations of its peoples, fresh impetus could be given to the Organization if Member States would firmly commit themselves to supporting operational activities. That was the best way of achieving the aims of the Charter.

37. Mr. BRODODININGRAT (Indonesia) noted that only limited progress had been made since the thirty-seventh session of the General Assembly in the operational activities for development of the United Nations system, despite the adoption of a number of important resolutions, including resolution 37/226, and the efforts of UNDP and the Economic and Social Council. He would concentrate on the most important problem: that of the mobilization of resources. The level of contributions had fallen short of the desirable funding levels established by intergovernmental bodies, and the gap between resources and requirements had become even wider. As the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation had said, "uncertainties as to resource availability have adversely affected the smooth programming and implementation of operational activities" (A/38/258, para. 69). The critical situation of UNDP, the centre for multilateral co-operation activities, called for particular attention. If the situation could not be improved, the Governing Council would have to make drastic cuts when it carried out its mid-cycle Programme review. In Asia and the Pacific, four most useful regional institutions financed by ESCAP were threatened with closure because UNDP had had to withdraw its support, and the region was therefore already feeling the impact of the critical resource situation.

38. With regard to other priority areas covered in the Director-General's report, he was in agreement with the analysis of changing requirements for technical co-operation (para. 49) and particularly welcomed the recommendations on the need to encourage the Governments of recipient countries to execute projects themselves and to increase the participation of their national staff. With regard to the Director-General's views on the complementarity between technical co-operation and capital assistance, he agreed that technical assistance activities of the United Nations system should stimulate the flow of external resources. It was to be hoped that that ideal would be given material shape. Finally, with reference to the effectiveness and efficiency of operational activities, any evaluation of country programmes should be based on the consensus of 1970. Indonesia made a periodic review of the implementation of projects in its country programme. He welcomed the Secretary-General's assurance that voluntary contributions would be quickly and efficiently channelled to developing countries and that there would be a constant

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(Mr. Brotodiningrat, Indonesia)

search for cost reductions, but he did not believe in the appropriateness of making efficiency a precondition for increasing contributions. That was not the way to solve the real problems facing operational activities.

39. In a difficult situation, the Indonesian Government continued to support wholeheartedly multilateral co-operation for development. Its support had been shown by his Government's determination to implement the joint programme-funding arrangement signed with UNDP in 1982. To increase efficiency and minimize wastage, his Government, together with the resident co-ordinator and the representatives of the specialized agencies, was pursuing joint programming of the United Nations resources available to it. Finally, his Government would do all in its power not to lessen its support for the various United Nations programmes and funds.

40. He echoed the appeal launched on 10 October 1983 at the meeting of Ministers of the Group of 77 (A/38/494) calling for a substantial increase in the flow of resources for operational activities and in particular for UNDP.

41. Mr. ZAPOTOCKY (Czechoslovakia) expressed support for the appeal of the UNDP Governing Council at its thirtieth session for increased special assistance to the Palestinian people. He was also in favour of emergency assistance to the countries added to the list of the least developed and recalled that he had consistently promoted the 1970 UNDP principle of consensus. Indeed, only by strict observance of the universality of UNDP and the voluntary nature of contributions to it would it be possible to ensure the steady advance of the scientific and technological revolution and thus gradually to transform UNDP technical assistance into scientific and technological co-operation and pass on the results of that co-operation to the countries with the lowest per capita GNP levels.

42. Since the activities of UNDP depended on the world political and economic situation, disarmament would make it possible not just to tackle but also to solve UNDP's financial problems. Other proposals were inadequate because they did not go to the root of the matter, and their unrealistic nature was further emphasized by the fact that the socialist, the developing and the advanced capitalist countries had different views as to how they should be implemented. Therefore, the three sessions of the Intersessional Committee of the Whole of the UNDP Governing Council had been unable to do more than consider temporary palliatives for the financial difficulties of the Programme. The fact that the majority of countries, including Czechoslovakia, had disagreed had led to the rejection of a number of those proposals such as the method of replenishment. Long discussions in that Committee had led to the establishment of a Programme Committee of the Whole to consider draft national programmes of individual countries. His delegation reiterated its opposition to the idea that such a body should encroach on the competence of Governments to establish their development programmes and determine priorities. He also opposed any further expansion of the activities of local UNDP representatives in the matter of bilateral technical assistance. On the other hand, he welcomed realistic proposals for establishing conditions for partial but lasting improvements in UNDP's financial situation and supported proposals to strengthen the planning element in UNDP, especially the proposal that, at the pledging conferences, States should make pledges for one year and provide estimated data on their contributions, if possible, for a further two years.

