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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 29th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. OUDOVENKO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic)

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

LETTER DATED 14 OCTOBER 1987 FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO THE CHAIRMAN OF THE SECOND COMMITTEE (continued) (A/C.2/42/L.13; A/42/16, part II, A/42/512)

1. Mr. CAHILL (United States of America) said his delegation was extremely satisfied with the overall approach taken in the annex to the document on the preparation of the next medium-term plan, in which the Secretary-General set forth some perspectives on the work of the United Nations in the 1990s. The United States was committed to contributing to real progress being made during the 1990s. Much remained to be done in many areas, and the Secretary-General had drawn attention to those areas on which emphasis should be placed, converting the vast number of issues of world-wide concern into more specific and manageable priorities. The broad range of activities engaged in by the United Nations and the human and financial limitations within which, like any organization, it operated meant that established priorities should be more strictly followed than in the past. A choice, however painful, had to be made between the various options, and it was more appropriate for the United Nations to devote sufficient effort to a well-defined series of tasks, rather than dispersing efforts across an overambitious plan of action. The peoples of the world would benefit more from the implementation of 10 or 12 really worthwhile projects than from the completion of 100 fragments of lesser importance.

2. While the Secretary-General had made a sincere attempt to reflect the various countries' different priorities, the document would have to be carefully adjusted at the concrete planning level. His delegation proposed that, in moving on to the stage of programme planning, it should be borne in mind that those adjustments would necessitate in-depth study and evaluation of the priorities, and if necessary their modification, but not an increase in the number of priorities established.

3. Mrs. MORENO DE DEL CUETO (Mexico), referring to the document on the preparation of the next medium-term plan, said that although, as the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation had pointed out, it was a first outline intended to serve as a basis for further consultations, her delegation fully shared the position of the Group of 77 as expressed by its Chairman.

4. Apart from the procedure proposed in that document, the contents of the annex entitled "Some perspectives on the work of the United Nations in the 1990s" gave grounds for concern, since they did not constitute an acceptable basis for the introduction, and needed totally recasting before consultations took place.

5. The document appeared to be the first step towards an unacceptable revision of the Charter of the United Nations, and ignored the concerns of the developing world and the established mandates. Its omission of basic concepts in the economic sphere, moreover, was unacceptable. Restructuring of the international economic system, solution of the debt crisis and establishment of justice and equity were

(Mrs. Moreno de del Cueto, Mexico)

the challenge which the interests of the majority of its Member States posed for the United Nations for the 1990s. Her delegation thus took an extremely serious view of the attempt to reduce the prerogatives of the United Nations and transform it into a limited organization with no impact on the major problems affecting world development, stripped of the possibility of establishing parameters and drawing up agreements, frameworks or guidelines for the activity of the international community. The United Nations was the one universal international organization par excellence in which all members of the community of nations could meet to discuss and agree on ways of working together to solve problems of common interest. Its work should be judged in the light of the problems of an increasingly interdependent world, rather than by the immediate economic or budgetary interests of one of its members, employed as a yardstick of efficiency.

6. When the sense of reality waned, there must be a return to the major policy objectives of the United Nations, which required it to be the guardian of non-intervention and self-determination and the promoter of international co-operation for development. Accordingly, the concept of decolonization, an objective which had still not been achieved in extensive areas such as Namibia, should not be forgotten. It must also be borne in mind that technology and biotechnology could increase the capacity to sustain the human population, instead of means of death, and that any attempt to achieve general well-being through population control was obsolete and unacceptable. The document overlooked the fact that the developing world was suffering from the effects of colonialism and that its resources had been exploited without regard for the interests of its inhabitants. The development of those countries was blocked by the deterioration in the terms of trade, protectionist measures and the restriction of sources of development aid. No attention was paid to the fact that development was a shared objective and a shared responsibility of the international community as a whole.

7. Moreover, it should not be maintained that the massive migratory pressure from the poor countries would invade those which were relatively more developed, or claimed that unemployment could be reduced by population control, since the majority of those who would require education, food, housing and health in the next decade were already alive. Nor was it right to state that the cost of energy was largely dependent on political circumstances; to do so was to forget the free energy from the sun, the wind, the sea and other renewable sources, and the role of technology.

