



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 30th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. AL-ASHTAL (Democratic Yemen)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 80: OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT (continued) (A/41/3, 185, 254, 341 and Corr.1, 356, 461 and Corr.1, 667, 674)

- (a) OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM: REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/41/350 and Add.1, 374 and Add.1-3, 424, 776 and Corr.1)
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1. Mr. XIE Qimei (Under-Secretary-General for Technical Co-operation for Development) said that the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development was closely studying problems related to coherence of action, programme effectiveness, stabilization of resources and international co-operation. In general, the vast majority of Member States had recognized the Secretariat's important role in system-wide operational activities. However, questions had occasionally been raised about methods of financing.

The resources of the Department came from the regular budget and extra-budgetary income. They were used for a wide range of activities. If financing were to be provided solely by voluntary contributions - as advocated by some - assistance to developing countries would necessarily have to be reduced and the distribution of costs would be more regressive.

3. The United Nations regular technical co-operation programme was also a source of controversy. It was, however, not unique to the Secretariat. Practically all specialized agencies and other United Nations organizations had similar programmes, financed in part from their regular budgets. Indeed, resources provided to the United Nations programme seemed relatively modest compared with their importance. That form of assistance had proved to be catalytic in the generation of new ideas and in encouraging the transfer of technical know-how. Contributions from the regular budget also helped to provide a minimum amount of technical assistance to developing countries and, above all, they represented a reaffirmation of collective responsibility with regard to technical co-operation.

4. The aforementioned objections should not cloud the real issues. Duplication of operational activities must especially be avoided. Notwithstanding the consensus on the need to separate funding and executing functions, the governing bodies of funding agencies had given them mandates for the execution of some projects. That practice tended to complicate the co-ordination of activities at the national level and, in general, injected an element of uncertainty into the system.

(Mr. Xie Qimei)

5. The Department had had to cut some 179 posts since 1983. It had continued to hold down costs, although its responsibilities had become increasingly heavy. As a result, output per staff member had risen considerably. However, the question of cost-effectiveness would continue to receive the necessary attention.
6. An effort must be made to implement fully General Assembly resolution 32/197, which called for, inter alia, the clustering of all operational activities in the Department. That would allow for a more unified approach in substantive support to project activities, better management of resources and greater cost-effectiveness. Strengthening of intergovernmental machinery and a more active role taken by the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly would also help to promote coherence in mandates and better management and control of operational activities by intergovernmental bodies.
7. Mr. CHEKAI (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that operational activities for development should help to promote the restructuring of international economic relations on a fairer and more democratic basis, attain the objectives of the International Development Strategy for the 1980s and encourage economic and social progress in the developing countries within the framework of an independent national economy.
8. The Soviet Union provided considerable multilateral assistance to developing countries; in 1985, it amounted to a total of 1.5 per cent of its gross national product, with 0.22 per cent for the least developed countries, or an increase, respectively, of 7.5 per cent and nearly 30 per cent in one year. The Soviet contribution to operational activities represented one aspect of that assistance. In concrete terms, the Soviet Union had pledged to increase by one third its voluntary contributions to UNDP, UNICEF and the United Nations Industrial Development Fund at the recently held Pledging Conference.
9. Certain factors were obstructing the economic programmes of the United Nations, in particular the international tensions and the arms race being encouraged by some Western circles, the repercussions of the crisis in the world capitalist economy and the neo-colonialist policy of the developed capitalist States. Those States sought to use international organizations to exploit the natural and human resources of developing countries. That trend was increasingly evident in the United Nations. On the whole, although it reaffirmed the principle of universality, the report on the operational activities of the United Nations system (A/41/350) reflected the views of the Western countries. It recommended the strengthening of ties with certain funding institutions which were entirely controlled by the major capitalist countries, the expansion of the private sector and a curtailment of measures designed to control the negative aspects of transnational activities. All of that ran counter to Economic and Social Council resolution 1983/61 and numerous other decisions.
10. In the context of operational activities, assistance to developing countries for the development of human resources was very important. It should include all aspects of the question, in particular the "brain drain", the training of local personnel, the exchange of skilled personnel between developing countries and the use of foreign specialists in vocational training.

(Mr. Chekai, USSR)

11. Co-ordination played an important role; to be of the most benefit, it should, however, be carried out by the recipient countries, as had been agreed, inter alia, in the 1970 consensus. The co-ordination function of UNDP should be compatible with the functions of other United Nations agencies and limited to the technical co-operation provided by the United Nations. Moreover, direct interventions should serve essentially to strengthen the co-ordination capabilities of Governments at their express request. Several Western countries were insisting that co-ordination should extend to all activities relating to technical co-operation, including bilateral activities. Such an approach would lead to interference in the internal affairs of the receiving countries.

12. Technical co-operation for development held an increasingly important place in operational activities. Such co-operation could be developed only on the basis of a radical reform of the economic and social structures of the developing countries. It could then be a tool of progress towards the economic independence and development of those countries. In that regard, it could be useful to take advantage of the experience gained by the socialist States in the framework of co-operation within the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance or with developing countries.

13. His Government strongly supported the activities of the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development. The volume of resources allocated to operational activities had recently declined as a result of internal restructuring. It was regrettable that the Department was recruiting an increasing number of short-term consultants and making less use of expert services for technical assistance projects. It was also regrettable that the principle of equitable geographical distribution was not respected in concluding and awarding contracts for UNDP projects, which was a problem that had been raised in the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions submitted at the fortieth session. In addition, his delegation reaffirmed its position of principle on technical assistance within the United Nations system, namely, that it should be financed solely on the basis of voluntary contributions.

