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OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT: OPERATIONAL  
ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

Bolivia\*: draft resolution

Operational activities for development  
of the United Nations system

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 2688 (XXV) of 11 December 1970, 3362 (S-VII) of 16 September 1975, 32/197 of 20 December 1977, 41/171 of 5 December 1986, 42/196 of 11 December 1987, 43/199 of 20 December 1988 and 44/211 of 22 December 1989,

Emphasizing the need for a co-ordinated and prompt implementation of its resolution 44/211 by all organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, on the basis of a three-year schedule, taking into account the linkages and interrelationship among issues, especially in the areas of the national execution modality, programming, decentralization, and simplification, harmonization and adaptation of rules and procedures,

Recalling its resolution S-18/3 of 1 May 1990, containing the Declaration on International Economic Co-operation, in particular the Revitalization of Economic Growth and Development of the Developing Countries,

Conscious of the objectives and priorities identified in the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade, 1/

\* On behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77.

1/ Resolution 45/\_\_\_.

Welcoming the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children and the Plan of Action for Implementing the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children in the 1990s, adopted by the World Summit for Children, held in New York on 30 September 1990, 2/

Recognizing the importance of the Programme of Action for the least developed countries for the 1990s, adopted by the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries held at Paris in September 1990, and stressing the need for the United Nations development system to implement urgently the relevant measures contained therein,

Reaffirming the exclusive responsibility of the Governments of recipient countries to formulate their multisector and subsector strategies, which should also be used as a frame of reference for the programming of resources received from the United Nations system, and, in this context, stressing the need to remove structural obstacles in the processes and procedures of the United Nations system to enable the recipient Governments to exercise full responsibility in determining their priorities,

Reaffirming also that the fundamental characteristics of the operational activities for development of the United Nations system should be, inter alia, their universality, their voluntary and grant nature, their neutrality and multilateralism, and their ability to respond to the needs of the developing countries in a flexible manner, and that the operational activities of the United Nations system are carried out for the benefit of the developing countries, at the request of those countries and in accordance with their own policies and priorities for development,

Aware of the acute problems of island and land-locked developing countries and their particular needs for development to overcome their economic difficulties,

Recalling the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990 3/ and recognizing the need for successor arrangements beyond 1990,

Recalling also its resolution 42/231 of 12 May 1988 on the Special Plan of Economic Co-operation for Central America,

Recognizing that the 1980s have been marked by the longest period of sustained economic growth in the developed countries and the continued deterioration of socio-economic conditions in the developing countries,

Concerned that multilateral resources for official development assistance, in particular those resources channelled through the United Nations system, are

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2/ A/45/625, annex.

3/ Resolution S-13/2, annex.

growing at a slower pace than the overall official development assistance, and that the official development assistance as a percentage of the gross national product of developed countries has been falling,

Stressing the consequent need for a substantial increase in resources for operational activities for development on a predictable, continuous and assured basis, commensurate with the increasing needs of all developing countries, and emphasizing the special needs of the least developed countries,

Recalling the role of the United Nations Development Programme as the central funding mechanism for technical co-operation in the United Nations system, the full potential of which has not yet been realized,

Stressing that resources channelled through trust funds should be additional to programme resources,

Emphasizing the need to increase and strengthen the promotion and implementation of technical co-operation among developing countries on a priority basis, through the rapid and full implementation of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries, 4/ in order to enhance the capacities and collective self-reliance of developing countries,

Taking note of the decisions adopted by the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme at its thirty-seventh session, on the fifth programming cycle, 5/ on elements of a funding strategy for the United Nations Development Programme, 6/ on agency support costs 7/ and on national execution, 8/

Reaffirming that national execution and the full utilization of national capacities would contribute to ensuring that programmes and projects are managed in an integrated manner and to promoting their long-term sustainability and wider impact on the development process,

Recalling the themes and objectives of the operational activities of the United Nations system, including those identified in paragraphs 3 to 8 of its

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4/ Report of the United Nations Conference on Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries, Buenos Aires, 30 August-12 September 1978 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.78.II.A.11 and corrigendum), chap. I.

