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Chairman: Mr. BURKE (Ireland)

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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 (continued) (A/46/186 and Add.1, A/46/206-E/1991/93 and Add.1-4)
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AGENDA ITEM 88: HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT (continued) (A/46/336, 344, 461, 501/Rev.1, 520 and 579)

1. Mr. JANKOWITSCH (Austria) said that, over the years, interaction between the secretariats and governing bodies of United Nations agencies involved in operational activities for development had become increasingly complex, and his delegation was concerned that decisions were often taken without regard for their practical meaning or consequences, particularly their financial implications. Organizations were frequently left to interpret what their governing bodies might have meant, which was an indication of how Member States tended to abdicate their responsibility. For that reason, one of the priority issues in the ongoing debate about the reform of the United Nations system must be better and more effective governance by Member States.

2. The relative decline in the amount of official development assistance (ODA) available for the operational activities of the development agencies of the United Nations system, especially, bilateral cooperation activities, did not necessarily reflect a lack of confidence in those agencies. There was a natural tendency for national administrations to take complete charge of ODA they distributed so that they could point to the success or failure of their own efforts and increase their bilateral weight vis-à-vis developing countries. There was little reason to hope that that attitude would undergo substantial change, since most donors had developed well-entrenched bureaucracies to administer their bilateral funds. Another reason why donors preferred bilateral ODA might lie in recipient countries' continued insistence that the themes and objectives of operational activities should in no way limit their prerogative to use United Nations assistance in accordance with their national priorities and objectives and local cultural and socio-economic

(Mr. Jankowitsch, Austria)

realities. If donors' ideas were not duly taken into account, it was not surprising that their enthusiasm for multilateral ODA was tepid.

3. The organizations of the United Nations system engaged in operational activities for development must strive to excel because only through excellence and the full use of their unique advantage of universality and impartiality could they maintain their share of available ODA. Any real or perceived inadequacy stemming from mismanagement or the slightest indication of corruption would destroy their reputation.

4. The relationship between the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), as the central funding body for operational activities, and the specialized agencies of the United Nations system had recently been reassessed. During the current period of transition, a few traditional roles had changed, and some units had taken over responsibilities previously vested in other agencies. Experience would show whether such emerging competition would complement efforts, and thus stimulate quality, or end in counter-productive rivalry. The specialized agencies should not abandon operational activities altogether to concentrate on "normative functions" and the preparation of studies, since the raison d'être of those agencies was involvement in technical cooperation activities.

5. Flexibility would be necessary if the United Nations development system was to adapt to changing requirements and formulate new strategies to deal with them. His delegation welcomed the strengthening of the concept of national execution and strongly supported the further integration of non-governmental organizations in project execution. However, changes, even when necessary, should be administered with great care. In order to avoid confusion, new structures would have to evolve gradually, with due consultation among all parties involved. In response to existing demand, various agencies had become far more involved in technical cooperation work than had been originally foreseen. All corrective measures should be thoroughly examined in the light of the tripartite system, which had proved useful. The United Nations development system should strive to implement the principle of timely and system-wide decentralization to the field.

6. While his delegation supported the concept of enhanced national execution in project implementation, it advocated strict adherence to the principle of accountability in its application, particularly during the current trial stage. As a member of the UNDP Governing Council, Austria sought clear evidence that that principle actually led to the timely and efficient execution of projects and due presentation of audited accounts in practice. That question should be given special attention during the next triennial review of operational activities, scheduled for 1992.

7. Mr. ZHANG Guanghui (China) said that it was important not to lose sight of the basic principles that guided the operational activities of the United Nations system, namely: universality, multilateralism and neutrality and the voluntary and grant nature of such activities; flexibility in responding to

(Mr. Zhang Guanghui, China)

the needs of developing countries and respect for their development policies and priorities; recognition that the formulation of national development plans and the setting of priorities and targets were the exclusive responsibility of recipient Governments; the need to adapt national execution to the specific situations of recipient countries in order to build national capacities; the need to maintain the traditional tripartite partnership and make use of the technical advantages of the specialized agencies; and the acceptance that coordination of external aid was the responsibility of recipient Governments. His delegation hoped that the technical cooperation agencies and organizations of the United Nations system would adhere to those principles in carrying out their respective mandates.

8. It was highly regrettable that the Human Development Report 1991 referred to some issues that were beyond the mandate of UNDP and had no direct bearing on development. The Report had given rise to controversy among various parties and had diverted the international community's attention from the practical difficulties and problems faced by developing countries. As to the ideas discussed in the Report, his delegation wished to formulate a number of observations.

9. Human development required an adequate material foundation that had to be built up through economic development. However, most developing countries had rather weak economies and were scientifically and technologically backward. Their primary task was to develop their national economy and raise the standard of living, and in that way lay the necessary material foundation for human development.

