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Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,  
on Thursday, 12 July 2007, at 10:00 a.m.

President: Mr. JAZAÏRY (Vice-President) (Algeria)

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The Meeting was called to order at 9:35 a.m.

DISCUSSION OF THE OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS  
FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION (*cont.*):

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION (Item 3 on the Agenda) (*cont.*):

- (a) FOLLOW-UP TO POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND THE COUNCIL (*cont.*) (A/62/73-E/200752, A/62/74-E/2007/54, E/2007.CRP.1, E/2007/CRP.3)
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Mr. SHA Zukang (Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs), speaking about the implementation of General Assembly resolution 59/250 on the triennial comprehensive policy review of the operational activities for development of the United Nations system, observed that several factors had considerably altered the development scenario since the resolution was adopted: the adoption in 2005 of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, the emergence of new players (foundations, the private sector, nongovernmental organizations) and the intensification of South-South cooperation.

In his report on the operational activities for development of the United Nations system, the Secretary-General had gauged the effectiveness with which the United Nations system helped developing countries achieve their national development priorities and internationally agreed development goals and he had described the reform currently under way in the United Nations system. The report analysed, in particular, the sustainability of outcomes, the balance struck between the quest for concrete results at the country level and the guarantee to be given to programme countries that they will be able to tap the knowledge and skills of the United Nations agencies, and the adequacy of funding and funding modalities of operational activities.

The report indicated that progress had been made with respect to capacity-building, South-South cooperation, the transition from the relief phase to development activities, gender equality, and evaluation, but that there were still difficulties at the country level with regard to human resources and the coherence and effectiveness of United Nations system activities, as well as with regard to the funding of operational

activities, which contained a growing share of earmarked funds. In 2005, core resources had made up only 43 per cent of contributions.

It was satisfying that the share of non-members of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development in contributions to operational activities had increased as a result of stronger South-South cooperation, and that the share of expenditure allocated to the least developed countries had risen from 30 per cent in 2001 to 40 per cent in 2005.

Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the matter under review was particularly important because the General Assembly was due to proceed at its 72<sup>nd</sup> session to the triennial comprehensive policy review of the operational activities for development of the United Nations system, member countries had received the recommendations of the High-Level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence, and the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) had been apprised of the UNDP Strategic Plan 2008-2011.

The General Assembly was the only body authorized to decide on the direction United Nations operational activities should take. Those activities had to continue to be universal, neutral, multilateral, and freely accepted, they had to continue taking the form of grants, and to respond flexibly to the development needs of the programme countries. They also had to be carried out for the good of the beneficiary countries, at their request, and in line with their own development policies and priorities. In country-level operational activities, partners, the United Nations system, the Bretton Woods institutions and bilateral donors should abide by the principle that it was up to the beneficiary countries to oversee and conduct development strategies.

The triennial review of operational activities should be guided above all by the quest for a greater development role for United Nations agencies and by the need to achieve internationally agreed development goals.

The key issue was still the quantity and quality of the development assistance provided by the United Nations system. Well, the growing imbalance between core and other resources detracted from the coherence of United Nations development programmes, even at the country level. Thus, more than 45 per cent of UNDP disbursements were for governance-related project, compared with only 25 per cent for poverty reduction programmes. More often than not, both multilateral and bilateral assistance ignored national policies and plans and was granted on condition that the contracts resulting from it should go to such and such a company. Moreover, funding for assistance was unpredictable. That being so, the savings achieved by system-wide rationalization efforts should be injected back into United Nations development system activities.

Coherence at the national and international levels also required the participation of the Bretton Woods institutions, if they were represented at the country level, and that of bilateral development partners. The imperative need for coherence in United Nations development system activities also required strengthening regional coordination

mechanisms, particularly in the framework of the role accorded the regional commissions in the documents adopted at the major conferences and summit meetings, along with the strengthening of South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation. The activities had to focus on long-term development issues and promote the strengthening of the national capacities needed to be able to pursue their national priorities and achieve internationally agreed development goals. To that end, the United Nations system had to tap, as much as possible, the available national expertise and techniques, make sure that new technology was transferred to developing countries, facilitate those countries' access to services offered, particularly those of the regional commissions, and, in country-level operational activities, promote exchanges of information regarding best practices.

There should be no restrictions on the ability of national governments to define their priorities and select their development partners, or to decide on the relations they wish to have with United Nations development agencies at the national level. In order for them to be able to achieve internationally agreed development goals, developing countries also had to have access to new and emerging technologies, including information and communication techniques.

