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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 31st MEETING

Chairman: Mr. OUDOVENKO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic)

later: Mr. GAJENTAAN (Netherlands)

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 83: OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT (continued) (A/42/3, 136, 178, 293, 354, 359, 381, 411, 417, 603, 604, 677)

- (a) OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/42/207 and Corr.1, 326 and Add.1-3, A/42/290)
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- (e) UNITED NATIONS VOLUNTEERS PROGRAMME (E/1987/25)

1. Mr. LICHTINGER (Mexico) commended the note of the Secretary-General on operational activities of the United Nations system (A/42/326 and Add.1-3). In particular, the report prepared by Mr. Kurt Jansson (A/42/326/Add.1) dealt with questions of global importance for the better management of operational activities for development. First, the United Nations system should continue to respect the exclusive right of recipient Governments to formulate their national development plans and to choose the way in which external assistance was integrated in their strategies.

2. Second, in order to enable the UNDP country programme to fulfil its role as a frame of reference for all sources of United Nations system technical assistance and as a mechanism for promoting a more coherent and co-ordinated approach in operational activities, three basic changes must be made: the role of UNDP as a central financing body must be strengthened; programmable resources must be increased substantially; and the methods and practices of UNDP programming should be simplified and made more flexible to meet the specific needs of each developing country. In that respect, the proposal for an indicative programme of the United Nations system for Governments should be seriously considered as a possible alternative to the current method of programming and co-ordinating operational activities.

3. Third, co-ordination of assistance and international technical co-operation was a primary responsibility of each recipient Government. His delegation was concerned at certain new tendencies which could weaken Governments' ability to plan, control and co-ordinate external technical assistance and their sovereignty and self-determination in formulating economic policies. One such tendency was the insistence that UNDP should preside over the so-called "round tables". There was a need to find new mechanisms which could efficiently meet short-term co-ordinating needs and, at the same time, prepare and strengthen the infrastructure in order to enable Governments to carry out such a task by themselves. In addition, the

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(Mr. Lichtinger, Mexico)

efficiency and complementarity of the various bodies and agencies of the United Nations system in international economic co-operation must be enhanced.

4. Fourth, there was a need for decentralization in programming and decision-making. His delegation was concerned at the establishment, at UNDP headquarters, of new committees entrusted with the task of approving projects, and at the intention of several donor countries to centralize further the work of the UNDP Governing Council and to create new subsidiary bodies with restricted memberships.

5. Fifth, the Jansson report described the advantages of joint programming, and greater effort should be made in order to ensure that those advantages were used.

6. The report failed, however, to mention the role of the regional commissions in operational activities. The commissions could be of great assistance in establishing a national system of information on development and increasing technical co-operation among developing countries. The Secretary-General should review that problem in depth on the basis of the guidelines established in General Assembly resolution 32/197.

7. Lastly, the international community should increase its donations in order to provide greater assistance to the least developed countries; however, that should not affect the level of assistance provided to the rest of the developing world.

8. His delegation was concerned that no progress had been made in including the developing countries in a modern and equitable process of international co-operation. In recent years, the United Nations system had decreased its purchases of equipment and services from those countries, and agencies, field workers and major donor countries were reluctant to create the necessary attitudes, conditions and infrastructure which would enable them to participate more actively in co-operation and international assistance. Although technical co-operation among developing countries was a highly important activity, it had received little attention or funds from the international community.

9. Creative and innovative efforts must be made to modernize the concept of operational activities for development. That would have to be a slow but steady and coherent process. The role of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly must be strengthened in the political guidance and co-ordination of operational activities in their entirety.

10. Mr. TURYSKY (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that in 1986, UNDP had adopted a number of measures to improve its operational and organizational work, heighten its effectiveness and ensure the fuller use of existing resources. Technical assistance programming had been better co-ordinated with the national plans of the countries concerned, and technical assistance projects had been carried out more efficiently and objectively. His delegation noted with satisfaction that UNDP had increased its assistance to national liberation movements in Africa and to the Palestinian people.

(Mr. Turyansky, Ukrainian SSR)

11. However, there were also negative tendencies in the Programme's activities. The Programme had continued to strengthen its unjustifiable relations with international monetary and financial institutions, and had attached increasing importance to the development of the private sector in the developing countries and to the development of the industrial potential of small enterprises. At the same time, there had been no initiative to assist the public sector, despite the fact that that sector played a decisive role in the development of the national economies of developing countries. By ignoring the public sector, UNDP was violating United Nations resolutions on technical assistance for economic development, in particular General Assembly resolution 34/137.

