



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 32nd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. OUDOVENKO (Ukrainian Soviet
Socialist Republic)

later: Mr. GAJENTAAN (Netherlands)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 83: OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT (continued)

- (a) OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)
- (b) UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (continued)
- (c) UNITED NATIONS CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT FUND (continued)
- (d) UNITED NATIONS TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION ACTIVITIES: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)
- (e) UNITED NATIONS VOLUNTEERS PROGRAMME (continued)

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

- (e) ENVIRONMENT (continued)

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

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

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

1. Mr. SCHUMANN (German Democratic Republic) said that, while the volume of operational activities had undoubtedly grown in recent years, the overall amount of assistance given was modest compared with the total needs of the countries concerned. The main significance of such activities was, therefore, their general impact on development, and they could not be considered in isolation from current economic conditions. Indebtedness and deteriorating terms of trade, among other things, were very seriously affecting the overall economic and social conditions of most developing countries, and there was full justification for a comprehensive restructuring of international economic relations.

2. Operational activities should meet the needs and interests of individual recipient countries and be consistent with their development priorities. Strict observance of the basic principles of UNDP, namely, sovereignty, universality and voluntarism, was essential to prevent such activities from being used as a means of political blackmail or economic pressure.

3. The private sector must not be presented as providing some kind of panacea for the economic problems of developing countries, nor should UNDP concentrate on promoting an improved climate for private sector activities. An effective public sector had, in the past, proved indispensable when it came to implementing fundamental socio-economic measures, particularly in developing countries. UNDP should help countries to strengthen their capabilities in administration and planning and in other important sectors so that they could implement effectively not only development programmes, but also projects directly linked with promotion of the public sector. That approach could also be taken in connection with ongoing economic adjustment programmes in developing countries, the aim being to avoid one-sided austerity measures mainly affecting the poor.

4. All voluntary contributions to operational activities should be used promptly to implement development projects. Some progress had been made with regard to use

(Mr. Schumann, German Democratic Republic)

of that part of his own Government's contribution which had not yet been utilized. Some indication as to how contributions in national currencies could be better used would encourage Governments to increase their voluntary contributions.

5. He commended UNDP activities with regard to the development of human resources and awaited with interest the 1988 report of the Administrator. Economic and Social Council resolution 1987/81 called for an examination of all aspects of human resource development in the United Nations system as a whole. In that connection, optimum use could be made of the experience of UNDP for the benefit of all parts of the system. The report of the Secretary-General on the role of qualified national personnel in the social and economic development of developing countries (A/42/275) should also be used and updated with that aim in view.

6. Training and education had long been central features of the assistance given by his country to developing countries and national liberation movements. Not only had many nationals from developing countries received training in the German Democratic Republic, but experts had also been sent free of charge to assist the developing countries. Details of that assistance could be found in document A/42/359 and should also be included in relevant analytical publications of the United Nations. The Secretariat should publish only data based either on its own calculations or on figures provided by Member States. The withholding or distorted presentation of information concerning development assistance ran counter to the promotion of such assistance.

7. The Jansson report (A/42/326/Add.1) addressed some of the fundamental aspects of multilateral development co-operation and made a timely contribution to the continuing efforts to enhance the relevance and impact of operational activities. Of particular significance was the concept of integrated programming consistent with the macro-economic and social policies of recipient countries. Nevertheless, in view of the necessarily small sample of countries studied, the conclusions of the report had only limited applicability. Both the report and the views expressed thereon required further consideration, particularly within the UNDP Governing Council. They should also be taken into account in the Economic and Social Council's next comprehensive policy review of operational activities, while the further improvement of the Council's co-ordination function in that respect should be discussed in the Special Commission on the In-depth Study of the United Nations Intergovernmental Structure and Functions in the Economic and Social Fields.

8. His country had substantially increased its annual contribution to UNICEF since 1986, and was participating in various projects, including the provision of medical supplies, school equipment and other essential goods for children in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

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

10. Mr. KUMARAKULASINGHE (International Labour Organisation) said that both the annual report of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation and the Jansson report dealt with important issues on which ILO legislative organs had recently deliberated. The International Labour Conference, held in June, had discussed the role of ILO in technical co-operation. Its broad conclusions reflected a commitment to enhancing the relevance and impact of the operational activities of the United Nations system, in general, and of ILO, in particular.

11. The ILO Governing Body had conveyed to the Economic and Social Council and to the General Assembly its views on some of the more important policy issues (D/1987/89). It had also made a preliminary response (E/1987/82/Add.2) to the findings and recommendations of the Jansson report, which provided an important field perspective to the deliberations of intergovernmental bodies and could contribute towards a better understanding of the complexities of operational activities. While it was important to bear in mind the limited applicability of the conclusions of the report, that consideration in no way detracted from its overall value.