The Group of 77 and China were concerned about the excessive emphasis on such issues as human rights, gender equality or humanitarian aid in connection with operational activities. Developing countries construed that as a pretext for attaching new conditions to international development assistance and as a factor causing discrimination and distortions in their national strategies and plans.

Mr. ESTEVES (Portugal), speaking on behalf of the European Union, the candidate countries (Turkey, Croatia, and the former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia), the stabilisation and association process countries and potential candidates (Albania, Montenegro and Serbia), and Iceland, the Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia, said that the upcoming triennial comprehensive policy review of the operational activities for development of the United Nations system afforded an opportunity to deepen the reforms undertaken following the triennial review conducted in 2004. To "deliver as one", it was important to prepare a joint programming instrument and to put in place a joint monitoring and evaluation system at the country level. Furthermore, United Nations programmes had to be rooted in national priorities and make the most of the services and skills available in the system, including those of specialized institutions, whose special assets should be tapped.

The United Nations system had to step up its capacity-building activities, improve monitoring and evaluation, and more clearly define its role in those areas. For that, the development agencies of the United Nations had to make as much use as possible of national project execution mechanisms and the available national expertise and techniques, as a basic rule in carrying out operational activities.

At the 2005 World Summit, the Heads of State and Government had agreed to work on mainstreaming human rights throughout the United Nations system and a large number of United Nations agencies had set about it. It was advisable to strengthen the capacity of country teams to support the member countries that so desired in their efforts

to boost protection of human rights. Gender equality, too, deserved to have greater priority in United Nations agencies, which should acquire specific mechanisms to that effect and be accountable for results.

Resident coordinators were essential for coordinating operational activities for development at the country level and they needed to be vested with greater authority. That presupposed their no longer being solely responsible for UNDP country programmes and it meant that they would be accountable for their activities to all the agencies concerned. That being so, strengthening the resident coordinator system, programme integration, and the establishment of new inter-institutional mechanisms posed certain reporting, supervisory and governance problems that needed to be discussed in the reports and draft resolutions that the General Assembly will be called upon to pronounce, in connection with the triennial review of operational activities.

As regards funding for operational activities, the European Union would work on guaranteeing sufficient and predictable long-term core resources for operational activities and was sympathetic to the idea of a code of conduct in this area. At the country level, the European Union was prepared to envisage more frequent pooling of contributions rather than financing isolated projects and programmes. Finally, since it was a matter of integrated funding of one-office pilot projects, the United Nations agencies should continue to think about ways of transparently disclosing the different sources of financing, even for core resources.

It was essential to achieve complete compatibility among the different United Nations agencies with respect to resource planning, especially as regards human, joint services, and evaluation resources. Efforts aimed at reducing transaction costs and boosting effectiveness should first and foremost benefit the developing countries. There, it would be useful to invoke the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness in the draft resolution on the triennial review of development activities. Finally, simplification and harmonisation were both likely to have an impact on United Nations development cooperation and the resources allocated to it.

Mr. CHAVE (Observer from Switzerland) said that, since the recommendations of the High-Level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence broadly matched the recommendations adopted by the General Assembly in 2004 on the occasion of the triennial comprehensive review of operational activities for development, the role of the Economic and Social Council and of the General Assembly in directing and coordinating operational activities had not changed.

As regards their funding, operational activities for development suffered from the fact that too many disbursed funds were earmarked for predetermined programmes. Furthermore, since contributions were relatively unpredictable and expense-sharing procedures obscure, or even nonexistent, the actions of United Nations agencies were governed less by multilateral agreements than by donor priorities. One solution would be to develop a “good donation” principle based on the following criteria: predictability and quality of funding; announcements of long-term contributions; emphasis on core resources; and a realist approach to expense-sharing. Certain (upper-tranche) middle-

income developing countries, especially those that are net contributors to development assistance, could participate in the implementation of that idea. In addition, it was necessary to provide more incentives to States to contribute to the core resources of United Nations agencies by assuring them that the funds would be used effectively and transparently. As for extra-budgetary contributions, which would continue to be an important component of those agencies' funding, it was worth working out new ways of bringing them into line with budgetary and programme priorities. The High-Level Panel had put forward proposals that should be evaluated, given their potential for mobilising additional resources on a sustainable basis, making programming more coherent, reducing the transaction costs incurred by development partners, and boosting the credibility of the multilateral system.

