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Chairman:

Mr. BURKE

(Ireland)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 82: OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT (continued)

- (a) OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM
- (b) UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME
- (c) UNITED NATIONS CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT FUND
- (d) UNITED NATIONS TECHNICAL COOPERATION ACTIVITIES
- (e) UNITED NATIONS VOLUNTEERS PROGRAMME
- (f) WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME

AGENDA ITEM 88: HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 82: OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT (continued) (A/46/3, 344, 501/Rev.1 and 520; A/C.2/46/7)

- (a) OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM (A/46/186 and Add.1, A/46/206-E/1991/93 and Add.1-4)
- (b) UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (A/46/491; E/1991/34 and Add.1)
- (c) UNITED NATIONS CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT FUND (E/1991/34 and Add.1)
- (d) UNITED NATIONS TECHNICAL COOPERATION ACTIVITIES (E/1991/34 and Add.1)
- (e) UNITED NATIONS VOLUNTEERS PROGRAMME (E/1991/34 and Add.1)
- (f) WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME (A/46/265-E/1991/105)

AGENDA ITEM 88: HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT (continued) (A/46/336, 344, 461, 501/Rev.1, 520 and 579)

1. Mr. SINGH (India), referring to the report of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation on operational activities for development (A/46/206, annex), stressed the serious economic difficulties still confronting many countries. In particular, the more vulnerable groups - women and children - would require considerable support before they were able to make their contribution to society. Official development assistance (ODA) channelled through operational activities of the United Nations system should serve primarily to meet the needs of those deprived groups and build the infrastructure in developing countries. Efforts must also be made to focus operational activities on those sectors which did not attract ODA and had no access to funding from multilateral, bilateral and private institutions.

2. Decentralization was a key theme of General Assembly resolution 44/211; however, decentralization must not be viewed as an end in itself but as a means of strengthening national execution and expediting project delivery. The cursory treatment which national execution had received in document A/46/206 was disappointing. The subject merited much fuller consideration. His delegation welcomed the Director-General's recognition of the need for a partnership in which the United Nations system would ultimately play only an advisory or technical backstopping role. Attention must also be devoted to simplification and harmonization of procedures within the United Nations system.

3. The approach of various agencies toward's procurement from developing countries was also disappointing for procurement could spur the development of national capacities. His delegation welcomed the attention being devoted to the question by the Joint Consultative Group on Policy and the Inter-agency

(Mr. Singh, India)

Procurement Working Group. However, the entire process must be strengthened and monitored more effectively.

4. His delegation agreed with the proposals contained in the report of the Secretary-General on developing human resources for development (A/46/461), and supported, in particular, his statement that the international community should think less in terms of conditionalities and more in terms of an improved aid relationship (para. 108). The new emphasis on improving the quality of life, as opposed to mere growth in per capita gross domestic product, was a welcome change. Caution should be exercised, however, in any effort to develop universally applicable indicators, since the relative importance of individual sectors in each country was largely a product of national history and tradition. In conclusion, it was to be hoped that donor countries would step up their efforts to meet ODA targets, even in the current difficult economic times. India, which itself was wrestling with major economic hardships, had managed to maintain the level of its contributions to certain United Nations agencies and even to increase its contributions in some cases.

5. Mr. KRAVETZ (El Salvador), speaking on behalf of the six Central American States - Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama and El Salvador - said that many of the issues highlighted by the World Bank in its World Development Report 1991 - health, education, the reduction of population growth and human resources development - were of concern to the Central American countries too. In particular, they agreed with the Report about the role of education in cultivating an entrepreneurial spirit and the impact of rapid population growth on economic growth prospects, human well-being and the environment.

6. Human development depended not only on the policies of individual ministries, but on broader national strategy and the existence of an enabling legal framework. Human resources development would be a major topic of discussion at the forthcoming meeting of Central American Presidents to be held in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, on 13 and 14 December 1991. In preparation for that meeting, Central American Governments were formulating national plans of action whose theme was "human development, children and youth", and which addressed a broad range of issues such as child mortality and malnutrition, maternal mortality, illiteracy, unemployment, lack of income and underemployment, and environmental degradation. The plans of action were to review changing national situations over the past two decades; establish priority themes, such as health, primary education, drinking water, the development of new skills, erosion and deforestation; and describe short-term national strategies and goals. It was hoped that such action plans would facilitate the adoption of regional measures for human resources development.