12. A new approach to the solution of world economic problems was needed, through the development and implementation of the concept of international economic security, in which international economic relations would be based on just, mutually advantageous and mutually acceptable principles, creating conditions for peaceful coexistence and co-operation among all Governments, regardless of their social system or level of development, for the social and economic progress of each country in particular and of mankind as a whole. UNDP could make a valuable contribution to the development of that concept.

13. The Ukrainian SSR understood the developing countries' interest in finding new sources of financing for operational activities. The most realistic way to solve that problem was to undertake practical measures for the reduction of military expenditure and to use part of the savings for development. The recent Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development had shown what great opportunities the international community had to increase assistance to developing countries for their social and economic development.

14. The Ukrainian SSR participated in the organization of effective co-operation with the developing countries in diverse spheres of economic activity. Nearly 30,000 citizens from 25 countries were currently studying in the Republic's educational institutions. Moreover, several hundred of the Republic's teachers were training national personnel in the developing countries themselves. Seminars and practical work for specialists from developing countries continued to be held on a regular basis, and scientists and scholars of the Academy of Sciences of the Ukrainian SSR conducted joint research with their foreign colleagues in more than 400 different areas.

15. The Ukrainian SSR was prepared to co-operate more closely with UNDP and regretted that its nationals were not involved in the administration or field activities of the Programme.

16. Mr. BAI Xingji (China) said that, although the recent pledging conference for operational activities for development had resulted in a marginal increase in the general resources, the total amount of available resources was far from sufficient to meet the growing needs. On the whole, the amounts pledged by a few major donor countries had remained at the same level as the previous year. Moreover, the percentage of multilateral aid in official development assistance had dropped

(Mr. Bai Xingji, China)

sharply in recent years. His delegation was quite concerned at the apparent inability of the development system to meet the needs of many developing countries, in particular the least developed countries.

17. China welcomed the fact that the United Nations development system had reinforced its co-ordination at the headquarters level over the past year. The Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP) - comprising the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Food Programme, the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) - had made efforts to co-ordinate its position on certain questions relating to operational activities for development.

18. Since Mr. W. H. Draper had assumed the office of UNDP Administrator, he had made unrelenting efforts to improve the organizational structure, ensure programme quality and raise efficiency. Progress had been registered in three new areas: non-governmental organizations, women in development and the private sector. His delegation hoped that UNDP would continue to explore other modalities of co-operation in order to meet the needs of the developing countries. In addition, the small UNDP-administered funds should adopt more effective and flexible methods and should modify regulations unfavourable to developing countries with a view to encouraging more developing countries to participate in their activities.

19. His delegation commended the remarkable progress of the UNICEF Child Survival and Development Revolution as well as the policies and measures which UNICEF had adopted in the area of women in development. However, China was concerned about the financial problems of UNICEF. Although flexibility had enabled UNICEF to keep its project-delivery rate at a comparatively high level, such flexibility was inconsistent with the existing United Nations financial rules and regulations. His delegation hoped that UNICEF would act in full co-operation with the Board of Auditors to ascertain the causes of existing problems, improve management, adopt the necessary remedial measures and establish a financial system in keeping with both the existing United Nations financial rules and regulations and the actual practice of UNICEF.

20. China and the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development had continued to maintain a close and sound relationship of co-operation. The recent Beijing Symposium on Rural Energies and Rural Electrification had been a complete success. It was heartening to see that UNDP and that Department had made positive contributions to the promotion of technical co-operation among developing countries.

21. China highly commended UNFPA for its work in seeking a solution to the population question by helping developing countries carry out demographic research, compile population statistics and formulate population policies. China believed that population growth must be in keeping with social and economic development and should be kept in harmony with resources utilization, environmental protection and the maintenance of the ecological balance. China's policy of family planning, carried out on the basis of education and voluntary participation, had not only gained the support of all the nationalities of China, but had also received

(Mr. Bai Xingji, China)

extensive support from the international community. There was no doubt that a rational solution to China's population problem would be a major contribution to stabilizing the world's population.

22. His delegation regretted that the United States Government had repeatedly withheld its contributions to UNFPA, and had distorted and attacked China's population policy, blatantly interfered in China's internal affairs and endeavoured to change the mandate and direction of UNFPA. That must not be tolerated. The attitude and behaviour of the United States Government ran counter to the relevant General Assembly resolutions and violated the norms of international law. His delegation sincerely hoped that the United States Government would relinquish its prejudice as soon as possible and rejoin the international community in promoting a stable world population.

23. Mr. ROSALES (Honduras) said that his Government attached great importance to the operational activities of the United Nations, and welcomed the increased direct contributions to the specialized agencies indicated in the Director-General's report. Despite its economic difficulties, it was maintaining its own modest contribution as a token of its belief in multilateral co-operation.