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(Mr. Zapotocky, Czechoslovakia)

43. With regard to the appeal of the UNDP Governing Council to all States to maintain at least the real value of their contributions, the cumulation of voluntary contributions in national currencies was an obvious paradox. His country had taken the necessary measures to facilitate the utilization of its voluntary contributions to UNDP. During the past three years, it had managed not to increase further the volume of the contributions which had accumulated during the 1970s. In the future its contributions should be used in a flexible manner and the funds already accumulated should be directed towards meeting the needs of the developing countries. He therefore welcomed the initiative of a number of international specialized agencies as well as auxiliary UNDP bodies to make effective use of part of his country's UNDP contribution to implement projects whose executing agencies included UNIDO, UNCTAD, FAO and UNFPA. In the future, his country would endeavour to meet the justified requests of those organizations to reallocate a part of its contribution to projects within UNDP that were implemented by those agencies and to ensure that those funds would be used for projects that were making a clear contribution to the economic development of the developing countries.

44. Concerning the annual report of the Executive Director of UNICEF, entitled The State of the World's Children, 1982-1983, it was gratifying that the majority of UNICEF programmes were focused on children who were most in need of primary health care. In the most threatened areas, infant mortality and morbidity were on the increase, as were the risks run by the children affected by that situation, in particular those under five years. The most valuable projects were those designed to provide simple but effective basic health care to the largest possible number of children, but they did not constitute a long-term solution because they did not eliminate the causes of the almost hopeless situation of young people in the developing countries and merely mitigated its consequences. A lasting solution could be found only by establishing a new and just economic order and ending the exploitation and heavy economic dependence of the developing countries on the industrialized capitalist States. The solution would also require educational and women's training projects in primary health care, nutrition and child care.

45. With regard to the organizational changes in UNICEF's activities, the scope of activities of the Geneva Office should be carefully examined and consideration given to the close co-ordination of certain programmes with governmental and non-governmental organizations situated at Geneva or elsewhere in Europe as well as to less costly operational and financial co-operation with the National Committees of the European countries. He welcomed the response to the appeal of the UNICEF National Committees to its Executive Director concerning the capture of Czechoslovak and Portuguese hostages in Angola, including 21 children ranging from 2 to 15 years of age. One of the functions of UNICEF was to protect the health and lives of children and their mothers placed in jeopardy as a result of military conflict and acts of terrorism. That function should be extended to cover the families of experts working in the developing countries to implement the goals and objectives of the United Nations. His country greatly appreciated the efforts made by the United Nations bodies and organizations, in particular UNICEF, which had led to the release of the women and children who had been taken hostage.

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(Mr. Zapotocky, Czechoslovakia)

46. The medium-term and long-term orientation of UNICEF activities was all the more important since it formed the basis of a better understanding of the role of the Organization in developing countries. Concerning the activities of the World Food Programme, it had already been possible, under agenda item 78, to consider the problems of food as part of international economic co-operation. He too considered that the problem of hunger and malnutrition should be viewed in the broad context of the development process and that no solution was possible from any other perspective. In addition to special economic assistance and relief in disaster and emergency situations, efforts should be centred on the training of specialists in the developing countries who would be capable of finding permanent solutions to food problems in terms of local conditions. His country with its developed agricultural sector offered agricultural development assistance to all interested countries.

47. Mr. Gibson (New Zealand) took the Chair.

48. Miss OSBORNE (Barbados) stressed the vital importance of the technical co-operation provided by the United Nations system to the developing countries, for the least developed of which it often represented a major source of assistance. Her Government was deeply concerned about the effectiveness of the operational activities which it supported financially, because they not only enhanced national development efforts but also made a substantial contribution to the development of human resources and to alleviating the suffering of millions of deprived people. The political will of all parties was therefore essential since, without it, only temporary or partial solutions could be found.