14. His Government would continue to participate in operational activities by providing assistance in the following areas: manpower training in developing countries, the provision of equipment, the sending of specialists and sub-contracting. Unfortunately, Soviet proposals had not always received the attention that they deserved.

15. The Soviet Union regularly organized courses at the University of Moscow on behalf of UNFPA. It was regrettable that the United States was attempting to use blackmail in its relations with the Fund.

16. The USSR made large contributions to UNICEF and was prepared to participate more fully in its activities especially since the organization respected the principles set forth by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, in particular, the right of the beneficiary countries to set priorities for programmes and determine the means of implementing them. His delegation also

(Mr. Chekai, USSR)

- endorsed the decision taken by UNICEF in April 1985 to encourage Member States to reaffirm their commitment to activities on behalf of children, including the immunization campaign, but that should not result in neglect of the conventional areas of activity (food and nutrition, water supply, education, health care).
17. His Government understood the concerns of the developing countries which were seeking new means of financing to make their operational activities more effective. The most realistic solution would be to promote disarmament and reduce military expenditures. In that connection, all United Nations agencies must develop specific measures to implement General Assembly resolution 38/188 J concerning the contribution of the United Nations system to disarmament.
18. Mr. FERM (Sweden), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, said that they attached great importance to multilateral assistance, since it was neutral and universal and made it possible to confront particularly difficult circumstances, especially in Africa. The crisis generated in southern Africa by the apartheid régime might require large-scale assistance by the international community. The United Nations system had an important role to play in that regard in supporting the efforts of the front-line States and the South African Development Co-ordination Conference. Operational activities should receive high priority and multilateral co-operation for that region should be developed.
19. The Nordic countries had already pointed to the discrepancy between the five-year planning cycles of UNDP and the one-year commitments on the part of donors. Countries had different budgetary procedures, but it should be possible to make indicative multi-year pledges to facilitate planning activities. The annual pledging system would not be such a serious problem if the contributions remained relatively stable. The recent drastic cuts in the United States contribution demonstrated that they were not. Moreover, the best way to avoid sudden disruptions in the financial flows would be to obtain fairly large contributions from an increased number of donors and ensure better burden-sharing, particularly among the industrialized countries.
20. The Nordic countries approved the new UNDP procedures for the formulation and examination of programmes and projects. More active participation of the Member States in programming discussions within the Governing Council and the Working Group of the Committee of the Whole was also an important reform, which would lead to an increased sense of responsibility and, it was to be hoped, to increased contributions to UNDP.
21. The Nordic countries were deeply concerned by the decision of the United States Government not to contribute to the United Nations Fund for Population Activities in 1986. That decision would have immediate consequences on the Fund's planning and programming activities and might, in a longer perspective, seriously weaken multilateral co-operation. According to the Fund's estimates, there was a risk that, in the near future, the gap between requests for assistance and the financial resources available to meet them would widen. Given that situation, it was essential to concentrate on core activities at the country level, such as

(Mr. Ferm, Sweden)

family planning, maternal and child health, education and communication, basic data collection and population policy planning. There was at present no scope for an expansion of the mandate of UNFPA. Instead, the activities within the existing mandate must be consolidated and co-ordination and co-operation must be further increased. All the same, financial constraints could have a positive impact: the Nordic countries would closely follow the restructuring under way at UNFPA, and noted with satisfaction that sub-Saharan Africa continued to receive priority attention.

22. UNICEF had changed considerably since its inception. It was now concentrating on the Child Survival and Development Revolution. The Nordic countries supported that strategy as well as the immunization campaign launched by UNICEF in co-operation with WHO and Governments. However, a balanced and broad approach to children's needs was essential. It was also important to build up a strong infrastructure for primary health care. UNICEF was overemphasizing the more "visible" of its activities. The mid-term review of the Child Survival and Development Revolution and the discussion at the 1987 meeting of the Executive Board on balancing programme priorities should make it possible to make necessary adjustments. The Nordic countries were also looking forward to a discussion in the Executive Board on administrative and budgetary questions.

23. Another important role of UNICEF concerned advocacy. UNICEF should be commended for its efforts in showing the world community what the United Nations could do. However, there was one pitfall to be avoided: too frequent involvement of UNICEF in fund-raising events of a spectacular nature might tax the endurance of its staff as well as of the national committees.

24. The World Food Programme had achieved impressive results in the context of the African food crisis. The Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes had recently considered a comprehensive report reviewing the management and organization of WFP, whose policy of transparency was highly commendable. One of the major recommendations in that report was designed to ensure a better interface between development and emergency work. Such an approach was of primordial importance, especially in Africa. Lastly, the Nordic countries wished to underline the need for realism in the setting of WFP pledging targets.

25. Member States should give priority attention to the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women as an important element in their future economic and social development. Women's participation in the development process had to be guaranteed at all levels. The Nordic countries were therefore in favour of strengthening activities at the country level in accordance with the proposal of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation. Moreover, involvement by women was essential from the planning stage, and the organizations should take that need into account.

26. While noting with satisfaction the positive outcome of the recent Pledging Conference, the Nordic countries also noted that the bulk of the funds had been pledged by a small number of countries. The need for increased resources called for more equitable burden-sharing.