8. What was needed, rather, was an analysis of why the three international development strategies had failed, why the situation was more difficult in the developing countries and how the new international economic order envisaged in the Declaration and Programme of Action unanimously adopted at the sixth special session of the General Assembly could be brought into being more rapidly. The technical co-operation activities of the United Nations were based on criteria agreed upon in the course of difficult and intensive negotiations, and that method should not be changed in order to adapt it to criteria which had not been the subject of agreement. The consequences of rapid communications should not be confused with the modification of basic ideological concepts. The only valid

(Mrs. Moreno de del Cueto, Mexico)

restructuring of international economic relations was one based on justice and equity, not one which prolonged or increased the vulnerability of the developing world. Accordingly, the interrelated topics of debt, money and finance, trade and commodities deserved special mention in any introduction of the kind envisaged. Nor should it be forgotten that in the Bretton Woods institutions themselves there had been important movements for a reform which must be integral and simultaneous, and serve to strengthen the United Nations.

9. The rationalization of activities in terms of results did not justify the elimination, in the name of efficiency, of political objectives such as disarmament, the question of Palestine, the elimination of apartheid, Afghanistan and Central America. For all those reasons, the conceptual framework of the introduction required extensive discussion, and would need to be closely examined by the international community.

10. Mr. PAULSEN (Norway), referring to the interesting perspectives on the work of the United Nations in the 1990s contained in document A/42/512, said that while the relevant section described important relationships between trade, debt, commodities, energy, environment, industrialization and population, more emphasis was placed on the effects of those problems than on their causes. Moreover the part dealing with the need for concrete priorities in the work of the Organization in the next decade required improvement. The criteria for determining priorities could be more closely linked with the major issues and problems referred to by the Secretary-General. In that respect, the need to concentrate the efforts of the United Nations on a realistic number of clearly defined world problems - where the Second Committee was concerned, economic problems - remained critical. In any event, the document before the Committee did in his delegation's opinion contain some valuable views and suggestions, and constituted a good basis for the subsequent conduct of a debate in greater depth.

11. Mrs. PERKOVIC (Yugoslavia) said that her delegation commended the Secretary-General's initiative in submitting the perspectives on the work of the Organization which were before the Committee, and thereby initiating the process of wide consultations with Member States on the medium-term plan called for in General Assembly resolution 41/213, section II. In addition, it welcomed the recommendation of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination that the perspectives should be considered by the General Assembly through its Main Committees. Where the content of the perspectives was concerned, her delegation fully endorsed the views expressed by the Chairman of the Group of 77. Although it represented only the beginning of the process of preparing the medium-term plan, the document under discussion was of great importance, since it should provide a basis for determining the activities of the United Nations in the coming decade. Hence the vital importance of the ongoing debate and the need for careful study of the document. Although the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation had said that its purpose was to elicit comments, it should also portray a true picture of the current world economic situation and the concerns of the majority of Member States. It was the mounting economic problems of the developing countries that should dictate the main priorities of the United

(Mrs. Perkovic, Yugoslavia)

Nations for the coming decade. Although that should not be an obstacle to the inclusion among those priorities of new issues as they arose, the present unfinished work should not be disregarded. It was very difficult to support a document which did not take properly into account problems of such importance to the developing countries as external debt, commodities, protectionism, the net transfer of resources from developed to developing countries, the critical economic situation in Africa, the least developed countries, the code of conduct for transnational corporations, the endogenous scientific and technical development of developing countries or a new international development strategy for the next decade. In that respect, her delegation shared the view expressed by many members of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination and reflected in paragraph 94 of that Committee's report. The best reflection of common concerns, priorities and expectations with regard to the work of the United Nations in the years to come was in the discussions in the plenary meetings of the General Assembly and in the Second Committee, and it was to be hoped that they would be reflected in the medium-term plan.

12. Mr. PAULINICH (Peru) said that, according to the Regulations and Rules, the introduction to the medium-term plan (A/42/512, annex), in addition to highlighting the policy orientations of the United Nations system, should include proposals concerning medium-term operational priorities which were not yet clearly defined in the document. It would therefore be advisable for the Committee to take up the matter again once it had received the opinion of the members of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC).

13. Referring to the chapter entitled "Development: the continuing priority", he emphasized the importance that the next medium-term plan must have in view of the fact that its implementation would coincide with a period when Member States would have to be laying the foundations for international co-operation up to the year 2000.

14. Given the results of the successive United Nations development decades, stress should be laid on the need to formulate and implement methods of co-operation for creating a just and equitable international economic system as the sine qua non for eradicating the hunger, bad health and poverty afflicting most of mankind.