10. The problem of defining the concept of "human development" was in itself very complicated, and his delegation objected to the inclusion of the "human freedom index" in the forthcoming edition of the Human Development Report. Any attempt to quantify human rights was unscientific and inconsistent with the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant provisions of international human rights instruments. Peoples of all countries should have the right to choose their own path of development, including "human development" strategies. The smooth implementation of operational activities for development of the United Nations system should not be affected by ideological differences.

11. The concept of human migration, also discussed in the Report, must be quantified. Migration was most often caused by a lack of the minimum conditions for survival and unbalanced economic development resulting from foreign aggression, civil upheavals, severe natural disasters and environmental degradation. The problem of mass migrations should be tackled at its roots, and UNDP should seek, within the scope of its mandate, ways and means of solving the practical problems faced by migrants.

12. In principle, his delegation was not opposed to the reduction of military expenditure; however, in view of its complexity, that issue should be allocated to United Nations bodies other than UNDP for consideration.

(Mr. Zhang Guanghui, China)

13. Given that the Human Development Report 1991 had given rise to such widespread controversy, UNDP should consider carefully whether to prepare the 1992 edition.
14. Over the past two years, considerable progress had been made in reviewing the governance arrangements of the World Food Programme (WFP) by the United Nations, the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and WFP itself. The bodies concerned had conducted a full exchange of views which had resulted in the unanimous adoption of the draft revised General Regulations. His delegation was in favour of the draft revised General Regulations and believed that WFP should continue to be run jointly by the United Nations and FAO and that the Executive Director of WFP should continue to be appointed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Director-General of FAO. The Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes must be strengthened through the enlargement of its membership and the enhancement of its functioning. His delegation understood that the provision of article 15 of the draft revised General Regulations, which stated that WFP "may also provide humanitarian economic assistance at the request of the Secretary-General", was applicable only under extremely unusual circumstances and that its application would not infringe the sovereignty of recipient countries.
15. Mr. BARAC (Romania) said that the latest efforts to reform the operational activities for development of the United Nations system seemed to be in keeping with the provisions of paragraph 17 (a) of General Assembly resolution 44/211, which called for the United Nations system to base its activities on the national programme framework of the recipient Governments. In that regard, strengthening the role of resident coordinators was essential for ensuring better coordination of operational activities and harmonizing policies and programmes at the country level.
16. Further measures would have to be taken to maintain the momentum of reform. A number of valuable ideas and proposals had already been put forward both by the relevant agencies of the United Nations system and by various Member States. The Nordic United Nations project contained a wealth of ideas dealing with the three main problem areas: overall policy guidance, governance and funding. Ultimately, the reform process should enhance the comparative advantages of the operational activities of the United Nations system, and his delegation supported the recommendation of the recent joint meeting of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) and the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) that that topic should be discussed in detail at the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council's regular session in 1992.
17. At its thirty-eighth session, the UNDP Governing Council had adopted a number of landmark decisions on many issues of major importance for the entire system of technical cooperation. UNDP had been the main catalyst for involving the private sector in national development efforts, and his delegation welcomed the establishment of the Division for the Private Sector

(Mr. Barac, Romania)

in Development within the Bureau for Programme Policy and Evaluation. The Division had conducted a fact-finding mission in Eastern Europe, including Romania, to determine how UNDP could participate in the economic reform process to help develop a privatization strategy for the region. UNDP private-sector activities should be expanded to include the compilation and dissemination of regulations and policies that promoted entrepreneurship and private-sector development; formulation and dissemination of methodologies for privatization of State-owned enterprises; organization of study tours in developed countries for entrepreneurs from countries in transition; development of an international network for privatization; appointment of special advisers for private-sector activities in the offices of UNDP resident representatives in interested countries; and provision of technical assistance to interested countries in order to promote entrepreneurship and the development of the private sector. In addition, UNDP and interested countries should prepare special management training projects for promoting entrepreneurship and the development of the private sector.

18. UNDP had also made a positive contribution to the transformation of Eastern European countries and their integration into the world economy. Governing Council decision 91/24 was only a first step, however, and his delegation looked forward to the formulation and presentation, at the Council's thirty-ninth session, of the of country and intercountry programmes which reflected that decision. While the UNDP regional programme for Europe made a valuable contribution in such fields as environment, energy, management and training and education, much more work should be done in the areas of problem identification, resource mobilization, project formulation and efficient coordination of regional efforts.

19. The informal exchange of views on the economic, social and environmental consequences of the situation between Iraq and Kuwait at the second regular session of 1991 of the Economic and Social Council had revealed the extent of the losses suffered by the economies of countries, including Romania, that were bound by strong commercial ties to the Gulf region. The participants in the debate had concluded that international assistance to help countries severely affected by the conflict had not been provided through traditional channels and had frequently been inadequate. His delegation therefore welcomed the establishment of the United Nations Development Programme Task Force and hoped that the UNDP Administrator would submit a programme containing concrete proposals for assistance to the affected countries before the end of 1991.