24. His delegation noted with approval the increase of 17 per cent in expenditure on technical co-operation activities indicated in the report of the Secretary-General (DP/1987/45/Add.3). It also accepted that 50 per cent of the resources should be spent on the natural resources and energy sectors, but it regretted that only a small amount went on the purchase of equipment in developing countries.

25. Non-governmental organizations had made a commendable increase in their assistance to the developing countries, but contributions to organizations giving aid to refugees and in cases of natural disasters had unfortunately increased only moderately. Honduras took in refugees and needed assistance in discharging its responsibilities to them. His delegation endorsed the point made in the Director-General's report that food aid for development should not disrupt productive activities and that full use should be made of regional and South-South co-operation.

26. His delegation endorsed what was said in the report about the need for the JCGP to ensure more systematic exchanges at the Headquarters level on a broader agenda. It also thought that consideration should be given to the need to set up an independent unit to administer each of the funds at present managed by UNDP.

27. The note by the Secretary-General on the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) (A/42/597/Rev.1) indicated that priority would be given to urban women as workers in the informal sector in the Participatory Action Plan for Latin America and the Caribbean. His delegation endorsed that priority, and noted with satisfaction the good results already achieved in some countries. It also welcomed the joint efforts of UNIFEM and UNDP to facilitate the participation of women in large-scale projects in Honduras.

28. Mr. MULLER (Australia) said that his delegation had read the Jansson report with interest, not least because Australia had provided extra-budgetary funds for the case studies. Many of the report's findings were reinforced by Australia's own reviews of the United Nations development system. In view of the great variety in the use of funds and in national priorities and needs, it was hardly surprising that the system had problems in operating with a single model of operational activities or that the UNDP country programme had failed to provide a frame of reference for all sources of United Nations technical assistance.

29. There was no simple answer to the issue of programming and co-ordination. His delegation had welcomed the introduction of the National Technical Co-operation Assessment Programmes (NaTCAPs) and it was concerned to read in paragraph 40 of the Jansson report that the NaTCAP concept had not taken root. It agreed with the proposal in paragraph 23 of the Director-General's report that the JCGP should have more systematic exchanges at Headquarters level on a broader agenda. His delegation could also agree with the suggestion made in paragraph 28 of the Jansson report that an inter-agency study should be initiated, and welcomed the Director-General's indication in his statement to the Committee that he would be pursuing the issue. Broader programming might be undertaken on an experimental basis in selected countries with a view to developing programming models.

30. The issue of harmonization of procedures was not confined to the United Nations system, but extended to bilateral donors as well. He noted in that connection that the UNDP Governing Council had requested the Administrator to submit proposals with a view to encouraging donors to adopt standard modalities. His delegation had doubts about the recommendation made in the Jansson report for greater decentralization of operational activities, especially the suggestion that UNDP should aim to abolish the in-country approval limit on a strictly selected basis within approved country programmes. Such a change might superficially improve management efficiency, but it risked undermining policy oversight and quality control. It might also exacerbate existing weaknesses in project identification and/or formulation.

31. His delegation supported the proposal made in the Jansson report that the leadership role and operational functions of resident co-ordinators should be more exactly defined in an inter-agency agreement. Problems of co-operation between resident co-ordinators and agency representatives did not usually result from personal factors but from institutional problems. His delegation was pleased that the Director-General intended to pursue the issue in the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination. Appointments to the position of resident co-ordinator must be based on merit and his delegation awaited with interest a report on the JCGP's views on unified field servicing. There was clearly a need for further detailed discussion of the Jansson report in governing bodies and the Economic and Social Council.

32. The Director-General had proposed that in the years between the triennial policy review the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly should limit their discussion of operational activities to only one or two issues, and that the scope of the Director-General's report itself should be similarly restricted. His

(Mr. Muller, Australia)

delegation disagreed with the latter proposal, but thought that the restriction of the consideration of the item by the Council deserved further study. It might in fact be possible to narrow the co-ordination focus of the Council's deliberations while ensuring that the broader perspective was also covered each year through debate in the General Assembly, and thus to reduce much of the current duplication in the consideration of operational activities in the Council and the Assembly.

33. Mr. FIELD (United Kingdom) said his delegation hoped that the Committee's debate would reinforce the work begun in the Economic and Social Council in the summer and build on the improvement in operational activities resulting from resolution 41/171. It endorsed the Director-General's view that the Jansson report would provide a useful basis for the consideration of important problems. Some of the issues would need follow-up in the governing bodies of the United Nations system, and the Economic and Social Council should also have the opportunity to discuss the report.