7. The Central American countries agreed with the Secretary-General that children and women were exposed to hardships, that human resources were the key to development itself and that spending on health and education was an

(Mr. Kravetz, El Salvador)

essential investment in the future of any country (A/46/461, para. 2). The United Nations system had contributed to human resources development in a number of ways. First of all, there were the publications of the various agencies, particularly the laudable Human Development Report (A/46/461, para. 28), which eloquently called for people-centred development. The United Nations also played an important role in supervising and evaluating social development and, through its operational activities, contributed substantial resources in support of human development. Particularly noteworthy was the systematic emphasis of operational activities on developing national capacities so that programmes and projects could become self-sustaining. The Central American countries welcomed, in particular, the World Bank's intention to focus its development strategy on investments in human resources in the 1990s and the news that commitments for human development lending had increased between 1987 and 1990 (para. 87).

8. Referring to the conclusions contained in the report of the Secretary-General, he said that successful inter-agency cooperation within the United Nations system had demonstrated the value of joint efforts. In Guatemala and Honduras, for example, UNDP and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) had collaborated on projects to eradicate poverty through the creation of opportunities for micro-entrepreneurs. Support for the work of non-governmental organizations, particularly local NGOs, and direct community participation projects were also of vital importance in human development efforts. The Central American countries hoped for greater cooperation in the financing of development and, in that connection, agreed with the Secretary-General that conditionalities should be de-emphasized in favour of improved aid relationships founded on mutual trust. They also agreed that the United Nations could help to build confidence by organizing special meetings and consultations among interested parties.

9. Referring to General Assembly resolution 45/191, he said that the brain drain was particularly acute in Central America and expressed the hope that the problem would be addressed in a future report by the Secretary-General.

10. The Central American countries were deeply concerned by the Secretary-General's statement (para. 118) that the financial situation in many donor countries was not likely to allow a significant increase overall in resource inflows to organizations of the United Nations system and that the main emphasis would have to be on making development assistance more efficient and effective. The national plans of action being formulated testified to the redoubled efforts which the Central American countries were making to accelerate human resource development. It would be disappointing indeed if, just as they were entering a crucial phase in the consolidation of peace and democracy and revitalization of economic growth, they were to find that the additional international cooperation they needed in order to achieve their objectives was not forthcoming. They trusted that that would not be the case.

11. Ms. STOKES (New Zealand) said that as peoples became more outward-looking, they had greater aspirations to a better life, but the state of the world economy had shrunk the pool of resources needed to meet such enormous global challenges as trade inequalities, the debt burden, drug trafficking and the environment. Paradoxically, while the political role of the United Nations had become more effective, economic and social activities were lacking in vitality. Certain United Nations operational activities and bodies had indeed been streamlined, but the pace of reform had been uneven. In particular, there had been excessive duplication of effort and bureaucracy in responding to emergency situations. As a country which had restructured its own public sector in recent years, New Zealand understood that the fragmented structure of operational activities at the United Nations must be transformed into a cohesive machine and available resources used more effectively.

12. General Assembly resolution 44/211, which had been so carefully crafted, had sent a clear message on how development activities should be implemented. Her delegation fervently hoped that a concise resolution would be adopted at the current session - one that would serve as a blueprint for further action and could be easily followed up by the session of the Economic and Social Council and the comprehensive triennial policy review in 1992. The focus on people-centred development and the financing of human development in the UNDP Human Development Reports of 1990 and 1991 respectively, was commendable. Her delegation appreciated the role of UNDP in the South Pacific, where growth performance in island developing countries had been weaker than in most other regions of the world. None the less, it agreed with the representative of Fiji that some difficulties remained regarding coordination. In conclusion, her delegation welcomed the determination of UNDP to proceed in the spirit of resolution 44/211, and the consensus which reigned in the Governing Council on agency support costs and national execution. The financial contribution of New Zealand to UNDP reflected its continuing support for the Programme's role as the central funding mechanism of the United Nations system for technical cooperation.