12. With regard to the specific issues raised, he emphasized first the significant role played by resident co-ordinators. It was important, above all, to ensure that they were of an appropriate calibre, were truly representative of the system as a whole, and could, therefore, make optimal use of its accumulated knowledge and experience. He supported the proposal for a "broader-based selection process". It was questionable whether meaningful mandates could be worked out for resident co-ordinators, given that their role varied according to the country concerned. The Governing Council of UNDP had itself expressed the view that the main responsibility for designing the activities of the resident co-ordinator at country level lay with the host Government. No measures to enhance co-ordination could adequately substitute for the effective discharge by the recipient Government of its primary responsibility for co-ordination.

13. Secondly, sector, subsector and thematically focused co-ordination efforts offered the greatest potential for enhanced levels of co-ordination, while the effectiveness of the country programming process depended significantly on the manner in which the sectoral knowledge and experience of organizations of the system were used. Further measures to that end should constitute one important focus of follow-up to the case studies report.

14. Thirdly, the channelling of trust funds directly to organizations like the ILO had contributed to multilateral aid flows and responded to the mutual concerns and interests of donors and recipients. Trust funds had often been applied to social and human aspects of development which did not always attract other sources of funding, and had been utilized within the framework of national plans and priorities.

15. Fourthly, the ILO welcomed the acknowledgement of the essential role of agency field representation. ILO field offices had major responsibilities with regard to the regulatory and legislative frameworks for development. In addition to

(Mr. Kumarakulasinghe, ILO)

providing administrative support to technical co-operation activities, field officers made a direct contribution to development and to policy discussions with Governments, employers and workers' organizations.

16. The real value of the case studies would depend on what follow-up action was taken. Such measures should take full account of their financial implications. Due attention should be given to the fact that the mandates and circumstances of each organization of the system were different and issues relating to their management should be addressed through their respective governing bodies. The ILO wished to be involved in the overall follow-up to the case studies report since, as an executing agency, it was a key partner in the development process. It would co-operate fully with the Director-General in any action which might be required.

17. The ILO attached great importance to the involvement of agencies in structural adjustment, and would be the host of a High-level Meeting on Employment and Structural Adjustment to be held at Geneva later in November 1987.

18. Mr. ELGHOUAYEL (Tunisia) praised the Jansson report for its relevance, objectivity and acute analysis. At a time when the structure and functions of the Organization were under scrutiny, there was doubt and confusion with regard to the new directions which certain parts of the system responsible for operational activities apparently wished to follow. It was appropriate, therefore, for the United Nations as a whole and for the Secretary-General to consider ways and means of consolidating operational activities and making them more effective, in accordance with the 1970 Consensus reached in 1970. The fact that all Member States, particularly the developing countries, attached great importance to those activities indicated the need to make constant adjustments in the light of those countries' priorities and requirements.

19. A number of factors indicated the urgent need for effective measures. Among other things, although voluntary contributions had increased in nominal terms, the IPFs of the recipient countries had fallen in real terms and growth rate objectives had not always been achieved.

20. Those countries considered the operational activities of the United Nations system to offer a genuine palliative for their economic difficulties at a time when they were undertaking structural reforms, burdened increasingly by debt and seriously affected by the growing instability of world economic conditions.

21. Any changes in operational activities for development must take account of a number of factors. The intrinsic value of such activities lay in their multilateral, universal nature. It was important to consider the fundamental role of the General Assembly and of a more effective Economic and Social Council with regard to policy-making and co-ordination in the field of operational activities for development, with the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation playing a central co-ordinating role. UNDP must maintain its twofold function as the central financing body and co-ordinator in the field. The structures upon which those activities were based should be reviewed more

(Mr. Elghouayel, Tunisia)

systematically, possibly annually or every two years, and perhaps at joint meetings of the Economic and Social Council and the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination.

22. The growth targets for voluntary contributions to United Nations programmes should be reached as soon as possible. The right of Governments to determine how funds allocated to them should be used should not be overlooked, and every effort made to increase substantially the share of the developing countries in the procurement of goods and services. Procedures at all levels should be made more straightforward. The UNDP Governing Council must consider ways in which to increase the use of technical co-operation among developing countries as an effective and inexpensive means of implementing IPF-funded programmes. Project delivery by agencies must be greatly improved and resident co-ordinators must receive the necessary backing not only within the system as a whole, but also from donors and recipients, to guarantee the effectiveness and proper co-ordination of activities in the field.

23. While those were not the only considerations, they were the most important when it came to making a genuine collective effort to achieve reform for the benefit of the developing countries.