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27. Mr. BAI Xinji (China) said that his country had always been an active and reliable partner in the United Nations system's operational activities for development. China's recently pledged contribution for operational activities represented an increase of 8 per cent in terms of United States dollars over that of the previous year.
28. Given the diversity of situations existing in different developing countries, China was glad to see that in the past year co-ordination of operational activities within the system had been strengthened and the functions and effectiveness of round-table conferences improved, as also had the quality and delivery rate of UNDP projects. It was to be hoped that efforts towards those ends would continue in the future.
29. In his delegation's view, the development of human resources was a decisive factor for social and economic development as well as for scientific and technological advancement in every country. Only when the great mass of the population had received a basic education could a nation's labour force adapt successfully to technological change, and only then could higher education become meaningful. China appreciated UNDP's unique role in the development of human resources and hoped that activities in that field would be maintained. UNDP could count on the Chinese Government's close and effective co-operation.
30. The problem of the accelerated growth of the world population was extremely serious; if the developing countries failed to solve it in a satisfactory manner, they would never succeed in freeing themselves from poverty and underdevelopment. In drawing attention to its Government's efforts in that respect, his delegation was regretfully obliged to note that a certain country, for domestic political reasons, had persistently attacked China's population policy, interfered in China's internal affairs and attempted to change the mandate and orientation of UNFPA. Such an attitude not only ran counter to the resolutions of the General Assembly but also violated the norms of international law. China had no intention of changing its population policy, which had achieved striking successes and won the international community's support. His Government highly appreciated the role of UNFPA, and would endeavour to strengthen its co-operation with the Fund.
31. Children represented the future of mankind, but 120 million of them were now receiving no education; in many developing countries, especially the least developed ones, children were also suffering from malnutrition. The Chinese Government therefore welcomed the outstanding work of UNICEF thanks to which millions of children were rescued every year from the brink of death, and was ready to join the Governments and social agencies of other countries in making further efforts to ensure the healthy growth of children.
32. Increased financial resources were an essential prerequisite for carrying out operational activities for development. While there had been a very slight increase in the total amount pledged, in terms of real value it was far from meeting the target set by the UNDP Governing Council at its thirty-second session.

(Mr. Bai Xinji, China)

33. In conclusion, he expressed his delegation's hope that financial resources for operational activities for development would be continuously and steadily increased, thereby contributing to the social and economic development of the developing countries and the prosperity of the world economy.

34. Mr. SOERIAATMADJA (Indonesia) noted that the report under consideration by the Second Committee (A/41/350) contained a sound analysis and useful recommendations; however, it failed to give all the issues dealt with the same level of attention. Both the analysis and the recommendations went into detail in such areas as coherence of action, co-ordination, and programme effectiveness, while the critical area of resource availability was somewhat glossed over. His delegation, for its part, was deeply concerned over certain trends which had emerged over the past few years, namely, stagnating or only marginal increases in contributions and their unpredictability. A solution to the problem of increasing resources on a continuous, predictable and assured basis was essential for the orderly planning and implementation of the operational activities of the United Nations system. In that context, his delegation considered the triennial report's two recommendations on financial resources (A/41/350, paras. 99 and 100) both too limited and too general.

35. Crucially important as it was, the issue of co-ordination had, in Indonesia's particular case, been satisfactorily settled for quite some time. His delegation's long-standing position on that issue was that responsibility for co-ordination at the field level should lie with the host Government. For its part, the Indonesian Government had taken the necessary steps, within the framework of its five-year development plan, to ensure co-ordination not only among programmes and resources of the United Nations system but also between national, sub-regional and regional projects and between multilateral and bilateral assistance. The United Nations Resident Co-ordinator in Jakarta had always been very active in assisting the Government to enhance co-ordination. At the global level, however, a lack of consistency of action in different policy organs of the system had been identified, the reason given being that it had not been easy for Member States to ensure consistency in the position of their representatives in the various policy bodies of the United Nations system. In such cases the secretariats should not hesitate to discharge their responsibility by drawing their respective governing bodies' attention to relevant decisions of other governing bodies on matters involving co-ordination. As for the idea of establishing a forum in which donors and recipients might seek common approaches for making United Nations development assistance more effective, his delegation doubted the desirability of such a step and considered that discussion within the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly should suffice for the purpose.

36. In respect of collaboration with non-governmental organizations, Indonesia was sure that those organizations and the private sector could make a positive contribution to development, not only in the social sphere, which was emphasized in the report, but also in the economic sector. Consequently, where such collaboration was in accordance with his country's legislation and development objectives, Indonesia would continue to encourage collaboration with non-governmental organizations.

(Mr. Soeriaatmadja, Indonesia)