15. As priorities were omitted from the document proposed by the Secretariat, it would have to be revised so that more thorough consideration could be given to the main monetary, financial and trade problems impeding development and to the shortcomings of the United Nations system's operation. Accordingly, the duration of the various mandates assigned by the General Assembly, especially those relevant to implementation of the new international economic order and the creation of conditions for achieving full exercise of the right to development, would have to be borne in mind.

16. During the period covered by the medium-term plan, the work of the Organization and of the system should be directed towards eliminating the phenomena which obstructed the economic and social development of most countries: external

(Mr. Paulinich, Peru)

indebtedness, the steady deterioration in trade relations, the imbalances in the world economy and the instability and volatility of that economy generated by the dominance and vast potential of sectors bent on speculation and by the emergence of a new international division of labour which threatened to accelerate the impoverishment of three quarters of the world's population.

17. He was not in favour of the line taken in the document under consideration which advocated population planning policies in the developing countries for the sole purpose of averting the effects that might result in the countries of the North from emigration from, and population growth in, the countries of the South. It should be borne in mind that, while the increase in world production must continue to be an objective shared by the international community, so should a more rational, symmetrical and equitable redistribution of resources among the countries of the North and South.

18. He trusted that the reconsideration he had proposed would be carried out so that those matters could be looked into at the next meetings more thoroughly and in greater depth.

19. Mr. JØNCK (Denmark) said that he shared the opinion of the Group of 77 that document A/42/512 was not definitive: he considered it to be an outline which, as such, could cover only the main topics to be taken up by the United Nations in the 1990s, i.e. issues which were of concern to the entire international community, and that matters of interest to one country or one group of countries should not be taken up. Furthermore, the priorities specified by the Group of 77 were very wide in scope and might not be consistent with what the United Nations was able to accomplish, realistically speaking, in the 1990s. Some of those issues which were already included in the current medium-term plan were, of course, so important that they would obviously have to be included in the next plan. As the note by the Secretary-General emphasized, the priorities would have to be adhered to more strictly than in the past.

20. Consideration of the Organization's long-term development called for extremely careful preparation and should be undertaken at a time when it would have the greatest impact on the formulation of the medium-term plan. As CPC recommended to the General Assembly, the current medium-term plan should be extended until 1991 and the next plan should cover the period starting in 1992. The discussion on that matter should be continued at the next session of the General Assembly, when the conditions in which the United Nations would have to carry out its work in the next decade would be known. The process of reform would be further advanced and use could be made of the results in the work of the Special Commission for reviewing the economic and social sectors.

21. The CHAIRMAN recalled that, in his letter of 12 October 1987, the Chairman of the Fifth Committee had requested him to communicate, not later than the first week of November 1987, the views of the Second Committee concerning the enclosure, entitled "Some perspectives on the work of the United Nations in the 1990s", appended to the note by the Secretary-General (A/42/512), so that the Fifth

(The Chairman)

Committee could take them fully into account. The discussion on that enclosure, while very constructive and useful, had not been exhaustive, for which reason the summary of opinions expressed should be regarded as provisional.

22. In addition to their differences concerning the role of the United Nations, delegations had shown that they agreed that the problems of economic and social development could not be considered in isolation and that they must be viewed in the context of the search for solutions to all the other problems of international relations, full account being taken of the political, social, humanitarian and other factors. Many delegations had stressed that United Nations activities should be geared towards eliminating all threats to international security, because they had political, military, economic, ecological and humanitarian implications. Virtually all delegations had emphasized the need to strengthen the role of the United Nations so that, in the 1990s, it would be able to serve the interests of the international community more effectively. As had been observed by many delegations, the note by the Secretary-General was a useful starting-point.

23. Committee members seemed to agree that the main problems to be tackled by the various economic bodies of the United Nations in the 1990s were those relating to the development of the developing countries, external indebtedness, flows of resources, the reform of the monetary and financial system, international trade, the activities of transnational corporations and the preparation of the code of conduct for governing them, and development of co-operation in science, technology and the environment. There was also a general agreement that, owing to the interdependence of the modern world, the stable development and prosperity of all economies could not be achieved unless the economic problems of the developing countries were solved and a favourable international environment was created. Accordingly it was important to prepare the new international development strategy for the 1990s.

24. As many delegations had indicated, the effective implementation of the decisions adopted in 1987 at the seventh session of UNCTAD and the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development should loom large in the activities of the United Nations in the 1990s.

25. In almost all statements stress had been laid on the need to improve co-ordination within the United Nations system, to avoid unnecessary duplication and to rationalize the allocation of functions among the various economic and social bodies. The Special Commission of the Economic and Social Council was working along those lines.