13. Mr. SOUMPHOLPHAKDY (Lao People's Democratic Republic) said that the operational activities of the United Nations system played an important role in assisting the development efforts of developing countries, and additional resources were urgently needed to ensure the continuation and expansion of such activities. Unfortunately, the results of the recent United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities had not fully met the expectations of the developing countries.

14. Significant progress had been made in making operational activities more effective in helping developing countries promote economic development and achieve self-reliance. In order to improve technical assistance, the relevant bodies and agencies of the United Nations system should endeavour to coordinate their activities, taking into account the priorities and specific circumstances of recipient countries. The shift from a project approach to a programme approach should result in greater emphasis on national and international prioritization in operational activities.

(Mr. Soumphonphakdy, Lao People's
Democratic Republic)

15. His delegation supported efforts to promote national execution. However, since that modality was relatively new, a careful and gradual approach should be adopted. The United Nations system should increase its assistance to recipient countries in the areas of programme implementation and management training. Detailed and simplified rules and procedures for the promotion of national execution should be established in order to strengthen recipient countries' indigenous executing capacities.

16. As the lead agency in convening round-table meetings, UNDP had played an active role in overall resource mobilization and, in many cases, had succeeded in attracting cost-sharing and co-financing contributions. His delegation highly appreciated UNDP's initiative to convene a fourth round-table meeting in the Lao People's Democratic Republic early in 1992.

17. His delegation was pleased at the successful conclusion of the fourth country programme and it was in favour of the idea of concentrating resources for the fifth country programme in three key areas, namely, support for the new economic mechanism, improvement and expansion of physical infrastructure, and human resources development. When translated into specific projects, those major themes should involve close consultations between UNDP and recipient Governments in order to ensure that the projects were feasible and relevant to the actual conditions in the field.

18. While his delegation supported the fundamental principles contained in the Human Development Report 1991, it shared the views of many other countries that the human freedom index was unacceptable because it was both inaccurate and inappropriate for inclusion in a UNDP report.

19. During its 25 years of existence, the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) had played a unique role in the multilateral financing system. At the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, the international community and the multilateral financial development institutions, in particular UNCDF, had been urged to provide substantial and adequate support to complement the efforts of the least developed countries in the area of investment and infrastructure maintenance. His delegation supported the proposal that donor countries should consider a 20 per cent annual increase in overall funding until the end of the decade.

20. The World Food Programme (WFP) was a major source of multilateral grant assistance to low-income, food-deficit countries, and it had become a major part of the operational activities of the United Nations system. His delegation welcomed the decision to maintain WFP as a joint programme of the United Nations and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and supported the recommendation to include in the draft revised General Regulations of WFP a provision for the Secretary-General to draw on WFP in providing humanitarian relief assistance.

21. Mr. THONG (Viet Nam) said that the very impressive agenda of the United Nations in the area of operational activities for development reflected the international community's resolve to confront the obstacles to development and responded to the need for the industrialized countries to increase their official development assistance. It was therefore unfortunate that resources for operational activities had hardly increased in real terms and that the results of the recent United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities had not met the expectations of the developing countries.

22. In view of their increasing importance in helping to revitalize the development process in the developing countries, the operational activities of the United Nations system should be appropriately reformed on the basis of General Assembly resolution 44/211. The ultimate goal of multilateral technical cooperation was to help the developing countries help themselves, and his delegation fully shared the view that national execution deserved high priority. However, the speed and scope of application of national execution must be accompanied by increased assistance from United Nations agencies in the area of management training and institution-building in recipient countries. The harmonization and simplification of the rules and procedures of United Nations operational activities could facilitate the better use of national capacities in all aspects of programme and project planning and implementation. Decentralization measures and the enhancement of the authority of field representatives with regard to project approval and selection of execution modalities would enhance the effectiveness of the Organization's response to country-specific needs and circumstances.

