

**Administrative Committee  
on Coordination**ACC/1992/32  
28 July 1993

ENGLISH AND FRENCH ONLY

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS OF THE SECOND REGULAR SESSION OF  
1992 OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE ON COORDINATION

(New York, 20-21 October 1992)

1. ACC held its second regular session of 1992 at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 20 and 21 October 1992, under the chairmanship of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali. The agenda for the session was as follows:

1. Adoption of the agenda
2. Follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
3. Role and functioning of ACC and its subsidiary machinery
4. Questions related to personnel
5. Other matters

2. A private meeting between the Secretary-General and the executive heads of the specialized agencies, of IAEA and of GATT present in New York, was held on 20 October 1992.

3. The present document outlines the issues raised under the agenda items and provides the text of the decisions taken by the Committee.

Follow-up to the United Nations Conference on  
Environment and Development

4. The Secretary-General recalled that at its first regular session of 1992, ACC had established a Task Force on Environment and Development in order to advance preparations for the Committee's discussion of the follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development by the United Nations system. ACC considered the report of the Task Force, which contained an analysis of the major implications of follow-up to the Conference, and a draft statement and draft decision for its adoption.

5. ACC adopted a statement, which also reflected its decision to streamline and improve the functioning of its subsidiary machinery in this area as follows:

"The Administrative Committee on Coordination decided to address the following statement to the General Assembly for its consideration during its deliberations on the follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development:

1. ACC is mindful that meeting the unprecedented and daunting challenges involved in achieving sustainable development will require special efforts from the entire international community. It recognizes that only the United Nations system is able to provide the appropriate global framework for action at international, regional, national and local levels. It further recognizes that implementation of Agenda 21 means tackling complex intersectoral problems; this will require greater coherence at intergovernmental and inter-agency levels, and a better interface between them as well as with non-governmental organizations.

2. ACC is also mindful that its consideration of the United Nations system follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development is taking place within a context in which parallel developments, as yet incomplete, leave a number of unknowns. These developments include: (a) the ACC's own review of its subsidiary machinery; (b) the proposals of the Secretary-General on organizational arrangements for the Commission on Sustainable Development, its secretarial support structure, and the high-level advisory body, to be considered by the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session; (c) the views of the General Assembly on the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, in particular the institutional and financing arrangements it proposed; and (d) the restructuring of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields. Taking the above into account and as a contribution to discussion on the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development follow-up, ACC offers below its views on various issues identified in Agenda 21 for the United Nations system.

Principles and guidelines for the allocation and sharing  
of responsibilities within the United Nations system  
for the implementation of Agenda 21

3. ACC underlines that the overall goal in examining an allocation and sharing of responsibilities is to optimize the United Nations system's contribution to the implementation of Agenda 21, through enhancing opportunities for cooperation, filling gaps and avoiding duplication of effort. ACC recommends that an allocation and sharing of responsibilities should evolve from a process based on an analysis of ongoing and planned activities of United Nations system organizations vis-à-vis Agenda 21 programme areas: areas covered by ongoing activities, areas where there could be duplication, areas where there are gaps, and areas where activities could be joined in such a way as to create greater synergy. Areas where a large number of organizations are involved would require inter-agency consultations and, where appropriate, joint programming. This could be facilitated through existing mechanisms or ad hoc consultations. The ad hoc consultations should be called either by the lead agency concerned with the subject area or, where no clear lead agency exists, by the Commission's secretariat support structure.

Enhanced cooperation between the multilateral funding  
institutions and other United Nations system  
organizations

4. ACC notes that Agenda 21 highlights the need for improved cooperation between financing institutions and other United Nations organizations. ACC views the rationale for enhanced cooperation as not merely to link executing and funding agencies but also to integrate different capacities and experience available within the United Nations system for the benefit of member nations. To achieve this, ACC recommends that substantial consultation and exchange of information be undertaken, particularly at country and programme levels. At the country level the role of the Resident Coordinator should be supported. The programme level will be particularly important for the new financing mechanisms, such as the Global Environment Facility and UNDP's Capacity 21. United Nations specialized agencies should be increasingly involved as cooperating and executing agencies in these mechanisms.

Financial requirements

5. ACC notes the recognition, in Agenda 21, that 'financial resources are also required for strengthening the capacity of United Nations institutions for the implementation of Agenda 21' and that 'the provision of new and additional financial resources should be both adequate and predictable'. It further notes that it will be up to the secretariats and governing bodies of United Nations system organizations to assess their respective additional financial requirements related to implementation of Agenda 21.