26. So far as priorities were concerned, most delegations had concurred with the Secretary-General that it was not proper for United Nations future activities to be concentrated exclusively on areas in which the Organization achieved better results. The United Nations must seek to tackle effectively all the issues included in its programme without circumventing those on which there was no consensus.

27. Mr. JØNCK (Denmark), Mr. ANDRADE AYCINENA (Guatemala) and Mr. KIURU (Finland) said that it would be advisable to hold further informal consultations so that all delegations could make their positions clear.

28. The CHAIRMAN said that, if there were no objections, he would take it that the Committee wished to hold further informal consultations on the enclosure to the note by the Secretary-General. He would consult with the Chairman of the Fifth Committee on the most appropriate way in which to communicate to him the views of the Second Committee.

29. It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 83: OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/42/3, 136, 178, 293, 354, 359, 381, 411, 417, 603, 604 and 677)

- (a) OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/42/207 and Corr.1, A/42/326 and Add.1-3, A/42/290)
- (b) UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (A/42/597/Rev.1; E/1987/25)
- (c) UNITED NATIONS CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT FUND (E/1987/25)
- (d) UNITED NATIONS TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION ACTIVITIES: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/42/110 and Add.1, A/42/275, 305, 387; E/1987/25; DP/1987/45 and Add.1-3)
- (e) UNITED NATIONS VOLUNTEERS PROGRAMME (E/1987/25)

30. Mr. RIPERT (Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation) stressed the complexity of operational activities for development, which, in addition to technical assistance, encompassed food aid and other development activities, and which were carried out by various departments of the United Nations itself, by eight organizations responsible to the Secretary-General and by 15 specialized agencies, including the Bretton Woods institutions. There were various forms of financial intervention; in 1986, grant expenditures by United Nations entities had totalled \$2.6 billion, while the World Bank and IFAD had provided soft loans totalling \$3 billion. It was against that background that it was important for the Second Committee and the Economic and Social Council to review operational activities from a central vantage point and in a coherent manner. A very useful document for that review was the annual report on operational activities (A/42/326), which contained valuable conclusions and recommendations, and the three addenda to that report.

31. It was important for the United Nations to receive the necessary resources to enable it to deliver effective assistance to developing countries. There were some encouraging signs in that regard, such as the recent Pledging Conference for United Nations Funds and Programmes, as a result of which the resources available to UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA could grow by about 10 per cent in 1988. Attention should be drawn to the fact, however, that in 1986, for the first time since 1979,

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concessional loan disbursements for operational activities had overtaken grant disbursements. In order to respond to the specific needs of individual countries it was important to increase the resources available to grant organizations, many of whose activities concerned human resource development, which was a critical component of long-term development efforts.

32. In 1986, contributions to UNDP and to funds administered by it had increased; at the same time, extrabudgetary contributions to executing agencies had increased even more. The General Assembly itself had affirmed that UNDP should be the central funding mechanism for the system's operational activities and that should be fully reflected in the funding decisions of Governments.

33. If country programmes were to serve as a frame of reference for technical co-operation activities of the United Nations system, UNDP and other funding organizations must be involved in the preparation of such programmes. Accordingly, there was a need for greater focus on analysis and sectoral, sub-sectoral and thematic programming and on resources made available by the various entities of the system in developing viable and durable programmes. A distinction had to be made between the UNDP country programming process and the UNDP country programme itself.

34. The Jansson Report made it clear that the multiplicity of organizational procedures and arrangements for programmes and projects constituted a serious problem for recipient countries. The organizations of the system should therefore explore further possibilities for the decentralization of decision-making, which might permit a more flexible response to the specific situations of individual countries. At the same time, there was a need for renewed efforts to harmonize procedures at headquarters level. Much more could be done in that area, and the Secretariat planned to consult with interested organizations to see how some concrete improvements could be made. The harmonization of organizational practices and procedures depended to a great extent on the support of Governments represented in the various governing bodies of the system.

35. There were a number of outstanding issues relating to the organization of the United Nations system at the field level. The Joint Consultative Group on Policy was proceeding with a country-by-country study of the feasibility of common premises for field offices of organizations under the authority of the Secretary-General. In addition, consultations were taking place with regard to the rationalization of the field offices of the United Nations information centres (UNICs).