As regards coherence, Switzerland was pleased at the adoption of the new directives of the United Nations Development Group regarding the joint country assessment and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, even though neither could address all the needs and priorities of partner governments. The joint programmes, which were a logical extension of the framework plans, could help reduce transaction costs for governments and donors, by forcing United Nations agencies to adopt a joint work plan and budget. They also provided an opportunity for non-resident agencies and specialised institutions to participate in programmes with a view to achieving shared goals and made it possible to make better use of their contributions. At the same time, it was necessary to redouble efforts to complete the harmonisation of the agencies' planning cycles and to synchronize them fully with national programming instruments and cycles. It was also desirable to encourage more agencies to delegate more responsibility to their representatives at the country level and to conduct long-term programming in the countries so that specialised institutions could participate fully in the framework plans and make an effective contribution to the realisation of common goals. Finally, despite the progress made, much remained to be done to ensure coherence between framework plans and the strategic frameworks used by the international financial institutions in the countries.

Mr. SAVOSTYANOV (Russian Federation) said that the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities, to be conducted in the light of the recommendations made by the High-Level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence, should continue to be the principal mechanism for developing guidelines for operational activities and that the decisions taken there should lead to the adoption of concrete measures regarding the activities of the funds and programmes. The three-tiered structure of the review rendered it one of the most effective intergovernmental mechanisms, which was why it was worth streamlining it and making it more effective rather than establishing new bodies and institutions. As regards finance, there was no denying that the overall trend was toward a declining share of core resources in the funds administered by United Nations agencies. That meant that the United Nations development agencies had to make more systematic use of resources other than core resources to finance their normative work. The Russian Federation supported measures aimed at strengthening countries' capacities, especially their technical and technological capacities, thanks to South-South cooperation and external assistance. It likewise supported the efforts made to strengthen coherence and coordination at the country level,

while deploring exaggerated criticism of the ineffectiveness and fragmentation of the United Nations development system. Nevertheless, to improve the situation, it favoured a reasonable pooling of United Nations system activities in the recipient countries that, without detracting from the individual identity of each of the agencies concerned or from their independence, would attract more donors. The Delivering as One initiative was undoubtedly a good way to make the United Nations system more coherent, but its viability and effectiveness had yet to be proven. The quest for coherence could also take the form of an improvement of joint programming instruments, such as the framework plans, most of which did not comprehensively address internationally agreed development goals, which were in the remit of the specialised institutions: an arrangement that weakened the overall contribution of the United Nations development system. In addition, it would be advisable to strengthen the resident coordinator system, which should be based on the principles of participation, collegiality, transparency and accountability. There, it would be necessary, in particular, to make an intergovernmental body responsible for overseeing the workings of the system: as the organ that coordinates the activities of the entire United Nations development system, the Economic and Social Council would be an apt choice. Finally, emphasis also had to be placed on strengthening cooperation between the operational funds and programmes and the regional commissions, with a view to achieving a marked improvement in the effectiveness and rational use of the funds in the framework of the initiatives undertaken and in order to convey the image of a more coherent system.

Ms. SMITH (Observer from Australia) said that for her country the top priority in the 2007 triennial comprehensive policy review was to strive to ensure that the United Nations operational system functioned well and led to measurable and measured concrete outcomes geared to the achievement of countries' development goals. While some progress had been made with the mainstreaming of gender equality in the operational activities of the United Nations system, much remained to be done. For the activities of the United Nations agencies to be coherent at the country level, a single framework plan had to be put in place bringing together all the funds, programmes and agencies in a country. It was necessary, too, to encourage the initiatives of some that, for the sake of effectiveness, coherence and better use of resources, adopted a joint framework plan. It was with that in mind that South Africa had embarked on an overall – rather than area-by-area – evaluation of the activities of the United Nations agencies in its territory. The triennial comprehensive review should learn from that evaluation. Moreover, capacity building had to be a priority: enhancing planning, management and outcomes and accountability enabled the ministerial departments involved to improve the implementation and coordination of the national development strategy and external assistance. Furthermore, while progress had been made with the transition from the relief phase to development activities, there was still not enough ownership of the process by stakeholders, and not enough coordination, capability, and resources. Two fundamental goals needed to be examined in the triennial comprehensive review, namely: increased aid effectiveness – in order to lower transaction costs for partners, achieve better development outcomes, and encourage national ownership of programmes – and increased accountability of the system vis-à-vis its supervisory organs, donors, partner governments, and, above all, the populations of developing countries.