5/ Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1990, Supplement No. 9 (E/1990/29), annex I, decision 90/34.

6/ Ibid., decision 90/14.

7/ Ibid., decision 90/26.

8/ Ibid., decision 90/21.

resolution 44/211 and in decisions 90/14 concerning elements of a funding strategy and 90/34 on the fifth programming cycle, adopted by the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme, and stressing that the themes and objectives identified therein should in no way limit the prerogative of each recipient country to use United Nations assistance in the areas it chooses in accordance with its national priorities and objectives and local, cultural and socio-economic realities,

Taking into account the difficulties that many developing countries have been facing in recent years in meeting their counterpart financial obligations under technical assistance programmes and projects of the United Nations system,

1. Takes note of the report of the Director General for Development and International Economic Co-operation on operational activities for development of the United Nations system, including the response of the United Nations development system, and a synthesized summary of views of some Governments on the implementation of its resolution 44/211; 9/

2. Calls upon the international community, in particular donor countries, for a real and significant increase in resources for operational activities for development on a continuous, predictable and assured basis, and urges all countries to increase their voluntary contributions for operational activities for development;

3. Reaffirms the need for priority allocation of grant resources to programmes and projects in low-income countries, particularly the least developed countries;

4. Affirms that there should be a significant increase, in real terms, in the grant resources allocated to each developing country for operational activities, unless a significant increase, in real terms, in the per capita income of a country should justify otherwise;

5. Urges continued action by the governing bodies of the United Nations development agencies in 1991 to enhance national execution of United Nations-assisted programmes and projects;

6. Requests the Director General to include in his report to the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session proposals for developing clear system-wide guidelines for national execution on concrete measures designed to expedite the process of national execution in all United Nations-assisted programmes and projects, with a view to strengthening national capacities, taking into account the following elements:

(a) The crucial importance of simplifying the rules and procedures for national execution and their adaptation to the procedures of the recipient Government so as to reduce the administrative burden on Governments and on the

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9/ A/45/273-E/1990/85 and Corr.1 and Add.1-3 and Corr.1 and Add.4-5.

field offices of the United Nations Development Programme, and to avoid unnecessary delays in the appraisal, approval, monitoring and evaluation of programmes and projects;

(b) The need to ensure that the shift towards national execution reorients the human and technical capacities of the specialized agencies and other relevant bodies of the United Nations system away from the administrative burdens of the recruitment of experts, the procurement of equipment and the award of fellowships and towards a focus on the provision of relevant technical advice and monitoring, as well as on global research, analysis and policy functions;

(c) The need for United Nations agencies to localize, at the country level, information on data bases and rosters on sources of equipment, experts and training/educational institutions, including the data base for technical co-operation among developing countries (INRES), so as to facilitate the assumption by Governments of the responsibility for executing programmes and projects;

(d) The need to take concrete action to strengthen national units in charge of technical assistance and training institutions to enable Governments, inter alia, to design, manage, monitor and evaluate programmes and projects;

(e) The need for United Nations Development Programme field offices to be country specific and flexible in order to provide transitional assistance to Governments that wish to undertake national execution but that have not yet built up the required national management capacities;

(f) The importance of giving sufficient financial incentives, including incentives for technical support, through, inter alia, the agency support cost arrangements, to assist developing countries to move towards national execution;

7. Reiterates that the recipient Governments have the sole responsibility for the co-ordination and programming of external assistance and the principal responsibility for its design and management and that the exercise of those responsibilities is crucial to the optimal use of external assistance and to the strengthening and utilization of national capacity;

8. Emphasizes that, to enable Governments to design, co-ordinate and effectively programme United Nations assistance on the basis of their multisectoral, sectoral and subsectoral strategies, the following measures need to be undertaken:

(a) Urgent implementation of paragraph 17 (c) of its resolution 44/211, which concerns the harmonization of the programming cycles of all United Nations funding agencies and their adaptation to the planning periods of recipient Governments;