36. Turning to the problems inherent in the operation of the system of resident co-ordinators, he pointed out that the possibility of working out an interagency agreement which would define the leadership role and operational functions of the resident co-ordinators would continue to be studied in the context of ACC, as had been suggested in the Jansson Report. With regard to the recommendation concerning the capacity of the resident co-ordinators to carry out the responsibilities entrusted to them, namely, that in certain countries the assignment of the resident co-ordinator should be separated from that of the resident representative, while

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recognizing the importance of the question and the need for a study to determine whether the co-ordinators had the necessary resources to carry out those functions, he had serious reservations about the proposal because of its organizational and financial implications. He would therefore consult the Administrator of UNDP on it. The Joint Consultative Group on Policy had already been asked to express its views regarding the advantages and disadvantages of creating a unified field service for United Nations organizations, a proposal that might have implications for the post of resident co-ordinator.

37. Delegations had not been able to review all the documentation on the item in sufficient depth. However, the documentation was part of an ongoing process of study and deliberation which should lead to the introduction of necessary reforms so as to resolve the complex problems which had been encountered. The preliminary views of delegations could have an important impact on the process. Moreover, the difficulties encountered in producing documents on time led him to suggest that the Committee might wish to give more serious consideration to the organization of its work, in particular to the scheduling of reports. The triennial review of operational activities would provide an opportunity for an in-depth discussion of the subject. In that connection, he recalled the proposal made by the Secretary-General at the second regular session of the Economic and Social Council concerning the need for the Council to make appropriate arrangements to carry out its responsibilities with regard to operational activities and he expressed the hope that the proposal would be seriously considered.

38. Mr. DRAPER (Administrator, United Nations Development Programme) said that 1987 marked a turning-point. In the past 12 months the whole world had come to realize that development as usual meant less development and that the time had come to make bold and imaginative policy and institutional changes.

39. Many developing countries, steeped in debt and mired in poverty, were finding it increasingly difficult to remember that development began and ended with people. In order to address those and other problems they had been forced to introduce rigorous restructuring programmes. In Africa alone, 28 countries had chosen that path, in many cases - Ghana, Guinea and Senegal were good examples - with encouraging results. Nevertheless, in Africa and in other regions, restructuring efforts were being made under difficult circumstances. UNDP was aggressively supporting those efforts and was trying to help the countries to resolve problems as they arose. To that end it was co-operating with them in four areas that were directly related to the factors on which the success of any restructuring programme hinged.

40. Firstly, UNDP was helping Governments to improve their statistical coverage of leading economic indicators so that in the future they would be able to take corrective action well before their financial problems got out of hand. Secondly, it was helping Governments to monitor the impact of their adjustment policies and to evaluate the social consequences of such policies. As a first step it had just approved a project, co-funded by the World Bank and the African Development Bank, which would enable 16 countries to reduce some of the social costs of their

(Mr. Draper)

adjustment programmes. Thirdly, it was helping countries to use their technical assistance more efficiently, in the framework of its National Technical Assistance Assessments and Programmes and through the round-table meetings of donors and least developed nations, a procedure for co-ordinating policies and resources which UNDP planned to strengthen. To that end, UNDP would work even more closely with the World Bank and with Governments on the technical preparations for the round tables and would endeavour to increase the effectiveness of those meetings as a financing mechanism. Finally, in a major new policy thrust, it was helping countries to foster private sector growth.

41. In that connection, UNDP had already chalked up a good record, particularly in the formulation of new macro-economic and other policies for stimulating the private sector. The first in a series of seminars designed to bring together representatives from the public and private sector to study how to stimulate private sector growth had been held the previous month in New York. The seminar, which had been attended by bankers, industrialists and management experts from four industrialized countries together with government ministers and private sector businessmen from Bolivia, Ghana, Jordan and Thailand, had provided stimulating and very interesting exchanges regarding the experience those developing countries had acquired in their efforts to promote private sector growth.

42. None the less, although UNDP was emphasizing those four areas, it was well aware that such national adjustment programmes, if effectively carried out, called for adequate international response. He had taken advantage of the fortieth anniversary of the Marshall Plan to remind the developed countries that they must do more to help, particularly since the developing countries required not only more capital but also human, technical and managerial resources in order to make effective use of the capital, and he had stressed that the world economy as a whole stood to gain.

43. The same was true with regard to the environment. Everyone knew that the environment and world development were tightly bound together in one common destiny. The experience UNDP had acquired from over 1,800 environmental projects confirmed that most environmental problems in the developing world sprang from unmet human needs. Economic, social and environmental issues were inseparable and must be dealt with as a whole. That meant that any resource management strategy in the developing world must ensure better prices for farmers, promote introduction of better agricultural practices and more efficient land tenure systems and must foster primary health care, grass-roots education and family planning services.