49. With regard to the comprehensive policy review of operational activities, she noted that the effectiveness of the United Nations system in the years ahead would depend to a large extent on the action it took in the priority areas defined by the Director-General. She drew special attention to the need to continue, concurrently with the operational activities in the least developed and other low-income countries, participation in the development programmes of medium-income and high-income developing countries, since the mission of the United Nations was universal (A/38/258, para. 51). While assistance should be directed as a matter of priority to the least developed, it was nevertheless true that a number of developing countries were in dire need of technical assistance. Her country therefore continued to take issue with the fact that, for the allocation of resources, UNDP relied too heavily on the criteria of per capita GNP and population size. For some small island developing countries like those in the Caribbean, the result was often a cutback in the Indicative Planning Figures (IPFs), as was precisely the case during the current programming cycle. Her delegation therefore welcomed the provisions adopted by the Governing Council of UNDP in its decision 83/14, paragraph 1, VI, with a view to minimizing the erosion of the already small IPFs of certain developing countries.

50. Concerning the improvement of evaluation methods, the approach outlined by the Director-General was satisfactory and the efforts envisaged to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the system would be particularly welcome. The analysis of the Joint Inspection Unit was very useful and it was true that the

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(Miss Osborne, Barbados)

Governments of the developing countries had an important role to play. It was also true that administrative expenses should be cut back without jeopardizing the quality of programme delivery. Moreover, better evaluation mechanisms would improve co-ordination among the agencies of the United Nations system with regard to implementation at the country level. Ultimately, the goal should be to increase the flexibility of the system and its responsiveness to the evolving needs of the developing world.

51. With reference to the weakening of support for multilateral development co-operation, a problem which had become critical in the case of UNDP, she expressed the hope that if Governments demonstrated the requisite political will, the measures envisaged in Governing Council decision 83/5 would provide the means to overcome the crisis. Nevertheless, the initiatives envisaged should in no sense override the basic principles of the Consensus of 1970, which should continue to guide the search for solutions to the question of resource mobilization in the short and in the long term. Moreover, although it was true that UNDP would only recover its central role by mobilizing resources on an increasingly predictable, continuous and assured basis, it was also true that an increase in resources was necessary to meet the needs of the developing countries, particularly of the least developed among them.

52. Her country associated itself with those States which were calling on the developed countries to give UNDP greater support. It was also counting on the support of developing countries which, as was known, were making voluntary contributions and shouldering part of the costs through various arrangements. It would not be forgotten that some of them were net contributors.

53. Some of the issues raised by resource mobilization required study in depth, since the proposals put forward by the Director-General on the subject presupposed that Governments would agree on the possibility of adopting new approaches. In that respect, the experience acquired by UNDP along the lines envisaged by decision 83/5 would be valuable and the ideas put forward might be explored from a long-term viewpoint, taking care to respect the principles governing multilateral technical co-operation.

54. Mr. FLEMING (United States of America) said that much of the statement made on the previous day by Mr. Ripert had dealt with the concerns expressed by his delegation during the summer session of the Economic and Social Council in connection with the Director-General's report on operational activities for development. He wished, however, to reiterate some of the points made by his delegation and, in others, to modify its position on the basis of information recently received.

55. Although he appreciated the difficulty of analysing so many diverse elements of the United Nations system in a single document, he considered it unfortunate that there were not more precise statistical data to support various conclusions. In Geneva, his delegation had noted that the report tended to be only a compilation of what had already been discussed in other United Nations forums, particularly in the UNDP Governing Council. His delegation was pleased, however, that the

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(Mr. Fleming, United States)

Director-General, taking into account the discussions in the Economic and Social Council, had recently offered several recommendations on the problems of tied contributions, inter-agency co-ordination and programme effectiveness, which could serve as a basis for the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly when they considered operational activities.

56. Although resource flows were critical factors for the stability and effectiveness of the system and for sustainable development programmes in recipient countries, it was important to give greater attention to the impact of those resources on their beneficiaries in the developing world.