Mr. MIYAGAWA (Observer from Japan) considered that discussion of the triennial comprehensive review should focus on the idea of national “ownership” and on people-centred development. Improving the workings of the United Nations development system required strengthening, on the one hand, the joint country assessments and framework plans at the local level and a refocusing of the regional commissions on analytical and normative activities, and, on the other, the resident coordinators system, whose role needed to be clearly defined. Thus, it would be necessary to study how the UNDP could avoid overlaps between its activities and those of other agencies, and, at the same time, to evaluate the eight pilot programmes. In addition, in order to have a significant impact on poverty eradication, the assistance provided to countries had to be accompanied by a strengthening of their capacities; hence the importance of the provisions contained in paragraphs 61 and 64 of the Secretary-General’s report. The triennial comprehensive review should make it possible to develop a South-South cooperation strategy, without which the resources it needed would remain insufficient and unpredictable and information exchanges among the agencies would continue to be very limited. As for gender equality, it would be useful to pay more heed to that factor in the design, implementation and evaluation of projects and programmes in the joint country assessments and framework plans. With respect to the transition from the relief phase to development assistance, it would be necessary to ascertain to what extent and in which areas the United Nations development system could do more to cooperate with the Peacebuilding Commission, and strengthen coordination between the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the UNDP and between the UNDP and other humanitarian and development agencies, especially the World Bank and regional development banks. Although each government was primarily responsible for achieving the Millennium Development Goals, it was necessary to help the State “own” the programmes and, as a result, support local initiatives; hence the need to promote partnerships with civil society, nongovernmental organizations, and other local entities.

Ms. KHARASHUN (Belarus) said that her country supported the proposal aimed at improving coordination among United Nations programmes and funds and was in favour of any mechanism facilitating technology transfers. However, one should be careful about centralising operational activities in a way that undermined the activities proper to each institution and agency. Belarus supported measures adopted by the UNDP Administrator to strengthen the resident coordinators system and bring programmes more into line with national development priorities. With its country programmes, the UNDP was making a very valuable contribution in numerous areas. Nevertheless, regardless of the outcomes of the pilot projects, it was necessary to respect the right of governments to choose whether or not to go along with United Nations coordination mechanisms and necessary to avoid imposing artificial deadlines. Furthermore, pursuant to the statutes governing the programmes and funds, decisions had to be taken that addressed the economic and social obstacles that, in particular, prevented improvements in the lives of women and exposed them to trafficking. That last-mentioned goal was important for Belarus and required strategies and special United Nations-sponsored programmes of action. At the same time, South-South cooperation, which had existed for some time and facilitated social and economic progress, merited support, particularly by ensuring that



the opportunities afforded by the United Nations system were used more coherently and systematically.

Ms. DJAJAPRAWIRA (Indonesia) considered that the long-term viability of development programmes required not just that a country's particular needs be taken into account but also greater control over those programmes by the country itself and strengthening of the country's capacities. In fact, national ownership meant that government had to be given more latitude thanks to increased coordination and coherence of policies and programs. To function properly, the United Nations system needed to be able to rely on sufficient permanent, predictable, and certain resources. As it was, in recent years it had been resources other than core resources (which finance operational activities) that had increased. It was of the utmost importance to ensure coherence at the national level between the United Nations system and the international financial institutions, especially in order to avoid overlapping activities and to make progress toward the attainment of the Millennium Development goals. Given that there was no doubt about the contribution made by South-South cooperation to poverty eradication, nor regarding its complementarity with North-South cooperation, Indonesia called upon the United Nations system to continue its support of such triangular cooperation.

Mr. MOLINA (Observer from Venezuela) said his country had set about strengthening the actions and procedures that represented a true democratisation of global decision-making with respect to South-South cooperation. Developing countries needed, as a matter of urgency, to insist on the establishment of the conditions required for the sustainable development of their populations. In recent years, Venezuela had lent nearly US\$450 million to countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, and provided grants totalling US\$15 million. In the energy sector, it had signed oil agreements. In communications, it had launched Telesur in order to strengthen the plurality of the media. In banking, the Bank of the South had been established, primarily to contribute to the social and economic development of its member states. Venezuela also provided cooperation in the form of grants for African countries. For instance, in 2001 it had disbursed US\$1 million to the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and US\$1 million to the Niger basin sustainable development programme. Apart from that, Venezuela had also contributed US\$12 million in the framework of an economic assistance agreement between Venezuela and the World Food Programme (WFP). Much more still needed to be done to provide the population of the region and of the world the opportunity to live in peace and with respect for social justice.

Ms. RIVINGTON (Canada) hoped that the 2007 General Assembly resolution on operational activities would, to the extent possible, contain goals with precise deadlines and clear benchmarks. While much had been accomplished at the country level, there were various obstacles to more in-depth progress: a lack of uniformity in rules and procedures; the necessity that country teams reposition themselves so as to address countries' changing needs; the lack of adaptation of regional structures and the difficulties encountered by external agencies seeking to contribute effectively to team work at the country level; the need for a change in institutional culture to allow a consolidation of the resident coordinator system, which would turn the coordinators into

the chief interlocutors for governments and effective and impartial team leaders; incomplete adoption by the institutions of the standards set by the United Nations Evaluation Group; and incapacity to guarantee monitoring of allocations and expenditure on gender equality programmes.