44. UNDP had a long tradition of supporting those goals and it did not hesitate to incorporate environmental dimensions when approving new projects.

45. Since the prevailing economic and environmental trends required decisive, sustained and co-ordinated action, UNDP was working to make country programmes more effective co-ordination frameworks. All 45 new country programmes which had been submitted to the Governing Council in June took into account resources available from the associated funds under UNDP management. Moreover, 32 per cent of the

(Mr. Draper)

resources in those new programmes came from government cost-sharing and from other United Nations funding agencies, thus providing evidence that UNDP could help to co-ordinate an appreciable volume of funds from other sources. UNDP would continue its efforts to see to it that country programmes attracted a broader mix of resources.

46. On the management side, he noted that the Action Committee, which had been established one year earlier and which met every week to approve projects worth \$400,000 or more, had proved to be a valuable in-house co-ordination mechanism. It approved between 60 and 70 projects each month. Projects, which stood up under the Committee's scrutiny or were strengthened as a result, had a better chance of being carried out on schedule and delivering results as planned thus strengthening the effectiveness of development action in the field.

47. At UNDP, action for world development never stopped. In 1987, the Governing Council had considered a \$1 billion package of new country programmes and had taken action in respect of more than 700 new projects in such diverse areas as the fight against acquired immune deficiency syndrome, technical co-operation among developing countries, village water supply all over the world, pollution control, housing and so forth.

48. Thanks to the new policies it was promoting, the dedicated work of its staff and the generosity of donors, UNDP was ready to contribute to world development in the current demanding circumstances. Its resource position reflected the confidence and high expectations of the donor community. Total pledges to UNDP and to UNDP-administered funds at the recent United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities had been 10 per cent higher than the record level reached in 1986 and were expected to reach a new peak of over \$1 billion.

49. UNDP had a strong role to play in world development so long as it gave value for money, drew ever closer to the beneficiaries of its work and supported private-sector growth. Accordingly, UNDP was resolved to continue improving co-ordination at the country level in order to offer higher returns on development funds; to co-operate more closely with non-governmental organizations; to make greater efforts to bring more women into mainstream development; and to co-operate in the task of unleashing the dynamism, creativity and talent of the citizens of the world to manage development.

50. Mr. QIMEI (Under-Secretary-General for Technical Co-operation for Development) introduced the Secretary-General's reports under agenda item 83 (d): the report on the role of qualified national personnel in the social and economic development of developing countries (A/42/275) and the report on technical co-operation activities (DP/1987/45 and Add.1-3). As could be seen from the latter report, not only had the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development (DTCD) arrested the deterioration in its financial position, but it was currently in sound financial health, as a result of substantial reductions in staff, judicious restraint over other cost elements, and cost-effective approaches. Total expenditure on technical co-operation activities had continued to rise since 1984 and had reached

(Mr. Qimel)

146 million in 1986. Project earnings had also increased, whereas overhead costs had been further reduced during that period. The resulting surpluses generated in 1985 and 1986 had enabled the Department to close the 1986 fiscal year with a modest net surplus. The implementation rate had improved substantially and DTCD had continued to maintain its position as the second largest executing agency of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). In 1986 progress had been made in several fields, including project-related activities, responses to legislative mandates and activities under the United Nations regular programme of technical co-operation.

51. The declining trend in total technical co-operation expenditures in Africa had also been reversed in 1986, which signified a considerable improvement over the total for 1985. If that upward trend was sustained, it could make a very useful contribution to the effective implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development. With a view to the development of human and natural resources, the strengthening of national economic management and assistance to Governments in aid co-ordination and mobilization, a special project on development planning had been established under the regular programme of technical co-operation. That project would provide advisory and training assistance, especially to the least developed countries in Africa. With regard to the Special Action Programme for Administration and Management in Africa, funded by the Government of the Netherlands and organized by UNDP in close co-operation with DTCD and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), projects had been identified and formulated in six countries and further country missions were planned. Implementation of those projects was programmed to begin in January 1988. The total cost of existing projects and of those to be developed exceeded the funds currently available and, although it was expected that country IPF sources would supply some funds, substantial additional funds would be required, as had been recognized in Economic and Social Council resolution 1987/55.