57. The Director-General's report did contain various interesting points which could provide the basis for more detailed discussion within the Committee and the plenary Assembly. United Nations operational programmes in the field of technical assistance were in general reasonably successful and responsive to the needs of developing countries. Nevertheless, it was necessary to begin thinking what the system should look like in the 1990s and the years beyond 2000. It was time to make a thorough review of the mandates of the various operational entities of the system and to determine which functions could be combined or streamlined. There were many options. Most United Nations development agencies showed dedication and professionalism, but he shared the opinion expressed in the report that there was considerable scope for improvement in the allocation of resources and the design, execution and evaluation of programmes. Just as donors could improve their contributions, so could recipient countries use the multilateral assistance they received much more effectively.

58. His delegation had noted during the summer session of the Economic and Social Council that it would be inconsistent for the United Nations system to increase its assistance to the least developed countries and at the same time continue aid to medium-income and high-income countries, given the probability that there would not be significant increases in resources, at least in the short term. It favoured giving increasing priority to least developed countries and believed that the other countries should, within the limits of their capacities, more and more shoulder the financial cost of United Nations programmes. His delegation also strongly supported the central role of UNDP with respect to funding and co-ordination. It believed that specialized agencies, recipient Governments, bilateral donors and United Nations operational agencies should encourage the field co-ordinating role.

59. His delegation was aware that programme managers and recipient countries needed to plan their activities on the basis of reasonably accurate resource projections. Too much time had been devoted to analysing the resource input process as if it were somehow scientific, which was not the case. In fact, in many democratic donor countries such processes were extremely complex undertakings. Although the United States was skeptical that the procedure of intergovernmental consultations on resources adopted by the Governing Council would lead to increased and more predictable contributions, it would participate in order to inject a note of realism. His country could not legally commit itself in advance to maintaining a specific level of contributions in real terms, but would do its best to maintain and increase its voluntary commitments to the United Nations system. That would be

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(Mr. Fleming, United States)

the case in 1984, when such commitments would rise by 16 per cent from the 1983 level. Nevertheless, crocodile tears would continue to be shed over the stagnation of funding and of commitments from major donors. The tears would stream from those who had themselves demonstrated that they were unwilling to give as much as they could. His country continued to be the most important contributor to third-world economic and social development. Since the United Nations development system would never have all the resources it wished and since the tasks to be faced were formidable, discussions must be focused on how best to employ the available assets. The complementarity between technical co-operation and capital assistance was mentioned several times in the report, as were also the Bretton Woods institutions. Nothing was said, however, about how United Nations technical co-operation could be co-ordinated with programmes to attract foreign private investment and to mobilize domestic capital resources.

60. The development of human resources was one of the most important concomitant benefits of United Nations operational activities. The Director-General's report contained several useful suggestions on making the best use of project field staff. In that connection, recipient countries should be doing more to ensure that nationals trained abroad on United Nations scholarships should return to their respective countries and be deployed for the purposes originally intended.

61. His delegation had often underscored the importance of evaluation as a means of improving programme effectiveness and increasing donor confidence. It therefore welcomed the news that improvements in the United Nations evaluation system were under way.

62. The Second Committee and the governing bodies of the development agencies rarely had the opportunity to focus on what developing countries, in concert with multilateral and bilateral assistance agencies, were doing for themselves on the difficult road to development. The record indicated that, in child health, with the co-operation of UNICEF, and in the field of population, with the co-operation of UNFPA, significant progress had been made. While much remained to be done in the latter sector to slow the net rate of increase in the world population, the efforts of UNFPA and the United Nations system were to be applauded, for they were beginning to produce gradual but sure progress in that complex area.

63. UNDP, pursuant to the recent decision of its Governing Council, had established a new central evaluation office. The flow of information on concrete results from UNDP-supported projects was increasingly impressive. The Programme's efforts in the development of managerial and technical skills directly related to public and private capital investment activities had become increasingly vital in helping developing countries to make such investment effective. In addition, many reports indicated that UNDP strategic global and interregional programmes were not only reinforcing efforts at the country level but were also drawing upon country-level operational experience.