34. What was loosely described as "co-ordination" should be a fundamental habit of daily life, especially when operational activities were changing and the traditional approaches to technical co-operation were being challenged. Co-operation required the active support of all concerned, with the aim of harnessing the potential of the system in a collective effort. There was room for a top-down strategy in creating the framework and a bottom-up approach centred on field activities. The report on co-ordination (A/42/232) referred in paragraph 77 to the need to enhance the Director-General's role; his delegation agreed and thought that it would be useful, for example, for the Director-General to chair all the meetings of the Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (Operational Activities).

35. There was concern that the purpose of the country programme - to provide a framework for coherent action - had not been realized. The United Nations system now had no less than five separate programming mechanisms, yet it failed to deliver its assistance in a co-ordinated manner. Four of the mechanisms were preparatory in nature, but the country programme should be seen as an end product, as a five-year programme of action. It might be better to refer to a "Government programme" for technical co-operation, which would require the participation of all agencies concerned. A broader-based approach from the start could provide the key to realizing the promise of the JCGP and NatCAP processes. The Director-General might wish to examine the possibility together with the agencies and UNDP.

36. The needs of the developing countries were paramount, and programmes should be planned to produce the most cost-effective results. His Government had long attached particular importance to UNDP's crucial funding and co-ordinating role, and it was concerned at the further erosion of that role by the sharp increase in extrabudgetary contributions to the specialized agencies. The fragmentation of resources into a variety of small units increased the administrative costs and made co-ordination more difficult. Of course the donors must co-ordinate their activities, but that applied equally to the specialized agencies. Progress might be achieved if all trust funds were initially channelled through UNDP.

(Mr. Field, United Kingdom)

37. Since the focus of operational activities was the delivery of technical assistance, field staff, especially resident co-ordinators, should receive the necessary support. UNDP's new system for consideration of project proposals coincided with the system used by the Overseas Development Administration for the United Kingdom's bilateral programme. His delegation was pleased to note that the new system had speeded up the approval process.

38. In view of the importance of UNDP's role, the UNDP resident representative should normally be designated the resident co-ordinator, and UNDP must provide the best people available. Various suggestions had been made to that end, including the creation of a development service. His delegation welcomed the way in which UNDP had responded by introducing a roster of suitable candidates.

39. Governments valued the operational activities of the United Nations system, for it was worth more than the sum of its financial resources. That attitude was demonstrated by the increase in those resources, which was a further incentive to seek improvements in the way they were deployed in the cause of development.

40. Mr. MAIGA (Mali) said that the debate on operational activities provided an opportunity to assess the efforts made by the international community through the United Nations to ease the economic and social problems of many Member States. Many bodies had been created in the United Nations system with the specific purpose of solving those problems, and his delegation remained convinced that the goal stated in Article I, paragraph 3, of the Charter could not be attained without political will and the necessary financial support for operational activities. The Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990 was an appropriate framework for the mobilization of funds for Africa, for most United Nations bodies had already adopted action plans which took into account the priorities set out in the Programme of Action.

41. The administration of operational activities was just as important as the provision of funds. Resolution 41/174 indicated the main lines of project management and reflected the wish of developing countries to take part in operational activities, especially through the use of local skills and materials. In the effort to improve the co-ordination of development activities emphasis should be given to co-ordination in the secretariats and in the field, strengthening of the role of resident co-ordinators, and broader co-operation between United Nations bodies and other sources of assistance.

42. A new phase in the co-operation between Mali and UNDP had begun in 1987 with the start of the fourth IPF cycle. The main goals were to strengthen the country's planning and management capacity, increase food and livestock production, harness water and increase training and jobs. New co-operation programmes had also been prepared, or were being prepared, with a number of other United Nations institutions. Mali was grateful for all the assistance it received.

(Mr. Maiga, Mali)

43. The approaching end of the Third United Nations Development Decade - rightly described as a lost decade for development - underlined the central role which the United Nations ought to play in economic and social development. The development opportunities of the developing countries must be increased. Operational activities were essential to that end and would also help to secure the international balance needed for the development of the world economy.

44. Mr. LOPEZ (Philippines) noted that, although the increase in the volume of resources made available to the grant assistance organizations of the United Nations system had increased, the share of total official development assistance (ODA) contributed to those organizations had declined from 1979 to 1986. His delegation believed that a significant portion of total ODA must go for the financing of United Nations operational activities, given the developing countries' clear preference for assistance from multilateral sources, a preference confirmed in the Jansson report.