(b) Integration of non-emergency food aid from the World Food Programme with funds provided by the organizations of the United Nations by ensuring that the World Food Programme Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes and the Council of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations approves resources on the basis of a programme rather than a project-by-project approach;

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(c) Reliance on national institutions and capacities for data collection, analysis and formulation and assessment of national programmes, with the United Nations development system providing technical advice, where necessary, including high-quality data/information on development experience within the context of technical co-operation among developing countries;

(d) Provision of resources by the United Nations funding agencies, including the trust fund resources of the specialized agencies and the funds administered by the United Nations Development Programme on the basis of the strategies of the recipient Government, which would serve as frames of reference for the programming of resources from the United Nations development system in an integrated manner;

(e) Co-ordinated review of rules, procedures and formats governing the appraisal, formulation, approval, procurement, reporting, monitoring and evaluation of programmes and projects, with a view to promoting a programme approach and facilitating national execution;

(f) Uniform and appropriate decentralization of authority to the country level;

(g) Assisting recipient countries in building and strengthening the capacities of units in charge of technical assistance to enable Governments to exercise fully their responsibility for managing and programming United Nations development system resources;

9. Takes note of the agreement in principle of the Joint Consultative Group on Policy to harmonize its programming cycles with national planning and budget cycles, and calls upon the Group to intensify its efforts in this direction;

10. Requests the Director-General in co-operation with the executive heads of the organizations of the United Nations development system, through their respective governing bodies, to institute greater country focus in their activities, which would improve efficiency and effectiveness and facilitate the maximum utilization and strengthening of national execution; this would require a redefinition of the roles, composition and range of skills available at their headquarters and in country offices, involving, inter alia, a better balance between technical expertise and administrative support staff at the country level, according to the specific needs of each recipient country, with agency headquarters providing support to the country offices through selective intervention;

11. Takes note of the action taken by the Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund and the Governing Councils of the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Population Fund in 1990 on decentralization in the context of the implementation of its resolution 44/211, and requests the governing bodies of the United Nations development system and the executive heads of the organizations concerned to delegate full authority to country offices, in keeping with the requirements of financial accountability, to make decisions in the following vital areas:

(a) Procurement, awarding of fellowships and hiring of experts;

- (b) Negotiating details of project agreements;
- (c) Reviewing disbursements on a regular basis;
- (d) Reallocating funds between programmes and projects within the limits set by the country programme;
- (e) Authorizing reimbursements of eligible expenses incurred by recipients;
- (f) Making changes in the scope and design of individual projects, as required;

12. Also requests the governing bodies of the United Nations development system and the executive heads of the organizations concerned to develop criteria for the programme audit function to ensure greater impact and the long-term sustainability of programmes;

13. Notes with appreciation the decision of the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme on successor arrangements for agency support costs, 10/ and calls upon the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, in co-operation with the executive heads of the organizations of the United Nations system to make concrete proposals to enable the Governing Council to take a decision on outstanding issues in 1991;

14. Stresses the need, in the implementation of operational activities, to increase substantially the procurement of equipment and services, hiring of experts and utilization of the training facilities available in developing countries in order to promote and strengthen collective self-reliance among them;

15. Requests the Secretary-General to strengthen the Office of the Director-General, taking into account the need for equitable geographical distribution, to ensure adequate system-wide follow-up, monitoring and co-ordination of the implementation process on the basis of a consistent set of agreed guidelines;

16. Requests the United Nations development system, in particular the United Nations funding agencies, to continue to show maximum flexibility to recipient countries facing financial difficulties in meeting their counterpart financial contributions for ongoing projects;

17. Takes note of the three-year schedule for the implementation of the provisions of its resolution 44/211, and requests the Director-General to continue to ensure implementation of the provisions of that resolution and of the present resolution, and to submit a report to the Assembly at its forty-sixth session, through the Economic and Social Council.

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10/ Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1990, Supplement No. 9 (E/1990/29), annex I, decision 90/26.