6. ACC urges that, taking into account these assessments of requirements, zero-growth budgetary policies be relaxed in order to enable the relevant parts of the United Nations system to play their full role in the implementation of Agenda 21. Similarly, the timely and full payment of contributions and all arrears would enable organizations to re-establish their full programme delivery capacities.

7. At the same time, ACC stresses the imperative need to provide supplementary resources to relevant United Nations system organizations. For, although all organizations are committed to implementing the recommendations of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development to the extent possible within existing resources, the provision of additional funds will be a conditio sine qua non for their full and effective response to the new demands generated by Agenda 21 (including those for inter-agency coordination and cooperation). ACC also strongly supports the replenishment of the Global Environmental Facility in 1993 and the financing of UNDP's Capacity 21, since both would provide resources for the implementation of part of Agenda 21.

Arrangements for cooperation and coordination

8. ACC is taking steps to ensure effective cooperation and coordination in the United Nations system follow-up to the Conference. It notes that the complexity and enormity of the challenges involved and the scarcity of resources available to tackle them require maximization of opportunities for streamlining the use of expertise and resources, in order to achieve greater synergy, value added, integration and cost-effectiveness from United Nations system activities. The Committee stresses that coordination is not an end in itself but a means to achieve those benefits.

Coordination machinery

9. ACC recalls that Agenda 21 suggested that consideration be given 'to establishing a special task force, subcommittee or sustainable development board' to assist it in fulfilling its high-level coordinating role for the United Nations system. ACC recognizes that solid analytical work will be needed to underpin its action in that regard. It considers that none of the existing inter-agency mechanisms has the requisite functions, experience and capacities to provide the underpinning. Accordingly, ACC has decided to streamline and improve the functioning of the existing ACC subsidiary machinery. It has further decided to establish an Inter-agency Committee on Sustainable Development (IACSD), which will form part of a three-tier machinery to coordinate the United Nations system's follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

10. The machinery will comprise:

(a) ACC itself, as indicated in Agenda 21, which will be the high-level inter-agency coordination mechanism for policy decision-making;

(b) The streamlined existing ACC subsidiary machinery and other inter-agency coordination arrangements, which will ensure complementarity and synergy in the implementation of programme areas of Agenda 21, at the technical, working level;

(c) The new Inter-agency Committee on Sustainable Development, which will constitute the intermediate level between coordination of technical work and ACC decision-making in the substantive area of sustainable development, with a view to enhancing ACC decision-making, reporting to intergovernmental bodies and the effectiveness of relevant inter-agency coordination arrangements.

11. The Inter-agency Committee on Sustainable Development will have participation at the level of senior officials from a core number of ACC members and participants, while remaining open to all ACC members and participants interested in specific issues placed on its agendas. The composition of the core group will be reviewed after two years by ACC. The Committee has been requested to meet before ACC's first regular session of 1993, with a view to launching a process of inter-agency consultations for Conference follow-up, aiming to assist ACC in streamlining the coordinating

machinery; allocating and sharing responsibilities for Agenda 21 implementation by the United Nations system; monitoring new and additional financing requirements of United Nations system organizations related to Agenda 21, taking into account the decisions of their governing bodies; and assessing new and existing reporting requirements related to implementation of Agenda 21 and making recommendations for their streamlining. As indicated in Agenda 21, this inter-agency mechanism should be serviced by the secretariat support structure of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

#### Reporting

12. On the basis of a brief review of existing reporting requirements and those requested in Agenda 21, ACC, without wishing to prejudge the decisions of competent bodies, the Commission on Sustainable Development in particular, makes the following observations:

(a) Some resolutions and decisions adopted by intergovernmental bodies prior to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development called for periodic reporting which, in all likelihood, will be duplicated by reports requested in Agenda 21. Multiple and duplicative reporting from the United Nations system would indicate a lack of coordination and should be avoided. Moreover, it would have serious budgetary implications (costs for staff time and governing body deliberations). There is also a risk that, within intergovernmental bodies such as the Commission on Sustainable Development, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, Governments could review subjects which they had already examined in the governing body of the technically competent organization, and that, as different ministries may be involved, different, or even conflicting, guidance could be provided, unless a clear distinction is made between overall, cross-sectoral policy issues and technical/sectoral issues.

(b) It would be beneficial for the various monitoring bodies (governing bodies, ACC, the Commission on Sustainable Development, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly) to coordinate, to the extent possible, their examination of progress in implementation of various parts of Agenda 21. This would allow central monitoring bodies to be aware of the technical policy advice given by Governments in the other forums. In this case, it would be useful for the Commission to receive relevant extracts of reports adopted by the governing bodies of United Nations system organizations.