45. His delegation was pleased that the international community was attaching increasing importance to the financing of activities related to food aid; however, measures must be taken to make optimum use of the resources available through the World Food Programme (WFP). Recipient countries must devise a means of ensuring that food aid reached those in need immediately. He supported the proposal by the Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes (CFA) that food aid should be incorporated in national development plans of recipient countries and believed that donor countries should pledge food assistance for multi-year periods in order to facilitate planning by recipient Governments. International agencies must co-ordinate their respective activities so that projects formulated by developing countries could obtain appropriate international support. In that connection, he supported the recommendation of CFA that the roles and functions of food aid should be explicitly considered and included in the preparations of World Bank consultative group meetings and UNDP round tables.

46. Co-ordination of United Nations activities in the field continued to create difficulties, perhaps because of problems inherent in having the UNDP resident representative serve as the resident co-ordinator for all such activities. At the country level, some specialized agencies believed that their mandates exceeded that of UNDP, since their organizations had broader membership; consequently, the representatives of those agencies tended to act independently in their dealings with host Governments. While his delegation believed that the Secretary-General should designate country co-ordinators, it understood that Governments might find it convenient to deal with the representatives of the specialized agencies directly. Resident co-ordinators were often limited in their ability to help host Governments assess development assistance needs and to provide them with the range of support that other agencies could offer. The dominant role played by the UNDP resident representative in the preparation of country programmes deprived the representatives of other agencies of an opportunity to contribute to that process.

47. His delegation had noted a number of other difficulties relating to co-ordination and had particular misgivings about the maintenance of the project

(Mr. Lopez, Philippines)

approval limit of \$400,000. The need to refer even projects costing less than that amount to UNDP headquarters for final approval negated the sovereign right of recipient countries to determine their own needs and priorities and contravened the spirit of the 1970 Consensus.

48. Since the concept of operational activities had evolved over the years, a new conceptual framework might have to be devised that would ensure a continuum between technical and capital assistance to developing countries and would clearly delineate the responsibilities and functions of all the United Nations agencies and bodies concerned. His delegation supported the work done by the JOGP to co-ordinate the operational activities of the United Nations system, and suggested that that work might be expanded. United Nations agencies and bodies might also work jointly with host Governments in the formulation of comprehensive country programmes.

49. Because of its commitment to the operational activities of the United Nations system, the Philippine Government, notwithstanding its current economic situation, had maintained its pledges for those activities at the previous year's level.

50. Mr. Gajentaan (Netherlands) took the Chair.

51. Mr. SINGH (India) said that the spirit of partnership which had characterized the operational activities of the United Nations system over the years must be preserved and developed as the Organization strove to meet the challenges of technical co-operation in the future. Of major concern to his delegation was the current level of resources provided for operational activities. While the overall situation appeared to have stabilized, the bleak prospects for any significant increases in the near future were sure to have an adverse impact on the ability of the United Nations system to provide technical assistance. He therefore urged all countries, particularly those whose contributions were relatively low in comparison with their capacity, to respond to the Director-General's appeal by increasing their contributions to the grant organizations of the United Nations system. His own country, which had increased its level of contributions for 1988, contributed more for operational activities than did several developed industrialized countries.

52. The Jansson report on the operational activities of the United Nations system was useful, but the inclusion of additional case studies would facilitate further in-depth consideration of the issues involved.

53. The efficiency of operational activities must be measured in terms of their consistency with the development plans and priorities of recipient countries. In fact, national Governments were best placed to ensure such consistency. In India, for example, government execution of some projects had not only been cost-effective and improved programme delivery, but made optimum use of local skills and expertise. United Nations resident co-ordinators should respond to requests from recipient Governments and play a more active role in co-ordinating activities and programmes of the specialized agencies and in ensuring that projects funded by UNDP were consistent with agreed objectives.

(Mr. Singh, India)

54. His delegation was disappointed by current patterns of procurement, and believe that greater use should be made of the capabilities of developing countries. In that connection, he strongly supported the activities of the Inter-agency Procurement Services Unit and hoped that the organizations of the United Nations system would continue to work to that end.

55. India attached particular importance to the role of UNFPA, which had supported the country's population programme. As the agency responsible for implementing the World Population Plan of Action, UNFPA needed the backing of all countries, and he urged that extraneous considerations should not deter any country from providing support. In view of the findings of the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, his delegation believed that UNFPA should focus greater attention on the relationship between population and environment.

56. His delegation attached great importance to UNICEF programmes in general and to the Child Survival and Development Revolution in particular. He acknowledged the support which UNICEF had provided to his own country's universal child immunization programme, and urged all Governments to continue their support to that praiseworthy agency. It was to be hoped that improved programme delivery by UNICEF would be accompanied by improved financial management and administration.