37. The painstakingly negotiated Economic and Social Council resolution on that issue (E/1986/74) took into account the interests of all parties in a sufficiently balanced manner, and he hoped that the General Assembly would endorse it.
38. With regard to the report of the Governing Council of UNDP, the choice of human resources development as the main theme for policy review at the 1986 special session showed that States were increasingly aware of the importance of that issue for the development process. Human resources development was not only a pre-condition for economic growth, but also a key development objective. In that context women, constituting half the world's human resources, should receive due attention. For many years, Indonesia had made human resources development a central part of its development plans, and it therefore welcomed the priority given to that sector by UNDP.
39. The work of UNFPA was also of crucial importance, and his delegation was concerned about the Fund's situation. The international community should take urgent measures to help the Fund overcome its critical situation.
40. Indonesia thanked UNICEF sincerely for its collaboration which had enabled it to establish integrated health services that had been held up as an example by the Chairman of the Executive Board at its recent session. At the world level, it was encouraging to note the significant progress made by UNICEF in its efforts to promote the Child Survival and Development Revolution.
41. As for financing science and technology for development, his delegation supported the proposed establishment of a trust fund within UNDP, provided that it would not replace the global financial arrangement referred to in the Vienna Programme of Action.
42. Mr. MOKHTARZADA (Afghanistan) said that the operational activities of the United Nations, which could play a significant role in overcoming economic, social and technological inequality between nations and supporting the efforts of developing countries to achieve self-reliance, must conform strictly to national development plans. The 1970 consensus that the Government of the country concerned had the exclusive responsibility for formulating its national development plans or priorities and objectives [resolution 2688 (XXV)] must be implemented. It was of fundamental importance that the financing of operational activities should continue to be guaranteed in accordance with that principle. Operational activities should also reflect the policy and priorities formulated in the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade and should contribute effectively to its implementation. In order to achieve that goal, adequate financial resources must be made available. The report (A/41/350) showed that operational activities accounted for approximately 60 per cent of the United Nations system's regular and extrabudgetary resources, but the retrograde policy of imperialist circles, which used their financial power to reduce, delay or completely suspend operational assistance to certain developing countries which had chosen an independent and progressive line had had a detrimental effect on those activities and on multilateral co-operation efforts in general. The international community must put a stop to a trend which seriously affected the spirit of universality and multilateral co-operation.

(Mr. Mokhtarzada, Afghanistan)

43. For Afghanistan, a land-locked and a least developed country, the assistance received as part of the operational activities of the United Nations system was particularly valuable. After the 1978 revolution, those activities had declined sharply as a result of imperialist coercion. Despite such intrigues, United Nations bodies had continued to participate in the implementation of Afghanistan's social and economic development plans, but their assistance, although most welcome, had not been sufficient to ensure development. Moreover, when Afghanistan had submitted its country programme to the UNDP Governing Council at its thirty-first session in 1984, a number of developed capitalist countries had blocked its adoption. He hoped that the Governing Council would consider and adopt Afghanistan's revised programme at its thirty-fourth session in view of the priority which was to be given to the least developed countries and the written understanding reached in New York in June 1985.

44. The contribution of UNICEF and the development of its activities in Afghanistan were appreciated and he hoped that UNICEF's assistance would increase and not be affected by the current budgetary restrictions.

45. It was regrettable that the World Food Programme had suspended all assistance to Afghanistan since 1980, on the pretext of insecurity, although his Government had guaranteed good working conditions for the Programme throughout the country. It was thus apparent that donor countries did not want the Programme to resume its activities in Afghanistan; similarly, the International Fund for Agricultural Development did not participate in any projects in Afghanistan, and he called upon those bodies to re-examine their position and resume their programmes and activities as soon as possible.

46. His Government had mobilized greater financial and human resources for economic and social development in recent years. Thanks to those efforts, industrial production in 1985 had grown by 25 per cent compared to 1980. In the period 1980 to 1985, attention had been paid in the first place to improving the levels of living of the people. As a result, the average salaries of workers in institutions and State organizations were 2.4 times higher than in the year preceding the revolution. There was no doubt that the result would have been far greater had not the undeclared war absorbed much of the country's attention and resources. The first social and economic development plan for 1986 to 1991 was already through its first half-year and was designed to increase the gross national product by 25 per cent. The anticipated total volume of investment had been estimated at 114 billion afghanis, i.e. almost 72 per cent more than for the preceding five years. To achieve that figure, Afghanistan would have to make serious efforts to mobilize larger domestic resources. But there was also an urgent need for a substantial increase in the volume of foreign aid and technical assistance. Total development expenditure of Afghanistan for 1985/86 would amount to 16 billion afghanis, of which the domestic contribution would be nearly 53 per cent, the balance being met by friendly countries, mainly the Soviet Union, India and the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance. In that connection, it was worth mentioning that Afghanistan had not received any assistance from developed capitalist countries since the revolution of April 1978, which was contrary to the spirit of the Substantial New Programme of Action for the 1980s for the Least Developed Countries.

47. Mr. FERNANDEZ (Philippines) said that his delegation was pleased with the highly encouraging results of the recent Pledging Conference, especially the increases in voluntary contributions to UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA.

48. With regard to the policy review of operational activities for development, the ultimate objective should be to improve the quantity and quality of technical assistance extended to developing countries. It was important to stress the point because the delivery of technical assistance had become so complex and it was being suggested that new management and co-ordination systems were required to rationalize operational activities. However, it would be self-defeating to create too intricate a mechanism for management and co-ordination systems because that would require enormous expenditures of energy and resources. Furthermore, management and co-ordination procedures could improve efficiency only if they were uniformly understood and appreciated. In addition to being simple, therefore, such procedures should be stable and not subjected to changes too often.

49. UNDP provided good examples of successful operational activities. It owed much of its success to the confidence which Governments placed in it. The consensus of 1970 was primarily responsible for maintaining that sense of confidence. In recent years, the Governing Council of UNDP had decided to strengthen central co-ordination procedures at headquarters, which was both useful and reassuring to donors that their contributions were being properly utilized. The Governing Council had also adopted the practice of selecting special themes for its general debates. A similar practice was being proposed for adoption by the Economic and Social Council, primarily to permit donors, recipients and executing organizations to exchange ideas on how to make development assistance more effective. Such thematic debates could enhance co-ordination in a general way.