23. As the central funding agency for technical assistance of the United Nations system, UNDP had a vital role to play. The programme approach recently adopted by the UNDP Governing Council provided a good basis for better allocating the limited resources available to high-priority areas. While his delegation supported the concept of the human development dimension in the development process, it considered that the human freedom index contained in the Human Development Report 1991 was inaccurate and irrelevant to the acute concerns of developing countries in their arduous struggle to free their peoples from grinding poverty, backwardness, hunger, disease and early death.

24. The cooperation of Viet Nam with United Nations agencies had been characterized by increasing growth and mutual trust. The assistance provided by UNDP in Viet Nam's economic reform process had brought about important and encouraging results, and the cooperation of WFP with Viet Nam in the areas of emergency food aid and food-for-work development projects had been highly fruitful. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) had helped Viet Nam to slow reducing the pace of population growth and increased national awareness of the relationship between population and development. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) had benefited millions of Vietnamese children and mothers, particularly in remote areas of the country.

25. Mr. KABIR (Bangladesh) said that operational activities continued to be the most accessible and most important means of fostering multilateral cooperation to address the formidable problems facing the developing countries. The focus of operational activities should shift from narrow inflexible goals to comprehensive objectives conducive to concerted action on a far larger scale. In order to achieve that, a clear set of common objectives was required.

26. While his delegation valued operational activities for their qualitative difference from other types of development assistance and their catalytic effect on other activities, it was not satisfied with the actual trends in the overall availability of resources for those activities. Although in recent years those resources for operational activities had increased in nominal terms, those increases in real terms had remained far below actual requirements. Measures should be taken to ensure that operational activities were not curtailed because of a lack of resources; in that regard, there was a need to assess the possible impact on operational activities of the application of the new criteria for identifying least developed countries.

27. His delegation appreciated the steps taken by the Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (Operational Activities) to implement the recommendations contained in General Assembly resolution 44/211, and welcomed the increasing cooperation among the organizations of the United Nations and the efforts launched through the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP). There was, however, room for further improvement on that score both at Headquarters and in the field.

28. Operational activities must become more responsive to national priorities and should involve national planning authorities in programme planning and execution. In order to facilitate that task, United Nations agencies should endeavour to adapt their programmes to clearly defined national goals and priorities. In addition, programme implementation should be closely linked to an objective appraisal of existing national capacities and their full utilization both in the planning and implementation stages.

29. Further measures should be taken to decentralize operational activities and simplify and harmonize complex rules and procedures. That entailed the identification of essential norms and common standards applicable to all operational activities - programming, execution and accountability - which would be adapted to local circumstances. Moreover, efforts should be made to minimize the long time-lag between programming and the execution of agreed programmes.

30. In the areas of entrepreneurship and women and development, Bangladesh hoped that United Nations activities would promote action on the basis of a serious and objective evaluation of all obstacles to progress and would avoid an overly fragmented approach.

31. Mr. IQBAL (Pakistan) said that Pakistan shared Canada's disappointment at the lack of progress made in the implementation of resolution 44/211. The forthcoming triennial review rendered particularly urgent the need for clear guidance on the question of operational activities, and his delegation believed that the resolution on operational activities, shortly to be discussed by the Group of 77 and its development partners, should focus on programming, national execution and decentralization.

32. With regard to programming, the project approach had proved to be wasteful, resulting in unrelated and sometimes competing schemes which overburdened the administrative capacities of Governments. Conscious of that waste, Pakistan had devised a national conservation strategy on environment, under which projects were identified for funding from all sources, bilateral, multilateral and national. Funding and technical assistance should be provided by the United Nations for such national strategies.

33. He stressed that Governments of the developing countries had primary responsibility for programming and should work with UNDP, other United Nations agencies and donors to ensure smooth coordination of the entire development effort. The main obstacles preventing Governments from assuming a leading role in their countries' development programmes were the current method of execution and the centralized system of decision-making.