57. Mr. JOSSE (Nepal) agreed that serious thought must be given to the form operational activities for development would take by the turn of the century. Such consideration should not, however, divert attention from the year-to-year programming of operational activities, especially for countries whose development needs were urgent. His delegation was concerned that the modest increase in the total disbursement of ODA registered in recent years could not be maintained. He welcomed the increased assistance extended to sub-Saharan African countries, but expressed the hope that the future would see a corresponding rise in ODA to Asian least developed countries, whose economic plight was hardly less acute.

58. The implications of the growing trend towards multilateral funding, which included funding by regional banks outside the United Nations system, must be carefully assessed in the context of United Nations operational activities. Non-governmental organizations should be encouraged to continue their disbursements of grants to developing countries for humanitarian and development purposes. In view of the current importance of food aid as a modality for financing operational activities, there was a need for donors and recipients to integrate such assistance with other forms of development assistance, particularly since food aid was provided largely on an ad hoc short-term basis.

59. Given the declining share of ODA channelled through UNDP, the Programme's role as the central funding mechanism for operational activities had become open to question. The increase in financial support for the Programme in 1986 and 1987 had been encouraging, although pledges might still fall short of resource targets.

60. He welcomed the efforts by UNDP to help developing countries set up early-warning systems to forestall economic reverses and the Programme's policy of

(Mr. Josse, Nepal)

helping developing countries stimulate activities in the private sector. He shared the view that most environmental problems in the developing world were the result of unmet basic human needs, and therefore supported the Programme's call for the inclusion of sound resource management plans in developing countries.

61. He noted with satisfaction that the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development was currently in sound financial health and that the Department's activities in the fields of natural resources and energy had increased considerably.

62. The United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) had helped the Government of Nepal implement plans designed to meet the population's basic needs. His delegation was therefore grateful to all donors to the Fund and was encouraged to learn of the increase in the Fund's activities throughout the world.

63. His delegation had always attached great importance to the operational activities of UNFPA and appreciated its efforts to increase awareness of the role of population in development in Nepal. The substantial increase in contributions to the Fund for 1980 was therefore welcome, although it was unfortunate that a principal donor had not contributed to the Fund for two years in a row.

64. The activities of UNICEF had also had a significant impact in Nepal. At a time when half the population of the developing world was under 15 years of age and the standards of living of third-world children were deteriorating, his delegation endorsed the UNICEF concept of "adjustment with a human face". The Nepalese Government and UNICEF shared many programme objectives and concerns, particularly in the area of women's education and the training of primary school teachers. His delegation firmly endorsed the recommendation contained in paragraph 82 (f) of the Jansson report (A/42/326/Add.1).

65. Nepal had always recognized the value of the United Nations Volunteers programme, having both benefited from and contributed volunteers to the programme. His delegation was thus pleased to note that the UNDP Governing Council had, at its thirty-fourth session, decided to expand the use of United Nations Volunteers significantly. It was to be hoped that due consideration would be given to the recruitment of volunteers from least developed countries.

66. Mr. ABRAHÁM (Czechoslovakia) emphasized the importance of increasing the effectiveness of operational activities, which were an important means of promoting the economic and social development of developing countries. The extent to which such activities contributed to those countries' independent economic development should be regarded as a basic criterion as far as the effectiveness of assistance was concerned. The 1970 Consensus was a vital prerequisite of successful UNDP activities, since it undoubtedly created suitable conditions for fruitful co-operation between developing and industrially advanced countries with different social and economic systems.

(Mr. Abrahám, Czechoslovakia)

67. The release of funds spent on armaments would help to accelerate the economic development of all countries. Accordingly, the group of socialist countries had issued a joint declaration during the thirty-fourth session of the UNDP Governing Council, on the relationship between technical assistance, disarmament and development. He reaffirmed the positions contained therein.

68. UNDP programmes must be geared to individual economic sectors within developing countries, whilst respecting national sovereignty. The role of the State in socio-economic development had been confirmed by many United Nations resolutions. Operational activities should not give preference to one-sided models for the management and development of national economies, experience having shown that, in many spheres, the private sector could not, by any means, substitute the public sector.

69. His delegation favoured a strengthening of the role of the Economic and Social Council as the central intergovernmental co-ordinating body, responsible also for the co-ordination of operational activities. The co-ordinating role of UNDP should be increased to strengthen effective co-ordination between UNDP and the specialized agencies, with resident co-ordinators being accorded greater power, all of which should help to increase the effectiveness of assistance given to developing countries.

70. His delegation supported greater involvement of the developing countries in operational activities, and the assignment of increased responsibility for co-ordination to their Governments. There was also a need to increase purchases of commodities and services from those countries, and to make use of, accumulated voluntary contributions in national currencies. His Government was concerned about its own underutilized contribution; it had therefore intensified its contacts with the Inter-agency Procurement Services Unit and the executing agencies and had ascertained that there were no formal obstacles to the drawing of funds in national currencies.