20. Together with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Bank, UNDP was in the forefront of activities to protect and improve the environment. Romania was firmly convinced that operational activities must meet environmental protection standards fully and was particularly interested in the speedy implementation of the project concerning environmental management in the Danube River basin. UNDP could also play a key role in implementing a subregional project on environmental management and sustainable development based at Chişinău, the capital of the Republic of Moldavia.

21. Mr. METE (Albania) said that Albania was seeking to create as many opportunities as possible for cooperation with the specialized agencies of the United Nations system within the framework of operational activities for development. The assistance of UNDP and other specialized agencies would be especially important to Albania, which was on the verge of economic, social and political chaos. Two decades of development under an excessively centralized economic system had left the country without the essential infrastructure, as well as management know-how and the legal framework required for a market economy. The willingness of UNDP to help Albania with its transition had been appreciated, as had been the assistance provided by the United Nations system in dealing with the problem of Albanian refugees. Further assistance was now needed to help develop Albania's scientific institutions, universities and the productive sector. Participation in regional projects had already helped to increase the level of technical knowledge, and the UNDP office which had been opened in Tirana had rendered valuable assistance in that regard. The Albanian Government and people must also play their part by making full use of their own resources and capacities.

22. National capacities must be properly utilized in the formulation and execution of operational activities for development, taking due account of each country's level of development and circumstances, with resident coordinators playing a major role. It was important to preserve and strengthen the central role of UNDP in the funding of technical cooperation; the Programme also had a positive role to play in assisting countries that were embarking on the path towards a pluralist political system and a market economy in such areas as privatization, the training of managers and specialists, environmental protection, transfer of technology and telecommunications.

23. Experience had shown the continuing relevance of the fundamental principles underlying the operational activities for development of the United Nations system, namely universality, their voluntary nature, neutrality and multilateralism. It had also demonstrated the importance of respect for the principle of national Governments' responsibility for formulating and implementing national development programmes.

24. Mr. CARMICHAEL (Canada) said that in order to improve the effectiveness of operational activities for development, a medium- to long-term approach to questions of structure and mandate was required. Equally important, however, were the short-term functional initiatives referred to in General Assembly resolution 44/211. His delegation was disappointed at the slow progress made in the implementation of that resolution as a result of problems inherent in the structure of the operational activities system, such as a lack of clear system leadership, parochial agency agendas and conflicting governance systems.

25. Nevertheless the essentially mechanical improvements outlined in resolution 44/211 must be implemented within the context of the existing structure at once. Failure to do so would impose heavy costs on the developing countries the system had been designed to help. Opportunities

(Mr. Carmichael, Canada)

would be lost for development; moreover, the problems inherent in dealing with a system characterized by multiple procedures and cycles, scattered offices and facilities and uncoordinated programme objectives undermined the Organization's credibility. If developing countries were to be helped through development cooperation, the United Nations system should be concentrating on capacity-building in order to make national execution the norm, not the exception.

26. Given the complexity of resolution 44/211, time and resources must be concentrated on five key elements: the rationalization and integration of field office facilities; the harmonization of cycles and procedures within the United Nations system and, in due course, with recipient Governments; a common country statement of objectives derived from national priorities, leading to fully integrated programming; national execution; and a United Nations programme approach targeted on the building of national capacity to accelerate human development. The effectiveness of human resource development activities in particular could be significantly improved by better coordination of United Nations operational activities, and the focus of the system's development programmes should be on human and institutional capacity-building, with particular emphasis on women. The Human Development Report 1991 also provided useful guidance in that regard.

27. By the time of the triennial review in 1992, each United Nations country office should have in place: a specific plan for achieving common premises by 1995, where economically feasible; a set of harmonized rules and procedures for all United Nations development agencies, with a plan for their integration with recipient Government cycles by 1995; a common, focused country statement of objectives fully integrated with national objectives which reflected the comparative advantages of the United Nations system; a specific plan to promote national execution over a time-scale commensurate with national capacities; and a methodology for the implementation, by 1995, of an overall programme approach for the United Nations development system at the country level. Primary responsibility for the implementation of those measures should fall to the resident coordinators and, at the system level, to the Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation.

28. Decisive action and cooperation by all parts of the United Nations development system was crucial. UNDP must play a key role in the process and recipient Governments must be significantly involved. In view of the limited personnel resources available to carry out that task, the necessary staff should be seconded from other parts of the system to the Office of the Director-General.

29. Mr. AMAZIANE (Morocco), speaking on behalf of the States members of the Arab Maghreb Union, said that the scarcity of financial resources and the absence of sex-disaggregated statistics had limited progress towards the mainstreaming of women in development. Women throughout the world continued to suffer acute socio-economic hardships, and until they were able to

(Mr. Amaziane, Morocco)

participate in political life and decision-making, their economic situation was unlikely to improve. Although the Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation had put forward some extremely useful proposals on the subject, without a clearly stated and honoured commitment on the part of all countries there could be no concrete progress towards the advancement of women in the short and medium terms.