52. In the field of natural resources and energy, which was the largest single substantive component of the programme, operational activities had increased considerably. Governments had been according priority to water resource development, development of new and renewable sources of energy, energy planning and conservation and development of physical infrastructure. In view of the decline in commodity prices, the current emphasis in the minerals sector was less on exploration and more on improved management and productivity of current operations. At the Interregional Symposium on Improved Efficiency in the Management of Water Resources: Follow-up to the Mar del Plata Action Plan, the key constraints which had slowed progress were identified and recommendations were made for overcoming them. The Committee on Natural Resources, at its April 1987 session, had also reviewed the Symposium's report and had made recommendations which were adopted by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1987/7. That resolution called for, *inter alia*, the formulation of proposals for a comprehensive strategy to implement the Mar del Plata Action Plan during the decade 1991-2000. Those draft proposals would be submitted to the Committee on Natural Resources at its eleventh session. DTCD had continued to facilitate domestic and

(Mr. Qimel)

external commitments to viable natural resource development projects, and investment related to projects executed in 1986 and funded by UNDP had totalled \$1.5 billion.

53. The Eighth Meeting of Experts on the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance, held in New York in March 1987, (see the report of the Economic and Social Council and the report of the Secretary-General on that Meeting) discussed priority issues in public management in developing countries and made recommendations for action at both national and international levels.

54. With regard to technical co-operation among developing countries, DTCD and UNDP had supported intergovernmental programming exercises in China, Tunisia and Turkey. That experience had shown the need for international support beyond the identification of opportunities for technical co-operation among developing countries, and the Department would continue to provide catalytic assistance to countries from the regular programme resources during the biennium 1988-1989. The Department's further progress in internal arrangements for evaluation of projects was also noteworthy. An overall analysis of the results of all project evaluation missions for 1986 had helped to identify the difficulties and factors that influenced the successful completion of projects (see the Secretary-General's report).

55. Under the United Nations regular programme of technical co-operation, high priority had been accorded to human resources development. Advisory services, pilot field projects and training programmes had been organized in all sectors. In 1986, 235 officials from developing countries had participated in those training programmes. Having resolved its financial situation, DTCD now needed to pay greater attention to improving the quality and effectiveness of its activities and to ensuring universality in the conduct of its operational policies. To that end, it had endeavoured to increase the participation of women in operational activities, diversify the procurement of equipment, extending more opportunities to developing countries and underutilized donor countries, and increase the proportion of recruitment of project experts and consultants from developing and socialist countries. DTCD was also planning to further augment its internal capabilities in the field of human resources development. Several Governments, especially in the least developed countries, were currently undertaking major efforts in that area. Bhutan and Uganda, for example, had recently requested assistance in modernizing their respective civil service systems.

56. The opportunities for DTCD to play an even greater role in technical co-operation activities would continue to depend not only on external factors and on an increase in multilateral assistance by the Member States, but also on the ratio of the Department staff, which was barely adequate to support the substantial increase in operational activities, to the work-load. While the Department was prepared to co-operate in the implementation of recommendation 15 of the Group of 18, it hoped that the General Assembly would share the views expressed by the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination and the Governing Council on the need for a judicious and flexible approach to post reductions in the Department.

57. Ms. VETLESFN (Norway), speaking on behalf of the five Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden and Norway), said that they firmly supported efforts to strengthen multilateral development co-ordination and to improve the effectiveness of multilateral assistance, for which purpose the total flow of resources to the developing countries should be increased. While the level of resources was still insufficient compared to needs, she noted with satisfaction that there was a steady growth in contributions to United Nations operational activities, as demonstrated by the outcome of the recent Pledging Conference.

58. Although financial support to UNDP had increased at the above-mentioned Conference and during 1986, there was still a long way to go before UNDP received the funds required for it to fully play its central role in technical assistance. The Nordic countries, whose share in the financing of UNDP accounted for approximately 30 per cent of the total, urged all countries to increase rapidly and substantially their voluntary contributions to UNDP, as well as to other organizations of the United Nations system engaged in operational activities.

59. The broad increase in support for operational activities should be seen in the context of the efforts made over time by the United Nations organizations to improve the efficiency and quality of the assistance they provided, for example, by adapting their programmes to meet the changing circumstances and changing needs of the developing countries.

60. Her delegation would have liked to see in the Director-General's current report indications of the progress made towards achieving greater coherence and co-ordination of the United Nations operational activities, as requested in General Assembly resolution 41/171. It also regretted the delays in reporting to the Economic and Social Council by bodies responsible for such activities on the implementation of the resolution and the fact that the Director-General's report provided no indications as to how the resolution was to be implemented.