50. Thematic debates had also been utilized in the Intergovernmental Committee on Science and Technology for Development. Unfortunately, the last session of that Committee had been shortened in an effort to save money, and the thematic debate had been the most notable victim of that economy measure. Without exception, the members of that Committee had expressed their dissatisfaction and had unanimously requested that future sessions be restored to the full two weeks.

51. There had been a growing tendency to assign to UNDP, perhaps because of its success, the management of special-purpose funds; there were also proposals to increase the co-ordinating functions of UNDP and even to assign to it the role of central co-ordinator, but UNDP had already been overburdened with responsibilities not contemplated in the 1970 consensus decision and it would not be reasonable to ask it to centralize co-ordination as well, because the vital function of the Governing Council, which was to approve country programmes, had been adversely affected by the competing demands of extraneous tasks not originally envisaged in the consensus.

52. Although the importance of science and technology as a tool of development had been widely accepted since the Vienna Conference, the resources made available for that purpose had, paradoxically, diminished to such an extent that the agreements reached at Vienna remained largely unimplemented. Nevertheless, the objectives of

(Mr. Fernandez, Philippines)

the Conference remained valid. A review should therefore be undertaken of what had gone wrong so as to identify what policy measures needed to be taken to reinvigorate support for the Vienna Programme of Action. It was essential that the Trust Fund then established should be seen as a nucleus on which to build enduring international co-operation in science and technology. It was also desirable to involve the Centre for Science and Technology for Development in project identification, appraisal and evaluation so as to ensure greater consonance with the spirit and direction of the Vienna Programme of Action. His Government remained firm in its support of the operational activities for development of the United Nations system.

53. Mr. MAYIRA (Rwanda) recalled that his was one of the delegations that had welcomed the recommendations in the report of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation (A/41/350), especially those concerning co-ordination, the role of the resident co-ordinator, the special treatment intended for the least developed countries and the attention to be paid to sub-Saharan Africa.

54. In his report for 1985 (DP/1986/11), the Administrator of UNDP had indicated that the situation with regard to resources had been encouraging in that year, but at the same time he had expressed some anxieties about accessible resources for 1987, the first year of the fourth programming cycle. The Rwandan delegation was glad to note that those anxieties had now been dispelled by the encouraging results of the Pledging Conference. Those results were an unequivocal and irreversible demonstration of support by Governments for UNDP in particular, but also for the operational activities of the United Nations system as a whole. However, the global resources administered by UNDP had continued to diminish for the fourth consecutive year and it was therefore important to reverse the trend.

55. His delegation hoped that the level of resources which UNDP would receive in 1987 would be maintained or would rise in the remaining years of the fourth programming cycle, which would otherwise start on an uncertain financial basis at a time when the Governing Council had recently approved the country programmes of a number of countries, including Rwanda. In that connection, he regretted that the new programme proposed for his country contained a smaller number of projects than the current programme. Such a situation always jeopardized good project planning and acted as an obstacle to development efforts.

56. There was no doubt that the round-table meeting represented an effective instrument for aid co-ordination and Rwanda regarded it as a preferred medium for dialogue with the donor community and as a mechanism for mobilizing the additional resources which were essential for its development. Rwanda therefore intended to organize a multisectoral round table towards the end of 1987 with the help and support of UNDP. In that connection, the new procedure for the organization of round tables seemed to contain a number of practical disadvantages which threatened to delay the entire process of mobilizing funds and to run counter to certain susceptibilities. In his view, it would be preferable to involve all interested parties in such an exercise of international solidarity.

(Mr. Mayira, Rwanda)

57. Concerning the celebration of the fortieth anniversary of UNICEF, he reminded members that his Government had recently paid tribute to the world-wide activities of the Fund, particularly those in Rwanda.

58. Mr. DIECKMANN (Federal Republic of Germany) said that his country's Federal Ministry for Economic Co-operation had just celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary and was closely connected with the development of a great many developing countries, particularly in Africa. The assistance which it had provided during the past quarter of a century, amounting to approximately DM 100 billion, was proof of the extent to which his country was prepared to help the developing countries to become true partners in an interdependent world economy. The Federal Republic of Germany regarded such a policy as an indispensable element for securing long-term peace and international stability.

59. There had certainly been failures and disappointments. Serious crises, such as those which had afflicted sub-Saharan Africa and the debt problems of so many countries, had led the international community to question why the tremendous efforts which it had made had not produced better results. The special session of the General Assembly on the critical economic situation in Africa had reflected that concern. On that occasion there had been widespread recognition that the responsibility for the aims, ways and consequences of the development process lay with the developing countries themselves and that the developed countries could not substitute their own efforts. They could only contribute to those efforts. The value and validity of that contribution was dependent upon the development process itself and became an element in it. At the same time, his Government was convinced that the international community should not merely be satisfied with the verbal agreements which had been reached but should ensure that they were followed up.

60. The Federal Republic of Germany constantly reviewed its general policy guidelines for development co-operation. The prime focus remained on food security, the development of rural areas, the protection of the environment, energy supply, education and vocational training, particularly in the poorest countries. Official development assistance had increased by 9 per cent between 1984 and 1985, when it had represented 0.47 per cent of gross national product, which was well above the average of DAC members. In addition, its multilateral contributions had risen by approximately 10 per cent, while that of non-governmental organizations had increased by about 15 per cent.