The principles set forth in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness were a valuable tool for assessing progress. The advice that the United Nations Evaluation Group would shortly be giving regarding the way to establish points of comparison and evaluate the pilot countries would also be useful for improving future programmes. It was to be hoped that the next report would contain recommendations addressing lacunae with regard to surveillance and governance. It was also important to encourage the United Nations system to develop, implement, and then evaluate a plan of action for thorough mainstreaming of a gender equality perspective throughout the system. It would be a good idea for all United Nations country teams to use a common set of performance indicators in that area. In conclusion, the Canadian delegate seconded the observations made by the Swiss delegation on the coherence of activities, those of the Australian delegation on the need to continue to be guided by the 2004 triennial review, and those of the Indonesian delegation on the need to avoid duplication of donor activities at the country level.

Ms. MOORE (New Zealand) said that while major progress had been made since the 2004 triennial review, there was much still to be done to align the actions undertaken by the United Nations system with those of the countries and to work more effectively with the other development partners, including donors, civil society, and the private sector. The upcoming triennial review would afford an opportunity to improve the workings of the United Nations development system at the country level, especially as regards coherence and impact, greater attention to regional dimensions, reinforcement of the role of resident coordinators, transaction costs reduction, capacity-building and humanitarian work, gender-equality mainstreaming, and evaluation of operational activities. Particular attention should be paid to the need to match the system's strategies and programmes with the national plans and development priorities of the beneficiary countries.

Referring to actions undertaken in the Pacific region, the delegate of New Zealand said that stronger coordination and better targeting of United Nations system interventions had brought results. A joint framework plan had been put together for 14 small developing island states, which took regional and national plans into account. Moreover, the Government of Papua New Guinea had had no reservations whatsoever about supporting a more coherent presence of the United Nations in the country and it had encouraged the preparation of a framework plan.

Mr. BENFREHA (Algeria) said that his delegation subscribed to the declaration made by the Pakistani delegation on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. He underscored the need for operational activities for development to be based on national priorities, for national bodies to participate in those activities, and for the national authorities to continue to be the principal interlocutor vis-à-vis the United Nations

system. It was important – in accordance with the principles set forth in the principal development instruments and in keeping with their mandates – to overcome the problems of project and programme fragmentation and the lack of coherence of the activities and to lower transaction costs by harmonising and simplifying administrative procedures and accounting standards and by pooling the resources available. It was also necessary to address the issue of operational activity funding, including the problem of the dwindling proportion of core resources. There, it was a matter of guaranteeing predictable and stable financing in the framework of long-term funding plans by relying mainly on regular budgets. Resorting to core resources to finance additional fund-raising could compromise implementation of the fundamental mandates assigned to United Nations agencies.

At the same time, the United Nations system had to build South-South cooperation into the operational activity programmes, bearing in mind the specific nature of such cooperation and, in that regard, support implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development by encouraging triangular cooperation. Uniform methods and institutional arrangements were needed for the evaluation of operational activities. Reaffirming its commitment to the neutral, multilateral, universal and voluntary nature of operational activities for development, the Algerian delegation would like to see those principles continue to form the basis for consultations on the coherence of United Nations system activities in order to guarantee constructive cooperation for development.

Mr. BREVIK (Observer from Norway) said that the international community had to redouble its efforts to ensure achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Particularly now, with another triennial review that ought to be based on the recommendations of the High-level Panel on Coherence, the United Nations system had to strengthen the coordination and effectiveness of its activities. It should reposition itself in such a way as to respond better to national demands, while allowing countries to exercise full control over their development process. Norway supported strengthening the system of resident coordinators endowed with new powers, resources and responsibilities, and with a shared framework for management, programming and follow-up.

The Norwegian delegation encouraged the UN Heads of Agency Panel for Coordination to facilitate cooperation and coherence at the national level through the harmonisation of practices and the elimination of structural bottlenecks. Intergovernmental governance capable of responding effectively to national demands and securing national "ownership" of projects required the establishment of mechanisms for supervising and approving the pilot programmes launched under the United Nations "Delivering as One" initiative. It would be a good idea to begin discussing, in the triennial review context, the possibility of establishing a central governance mechanism. In the meantime, it should be possible for the pilot programmes to be reviewed by the Boards of Directors of the funds and programmes at their joint meetings.