71. A comprehensive multidisciplinary approach to the development of human resources was a significant component of assistance to developing countries. Accordingly, Czechoslovakia was setting up a trust fund within UNDP to train economics specialists from developing countries.

72. Czechoslovakia's assistance to developing countries was detailed in document A/42/603. Goodwill was an important element in promoting the greater effectiveness of operational activities, and his delegation deplored document A/42/381, submitted by several advanced market-economy countries and containing an out-of-context comparison of statistical data, as an example of the undermining of confidence and constructive co-operation.

73. Czechoslovakia fully supported the strategic aims of UNICEF and sought to contribute, through active participation, to the solution of urgent problems facing women and children in developing countries. It planned to hold a conference in 1988.

74. Mr. KOFFLER (Austria) said that 1987 had been a decisive year. Since the seventh session of UNCTAD, there had been encouraging developments with regard to relations between the developing and industrialized countries. It was now recognized not only that economic and social development could be approached in a variety of ways, but that the main responsibility lay with the developing countries themselves. The Brundtland report had emphasized the links between development and environment, questioning the extent to which development could be measured in economic terms.

75. Since Austria itself focused its attention on the poorest and least developed countries, he welcomed the emphasis they were being given in operational activities, adding that the utmost attention should also be paid to the least favoured groups in society, particularly women and children.

76. His delegation was particularly interested in the activities of UNDP and, having pledged recently an 18 per cent increase in Austria's contribution, was keen to see funds used as effectively as possible for the benefit of the developing countries. It strongly supported the strengthening of multilateral development co-operation and welcomed the continuing increase in contributions to operational activities.

77. His delegation was still convinced that UNDP represented the central funding agency with regard to technical assistance. It noted with interest the Administrator's emphasis on the links between development, population and environment, and looked forward to the results of the 60-nation project being funded by the World Bank and the African Development Bank with a view to reducing some of the social costs of adjustment processes.

78. The Jansson report (A/42/326/Add.1) contained important guidelines with regard to the improvement of operational activities. It stressed the need for broad-based co-ordination, which was of central importance with regard to the country programmes. It was to be regretted that such programmes did not embrace the World Food Programme, UNICEF, the technical assistance provided by regional development banks or the activities of the specialized agencies. A co-ordinated country programme implied joint programming and the harmonization of operation procedures, programme cycles and timetables. It also implied greater donor co-operation. The follow-up to the recommendations contained in the report should be organized on a system-wide basis, and the General Assembly should be kept informed of the progress made.

79. Mr. McDOWELL (New Zealand) said that he had led one of the teams conducting the case studies upon which the Jansson report was based. The fundamental frame of reference had been development, needs and processes in the developing countries. United Nations operational activities had been studied in terms of the development needs of the countries in question with a view to determining what the system could do to help Governments design and implement the most effective interventions against poverty and underdevelopment. Those producing the studies had come from a variety of backgrounds, sharing only their experience of development issues and a belief in the role of multilateral systems in fostering development. A broad

(Mr. McDowell, New Zealand)

consensus had emerged, however, and the situations described, and problems identified in the seven case studies were recognizable system-wide.

80. Very frank discussions had been held with senior officials at the highest levels and with project managers and the people directly concerned. Some of the findings at the report were very disquieting. In particular, the United Nations system had been criticized for its confusing lack of and harmonization of procedures, overall strategy and real system-wide co-ordination. It must respond to that criticism and make the necessary improvements. He hoped that one effect of the Jansson report would be to "demythologize" some of the concepts discussed in committee rooms - country programming, co-ordination and harmonization, decentralization of decision-making and so on - so that more attention would be paid to the reality of activities in the field.

81. The United Nations family of agencies could, however, be credited with some notable achievements. In the South Pacific region, for example, individual agencies had made a big impact, particularly in the health field. In sensitive areas such as national sectoral planning, a significant contribution had been made to Governments' planning and co-ordination capacity. Countries had also received advice as to how to negotiate with large and powerful transnational corporations with regard to the exploitation of mineral and fish resources.

82. Such achievements were made by the individuals working within the system. The system itself had major flaws which required urgent attention. The Second Committee should strongly encourage UNDP and the specialized agencies to implement many of the recommendations of the Jansson report through a process of self-examination and self-improvement. A constructive response would be to accept that the report described accurately and honestly the system as it appeared in the field, and to resolve to work with Governments to remedy the situation. It was the long-term credibility and viability of the system as a whole that was at issue.