24. Mr. RAHMAN (Bangladesh) said that United Nations operational activities had assumed special significance at a time when the external economic environment continued to be inhospitable to the developing countries. The multilateral and non-political nature of the assistance provided by the system, the world-wide experience of development acquired thereby, and the terms governing grants had given such assistance a value far in excess of its contribution to the overall aid flow.

25. Unfortunately, resources continued to fall far short of what was required to meet developing countries' needs, but the increased financial commitment to UNDP and the improved financial position of the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development were welcome developments. He called upon all countries to take urgent steps to increase their voluntary contributions.

26. The findings of the Jansson report would provide a useful basis for further consideration of how to improve operational activities. Efforts towards greater integration of activities, through such mechanisms as joint programming, should continue. The multiplicity of organizational procedures and arrangements for programmes and projects had constituted a serious problem for recipient countries. It was important to explore the possibility of greater decentralization in the management of such activities and harmonization of inter-agency procedures. The leadership role and operational functions of the resident co-ordinators should be more clearly defined. Furthermore, the United Nations system should offer maximum assistance to Governments to strengthen their role as external aid co-ordinators.

27. In-depth study of the Jansson report was essential, and his delegation agreed that the seven case studies, on which it was based should be distributed widely. While he did not question the merits of the report, the extent to which its

(Mr. Rahman, Bangladesh)

conclusions could be applied to the developing countries as a whole was an open question. The developing countries must have time to consider its findings, while the various bodies and specialized agencies concerned, some of which had not been consulted during the preparation of the report, should also have the opportunity to respond to the issues raised. Only such an approach would ensure that its recommendations received meaningful follow-up, rather than remaining a dead letter like those contained in General Assembly resolution 32/197.

28. Reference had been made to the need to integrate emerging issues in development policy and planning. His delegation appreciated the significance of sustainable development and the need to implement the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies, and believed that they should be accorded the importance they deserved in the operational activities of the United Nations system, while not losing sight of other issues, such as the elimination of poverty and hunger and the provision of education and health care, central to the development of the developing countries.

29. His delegation had read with interest the reports of the Joint Inspection Unit with regard to technical co-operation between UNDP and the regional economic commissions. In particular, there was a need to increase the participation of ESCAP at the inter-country project identification and project formulation stage, since it was in an ideal position to provide regional input which would inevitably lead to better programming and implementation of projects.

30. Mr. MOTHANA ALI (Democratic Yemen) said that, although responsibility for development lay primarily with developing countries, the operational activities of the United Nations were an important element in promoting their self-sufficiency particularly in a situation of scarce resources, poor infrastructure and persistence of an unfavourable international economic climate.

31. Document A/42/326 addressed key issues relating to the financing, administration and management of operational activities of the United Nations system. The financial crisis of the United Nations and the continued reduced financial flows of official multilateral aid, however, constituted the principal constraints on progress in that field. Moreover, his delegation regretted the negative position adopted by one of the major donor nations on the urgent situation with regard to the mobilization of resources for operational activities, which were intended to promote self-sufficiency among developing countries.

32. Recipient countries must be consulted before any measures to strengthen the role of resident co-ordinators were adopted. If co-ordination measures were to be strengthened, that process should also help to reinforce the co-ordination capacities of States and to meet their growing needs for operational activities without any decrease in the effectiveness of those activities.

33. Due attention should also be paid to the question of procurement in developing countries themselves of the equipment needed for the execution of operational activities. That was an essential part of the development process. In the case of larger contracts, it was essential for the United Nations system to develop better

(Mr. Mothana Ali, Democratic Yemen)

knowledge of developing countries' procurement capacities with a view to making more effective use of them. Finally, priority should be given to increasing the use of consultants from developing countries for project identification and formulation.

34. With regard to recommendation (12) contained in document A/42/326, his delegation considered that the role of nationals in administration, organization and execution of projects and economic and technical co-operation among developing countries would be suitable themes for discussion.

35. Mr. ABBAS (Bahrain) said that the development process must be accelerated in developing countries through an increase in the resources allocated to finance operational activities of the United Nations system. The decline in resources should be halted through increased contributions by developed countries to United Nations funds and programmes, and more attention must focus on the co-ordination of aid.

36. Operational activities should be consistent with the national goals and priorities of recipient countries. Efforts to assess those activities should improve procedures and facilitate co-ordination at the national level with a view to avoiding duplication of work, lowering the cost of services rendered by the United Nations, and facilitating the recipient country's task of co-ordinating external assistance aimed at achieving self-sufficient economic growth.

37. Under the terms of UNDP Governing Council decisions 85/16 and 87/25, a number of island developing countries, including Bahrain, had been classified as net contributors despite their inability to make financial contributions to the programme because of unique ecological problems and other valid reasons. Document DP/1987/22 illustrated all the obstacles to economic growth encountered by the economies of such island developing countries, particularly those which were dependent on non-renewable natural resources. His delegation hoped that the Governing Council would consider exempting island developing countries from the maximum per capita level of gross national product as determined in Governing Council decision 85/16.