30. While political changes in Central and Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union had encouraged a rethinking of the roles of the public and private sectors in development, the absence of a United Nations system-wide strategy for enhancing the role of entrepreneurship in economic development and reliable information about the volume, scope and type of activities undertaken by individual agencies made it difficult to assess the progress that had been achieved and the tasks that remained. In that respect, the Director-General's proposals in paragraph 44 of his report (A/46/206, annex) were quite appropriate

31. While seeking to ensure that the transition of the Soviet Union and the countries of Eastern Europe to a market economy was achieved without social instability and upheaval, the United Nations system should avoid redirecting financial resources away from the developing countries, as had occurred in the case of food aid. The collapse of the collectivist system had lengthened the list of unresolved problems faced by the developing countries, the most notable of which were population growth, poverty and hunger, increased flows of refugees and displaced persons, the spread of acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) and environmental degradation.

32. In General Assembly resolutions S-18/3 and 45/199 the international community had indicated its awareness of the need to prevent the difficult problems posed for the development of the South by insufficient financial resources for investment from worsening and the need to take account of ecological imperatives while safeguarding natural resources. However, donor countries had not yet come up with the financial resources needed to achieve the objectives set out in those resolutions. The nominal value of resources allocated to operational activities had in fact decreased. Morocco supported the Director-General's call for substantial concessional resources to enable the developing countries to revive and sustain their economic growth and for the developed countries to meet the agreed international target for ODA as well as the targets established at the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries.

33. While it was not yet possible to assess all the progress that had been made by the United Nations system in implementing General Assembly resolution 44/211, important decisions had been taken by the UNDP Governing Council at its thirty-eighth session, particularly with regard to successor arrangements for agency support costs, national execution and human development. Those decisions could not fail to have a positive impact on the tripartite relationship, since they encouraged execution by national agencies.

(Mr. Amaziane, Morocco)

34. His delegation supported the proposal to explore the feasibility of a United Nations system-wide strategy to upgrade and develop the skills and knowledge of United Nations system officials and national officials and was pleased to learn that certain donors were prepared to participate in the financing of such a strategy, provided that its main objective was to develop the human resources of the developing countries. He also welcomed the study to be undertaken by WFP on ways of integrating food aid with other development resources. The Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly should assess the real impact of all those measures prior to the triennial review in 1992.

35. Other positive developments were the increase in the number of short-term consultants and nationally recruited staff, the limited number of closures and the modest but sustained increase in the number of field offices and the expansion of the range of their functions. It should be noted, however, that budgetary constraints and the principle of zero growth were compromising the field offices' effectiveness. Progress in the simplification and harmonization of procedures governing programming processes and project cycles had been limited, given that operational activities constituted only approximately 10 per cent of the total aid flow to developing countries. Consequently, the problems associated with the diversity of procedures could be adequately resolved only with the help of the major bilateral and multilateral donors. Problems associated with the interpretation of such concepts as the programme approach and integrated programming should also be resolved, either by establishing universally acceptable definitions or by allowing beneficiary countries to draw their own definitions.

36. It would be easier to assess the situation and the relevance of the provisions of General Assembly resolution 44/211 once the Director-General's reports for the comprehensive triennial policy review were issued. The Director-General's Office should be provided with the necessary human and financial resources to enable it to produce reports of the necessary quality together with recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness of operational activities.

37. The countries of the Arab Maghreb Union remained committed to the principle of neutrality which characterized the technical assistance provided by the United Nations system. Attempts to introduce political conditions into operational activities were virtually tantamount to a violation of the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

38. Ms. CAPELING-ALAJIKA (United Nations Development Fund for Women) said that the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) had worked for 15 years to mobilize resources for women's economic activities and draw attention to the enormous contributions made by women to society. UNIFEM had been obliged to develop focused strategies to ensure the effective use of its limited resources for the empowerment of women. The Fund's long-term strategy concentrated on two sectors of crucial importance to women in developing

(Ms. Capeling-Alajika)

countries, agriculture and trade and industry, with particular emphasis on food security, environment, micro-enterprise and employment, and sought to support activities that addressed the major constraints faced by women.

39. Women formed a significant percentage of the agricultural labour force and were a major resource in food production, distribution, processing and preparation. Strategies for improving national and household food security needed to address the fact that, in addition to time spent in agricultural production, women had to spend time caring for children and performing other domestic duties. Such strategies must therefore address issues such as child-care arrangements, the introduction of time- and labour-saving technologies and access to credit, training and advances in agricultural science and technology. They should also build on the knowledge acquired by women in such areas as seed selection, pest management, soil maintenance and animal production.