34. Pakistan agreed with Canada that national execution should be the norm rather than the exception. The support costs system had become the single largest obstacle to capacity building in developing countries and wider use should be made of the concept advanced in the guidelines on new dimensions in technical cooperation, whereby programmes were run by Governments and assisted by the United Nations with counterpart contributions, and not vice versa. Built-in incentives in the system and UNDP's burdensome procedures hampered implementation of that modality and even discriminated against its use. The UNDP tendency to use the Office for Project Services also posed an obstacle to capacity-building.

35. National execution would reduce the United Nations system's administrative burden and redirect the human and technical capacities of the specialized agencies towards their real purpose, namely, provision of technical advice, technical monitoring and policy analysis. Specialized agencies could not be expected to provide objective technical advice when they themselves had an interest in grant funds, nor could they be expected objectively to appraise and monitor projects which they themselves had executed. It was essential that the 13 per cent of UNDP funds allocated to operational activities did not undermine the effective use of the other 87 per cent. For that reason urgent steps were needed to institute national execution, under which Governments were responsible for the management of United Nations-funded projects. Governments should manage programmes and projects in an integrated manner, following a programme approach with enhanced accountability and simplified rules and procedures, to reduce administrative costs.

(Mr. Iqbal, Pakistan)

36. Decentralization was essential to the rationalization of functions between Headquarters and field offices and the development of a country-focused approach, sensitive to the cultural and economic realities of the recipient country. Field-based organizations should shift from a controlling to a supportive role and referral to Headquarters should be kept to a minimum. Partial decentralization would not achieve the necessary division of labour between the country office and Headquarters. The latter's role should be confined to overall monitoring of the Programme. All measures aimed at decentralization and increased delegation of authority should be carried out in the context of full responsibility necessary for enhanced accountability, greater cost-effectiveness, efficiency and long-term sustainability.

37. Decision-making in the governing bodies should be consistent with that approach. The necessary increased coherence in the United Nations project-funding system could be achieved only if projects were funded on the basis of specific strategies and programmes. The insistence of many developed countries that certain global themes should be reflected in United Nations-funded programmes, regardless of their relevance to specific countries, prevented those countries from using the system to its full advantage.

38. In conclusion, he stressed that a comprehensive analysis of the implementation of resolution 44/211, indicating those areas where such implementation had been lacking, was essential for an effective triennial review of the system.

39. Mr. MAYORGA CORTES (Nicaragua), speaking also on behalf of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Panama commended the collaborative efforts launched through the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP), in particular the pilot initiative in six countries for operational collaboration to combat poverty and the collaborative action on women in development programmes (para. 25). The Central American countries agreed that training for staff involved in operational activities should be provided through a network of national and regional institutions supported by a central United Nations focal point (para. 26). Although the governing bodies of the organizations of the United Nations system had taken important steps to improve operational activities for development within the broad policy guidelines set out in General Assembly resolution 44/211, in particular with reference to the comprehensive triennial policy review, there were nevertheless a number of important aspects of that resolution on which further action was needed.

40. The countries on whose behalf he was speaking attached particular importance to the adoption of a pragmatic approach to coordination and field representation and to the proposals for improving information and communications systems and for promoting simplification and harmonization of procedures. They were encouraged by the progress being made in respect of national execution and noted that it was already the norm in UNICEF and WFP.

(Mr. Mayorga Cortes, Nicaragua)

41. They welcomed the work done by the Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (CCSQ) on the preparation of guidelines for strengthening the resident coordinator system and underscored the vital need for resources so as to improve communication and enhance the substantive dialogue between the Office of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Development and resident coordinators.

42. They strongly endorsed the view that the effective integration of women in the development process called for a system-wide effort covering the thematic issues outlined in document A/46/206/Add.2 and also the strategic issues referred to in paragraph 38 of the report (A/46/206).

43. They agreed on the need for multidisciplinary programmes based on specific country needs, rather than external considerations, and for full involvement of national officials. Government responsibility for project management must be a basic characteristic of operational activities for development.