38. Mr. BOUMAR (Israel) said that, despite the fact that Israel was a developing country it would continue to contribute to development through the United Nations system and provide grant assistance, particularly to the least developed countries. Because its financial resources were extremely limited, Israel had concentrated its efforts on technical co-operation with other developing countries, particularly in the areas of agricultural techniques and rural planning. Every year, Israel organized seminars, workshops and courses in agriculture, water management, community development co-operation and labour organization and community health services. In addition, it had sent over 9,000 experts abroad.

39. Israel believed that the least developed countries, particularly those in Africa, should be the prime target of operational activities for development. In May 1986, at the special session of the United Nations on the critical economic situation in Africa, Israel had stressed the need to expand vocational training.

(Mr. Boumar, Israel)

It would continue to co-operate with African countries to relieve one of the most critical constraints on African economic development - the transfer of know-how.

40. Thanks to the success of its integrated rural development programme, Israel was capable of transferring advanced agricultural technology to other developing countries. To that end, Israel had outlined a strategy for improving the productivity of the poorer traditional agricultural sectors of society. The strategy combined comprehensive intersectoral development with decentralized planning, programming and implementation. Programmes of that kind did not require long preparation and had been implemented with success both in Israel and in the developing countries with which Israel co-operated.

41. Israel wished to put its capabilities and considerable expertise at the disposal of interested Governments in Africa, Latin America, Asia and Oceania as well as the international donor and development agencies.

42. Mr. DUARTE (Brazil) said that, during the past 18 months, there had been some important developments for Brazil in the field of technical co-operation. First, the UNDP Governing Council had approved the fourth country programme for Brazil; secondly, in 1986 his Government had signed project documents for regional bureaux for Africa and for Latin America and the Caribbean; thirdly, the President of Brazil had established a special agency as the central government instrument for co-ordinating and establishing priorities in the field of international technical co-operation; and lastly, Brazil had been engaged in finding ways and means to encourage co-operation among the countries of the South Atlantic region.

43. Considering the role of United Nations operational activities for development, it was important to bear in mind the long-established major guidelines for such activities, the most important of which was the 1970 Consensus. Brazil was firmly convinced that increases in contributions to UNDP should not be obtained at the expense of any deviation from the Programme's original and fundamental role, namely, to assist countries in promoting development, while respecting recipient States' sovereignty in establishing national priorities, developing projects and programmes and co-ordinating co-operation activities. There should be no attempt to interfere with or encroach upon the work of other international organizations concerned with developing countries' structural adjustments or other aspects of macro-economic policy. In that respect, Brazil found it difficult to understand why the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation had raised the question of "whether UNDP should define in substantive and operational terms some priority fields of intervention for the Organization" (A/42/326, annex, para. 26) in the context of the level of UNDP resources.

44. The nature of operational activities was changing, and countries had different needs than at the time the Programme was established. Developing countries could make good use of approaches to technical co-operation which would involve a greater number of such countries in the overall procurement of goods and services by the United Nations system. Changing needs were also reflected by the increasing emphasis on government execution of projects, as well as on technical co-operation among developing countries and general South-South co-operation.

(Mr. Duarte, Brazil)

45. Brazil welcomed some of the recommendations of the Jansson report (A/42/326/Add.1, annex), particularly recommendation (b) on joint programming and recommendation (d) on the need for greater decentralization in the management of operational activities. His delegation had not had sufficient time to study the implications of the recommendations as a whole, but recognized that some of them were controversial and would require further study.

46. Finally, his delegation supported the Director-General's suggestion that one or two specific themes should be selected for in-depth analysis in the years between the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development. In that regard, the question of assuring a greater volume of procurement of equipment and services from developing countries, and the possible courses of action to strengthen technical co-operation among developing countries, were timely and extremely pertinent themes.

47. Mr. CHEKAY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the role and place of UNDP in operational activities and in the United Nations system of technical assistance were very closely related to the extent to which UNDP adhered to the fundamental principles of its activities. His delegation was concerned at the fact that UNDP was becoming an increasingly important and active instrument for carrying out large-scale and far-reaching economic actions of the West, such as "structural readjustments" in the developing countries, the phasing out of the public sector, the uncontrolled development of private enterprise and the creation of favourable conditions for using the natural, human and even financial resources of developing countries in the interest of Western monopolies. As a result, the absolute and relative economic situation of the developing countries had continued to deteriorate. The UNDP Administrator had spoken imperatively about the need for developing countries to curtail the public sector and to sell public enterprises. In that connection, his delegation wished to stress that it was the sovereign right of the Governments of recipient countries to determine the ways in which their national economies would develop.