61. Concerning the operational activities for development of the United Nations system, he said that his country had for many years past supported the activities of agencies such as UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF and would continue to do so. All were aware, however, that reform within the system was required and that it was particularly important to strengthen consistency, efficiency and co-ordination in the area of operational activities. It seemed therefore essential to clarify the mandates, functions, competence and tasks of the various United Nations bodies responsible for those activities. His delegation wondered if some of the rather small funds were really worth the administrative burden they represented for the United Nations. Member States should screen their own initiatives more carefully

(Mr. Dieckmann, Federal Republic
of Germany)

so that the Organization would be able to make optimal use of available resources. Operational activities were of value only to the extent that they fulfilled purposes which could not be performed better by other means.

62. With reference to document A/41/776 entitled "Operational activities of the United Nations system", his delegation believed that an indication of continuing confidence in multilateral activities on the part of the major donor countries was the fact that their contributions had stabilized in spite of ongoing budget restrictions. It was, however, concerned by the 5 per cent decline in the overall level of UNDP technical co-operation activities, a development which was contrary to the established principle that UNDP was the main body for such activities. On the other hand, it welcomed the increase of procurements in developing countries and also the organizations' realistic outlook with respect to resources. As in previous years, the contributions of the Eastern countries to multilateral activities remained extremely small and it was not clear why developing countries were able to make contributions in convertible currency while countries with a much better economic standing could not do so.

63. The Federal Republic of Germany would continue to help enhance the consistency of operational activities through its participation in evaluations, its contribution in the Working Group and its adherence to the principles established by the Economic and Social Council, including those laid down in resolution 1986/74.

64. His delegation had listened with interest to the statement of the Executive Director of UNICEF and wished to encourage the Fund to adopt a balanced approach to the essential services provided to mothers and children. The strength of UNICEF had always rested on the broad support it received from volunteers throughout the entire world; that support must be further strengthened.

65. Mr. AL-HADDAD (Democratic Yemen) said that, while operational activities had contributed a great deal to the development of the developing countries, they represented no more than multilateral support for the continuing and essential efforts made by the Governments of those countries to become self-supporting and self-sufficient. It was for that reason that a number of developing countries had increased their voluntary contributions to the appropriate United Nations funds and programmes.

66. The Economic and Social Council had undertaken a substantial review of operational activities for development, resulting in the adoption of a number of conclusions and recommendations that were likely to improve significantly programme delivery and efficiency and enable optimum use to be made of resources. Since the responsibility for development lay primarily with the Governments of the developing countries, due attention should be paid to the part they played in programme execution. National experts and advisers should take responsibility for setting national priorities for programmes and their execution and participate in their formulation. Due attention should also be paid to the question of procurement in the developing countries themselves of the equipment needed for the execution of operational activities and recommendations should be made to the General Assembly to that effect.

(Mr. Al-Haddad, Democratic Yemen)

67. The economic difficulties faced by the developing countries made it necessary to continue to mobilize financial resources for operational activities for development. The pledges by donor countries for 1987 were therefore to be welcomed, proving as they did the international community's commitment to multilateral co-operation. The growing number of programmes executed by the United Nations system and the resulting administrative complexities inevitably resulted in duplication, and for that reason his delegation attached great importance to the question of co-ordination and efficiency of operational activities, and to consideration of that question by the Economic and Social Council. In the field, resident representatives should, for instance, have full authority in co-ordination matters so that resources could be used to the best advantage and programmes executed with all due efficiency.

68. There was unanimous agreement on the need to take measures to increase women's participation in the development process, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 48/108, and the efforts made by the United Nations bodies and organizations in that respect were to be commended.

69. The Second Committee should give attention to the results of the Economic and Social Council's review of operational activities for development and to the questions covered by Council resolution 1986/74, in order to increase the efficiency and improve the co-ordination of activities, ensure optimum utilization of resources and speed up the economic and social development of the developing countries.

70. Mr. BORG (Malta) said that the operational activities for development of the United Nations system played a unique role in the economic and social development of the developing countries and that UNDP, through its catalytic role, enabled those countries to enhance the use made of their own resources, both human and material. The decline in UNDP's share of the system's total expenditure on technical co-operation seriously jeopardized projects and programmes of fundamental importance to developing countries.

71. Malta, for its part, was suffering from the curtailment of its IPF, which did not truly reflect its development needs. For a number of years Malta, along with other island developing countries, had been drawing attention to the difficulties inherent in their situation and requesting the United Nations and its specialized agencies not to calculate development assistance on the basis of per capita income. It was only because of its insistence during the negotiations for the fourth programming cycle that Malta had been able to retain its IPF, small though that was.

72. It was gratifying that at the thirty-third session of the Governing Council, the Administrator of UNDP had been requested to submit to the Governing Council the following year a report on his evaluation of the role of UNDP in the implementation of specific measures in favour of island developing countries. The report would certainly reveal the considerable endeavours made by those countries to make headway in an unfavourable world environment, in spite of the difficulties they faced in obtaining financial and technical assistance from the United Nations system.

(Mr. Borq, Malta)

73. On the subject of development assistance, Malta had always endeavoured to take into account the wider regional dimension and convince its European partners that co-operative activities must be developed in the Mediterranean region between European and Arab countries. It was therefore regrettable that there had been only limited links between projects of concern to those two groups of countries under the third programming cycle. It was equally regrettable that, in general, development needs were considered to be less pressing in Europe than in other parts of the world. It was too readily forgotten that within the European region there were developing countries like Malta which merited special consideration.