64. While noting the fact of project failures, duplication of effort and a host of other problems associated with the difficult task of economic and social development, what his delegation wished to highlight was the need to pay more

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attention to programme impact and effectiveness and to be realistic when making pronouncements on the need for greater predictability of resources. The Second Committee would shortly be discussing the programmes of specific voluntary agencies. The Committee should concentrate its attention on improving the effectiveness and co-ordination of those programmes and on making better use of the resources available, not because efficiency should be regarded as an end in itself but because it was important to be concerned with the impact of the available resources on the development process and, what was more important, on the lives of the poor.

65. Mrs. DORSET (Trinidad and Tobago) said that the economic crisis had translated itself into dwindling support for development institutions and had spelt despair and misery for a vast majority of humankind. There had however been tentative signs at the 1983 United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities that some major donor countries were again prepared to participate in an exercise that was in the interests of all countries. Her delegation would urge other Member States to join that effort.

66. Technical assistance and co-operation had been recognized by several General Assembly resolutions and UNDP Governing Council decisions as a means of promoting self-reliance in developing countries by assisting them to use their resources more efficiently and by enhancing their ability to carry out development activities on their own.

67. Several countries, including a number from the developing world, had taken steps to maintain the real value of their contributions or had increased their contributions in national currency. At the same time, there had been a dramatic growth in programme cost-sharing which would probably exceed \$100 million in 1984. For the developing countries that was indeed a worthy achievement which demonstrated the value they placed on multilateral international economic co-operation.

68. In the Latin American and Caribbean region, the UNDP presence had been catalytic in nature and had provided the infrastructural underpinning for development. Trinidad and Tobago, faced with a small Indicative Planning Figure (IPF) and a reduction in UNDP resources, had found it necessary to finance 75 per cent of the UNDP country programme, representing an increase in the level of cost-sharing for the 1982-1986 cycle of at least 100 per cent over the previous cycle.

69. The efforts of the developing countries themselves were not sufficient, however, and the Administrator of UNDP had already referred to the vast and far-reaching changes in the IPF figures for the 1982-1986 cycle that would be necessary unless there were substantial increases in development resources.

70. Earlier in the year, the Group of 77 had submitted a declaration at Geneva pointing clearly to several areas which needed to be addressed if operational activities were to be supported by resources on an increasingly predictable and assured basis, while maintaining their unique characteristics. In recent years,

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(Mrs. Dorset, Trinidad and Tobago)

several major contributors had tended to attach conditions to the utilization of their contributions. That trend, if it continued, would have serious consequences, the Director-General noted in paragraph 103 of his report (A/38/258). In that regard, her delegation endorsed the view that there was need for a system-wide review by the General Assembly of current practices, based on information provided by the governing bodies of the organizations within the United Nations system.

71. The co-ordination of operational activities by the responsible agencies was another area where there was need for close scrutiny. Inter-agency co-ordination at the country level would ensure the more effective use of assistance. She therefore welcomed the initiatives by organizations within the system to foster coherent programming. Co-ordination must not however be an end in itself but should assist in the evolution of a dynamic system more responsive to the ever-changing priorities of developing countries.

72. On the question of evaluation, her delegation, while supporting evaluation at the centre, felt compelled to echo the position it had stated in the UNDP Governing Council earlier in 1983 that evaluation in the field must be strengthened. Assistance must therefore be provided so that recipient countries could develop their own capability in that area.

73. There was need for rational and optimal utilization of available resources and, as the Group of 77 had correctly pointed out, local procurement must be increased and greater use made of local personnel and equipment. Future reports should address that issue substantively and provide statistical data on the use of such resources in developing countries. The United Nations Development Programme was in the vanguard of the movement against dependence and underdevelopment, and Member States must give it full support to enable it to accomplish its noble task in the interests of all countries.

74. The CHAIRMAN announced that Botswana, Mozambique and Singapore had become co-sponsors of draft resolution A/C.2/38/L.60 and that Guyana, Mozambique, Nicaragua and Thailand had become co-sponsors of draft resolution A/C.2/38/L.66.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.