48. One of the key issues of United Nations operational activities was co-ordination. The Soviet delegation supported the provisions of the Secretary General's report (A/42/232) which stated that the recipient Government had the sole prerogative to co-ordinate all external assistance and that the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council had a central co-ordinating role to play within the United Nations system. That report should be considered not only in the context of agenda item 12, but also under agenda item 83.

49. In the view of his delegation, the questions of co-ordination and of the administration and management of the operational activities of the United Nations system should be dealt with, at the intergovernmental level, by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council; at the Secretariat level, by the Director-General for Development; and, at the country level, by the recipient Government. It was the task of the organizations of the United Nations system to strengthen the recipient Government's potential and to provide consultative and other services where and when requested without interfering with that Government's

(Mr. Chekay, USSR)

prerogatives and sovereignty. The same approach should be adopted with regard to the Director-General's proposal to explore the possibilities of "establishing a unified United Nations development overseas service" (A/42/326, annex, para. 50) and developing a "practical and useful relationship" between different units involved in ensuring interaction between operational activities and research (*ibid.*, para. 55). In that process, account should be taken of the experience of the entire international community.

50. His delegation noted the improvement in the performance of the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development, and considered that it was necessary to diversify the sources of supply of equipment and services by making wider use of the opportunities in developing and socialist countries.

51. The USSR attached great importance to the activities of UNICEF, and commended the great amount of work which was being done by the Fund in the interests of children in developing countries, especially the front-line States. However, UNICEF continued to carry out projects which had no direct bearing on the needs of children. That provided grounds for reproaching UNICEF with parallelism and duplication of the activities of other specialized agencies of the United Nations system. The balance of UNICEF programme activities had been upset in favour of universal immunization, that had been detrimental to other programmes in such areas as the strengthening of national medical and sanitary assistance services, the combating of malaria and the ensuring of drinking water supply. His delegation noted the increasing international support for UNFPA, and hoped that the Soviet Union's fruitful co-operation with the Fund would continue to gain in strength.

52. Some agencies of the United Nations system seemed to have forgotten that the real attributes of development were know-how, experience, technology, materials and equipment. Money only made it possible to plan, distribute and take stock. UNDP was beginning to be considered as a kind of bank which favoured profitability over development, the procurement of advantages over the granting of assistance, and control over co-operation. The USSR would never accept such an approach to international co-operation.

53. The Soviet Union was engaged in broad multilateral co-operation with developing countries. Between 1981 and 1986, the volume of Soviet assistance to developing countries had grown by more than 86 per cent and had been rising steadily from year to year. Certain staff members of the United Nations Secretariat had attempted to distort the level of assistance provided by the Soviet Union and other socialist countries to developing nations. Soviet participation in United Nations operational activities for development would be far more effective if such practices were discontinued.

54. The Soviet Union was prepared to transfer to developing countries a part of the resources which would be saved as a result of measures to curtail the arms race. It wished to increase substantially its participation in multilateral assistance programmes, and economic opportunities to that end would appear as the principle of "disarmament for development" was put into practice.

55. Mr. LE HUU PHUNG (Viet Nam) said that there was an urgent need for the international community to increase its contributions to operational activities to help reverse the deteriorating situation of the developing countries. The encouraging result of the recent Pledging Conference was offset by several economic factors which worked against the developing countries. The diversion to development purposes of some of the money spent on armaments would considerably increase the resources of the United Nations system.

56. His delegation welcomed the suggestion in the Director-General's report that in future the annual report might focus on one or two specific issues. It also welcomed the increase in the resources allocated to international institutions, but shared the Director-General's concern that the United Nations system was not receiving a sufficient share of total official development assistance. The recommendation of the Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes that food aid should be brought within the national development plans of recipient countries should be carefully weighed, and any application of it must be consistent with resolution 41/191 on food and agricultural problems.

57. The basic purpose of technical co-operation should be to promote self-reliance in developing countries. UNDP played a pivotal role in mobilizing resources for that purpose and in the co-ordination of technical co-operation. His delegation was encouraged by the Director-General's support of increased Government participation in project implementation. The field representation of United Nations organizations was a sensitive issue: Governments wanted to make full use of available resources, but that required rationalization of field representation; yet the maintenance of good working relations between Governments and executing agencies deterred Governments from taking initiatives to secure such rationalization. The Jansson report was an encouraging first step in the Director-General's initiative to design a rational pattern of field representation. His delegation would welcome a more active role for the resident co-ordinator, especially in ensuring that UNDP-funded projects conformed with national development priorities.