40. Biases inherent in current approaches to agrarian and rural development had led to an inadequate analysis of women's role in food production and thus to a wasteful neglect of the knowledge, skills and needs of female farmers. Existing methods of choosing and introducing technological improvements in agriculture had increased women's work burden while undermining their rights to the product of their labour, thus promoting their marginalization and affecting the health and welfare of their families. UNIFEM programmes were focused on increasing women's access to credit, to safe and appropriate technologies and to training to equip them with the skills, knowledge, experience and confidence for increased self-reliance. At the macro-policy level, the Fund's long-term strategy sought to provide support for national planning activities and national machineries for the advancement of women with a view to strengthening women's voice in national development decision-making, thereby creating an environment in which direct support for women's grass-roots activities could flourish.

41. Experience had shown that it was important to take social, environmental and human factors into account along with economic objectives. A flexible approach to project design had shown that, with knowledge of the specific living conditions of the poor, projects could meet basic human needs and foster an awareness of ecological sustainability. The creative response of women's groups involved in a Peruvian project to support non-governmental organizations developing and introducing food-processing technologies had led to substantial savings in the time spent on domestic duties; at the same time, the dissemination of those technologies would generate employment and income for women and improve nutrition for rural families.

42. UNIFEM's work in Africa involved strengthening relationships with major development agencies, building strong working partnerships with regional institutions of science, technology and development management and improving women's capacity at the community level to manage their own development. A key element in the Fund's strategy was providing support to intermediary

(Ms. Capeling Alajika)

organizations that offered rural women alternative access routes to the priority sectors of UNIFEM activities.

43. UNIFEM also sought to draw attention to the needs of women refugees and their children and to influence mainstream refugee programmes by giving direct support to demonstration projects which empowered women and contributed to their economic welfare, and by reminding policy makers of the vital role played by women in emergencies in rebuilding families, communities and societies.

44. Mr. WALKER (Jamaica), speaking on behalf of the States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that human resources development had been severely damaged by the decline in social expenditure occasioned by structural adjustment. The challenge of the 1990s would be to translate the new perception of people-centred development into practical activities at the national and regional levels. The Caribbean Community welcomed the priority accorded to human resources development in the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade and the work done in that area by the World Bank and UNDP, among others.

45. The economic problems of the 1980s had had particularly disastrous consequences in the Caribbean region. The Grand Anse Declaration, adopted by the Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community in July 1989, contained a resolution recognizing that human resources must play a central role in regional and national development strategies. In their human resources programmes, which fostered, *inter alia*, indigenous entrepreneurship and the expansion of the knowledge base, Caribbean countries sought to design structural adjustment programmes with minimal negative social impact.

46. Human resources development would be best pursued from a cross-sectoral approach stressing the integration of women in development and the enhancement of national capacities. Education and training were of primary importance. In particular, educational opportunities at the secondary and higher levels must be increased. Training programmes should equip students with marketable skills based on job demand. Distance-teaching programmes at the tertiary level of education, which had proved valuable in the Caribbean region, might be explored more actively by other developing countries and, at the same time, provide a major input to cooperation among developing countries.

47. Science and technology must also be a major component of education and training in order to ensure that the transfer of technology to developing countries was meaningful. At the same time, the particular economic and social requirements of the developing world should be reflected in an appropriate mix of traditional, locally generated and imported technology. Resources must be mobilized to enhance the coordination of United Nations activities in support of national human development initiatives, and the CARICOM States hoped that the new demands on available resources would not detract from the high priority the international community had accorded to human resources development.

48. Mr. KHORRAMI (Afghanistan) said that while the developing countries themselves had a decisive role to play in eradicating poverty, hunger and disease, raising living standards and achieving socio-economic development, assistance from developed countries and international organizations was also an important factor. The operational activities of the United Nations system contributed significantly in that regard and therefore required substantial support from the international community. Projects funded by the United Nations should be carried out in an integrated manner in order to strengthen the national capacities of developing countries, which should eventually assume full responsibility for project execution.

49. Afghanistan fully supported the recommendations of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation contained in document A/46/206 and looked forward to the adoption and successful implementation of the draft resolution on operational activities. The operational activities of the United Nations system should reflect the overall strategies, policies and priorities formulated in the new International Development Strategy and should contribute effectively to its implementation. To that end the overall level of resources should be increased and a greater percentage of ODA allocated to operational activities, particularly in countries which did not receive sufficient assistance from international financial institutions or through the bilateral channels currently preferred by donors.

50. Afghanistan had received economic and technical assistance from a number of United Nations organizations, and operational activities in the country were harmonized with the national social and economic development plan. The United Nations humanitarian and economic assistance programmes for Afghanistan were also rendering valuable assistance. He appealed to donor countries which had pledged their support for that programme to make every effort to assist Afghanistan in the rehabilitation and reconstruction of its economy.

51. Mr. KOIKE (Japan), speaking on agenda item 82, said that the fundamental political changes in the world were creating positive conditions for economic development and heightening awareness of the need for a market-oriented system, popular participation, pluralistic democracy and respect for human rights. While the United Nations had concluded important agreements on development strategy and channelled important resources to its operational activities, current needs still exceeded available resources. The key to the success of those activities was more efficient utilization of all resources.