Norway, which ranked number one in the world in terms of ODA as a percentage of gross national income, insisted on the need to increase development assistance and, in particular, to provide for incentives aimed at redirecting that assistance toward core, predictable, and long-term financing, knowing full well that the United Nations will raise more core resources if it proves that it is both effective and responsible. For that, it would

be best to build the Paris Declaration into the system by including it in the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities

Mr. MUKHTAR (Sudan) said that the matter under review was vital because it was a question of establishing a joint platform for the cooperation activities of the United Nations system. Sudan was doing all it could to facilitate international cooperation. In particular, it was trying, with the help of the United Nations system, to provide decent work for each of its citizens. The labour law it enacted in 2007 met international standards and Sudan's Human Rights Commission was striving to guarantee decent working conditions. In addition, Sudan had embarked on several social development and institution-building programmes. Nevertheless, poverty was still rampant and still warranted war-time levels of assistance. The Sudanese authorities were ready to cooperate with the United Nations system and with other countries to remove the constraints on development programs. It was important that the evaluation of outcomes and of the performance of those responsible for project and programme execution should be based on shared criteria and that lessons be learned from positive experiences, like South Africa's.

Ms. YANG Ningning (China) said that there was a pressing need to adopt a more systematic approach to activities geared to boosting national capacities and strengthening macroeconomic guidelines. The governments of the beneficiary countries should play a more active coordinating role in the preparation of the joint country assessment and the United Nations Framework Plan for development assistance. It was also necessary to give further thought to the way to establish national implementation models and make greater use of national resources.

As regards funding, the Chinese delegation hoped that the United Nations agencies and institutions would actively try to find a way of improving the structure of resources and to minimise as much as possible the disastrous consequences of extrabudgetary resources. Given that it was a question of reforming operational activities, it was important to take the developing countries' views into account. Instead of establishing an artificial schedule, it would be preferable to proceed by stages in order to develop, through extensive consultations, a reform program that was realistic and acceptable to all. The particular circumstances of each country had to be taken into account, and governments' views should be respected. No recommendation put forward in the High-level Panel's report should be implemented until member countries had reached a consensus on the report as a whole.

To make full use of the immense potential of South-South cooperation, it was necessary to overcome problems such as the lack of a guarantee that resources would be available and the ineffectiveness of coordination and management arrangements. There, the United Nations system could conduct studies aimed at determining priority areas for South-South cooperation and draw up strategic action plans that could provide benchmarks for mutually complementary action by developing countries. In particular, effective steps should be taken to strengthen the role of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation and that of the Special Unit for South-South Cooperation.

Mr. CHANG (United States) recalled that, in the final document of the 2005 World Summit, the Heads of State and of Government had committed to helping developing countries put in place policies and investments conducive to sustained economic growth that encouraged small and medium-sized enterprises, and stimulated employment generation and private sector development. Such a goal should be central to operational activities for development. Instead of talking abstractly about capacity-building, it was necessary to see how the United Nations system could help countries implement programs and investments conducive to sustained economic growth and to establish political and economic institutions that protected the interests and rights of individuals, enterprises and civil society. Likewise, instead of calling endlessly for an increased in the core resources of United Nations institutions, it would be better to make sure that those institutions administered their resources transparently and accounted for the use made of the resources allocated to them, the aim being to ensure that as much as possible of those funds goes to those who need them. In order to achieve results, United Nations institutions had to put in place – as some had begun to do – transparency and accountability mechanisms, as well as robust monitoring, evaluating, auditing and reporting systems that made it possible to see exactly how their resources were used.

Ms. MAIERA (Brazil) stated that, since the beginning of the 1990s, the Brazilian Government had regularly strengthened its technical cooperation with other developing countries, particularly in the framework of bilateral measures, and had shared the technical expertise and successful development experiences acquired over the past 50 years. A number of the lessons Brazil had learnt were being applied by countries facing similar economic and social development difficulties. Brazil had striven to satisfy the growing demand for cooperation, emphasizing those sectors in which it could make a contribution, such as agriculture, education, or health. Projects had also been executed with multilateral organisations and agencies, such as the Organization of American States, the UNDP, FAO, and the World Bank.

In recent years, developing countries had strengthened their political and economic ties. The least developed countries and landlocked nations had been the principal beneficiaries of South-South cooperation. Nevertheless, middle-income countries ought also to be able to continue benefiting from that form of cooperation. In that regard, it was worth mentioning Brazil's cooperation with Cuba in the area of health and its cooperation with China in the space technology sector. Some 30 major projects had also been executed with MERCOSUR partners.