58. In Viet Nam the operational activities of the United Nations system supplemented the bilateral assistance received mostly from the socialist countries and helped to secure independent economic development. UNFPA played an active role in the implementation of Viet Nam's population programme and should be supported by all countries. His delegation therefore appealed to the United States to resume its contribution to UNFPA. UNICEF's assistance had enabled Viet Nam to carry out an immunization campaign which would reach 80 per cent of its children by the end of 1988. His Government was determined to show its efficiency by completing the campaign two years ahead of time. UNICEF also deserved generous contributions from the international community.

59. Mr. ANDRADE-DIAZ-DURAN (Guatemala), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77, said that operational activities for development were especially important to the Group as they were an expression of the principles and purposes of the Charter. It was important to keep in mind the definition of operational activities and their objectives set out in resolutions 32/197, 35/81 and 41/171. One of the main

(Mr. Andrade-Díaz-Duran, Guatemala)

objectives was the promotion of co-operation among developing countries as an essential component of collective self-sufficiency and a means of securing equitable world economic development.

60. The Group of 77 believed that the periodic reviews of operational activities should be continued to ensure greater efficiency. Equally important, operational activities must be co-ordinated with national development plans, and United Nations organizations must work together with the recipient Governments to enhance their ability to cope with their economic and social problems. The criteria used to determine assistance must be flexible, for excessive rigidity was counterproductive.

61. An increasing proportion of resources for operational activities took the form of loans by the World Bank and the regional development banks, to the detriment of the resources committed to the United Nations system. The Group of 77 again appealed to the international community to increase its contributions to United Nations organizations. It was pleased that a large part of financial aid had been spent on food for the victims of drought and desertification, but that kind of aid must be more reliable in the future and make full use of regional and South-South co-operation, and an effort must be made to tackle the causes of the problems. International assistance must also be increased for the least developed, island and land-locked countries.

62. The United Nations system must keep overhead costs to a minimum to ensure that as far as possible resources were used directly for operational activities. The activities themselves must also be made more efficient, but the developing countries must continue to play a central role in determining the type and purpose of United Nations assistance. They must decide on their priorities and allocate the resources accordingly. Programming should be more flexible, for that would enhance co-ordination and encourage investments from other sources. Better co-ordination of disbursements by multilateral and bilateral donors would also improve the management of the resources.

63. At the country level, the United Nations system must operate as efficiently as possible under the leadership of the resident co-ordinator, who must receive the necessary support from recipient Governments and donor countries. The structure and operation of the system must therefore be reviewed to ensure that Governments received integrated multisectoral advice which took due account of each country's circumstances. The Group of 77 reiterated its faith in multilateralism and in the operational activities of the United Nations as the most suitable tool for promoting development and international economic co-operation.

64. Mr. ABBASI (Pakistan) said that the Jansson report provided a useful overview of the operational activities of the United Nations system. His delegation believed that the efficiency, effectiveness and utility of those activities could be enhanced in a number of ways: first of all, Governments, the United Nations and potential donors should co-operate more closely in project preparation because potential projects were more likely to be funded if donor interest was established before feasibility studies were conducted. The availability of resources should

(Mr. Abbasi, Pakistan)

also be established at the outset of a country programme in order to facilitate long-term planning, that had not always been done in the past.

65. In programme implementation, emphasis should be placed on the use and enhancement of indigenous technical manpower, and reliance on outside expertise should be progressively eliminated. United Nations agencies could provide more effective advisory services in policy and programme matters if the officials concerned were familiar with a given country's development process. Moreover, heads of United Nations agencies should come from a background compatible with the culture of the host country, whose political sensitivities should also be respected.

66. Greater emphasis should be laid on the transfer of technology in intercountry programming and the Asian and Pacific region offered a particularly good opportunity for such transfers. The United Nations should support projects that facilitated the transfer of new technologies to users, especially those in the private sector. While the regional programmes of the first two UNDP programming cycles had allocated a disproportionate amount of funds for expert and consultant services, that trend had been reversed during the third cycle. It was to be hoped that the expert component of future programmes would be diminished still further and the equipment component increased. Intercountry programme evaluations should focus on the extent to which objectives were achieved and projects had produced a unified impact. Proliferation and duplication of activities should be avoided. Finally, while it was the responsibility of recipient countries to ensure that optimum use was made of resources for development, donor countries should demonstrate their commitment to operational activities by providing adequate amounts and the delivery mechanism should be improved.

67. Mr. YEGOROV (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) noted that the Director-General had said that there was little prospect of a significant increase in resources for operational activities given the prevailing economic conditions; that was correct according to outdated concepts of the modern world but incorrect in the light of the great opportunities offered by the new rules for coexistence proposed by the socialist countries in their comprehensive system of international peace and security. Implementation of the principle of "Disarmament for development", in particular, would have a direct effect on the problem.