52. In 1990, Japan had contributed \$700 million to the United Nations system, and its Government and people wanted to see that their money was being utilized effectively to meet the real needs of developing countries. His delegation believed that attainment of the central policy objectives set out in General Assembly resolution 44/211 would considerably improve the system's efficiency. Progress had been made since the adoption of that resolution, and UNDP Governing Council decision 91/32 on successor arrangements for agency support costs would encourage the United Nations system to shift from the project execution towards the provision of more substantive and improved technical support.

(Mr. Koike, Japan)

53. Tangible results of the efforts to improve efficiency were still limited, however. The Director-General must therefore provide comprehensive information, analysis and proposals on the major topics for consideration during the 1992 triennial policy review of operational activities, so that new policy guidelines could be formulated. Member States should help conserve the scarce resources available for the review by indicating the priority subjects on which the Director-General should concentrate. Decentralization, field representation, including the resident coordinator system, an integrated approach to the United Nations system and national execution all merited priority consideration.

54. Japan welcomed the guidelines elaborated to strengthen the resident coordinator system and other important measures taken to that end. However, the practical effect of those steps was still unknown, and much remained to be done to give real substance to the resident coordinator's roles and responsibilities. Under the recently adopted successor arrangements for agency support costs, the new authority of resident coordinators and resident representatives to allocate funds for technical support services at the programme level would strengthen their leadership role at the programme formulation stage. The new support cost arrangement was of particular importance, since effective coordination was best fostered at the very outset of the programming process.

55. Little progress had been achieved in promoting decentralization or delegation of authority. The situation should therefore be carefully monitored and appropriate guidance sought from the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. While progress had also been scant in the development of an integrated United Nations system response, Japan welcomed the Director-General's initiative of issuing resident coordinators a set of draft guidelines for enhancing the programming process as well as the ongoing analysis of experience acquired at the country level in programming and joint implementation activities. The in-depth deliberations which those studies would make possible could lead to consensus at the current session and provide guidance for further steps.

56. There was growing awareness of a need to reform the organizations of the United Nations system that were involved in operational activities. In that context, his delegation fully shared the concerns expressed in the context of the Nordic United Nations project about the organizational shortcomings of the system and the Organization's gradual marginalization in comparison with the World Bank and the regional development banks. That issue required further study by the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly in 1992.

57. Turning to agenda item 88, he noted the recent trend, largely supported by the UNDP Human Development Report, to include human resource development in the larger concept of human development, which placed human beings at the centre of development. Recalling the controversy aroused by the Human Development Report 1991, he suggested that the reports should concentrate on

(Mr. Koike, Japan)

the areas in which UNDP had competence, while human rights issues might be more appropriately dealt with by other bodies, such as the Centre for Human Rights.

58. The United Nations had an important role to play in strengthening the international community's assistance for human development. An interdisciplinary effort by the entire system, including the Bretton Woods Institutions, was required, involving coordination at both the policy-making and field levels as well as between the United Nations system and recipient Governments and among donor countries. Japan believed that human development presented a test case which would reveal the capacity of the United Nations system to act as a coherent entity and initiator of dialogue, especially with the developing countries.

59. Mr. SIEBER (Observer for Switzerland) expressed the hope that a resolution on operational activities would be adopted by consensus at the current session. Acknowledging the valuable progress report of the Director General for Development and International Economic Cooperation and the constructive deliberations of the most recent session of the Economic and Social Council, he said that additional efforts were required to upgrade the operational activities of the United Nations system. Integrated programming of United Nations field activities, for example, must be improved. In that regard, his delegation would appreciate further details on implementation and follow-up of the measures proposed by the Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (Operational Activities) (CCSQ(OPS)) and the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP).

60. Coordination and management would be much more effective if recipient countries defined their objectives clearly. The United Nations system could help recipient countries to plan and coordinate by taking into account not only its own specialized agencies but also JCGP meetings and the activities of other multilateral and bilateral donors. Training and institutional support, decentralization of authority and greater budgetary flexibility and accountability would also strengthen the coordination and management of operational activities.

61. A progress report on efforts to simplify and harmonize rules and procedures would also be extremely helpful. As indicated in document A/46/206, the United Nations system should review its procedures, taking into account the requirements of recipient countries and the need for accountability. Another area which should be reviewed was the UNDP field network and the role of the resident coordinator which should be strengthened. In that connection, the informal exchange of views which had taken place in September between five resident representatives and the UNDP Governing Council had been significant.

62. His delegation looked forward to the report by the Director-General on the implementation of the useful guidelines elaborated within the framework of

(Mr. Sieber, Observer, Switzerland)

ACC and took note of the encouraging interim assessment and report on the first series of training courses offered to senior United Nations representatives by the International Training Centre of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) at Turin. Such courses should be made a permanent feature of a more comprehensive strategy for training in operational activities and technical development.