83. The agencies alone could only achieve so much in reforming the system. There were many conflicting mandates, authorities and procedures. Fundamental parts of the 1970 Consensus and other key resolutions had never been put into effect. For example, resolution 32/197 contained recommendations, for instance with regard to the country-level organization of operational activities, which, if implemented, would have removed many of the problems being faced in the field.

84. The General Assembly should give some preliminary guidance at its current session as to the action to be taken. The Second Committee should, therefore, produce a draft resolution or resolutions on operational activities indicating possible approaches to implementation of the recommendations of the Jansson report and providing guidance for the governing bodies of other organizations of the system.

85. The next step should be taken elsewhere. In the light of the very serious criticisms contained in the Jansson report of the way the agencies worked, his delegation would be following very closely the consideration of the report by UNDP

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(Mr. McDowell, New Zealand)

and the agencies. The views already expressed on its main findings were generally extremely sketchy and insubstantial. He looked forward to far more detailed reactions in due course. To help elicit such reactions, each of the seven reports on which the Jansson report was based should in his delegation's view be distributed widely. The Jansson report itself should be considered not only by the governing bodies of the organizations in the system, but also by the Economic and Social Council, in a full-scale debate on the fundamental issues at the 1988 summer session, so that the General Assembly could take decisive action at its forty-third session.

86. Some of the broad issues the report raised should also be discussed by the Council's Special Commission on the In-depth Study of the United Nations Intergovernmental Structure and Functions in the Economic and Social Fields. The lack of coherence within the United Nations system was due in part to the fact that the intergovernmental structure had failed to give force and effect to its decisions.

87. Mr. KUFUOR (Ghana) welcomed the fact that generous contributions had been made to United Nations operational activities for development. In particular, some of the developing countries, including Ghana, had demonstrated their faith in the system by making contributions, in spite of their difficult economic circumstances.

88. The United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990 was a challenge to the development agencies. Since many of the countries concerned needed technical and other assistance as they embarked upon structural adjustment and policy reforms in accordance with that programme, it was appropriate that the United Nations had decided to give priority to its implementation. It was important to streamline and co-ordinate the various assistance programmes to avoid duplication, overlapping and inefficiency. Accordingly, his delegation welcomed the report on operational activities. Although its conclusions and recommendations might require more in-depth analysis, highly important issues had been raised.

89. A number of proposals had been made with regard, for example, to the use of UNDP as a framework of reference for all sources of technical assistance within the United Nations system, and to the need to concentrate activities funded by the United Nations within a few priority sectors. Caution was required, however, in order to avoid going from one extreme to the other, in other words, from a decentralized system to an over-centralized one.

90. The authority and functions of the resident co-ordinators must be carefully analysed to determine whether the UNDP resident representative should continue to hold that position. The resident co-ordinator must be able to command the respect of both the field representatives of United Nations agencies and host Governments. Generally speaking, any arrangements to enhance the efficiency of United Nations development agencies must respect the right of developing countries to determine their own objectives and priorities.

(Mr. Kufuor, Ghana)

91. He welcomed the assistance which UNDP had provided to the aid co-ordination offices of finance ministries in developing countries and suggested that that programme should be evaluated.

92. His delegation did not support the decision taken by the International Development Association to reduce the pay-back periods for loans (A/42/326/Add.3, para. 10), particularly as the countries it would affect were African countries requiring concessional flows of resources with long maturity periods. Another matter for concern was the situation regarding procurement from developing countries, which had been described as alarming. Many agencies had been unable to provide information regarding the countries from which they had procured equipment, and he urged all agencies to do so as of 1987.

93. As many of the issues he had raised related to the mandate of the Special Commission of the Economic and Social Council, he hoped that that body would not lose sight of the fact that its primary objective was to enhance the effectiveness of the Organization's economic and social programmes and not to curtail them.

AGENDA ITEM 82: DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION (continued)

(c) EFFECTIVE MOBILIZATION AND INTEGRATION OF WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT: REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)

Draft resolution on effective mobilization and integration of women in development
(A/C.2/42/L.29)

94. The CHAIRMAN announced that Greece and Morocco had joined in sponsoring the draft resolution.

(e) ENVIRONMENT (continued)

Draft resolution on protection of the ozone layer (A/C.2/42/L.37)

95. The CHAIRMAN announced that Greece had joined in sponsoring the draft resolution.

(f) DESERTIFICATION AND DROUGHT (continued)

Draft resolution on countries stricken by desertification and drought in Africa
(A/C.2/42/L.24)

96. The CHAIRMAN announced that the Federal Republic of Germany had joined in sponsoring the draft resolution.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.