74. Considering that it was most useful to pursue functional projects within the framework of the competent organs of the United Nations system and that such projects could make a significant contribution towards strengthening regional co-operation and security, Malta had proposed, during the recent consultations on the UNDP regional programme for Europe, the setting up of a Mediterranean environment studies centre. The project was aimed mainly at the high-priority question of environmental management in the region. It was to be noted that it had been prepared by an MF country, not an agency. Malta hoped that it would be executed by the Foundation for International Studies, with UNESCO support in training and research.

75. Malta, a small developing country, had never hesitated to share the experience it had gained in the educational and technical fields and to assist less fortunate countries. As had already been said, its educational and technical facilities were at the disposal of any international organizations and specialized agencies of the United Nations system that might wish to conduct training programmes there for nationals of other countries, especially developing countries.

76. Aware as it was of the crucial role of human resources development in national development, the Maltese Government, with the support of UNESCO, had set up the Foundation for International Studies, which had already aroused considerable interest in international and academic circles. The activities of the International Institute on Aging were another example of its concern to provide training for nationals from other countries, especially developing countries.

77. In conclusion, he wished to commend the work done by the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development. Its remarkable achievements in recent years were evidence of the special attention it gave to the aspirations of the less fortunate countries. Despite staff cuts, the programme executed by the Department in 1985 had been the largest programme in five years and had cost less than the previous programme.

78. Mr. DOLJINTSEREN (Mongolia), having stressed the importance of operational activities for development and of technical co-operation in view of the current economic difficulties of most developing countries, said that UNDP was playing an important and commendable role in that form of multilateral co-operation and that the successfulness of UNDP action depended on the observance of the principles of universality, the voluntary nature of contributions and non-interference in the internal affairs of States.

(Mr. Doljintseren, Mongolia)

79. However, for some time now in the Governing Council certain circles had been trying to violate the principles in question and to interfere in the affairs of sovereign recipient States, as demonstrated - for example - by the blocking of the confirmation of a further programme of assistance to Afghanistan, which was contrary to the principles laid down in the Charter and harmful to the reputation of the United Nations. His delegation was also concerned to note that an attempt was being made to use UNDP in order to facilitate the penetration of private capital into the developing countries and strengthen its presence there, particularly in the case of the transnational corporations, which - motivated solely by profit - made such countries financially dependent and looted their resources. Mongolia therefore also opposed the strengthening of the links between UNDP and the World Bank and IMF, which were becoming the advocates of private capital and continued to co-operate with such countries as South Africa.

80. With regard to human resources development, including the issue of the role of the developing countries' qualified national personnel, UNDP must act on the basis of the relevant General Assembly resolutions, particularly resolution 40/213, and adopt an integrated, multidisciplinary approach in that regard.

81. The outcome of the thirty-third session of the Governing Council of UNDP had been positive. Attention should be drawn in particular to the importance of the decisions on assistance to national liberation movements and the confirmation of many country programmes, including the programme for Mongolia. His delegation welcomed the increase in contributions to operational activities and hoped that as a result it would be possible to raise the overall level of the assistance provided to the developing countries by the various technical co-operation agencies in the United Nations system. Lastly, it was important to reduce the administrative expenditure of UNDP in order to release more resources for IPFs.

82. UNICEF - another important organization in the system - had done much to improve the living conditions of children throughout the world and had helped to solve the third world countries' fundamental economic and social development problems. Mongolia therefore supported its action and believed that it should devote sustained attention to food and education problems, medical and health care and the inoculation programme.

83. Mongolia also fully supported the activities of UNFPA, from which it itself benefited. In view of the financial difficulties being experienced by the Fund, Mongolia called on all donors to pay their contributions and thus support an important component of operational activities. Moreover, it condemned the policy of pressure and blackmail pursued by some Powers, of which the Fund was also a victim.

84. Peace, economic security and greater confidence in international relations would help a great deal to promote multilateral technical co-operation and the operational activities in the United Nations system, and it was to be hoped that at its current session the General Assembly would adopt a decision on the strengthening of the positive trends that had become apparent in that area.

85. Mr. SOMVORACHIT (Lao People's Democratic Republic) said that the issue of operational activities was of particular importance to the developing countries, which regarded multilateral co-operation as the only appropriate instrument for enabling them gradually to achieve steady growth and autonomous development. It was therefore normal - at a time when there was a shortage of resources - to avoid overlapping and to streamline as much as possible the activities in question, which should also be better co-ordinated, both within the United Nations system and at the level of the recipient countries, where the resident co-ordinators should play a prominent role. The experience gained by the Joint Consultative Group on Policy, which was made up of UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and WFP, should be shared throughout the system.

86. Moreover, there was one particularly pressing need - the need for a substantial and real increase, on a predictable and continuous basis, in the resources for operational activities, since such an increase was the only way to meet the developing countries' growing development needs, particularly those of the least developed countries. According to UNCTAD, the least developed countries' per capita GDP was still extremely low and their growth rate, which had already been low in the 1970s, had been dropping steadily since the early 1980s. Their debts represented an overwhelming burden, which prevented many of them from mobilizing the resources needed in order to expand investment and reactivate growth.