61. The necessary organizational reforms and greater efficiency were key factors in improving the capacity of the United Nations operational activities to contribute to sustainable development in economic, social and environmental terms. He stressed the need for all partners in the development process to contribute to a sustained and well co-ordinated follow-up nationally, internationally and within the United Nations system.

62. Institutional and professional capacity needed to be developed if environmental considerations were to be integrated into development policy and planning. UNDP and other United Nations funds and bodies engaged in operational activities could and should provide much-needed assistance to national and regional authorities in achieving that objective.

63. Where the follow-up to the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development was concerned, the resolute implementation of reforms in the African countries must continue and must be supplemented by increased transfers of financial and technical resources from the industrialized countries.

(Ms. Vetlesen, Norway)

64. While the current, growth-based, debt strategy remained valid, it urgently needed reinforcement, and its individual elements must be implemented more effectively.

65. Many African countries which had undertaken reform programmes for structural adjustment had experienced deteriorating social conditions. The Nordic countries therefore considered it crucial to take the African countries' economic and social needs into account in order to alleviate poverty. The opportunities created by reforms should be seized in order to improve the situation of vulnerable population groups, especially women, who at the same time represented an important resource in development, and children, for whom United Nations technical assistance programmes were of great importance.

66. In short, adjustment must have "a human face". As the Nordic countries had pointed out at the annual meeting of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, it would be helpful if the multilateral financial institutions collaborated with the United Nations agencies and other international organizations in that task, especially in operational activities in the poor and debt-distressed African countries.

67. Although the report on the functioning of the operational activities for development of the United Nations system was of limited scope, being based on case studies of seven countries, it provided illuminating examples of the progress made and the problems encountered in the field, in particular with regard to programming, the role of the Resident Co-ordinator, which should be strengthened, interaction with Governments on matters of development policy and clarification of the link between the operations of the World Bank and the regional development banks, on the one hand, and the United Nations system of operational activities, on the other. The report was thus a valuable contribution to the debate on suitable measures for achieving greater integration of multilateral operational activities.

68. She recommended that greater emphasis should be placed on joint programming and other methods which took advantage of the existing complementarities in the system as well as on increased co-ordination and, where appropriate, decentralization of the management of operational activities. The dialogue on economic policies and development strategies must continue with the Governments of recipient countries, which had an important role to play in planning and implementing operational activities at field level.

69. The Nordic countries felt confident that the efforts made so far provided a solid foundation for further improvement of the operational activities undertaken by multilateral institutions.

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued)

Draft resolution A/C.2/42/L.22

70. The CHAIRMAN announced that Indonesia, Mauritania, Bangladesh and Nicaragua had joined in sponsoring draft resolution A/C.2/42/L.22, entitled "Assistance to the Palestinian people".

71. Mr. GAJENTAAN (Netherlands) said that no consensus had been reached on the draft resolution during the informal consultations.

72. Mr. KASRAWI (Jordan) said that mention should be made in the draft resolution of the role which the Arab Governments concerned were playing in the implementation of the programme of economic and social assistance to the Palestinian people. Accordingly, he proposed that paragraphs 3 and 4 should be merged into a single paragraph and the wording of them should be amended slightly to read:

"3. Requests the Secretary-General to develop the programme, mobilize resources for it and seek its early implementation in close co-operation with the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Arab Governments concerned, where appropriate, and to co-ordinate the activities envisaged by various organizations of the United Nations system within the framework of the programme".

73. Mr. FAABORG-ANDERSEN (Denmark), speaking on behalf of the States Members of the European Economic Community, proposed that the Committee should defer its consideration of draft resolution A/C.2/42/L.22 so that delegations might study the amendment proposed by the delegation of Jordan and hold further consultations.

74. Mr. AL-ALFI (Democratic Yemen) seconded the Danish motion. He expressed agreement with the Jordanian proposal regarding the merging of paragraphs 3 and 4 of draft resolution A/C.2/42/L.22. In the new paragraph 3, however, he suggested that the words "the Arab Governments concerned, where appropriate," should be replaced by the words "and, where applicable, outside the occupied Palestinian territories, with the appropriate recipient Arab countries".

75. Following a procedural debate in which Mr. KASRAWI (Jordan), Mr. HARAN (Israel), Mr. EL GHOUTH (Mauritania), Mr. MOHAMED (Somalia), Mr. AL-ALFI (Democratic Yemen) and Mr. ABU-KOASH (Observer, Palestine Liberation Organization) took part, the CHAIRMAN suggested that consideration of draft resolution A/C.2/42/L.22 should be postponed.

76. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.