68. Operational activities must serve to further the development of the developing countries and their economic independence and place in the international division of labour. That was his country's approach to the item and he commended the UNDP, the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development and other United Nations organs on their good work, but shared the concern over the policy of the UNDP Administration to increase the use of foreign private capital, the main purpose of which was to reap maximum profits from participation in technical assistance programmes. Paragraph 27 of the Director-General's report referred to the increasing involvement of UNDP with financial institutions controlled by capitalist countries, the aim of which was to promote the private at the expense of the State sector. His delegation could not therefore support the proposal to bring all resources under UNDP's control.

(Mr. Yegorov, Byelorussian SSR)

69. That reservation extended to UNDP's co-ordination role, which was necessary but must be designed to strengthen the role of national Governments. Accordingly, his delegation could not endorse the proposal to extend UNDP's co-ordinating functions to cover all stages of the planning, implementation and assessment of technical assistance, including bilateral assistance, for it amounted to interference in the internal affairs of recipient States. That position was supported by the statement in the Secretary-General's report on co-ordination (A/42/232) that the Government had the sole prerogative to co-ordinate all external assistance and by the assertion in the Jansson report that co-ordination must be "bottom-up". His delegation agreed with the report of the Secretary-General that the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council should play the central co-ordinating role laid down in the Charter, and also agreed that, at the inter-secretariat level, such issues should be centred in the Director-General's hands.

70. The Byelorussian SSR co-operated actively with the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development, but reiterated its position that all technical assistance activities should be removed from the regular budget and placed on a voluntary basis. UNDP's assistance to developing countries in the training of national cadres must be comprehensive and include prevention of the "brain drain". Wide use was made of his country's experience in that kind of training, with the secondment of Byelorussian experts abroad and the training of students in Byelorussia.

71. The Byelorussian SSR appreciated the work done by UNICEF: it had increased its contribution by 30 per cent in 1987 and would hold it at the same level in 1988. However, it was concerned that the universal immunization programme occupied a disproportionately large place in UNICEF's work, to the detriment of its other programmes.

72. Mr. ARIYARATNE (Sri Lanka) welcomed the increase in voluntary contributions to UNDP and other agencies; his country had increased its contribution to UNDP by approximately 15 per cent, despite financial constraints.

73. The role of resident co-ordinators in operational activities should be strengthened and their functions clearly defined; at the same time, they should respect the development priorities of recipient Governments.

74. The United Nations system must consider the dissemination of information regarding development activities a priority issue so that Governments and donors could have early access to such information. The United Nations information centres might play an important role in that regard.

75. The strength of the UNDP system lay in its network of field offices. Field office staff generally had a good grasp of local policy issues and operational problems. His delegation hoped that the measures taken by UNDP to streamline its organization and management would not diminish the field offices' authority. It also hoped that reporting procedures would be simplified so as to reduce the burden

(Mr. Ariyaratne, Sri Lanka)

placed on host government agencies. With regard to the functioning of operational activities in general, the recommendations in the Jansson report should be given thorough consideration.

76. Many important development programmes in Sri Lanka had received UNDP assistance. His country had also benefited from a number of UNDP interregional activities, including a conference held at Colombo in January 1987 on economic, scientific and technological co-operation in marine affairs which had focused on the Indian Ocean.

77. He welcomed the recent increase in voluntary contributions to UNFPA and the Fund's decision to expand its programmes in developing countries in sub-Saharan Africa. UNFPA had been actively involved in the implementation of Sri Lanka's population policy and programmes since 1983. UNICEF, too, had provided invaluable assistance to his country for many years.

78. It was gratifying that the United Nations Volunteers programme continued to respond to the needs of developing countries, inter alia, by promoting technical co-operation among them. The UNV programme had helped Sri Lanka overcome its own shortage of skilled manpower.

79. Mr. SOMVORACHIT (Lao People's Democratic Republic) noted that the total of official development assistance (ODA) made available through United Nations bodies had declined and was unlikely to increase significantly in real terms in the years to come. It was therefore important that an adequate amount of that total should be channelled into UNDP to enable it to play its role as the central financing mechanism for development.

80. Whereas each field office of the United Nations assistance bodies, particularly in the least developed countries, was a source of expenditure and therefore felt to be an additional burden, the field offices of different bodies should be grouped together and their common services used wherever that would not affect normal programme execution. The example set by the World Food Programme, UNFPA and UNIDO in that respect should be followed.

81. The success of co-operation between recipient countries and UNDP or any other United Nations organization was largely dependent on the personal qualities of the resident co-ordinator, whose role must therefore be strengthened. With regard to project and programme execution, recipient Governments should, in the future, be given greater direct assistance for project execution or resource mobilization in the form of co-financing and cost-sharing.