63. It was to be hoped that the 1992 comprehensive triennial policy review of operational activities would be realistic and would focus on practical concerns. While General Assembly resolution 44/211 must serve as the basis for the review, it was also essential to consider the proposals contained in certain recent studies, such as the Nordic United Nations project and the studies conducted by the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), together with the proposals put forward by the representative of Canada. Given the budgetary problems faced by many traditional donor countries and growing competition for resources, the United Nations system must project a sharper image in order to attract additional resources. The comprehensive triennial policy review might provide a timely occasion to consider the Organization's operational activities from that broader perspective.

64. Mr. KOULYK (Ukraine) said that the operational activities of the United Nations system for development were a vital component in the economic and social development of developing countries. Referring to the comprehensive statistical data on operational activities and development contained in document A/46/206/Add.1, he noted with approval that over four fifths of all concessional resources in 1989 had been allocated to Africa and the Asian and Pacific region. Ukraine welcomed the efforts of UNDP to adapt to the changing pattern of economic coordination in the world. While adhering to the priorities set out in the consensus of 1970, UNDP and the related funds of the United Nations system should focus their efforts on the radical economic reforms under way in many countries, particularly in Eastern Europe, the world's severe environmental problems, and the need to achieve stability and transparency in all sectors of the world economy.

65. The report of the thirty-eighth session of the UNDP Governing Council (E/1991/34) demonstrated that UNDP activities generally reflected the changes in international economic cooperation, as evidenced in particular by the preparations for the fifth programming cycle (1992-1996). Ukraine attached particular importance to the inclusion of economies in transition among the criteria for the provision of UNDP assistance, since such assistance would help integrate those countries in the world economic system, to the benefit of all countries, including those of the developing world. Ukraine had given priority in its economic policy to a swift conversion to the market system and a more active participation in the international division of labour. That policy had been given particular impetus by Ukraine's recent declaration of independence, and his country was prepared to hold discussions with the Administrator of UNDP to determine modalities for the Organization's direct participation in Ukraine's radical economic reform.

(Mr. Koulyk, Ukraine)

66. His delegation also noted with approval the attention given by UNDP to environmental problems, particularly in view of their universal nature and the current preparations for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. For Ukraine, those problems were closely interlinked with the question of international cooperation on the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster and he therefore welcomed UNDP Governing Council decision 91/23 on that subject.

67. Following the recent fires at the Chernobyl power plant, the Ukrainian parliament had adopted a decision to complete the shut-down of the station in 1995 and had requested technological and material assistance from the United Nations, necessitated by the massive technical complications and the universal lack of experience in the shutting down of nuclear power stations and the disposal of spent fuel, as well as by the country's current economic problems. The Supreme Soviet of Ukraine had expressed the hope that all countries, and primarily the nuclear Powers, would support that effort, and his delegation believed that the implementation of Governing Council decision 91/23 would be substantially advanced by the participation of UNDP.

68. Mr. HADDAD (World Bank) stressed the role of human capital and human resources development in economic growth and technological progress. The World Bank had made poverty reduction a central element of its operations and policy. Based on the World Development Report 1990, it had adopted a two-part strategy for poverty reduction: promoting broad-based economic growth to generate income-earning opportunities for the poor and ensuring access of the poor to basic social services. The World Development Report 1991 had stressed the importance of secondary education, science and technology training and international exchanges of engineers in support of technology transfers.

69. Despite substantial progress in human development over the past three decades, there remained a huge gap between the demands and expectations of developing countries on the one hand and reality on the other. Closing that gap would require long-term commitments at the country level and difficult choices on four fronts: gearing human resource development investment to macroeconomic policy, demographic change and infrastructure projects; balancing competing demands among sectors and different human resource development investments; apportioning tasks between the State and the private sector (including non-governmental organizations); and determining the institutional skills and capacities to be developed.

70. The international development assistance community also had a key role to play in closing that gap. As available resources were limited, it must target and programme assistance selectively by providing support for human resource development over a sufficient length of time; increasing financial support for human resources; facilitating the transfer of ideas; and promoting international coordination and cooperation. Further details of that four-pronged approach were available to all delegations.

(Mr. Haddad, World Bank)

71. Reflecting its commitment to human-centred development, a commitment that would continue well into the 1990s, the World Bank had vastly increased its human resources development lending in the past five years. As of fiscal 1991, the Bank's cumulative lending in the field of education amounted to approximately \$13.5 billion, while lending for population, health and nutrition had amounted to \$5 billion. World Bank lending for education accounted for 14 per cent of external assistance from all sources and 45 per cent of multilateral financing in 1989; lending for population, health and nutrition had accounted for 7 per cent of all external assistance and 11 per cent of multilateral financing. That significant expansion in lending demonstrated that countries were no longer reluctant to seek Bank assistance for human development. Recently, the Bank had also diversified into new areas, such as social action funds, broader social safety-net initiatives, and science and technology.