Despite these positive trends, developing countries still had to deal with grave problems resulting from unequal income distribution, which meant that there were still extensive areas of poverty in those countries. That being so, it was important to maintain the specific characteristics of South-South cooperation. It would be unwise to apply the same conceptual approach to such cooperation as that adopted for North-South cooperation, because the political and economic circumstances were quite different.

Mr. FARIA (Angola) said that, despite progress at the global level, there were still high rates of poverty and human misery in numerous regions, especially sub-Saharan Africa, which was lagging behind with respect to achievement of development goals.

The Angolan Government was of the opinion that the United Nations system should focus its efforts on supporting national poverty reduction strategies in order to make actions taken in the field more effective. Operational activities needed to be conducted as a function of national priorities. It was true that States were responsible for social development, but it would be impossible to achieve the established goals without combining those national efforts with the collective efforts of the international community, which entailed strengthening global partnerships.

The Government of Angola had benefited from an upsurge in assistance for its reconstruction, particularly from donors such as Brazil, China, and other countries of the South. Angola was one of the countries benefiting most from South-South cooperation. Such cooperation was the key to accelerating the development of, and the volume of assistance for, developing countries, especially the least developed, so that they could achieve internationally agreed development goals. However, it should not replace North-South cooperation, but rather complement it and other more conventional forms of development assistance.

Mr. BAGCHI (India) recalled that the United Nations system conducted a very wide range of development activities through 40 funds, programmes and agencies. In his report regarding the triennial policy review of the United Nations system's operational activities for development, the Secretary-General had provided useful analysis of overall trends in the financial resources allocated to the United Nations system for development, and of the predictability and reliability of its funding. He had pointed, however, to several worrying factors. There was an imbalance between core and other resources, as the latter had increased. The overall increase in resources was not enough to cover the costs of the new intergovernmental mandates. In addition, it was necessary to distinguish between resources earmarked for humanitarian activities and those allocated for long-term cooperation for development, because a major share of the funding for operational activities was assigned to humanitarian assistance. Nor was the report reassuring regarding transaction cost reduction and cost recovery. Those issues should be examined in intergovernmental discussions of the United Nations development system.

The Secretary-General had indicated in his report that the United Nations system could contribute significantly to capacity-building in developing countries, by making available a huge range of technical skills and numerous best practices. Some progress had been made in that area and United Nations institutions were now more conscious of the need to recruit national personnel and to tap the skills of national institutions.

India was a firm supporter of the South-South cooperation which was currently expanding and building contributions from developed countries into triangular partnerships. It was, however, important to ensure that that cooperation did not substitute for North-South cooperation.

Much had been done to further gender equality, but it appeared that the United Nations needed to redouble its efforts to achieve parity among its own personnel, particularly as regards senior management positions. On this subject, India would like to

see more extensive data on the representation of women from developing countries at the highest levels of responsibility.

Significant progress had been made with strengthening the coherence of the activities undertaken by the United Nations system for development and programme evaluation capacities. India was in favour of systematic and regular evaluation of programme execution, including the impact of the reforms on transaction costs, and of the difficulties in accounting for activities in the field, as well as actions undertaken by the beneficiary countries.

Ms. SAPINHO PIRES (Cape Verde islands) said that the United Nations system had to harmonise its operational activities in such a way as to address more closely the policies and priorities of developing countries. To that end, it had to strengthen coherence and synergies, while avoiding overlapping. The Cape Verde islands supported the current reform process. It was clear that the system had evolved and had adapted to developing countries' new expectations, but much remained to be done. The country was convinced that more coherent implementation of the "Delivering as One" strategy would enable the United Nations to pay greater heed to national priorities and to have a greater impact on other development partners in the quest to attain the Millennium Development Goals.

The Cape Verde islands had hosted the first Joint Office for implementing the triennial comprehensive policy review, which aimed at introducing harmonisation and simplification measures to bring about more integrated programme delivery and to achieve a significant reduction of the administrative burden of the organisations that prepare and implement operational activities and that of their partners. Overall, the Office was deemed to be useful for development because it provided a unified presence of the funds and programmes. Transaction costs and administrative expenses could be reduced, but the decision-making hierarchy needed to be better defined. The issue of accountability within the United Nations needed to be resolved as a matter of priority by clarifying the role of the regional organs vis-à-vis headquarters and by ensuring that changes made at the national level were reflected at the regional level and at headquarters.

It was worth recalling that national governments' appropriation of their development strategies and capacity building with the help of cooperation partners were the mainstays for successful development in the countries of the South.