82. While the UNDP country programme was an irreplaceable tool for co-operation, it did not encompass all the activities carried out by United Nations bodies in a given country. The organizations concerned must work together to lay the basis for a more comprehensive country programme so that round tables and group consultations could, in the same way as national development plans, provide a broader framework for preparing future country programmes. His Government had followed that

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

procedure in preparing each of its five-year development plans and had thus found its co-operation with various United Nations bodies and non-governmental organizations to be fully satisfactory.

83. Mr. MUTOMBO (Zaire) said that Zaire had always held that the Economic and Social Council should co-ordinate the activities of the specialized agencies. One of the best ways of doing so was to hold thematic sessions dealing with operational activities between triennial reviews, as the representative of France had suggested.

84. The problem raised by the role of the resident co-ordinator was a complex one. While the recommendations in the Jansson report had merit, he wondered how the resident co-ordinator's functions could be completely separated from those of the resident representative who was basically an ambassador of UNDP. While in some cases many of the activities carried out by resident representatives did not derive from their mandates, the problem might be more appropriately solved by the appointment of a competent deputy. In any case, if the roles of resident co-ordinator and resident representative were to be separated, the responsibilities of each must be clearly set out.

85. The Jansson report was not the first of its kind; the earlier Jackson report, for example, had dealt with such subjects as the regional structures of the United Nations development system and its conclusions might well be reviewed so that the lessons learned from previous mistakes would not be forgotten.

86. In recent years, the regional economic commissions had grown more effective thanks to efforts to improve a system which had been criticized for its lack of co-ordination. The Economic Commission for Africa, for example, had established Multinational Programming and Operational Centres (MUI-POCs), which, while autonomous, were serving as catalysts for the United Nations system. Bodies such as UNICEF and UNFPA were co-ordinating their activities with those of other agencies through the MULPOCs.

87. Mr. BROWNE (Fiji) said that, while bilateral and multilateral development assistance had been of critical importance to newly independent nations in the years following the Second World War, those countries still had many urgent needs. Development assistance had become an industry in itself, and many developing countries had come to rely heavily on it. Moreover, vested interests had evolved which frequently influenced the free flow of aid.

88. Most of the States which had gained independence in the 1960s and 1970s in the Pacific region were small islands with limited resources. The fact that they were small and dispersed over wide areas created transport and communications problems affecting all aspects of life. Because of their distance from external markets, they found it difficult to benefit from economies of scale. Furthermore, they were subject to climatic disasters.

(Mr. Browne, Fiji)

89. While the Pacific States shared many problems, solutions must be tailored to the situation in each country, because conditions differed appreciably from one island group to another. The adoption by development agencies of the country programme approach, which was most effective when it involved local officials at every stage, was therefore particularly appropriate.

90. UNDP had helped the countries of the Pacific create a number of regional organizations for dealing with development issues, but it should exercise flexibility in so doing so that the programmes established met the needs of the countries concerned as effectively as possible.

91. Given the wide range of development assistance available, the co-ordination of external inputs was more important than ever before. Duplication and overlap must be eliminated from the operational activities of the United Nations and other providers of assistance so that scarce resources could be put to the most effective use. Regional consultative arrangements should therefore be strengthened, with attention given to the important role of the resident co-ordinators.

92. The Director-General's report, based on case studies, was an objective appraisal of the activities of various United Nations agencies in the field. For those studies to be of use, however, the organizations concerned must take note of the points made and implement the recommendations. The mission to the South Pacific undertaken in connection with the Jansson report had highlighted the problem of overlapping specialized agency mandates. It was to be hoped that the overlapping would be reduced, procedures simplified and the role of the resident co-ordinator more fully recognized.

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

(e) ENVIRONMENT (continued)

Draft resolution on international co-operation in the field of the environment
(A/C.2/42/L.44*)

93. Mr. ELIASSON (Sweden) introduced the draft resolution and announced that Australia, Barbados, Côte d'Ivoire, Ecuador, Lesotho, the Philippines and Uruguay had become sponsors. Two amendments had been made to the text: in paragraph 14 the words "concerning the environment" should be inserted after "United Nations system"; and in paragraph 16 the word "increased" should be replaced by "expanded".

94. It was usual for the General Assembly to adopt a resolution endorsing and commenting on the report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). That was the purpose of the draft resolution and he hoped that it would be adopted unanimously by the Committee. The text was consistent with the consensus decisions of the UNEP Governing Council, except that paragraph 7 included a reference to the role of the International Tropical Timber Organization. The Canadian delegation had suggested that the omnibus resolution should be drafted at the session of the Governing Council and he hoped that the suggestion would be considered favourably by the Governing Council.

The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.