44. The Central American countries supported the proposed guidelines for fostering the role of entrepreneurship in the development process. Improved coordination and greater flexibility was important, given the variety of programmes being carried out and the need for the design of operational activities to respond to the special requirements of national economies and specific sectors. Bearing in mind the importance of a common framework for action in that area the enunciation of a common set of goals would be desirable. The United Nations system should make vigorous efforts to encourage horizontal cooperation between small- and medium-sized entrepreneurs at regional and subregional level; the regional symposia on entrepreneurship being organized by the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs were useful in that respect. They also welcomed the information contained in document A/46/206/Add.2 regarding the activities of the various parts of the United Nations system aimed at strengthening entrepreneurship. It would be helpful if the experiences of the various agencies could be evaluated as a whole. Any conclusions or recommendations resulting from such evaluation should be communicated to the Member States.

45. The extensive statistical information provided in the addendum to the Director-General's report (A/46/206/Add.4, annex) was particularly appreciated. It had been encouraging to note that the volume of concessional resources had increased by 16 per cent in 1990 compared with a net decrease in 1989 and with the 5 per cent decrease in the resources flow to operational activities for development for the 1988-1989 biennium. The reduced volume of disbursements by the International Fund for Agricultural Development was cause for concern but there had been a very encouraging increase in net transfers to the developing countries by the International Development Association. Although there had been a welcome and significant reduction in negative transfers associated with non-concessional loans by the World Bank and the International Finance Corporation (IFC) gross disbursements in respect of

(Mr. Mayorga Cortes, Nicaragua)

World Bank technical cooperation activities - disbursements in respect of "training" and "consultants" - had been at their lowest level in five years.

46. They supported the comments made the previous day by the representative of Sweden regarding the need for a high-level forum within the United Nations system in which Member States could examine development topics in a coherent way. Such a forum should be one in which a genuine dialogue on development and cooperation could take place along the lines of the discussions held within the Development Committee. Operational activities for development were vitally important to the consistency, coordination and effectiveness of the international cooperation work of the United Nations system. More detailed consideration should be given in the near future to the development of the concept of a document containing the integrated operational response of the United Nations system, at the country level, to the national programme framework of the recipient Government for operational activities for development, as suggested in paragraph 17 (g) of General Assembly resolution 44/211.

47. Mr. ZIARAN (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that human resources were a key factor in development, but their successful utilization required well-managed programmes at national and international level. During the 1980s most of the developing countries had been forced as a result of economic difficulties to neglect human resources development. A favourable international economic and financial environment was crucial to the successful implementation of national plans.

48. International economic cooperation needed to be structured in such a way as to take proper account of the human resources development needs of the developing countries. The activities of the United Nations system should focus on national capacity-building, while donor countries and non-governmental organizations provided financial and technical support for the developing countries' own national endeavours.

49. Regional cooperation offered considerable scope for collective efforts involving the exchange of information and experiences and the organization of regional workshops and programmes, enabling the participants to derive the maximum benefit from joint economic progress and the sharing of costs. Regional conflicts, promoted and inflamed by the political and commercial interests of developed countries, had resulted in the loss of many young lives in the developing countries, along with the destruction of infrastructures and the squandering of opportunities for development. With relaxation of East-West tension the developing countries should be allowed to focus their efforts on development policies instead of on the arms race.

50. Human resources were now widely perceived as the chief agent and goal of development. The developing countries required help in order to draw up comprehensive country profiles and strategies for human resources development as a basis for coordinating activities at national and international levels.

(Mr. Ziaran, Islamic Republic of Iran)

51. The large number of qualified migrants from the developing countries now resident in the advanced countries could make a significant contribution to the development process in their home nations through short-term visits and the establishment of regular contacts with relevant institutions. The modalities and proven track record of the Transfer of Knowledge through Expatriate Nationals (TOKTEN) programme offered a suitable basis for the contribution of migrant expertise.

52. Coordination of the activities of the various organizations of the United Nations system in the field of human resources development was desirable and the proposal that coordination of those activities should be reviewed by the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) deserved consideration.

53. Mr. LEE (World Health Organization) said that national execution should be a common goal of the whole United Nations system. WHO already practised national execution, giving technical advice to the Ministers of Health responsible for national health systems while providing financial support from its own budget and seeking to obtain other additional resources. WHO saw its principal function as one assisting Member States in their efforts to achieve self-reliance.