Mr. GRAISSE (Senior Deputy Executive Director of the World Food Programme – WFP) said that the WFP had a dual objective because it was responsible for addressing both humanitarian crises and long-term development issues, as well as the transition between the two phases, making the most of the modest resources at its disposal and coordinating in such a way as to simplify programme delivery and achieve better targeted outcomes.

In 2006, the WFP had been able to feed nearly 90 million people, more than two-thirds of them women and children. These emergency, extended relief and rehabilitation activities addressed immediate needs while at the same time emphasizing long-term development outcomes. They accounted for 80 per cent of the Programme's expenditure, which had totalled US\$3 billion last year. In all areas, the WFP's operational activities relied on results-oriented partnerships.

The 2004 triennial comprehensive policy review had made considerable progress possible by underscoring the links between investment in development and the transition to development as well as the part played by manager teams and partnerships at the national and regional levels. As for the upcoming triennial policy review for 2008-2010, the WFP wished to make the following observations: (i) It was necessary to take note of the progress made in order to respond to the needs of countries and regions and to reduce the extent of hunger and poverty in the world; (ii) It would be useful to commit to guaranteeing greater predictability and viability of the voluntary contributions disbursed for the operational activities of the United Nations system for development by focusing on increasing non-earmarked resources. Like numerous other United Nations agencies, the WFP did not have access to so-called core resources; (iii) The WFP recognized the importance of capacity-building activities, but the recommendations to that effect should not result in less importance being attached to the role of the United Nations in furnishing direct operational assistance to vulnerable populations; (iv) The WFP recommended persuading donors to lend more support to innovative mechanisms for funding the transition from the relief phase to development activities; (v) The WFP considered that the United Nations country teams and agencies were already encountering numerous difficulties because of the existence of two parallel processes aimed at boosting coherence at the national level, namely the approach based on the Joint offices referred to in General Assembly resolution 59/250 and the "Delivering as One" pilot projects proposed by the Secretary-General following the report of the High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence. It was essential that the upcoming triennial policy review clearly indicate how those two processes could go hand in hand in order to be able to reach a consensus on that subject in the General Assembly that might serve as a guideline for United Nations agencies and country teams.

b) Reports of the Executive Boards of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Children's Fund, and the World Food Programme (WFP) (*cont.*) (E/2006/34/Rev.1-E/ICEF/2006/5/Rev.1, E/2006/35, E/2007/5, E/2007/6-E/ICEF/2007/3, E/2007/14, E/2007/34 (Part 1)-E/ICEF/2007/7 (Part 1), E/2007/34 (Part 1)/Add.1-E/ICEF/2007/7 (Part 1)/Add.1, E/2007/36, E/2007/L.11, DP/2007/16, DOP/2007/40.

The PRESIDENT drew the Council's attention to document E/2007/36, entitled "Report of the Executive Board of the World Food Programme on its first and second regular sessions and its annual session of 2006." The first chapter of that document contained proposed amendments to WFP's General Regulations.



There being no objection, the President considered that the Council approved the proposed amendments to those Regulations, as set forth in document E/2007/36, and wished to recommend their adoption to the General Assembly.

*It was so decided.*

The President said that, by way of conclusion, he wished to revisit certain topics that had arisen during the discussions. First of all, all participants had agreed on saying that the United Nations system had a very special contribution to make in the field of development and in that respect it enjoyed the trust of its partners at the global, regional and national levels. Second, the principle of country ownership and control of projects should continue to be at the very heart of cooperation for development, not just at the planning stage, but also during implementation; and special emphasis should be placed on programme delivery at the national level. Third, capacity-building had benefited a wide range of institutions, including civil society and the productive sector. Fourth, the coherence and effectiveness of the United Nations system needed further strengthening. In that regard, it was necessary to achieve better control and evaluation of outcomes, especially with respect to the impact of operational activities. It was therefore necessary to reinforce independent evaluation mechanisms in the United Nations system and in the beneficiary countries. Fifth, regionalisation should provide a more effective way of achieving established goals. Indeed, numerous development issues were transnational or could be solved thanks to intraregional cooperation. Sixth, the United Nations system should endow itself with greater resources to be able to support the transition between relief operations, reconstruction and development. Finally, as regards the resources of the United Nations system, the funds, programmes and specialised institutions could only respond to develop countries' needs and priorities if they had sufficient and predictable resources at their disposal. Core resources were still the mainstay of the funding system, and other resources should be envisaged for the long term and be more predictable, so as to permit greater flexibility and better targeting of activities. In addition, the discussions had shown the importance and impact of the triennial policy review, which both oriented the activities of the United Nations system for development and made it possible to measure the progress made.

*The meeting was closed at 1:10 p.m.*