87. In order to help the developing countries (particularly the least developed countries) to develop through self-help - one of the goals of multilateral technical co-operation - it was necessary to consider measures making provision for projects to train qualified national personnel, planning, co-ordination and evaluation, the gradual transfer of the responsibility for project implementation to Governments and to the recipient countries' institutions and the greatest possible use of national consultants and experts. In project implementation, priority must be given to the procurement of local materials and equipment. Moreover, the international development agencies concerned should assume direct responsibility for the local expenditure of UNDP field offices and other development agencies, which represented a heavy financial burden for the least developed countries, but there should be no change in the overall balance of the IPFs. Within the framework of ECDC and TCDC, the most advanced developing countries should endeavour to back the efforts made by neighbouring least developed countries by co-financing their sectoral projects.

88. Over the past 10 years the Lao People's Democratic Republic had achieved a certain amount of success as a result of co-operation with the international community, the most important examples of which were its virtual self-sufficiency in food and the rehabilitation of the economy after a long period of conflict.

89. Miss COURSON (France), stressing the importance of the operational activities of the United Nations system, said that such activities could only be evaluated if the relevant United Nations organizations responded favourably to the effort made by the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation to ensure improved co-ordination. It was in that spirit that France had joined in the consensus on Economic and Social Council resolution 1986/74, which should facilitate the streamlining of the organizations operating in the field.

(Miss Courson, France)

90. While it recognized the universal nature of operational activities, France believed that most of the resources set aside for technical co-operation should be allocated to the least developed countries and other low-income countries and that a greater effort should be made to help Africa, in accordance with the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development. Furthermore, priority should be given to agriculture, health and training, provision should be made in development plans and programmes for adjustment policies to assist the most vulnerable population segments and a development component should be added to emergency humanitarian assistance.

91. Moreover, operational activities should be co-ordinated at three levels. First of all, at the recipient country level: assistance should be provided, through the organization of round tables and consultative groups, to strengthen the co-ordinating capacity of recipient countries. That would include the field of humanitarian aid. Second, at the level of the United Nations system, the authority of the resident co-ordinator should be strengthened. His accreditation by a single letter from the Secretary-General addressed to recipient countries covering his responsibilities as representative of UNDP, WFP and UNFPA could be particularly useful in that regard. However, the resident co-ordinator should also represent all the other organizations whose range of activities did not seem to justify special representation. Finally, at the intergovernmental level, the Economic and Social Council must play a key role in reconciling differences and indicating the course to be followed, in close consultation with the various policy-making organs concerned. The co-ordination of development activities through consultative groups, as practised by UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP, should therefore be encouraged.

92. The recipient and donor countries should have a common interest in strengthening confidence in UNDP activities, increasing their transparency and proving their efficiency in order to encourage increased contributions to the general resources.

93. France welcomed the new policies of UNICEF in Africa and the manner in which it determined priorities for its activities on that continent. France fully supported UNICEF efforts in favour of vaccination but considered that that programme should be included in the regular programmes of UNICEF in order to avoid any overlapping of competence with other organizations such as WHO. There was also a need to evaluate activities in progress in order to ensure that programmes were based on solid analyses and were in keeping with policies clearly defined by countries.

94. UNFPA could play a major role, especially in the development of an internal programming strategy aimed at the needs of Africa. However, UNFPA should be encouraged to accord increasing importance to internal and independent evaluations and to co-operate closely with its executing agencies.

95. Mr. DASGUPTA (India) said that his country had always endeavoured to support operational activities since it also benefited from them. The triennial policy review of operational activities had brought into greater focus the multiplicity of

(Mr. Dasgupta, India)

means which existed in the United Nations system, and had shown up certain problems which could be solved to a large extent by implementing Economic and Social Council resolution 1986/74. In order to preserve and strengthen the spirit of partnership which had evolved over the years, operational activities must remain apolitical. Unfortunately, his delegation was deeply concerned that resources for such activities had stagnated and that the prospects for the future remained bleak. All developed countries, especially those whose contributions were low in relation to their capacities, should be more forthcoming.

96. The recipient countries were the best suited to ensure the co-ordination of operational activities, with the assistance of the resident co-ordinator, who should have a more active role in co-ordinating the activities and programmes of the various United Nations agencies. Those agencies, in particular UNDP, should make greater efforts to strengthen the participation of developing countries in operational activities and make greater use of their expertise and equipment, which would often prove more economical and rational. Unfortunately, the measures which had been taken in that regard remained insufficient.

97. Mr. FITI NGOYO (Zaire) said that operational activities figured prominently in third world countries' efforts to achieve autonomous development, and that UNDP played a leading role in the field of multilateral technical assistance for development. Such multilateral assistance should be increased, since it was the most striking proof of international partnership and since it had the advantage of being neutral and ensured respect for State sovereignty. Unfortunately, since the current crisis of confidence in multilateral relations jeopardized voluntary contributions to UNDP, it was to be hoped that measures would be taken to restore credibility and dynamism to the United Nations system. Considering the importance of operational activities for development and their share of the budget, donor countries should, as a matter of extreme urgency, significantly increase their voluntary contributions.

98. The activities in progress must be co-ordinated if resources allocated to development were to be used efficiently; in that respect, Zaire welcomed Economic and Social Council resolution 1986/74, which should settle that important problem. Nevertheless, the primary responsibility for co-ordinating external assistance lay with the countries concerned. Moreover, the agencies providing assistance should endeavour to make use of national expertise and capabilities and reduce their administrative expenses.

99. Zaire had set up a small permanent committee to co-ordinate efficiently the programmes and projects which it financed jointly with UNDP and other United Nations agencies, and to ensure their coherence. Operational activities should be financed in conformity with the 1970 consensus, according to which Governments bore the sole responsibility for formulating their plans and defining their objectives.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.