54. The problem as far as national execution was concerned seemed to be less the concept itself than the lack of a common understanding of the term and the absence of modalities for implementing the process. Serious concern had been expressed within WHO regarding different interpretations of the term and the way in which the process had been handled in some countries in so far as it affected the role of WHO and other specialized agencies. WHO hoped that the guidelines currently being developed by UNDP would help to clarify the situation and ensure the full participation of all concerned at the global, regional and field level.

55. WHO had been reassured by UNDP's announcement that it would be reviewing with WHO areas which might require special attention such as the prevention and control of the acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), an activity in which UNDP and WHO had formed a special alliance. AIDS posed a threat to all countries and efforts to combat the AIDS pandemic must not be held back by changes in managerial responsibilities. Full cooperation between national and international partners was vital and a clear understanding of national execution policy was therefore essential.

56. Mr. AL-ROMAIHI (Bahrain) said that the development of human resources was essential to successful economic and social growth. Development organizations had, indeed, provided tangible assistance in building the economic infrastructures of some developing countries. However, his delegation hoped to see a reversal of the recent disturbing trend, whereby certain countries had been excluded, so as to avoid the kind of injustice which had occurred with the introduction of the principle of net contributor status. That

(Mr. Al-Romaihi, Bahrain)

principle failed to take into account the negative features peculiar to small island developing countries, since it used the per capita gross national product as a yardstick; in the case of such countries that was not an accurate social indicator, since it disregarded such countries' overall economic circumstances, such as the net transfer of financial resources, the type of commodities available and whether they were renewable or exhaustible, the ability to diversify income sources and self-sufficiency in economic growth. It was regrettable that, despite the observations made in recent years by such countries, the principle continued to be applied, as a result of which most of them had been deprived of aid.

57. In that connection, UNDP had resolved to send a high-level mission to the countries so affected for consultations regarding application of the principle of net contributor status. His delegation therefore hoped that UNDP would reconsider the latter with a view to restoring the principle that assistance should be provided to all without restriction.

58. Mr. BLANCA (Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation) said that the statements on agenda item 82 had demonstrated broad consensus on the importance for the United Nations system to have a strong and effective development cooperation arm and he hoped that those views would be reflected in a consensus resolution on the topic.

59. With regard to the implementation of resolution 44/211, much hard work had yet to be done to ensure full implementation of the UNDP and UNFPA decisions on successor arrangements for support costs and on national execution. While the 1992 triennial review could provide general indications on the changes at field level, the true impact of those changes would take much longer to assess. It was therefore necessary to determine whether the steps already taken pointed in the right direction, since the guidelines on national execution would only be reviewed by the Governing Council of UNDP at its May 1992 meeting, and their impact in the field could not therefore be assessed in time for the triennial review.

60. Many delegates had regretted the lack of progress in such areas as the formation of a more rationalized field structure, with multidisciplinary teams; the sharing of United Nations facilities; the establishment of a United Nations common country programme to respond to national priorities; the promotion of decentralization, the delegation of authority, national capacity-building and national execution; the harmonization and simplification of procedures; and the strengthening of the resident coordinator system.

61. On the subject of resources, the results of the 1991 United Nations Pledging Conference had highlighted the need to give greater momentum to the financing of operational activities. Delegates had shown a shared concern at the marginalization of the Organization's social and economic programmes at a time when awareness of the interdependence of the problems of poverty, population, environment, economic transition and social reforms was growing.

(Mr. Blanca)

62. The disappointment expressed by many Governments with the slow pace of implementation of resolution 44/211 and all related decisions lent particular urgency to the resolution on that topic; he hoped that it would be adopted without difficulty.

63. Delegations had stressed the increasing importance attached to human development as a weapon in combating poverty and the role of technical cooperation, managerial training and institutional support in assisting countries with economies in transition. The principal focus for the triennial comprehensive policy review had been delineated; important ideas on intergovernmental mechanisms for operational activities and the funding of those activities, which had emerged from the Nordic United Nations project, would be of great value in preparations for the 1992 session of the Economic and Social Council.

The meeting rose at 5.35 p.m.