72. Mr. OKSAMITNY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that promotion of the welfare of every individual was an essential concern which should determine the priorities for joint action to enhance the efficiency of the operational activities of the United Nations system. The Soviet Union therefore welcomed the increasing trend of the projects of many programmes and funds, particularly UNDP and UNICEF, to reflect a sense of global responsibility and awareness. At the same time, his delegation noted with concern the lack of coordination in United Nations activities, particularly where major humanitarian and emergency assistance operations were concerned. Other shortcomings included a failure to optimize the functions and structure of separate subdivisions and the unacceptably large expenditure on administrative and managerial needs. These problems must be addressed on an ideology-free and non-discriminatory basis and in a manner consistent with the letter and spirit of the relevant major resolutions. The Soviet Union was willing to help strengthen United Nations operational activities in any way it could.

73. The Soviet Union was currently exploring modalities for the economic integration of the sovereign republics and ways of overcoming the severe structural and operational problems associated with that process. Severed economic links had to be restored as swiftly as possible in a new economic system based on truly democratic, market principles. Those difficult transformations were causing severe social and economic problems which were bound to have a far-reaching effect on world development. The Soviet Union looked forward to an appropriate response from UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and other bodies of the system, particularly in protecting the interests of children during the transition period, establishing the necessary conditions for free competition, furthering the privatization of State property and the demonopolization of production, improving the system of management, promoting the development of small enterprises and stepping up measures to deal with the Chernobyl problem.

(Mr. Oksamitny, USSR)

74. Despite its own current problems, the Soviet Union hoped to play a more active role in multilateral programmes under UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA, and therefore welcomed the impetus given by recent UNDP agreements to such issues as environmental conservation and restoration, combating AIDS, the development of human resources and assistance to the least developed countries. His delegation believed that UNDP might also address the conversion of military production. He welcomed the increased attention given by UNDP to the human factor in growth and development processes and hoped that that factor would be accorded similar priority in the economic work of the Organization as a whole.

75. The USSR welcomed efforts to enhance coordination of the UNDP and UNFPA programming cycles and to ensure that UNFPA programmes were better tailored to the social and economic needs of individual countries. His country was currently exploring ways of expanding its cooperation with UNFPA, in particular by extending the range of services it provided to assist the Fund's projects.

76. Applauding increased efforts by UNICEF to resolve global problems affecting mothers and children, he stressed that those problems could only be solved in the context of universal efforts to overcome underdevelopment and poverty, to implement complex and painful reforms, to preserve the environment and to make drastic cuts in military expenditure in all countries, including those of the developing world. The Soviet Union welcomed UNICEF's work on behalf of children's rights and had taken measures to fulfil its own commitments under the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In conclusion, he hoped that the Committee would be able to adopt responsible and balanced resolutions which properly reflected the increasingly universal approach of the United Nations to the world's economic and social problems.

77. Mr. GONZALEZ (Chile) lamented the loss of interest in many quarters in international economic cooperation. It was also unfortunate that the role of the United Nations in cooperation activities had been diminishing in recent years in favour of bilateral cooperation. That phenomenon was only partly attributable to the direction in which the system had evolved. In fact, the reasons for the shift were largely political. Donor countries preferred bilateral donations, over which they could maintain greater control.

78. In order for the United Nations to regain prominence in operational activities, defects in the current system must be corrected. In that regard, the proposals contained in the in-depth study prepared by the Nordic countries deserved support. It was his delegation's hope that the Nordic United Nations Project would be taken up at the 1992 session of the Economic and Social Council.

79. Nevertheless, operational activities which, however underfunded, focused on major development issues had always been crucial for developing countries.

(Mr. Gonzalez, Chile)

Operational activities had become even more relevant with the recent emphasis on national execution of projects and on key themes such as extreme poverty, the environment and technical cooperation among developing countries. However, the proliferation of executing agencies and organizations had blunted the decision-making and implementing capacities of the United Nations system and needlessly pushed up operational costs. Indeed, the World Bank and the regional development banks, which had entered the scene only recently and had greater resources, were occasionally more effective than the United Nations.

80. The comparative advantage of the United Nations system over other organizations was its neutrality, its universal access and its broader membership. In the future, however, the efficiency and management capabilities of United Nations operational activities must be enhanced. In that regard, his delegation supported a streamlining of functions with the establishment of a simple deliberative body and more effective governing bodies. The role of the specialized agencies must also be redefined. In no case, however, should reforms serve as a pretext for conditionality.

81. Chile attached great importance to technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC). Through its own international cooperation agency, it had sought to give fresh impetus to that modality through cooperation agreements and projects with countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. United Nations support and activity had been invaluable in that connection. His delegation hoped that increased human and financial resources would be provided to the UNDP Special Unit for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries. The experience of the Latin American countries in coordinating their TCDC activities through the Latin American Economic System (SELA) could serve as a useful model in that regard.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.