13. In view of the above, ACC has decided that an assessment of new and existing reporting requirements relevant to Agenda 21 should be undertaken by the IACSD with the help of the secretariat support structure. The IACSD should report its findings and recommendations to ACC, including proposals to avoid duplication in reporting, ensure cost-effectiveness and foster integration of environment and development. ACC will use these findings and recommendations to propose streamlining of the reporting

process to the Commission, other United Nations intergovernmental bodies, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly."

6. It also adopted the following terms of reference for the IACSD:

"1. In noting the report of the ACC Task Force on Environment and Development and approving its executive summary, ACC decided to establish an Inter-agency Committee on Sustainable Development (IACSD), with the following terms of reference:

Under the aegis of ACC, to identify major policy issues relating to the follow-up of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development by the United Nations system and advise ACC on ways and means of addressing them so as to ensure effective cooperation and coordination of the United Nations system in the implementation of Agenda 21. To this effect the IACSD would:

(a) In the light of the guidance and instructions received from ACC, examine information regarding the implementation of Agenda 21 provided by the United Nations system organizations, relevant subsidiary bodies of ACC and non-ACC coordinating bodies, and identify for ACC overall policy issues, major gaps and constraints affecting United Nations system cooperation in the Conference follow-up;

(b) Formulate, for consideration and decision by ACC, recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of cooperation and coordination within the United Nations system in the implementation of Agenda 21;

(c) On the basis of (a) and (b) above, prepare brief reports identifying issues and making recommendations on overall policy and coordination, for decision by ACC. These reports should be prepared in such a way as to provide a basis for subsequent reports of ACC to the relevant intergovernmental bodies (as required by paragraph 38.17 of Agenda 21);

(d) Perform other tasks as required by ACC including, where appropriate, monitoring follow-up of relevant ACC decisions.

2. ACC further decided:

(a) To ask the IACSD to meet before the April 1993 session of ACC and, with the help of the secretariat support structure, to launch a process utilizing inter-agency consultations to assist ACC to:

- (i) Streamline the inter-agency coordinating machinery;
- (ii) Allocate and share responsibility for the implementation of Agenda 21 by the United Nations system;
- (iii) Monitor new and additional financing requirements of the United Nations system organizations related to Agenda 21, taking into account the decisions of their governing bodies;

- (iv) Assess new and existing reporting requirements related to the implementation of Agenda 21 and make recommendations for their streamlining;
- (b) To request the IACSD, in implementing this decision, to take into account further details given in the report of the Task Force and to report on progress to ACC at its next session, in April 1993;
- (c) To designate a core membership of the IACSD, which would, however, remain open to all ACC members/participants interested in specific issues placed on its agenda, and to specify that participation would be at the level of senior officials. The core group will have as members the same organizations which formed part of the ACC Task Force on Environment and Development and two additional organizations, to be designated by the Secretary-General from among ACC members and participants, with the provision that the membership will be reviewed after two years;
- (d) To invite the Secretary-General to decide on the chairmanship of the IACSD after consultations with ACC members and participants;
- (e) To designate as the secretariat support structure the one proposed for the Commission on Sustainable Development;
- (f) To place a standing item relating to United Nations system follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development on its agenda."

#### Role and functioning of ACC and its subsidiary machinery

7. ACC considered a preliminary report prepared by Mr. Francis Blanchard containing suggestions as to how its role and effectiveness could be reinforced, in response to changing requirements of the new international situation.
8. There was general agreement on the need for ACC to focus on the most important issues, which should be properly prepared in advance. Increased responsibility needed to be assigned to the subsidiary bodies. Given the number and diversity of those bodies, however, it was necessary for their mandates and functioning to be reviewed with the aim of eliminating those which could not be justified within the ACC machinery.
9. In addition to its decision to establish the Inter-agency Committee on Sustainable Development, ACC also decided that a new Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions should be established, which would both replace and improve upon the former CCSQ(PROG) and CCSQ(OPS).
10. ACC did not reach agreement on the proposal, contained in Mr. Blanchard's report, to merge into one the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions (FB) and Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions (PER).
11. In summing up, the Secretary-General requested Mr. Blanchard to study the issues raised in the discussion, including a further elaboration of the proposed merger of CCAQ(FB) and CCAQ(PER) and report back to ACC at its first regular

session of 1993. The Secretary-General would in the interval propose concrete measures for a further restructuring and streamlining of the ACC machinery. 1/

Questions related to personnel

12. ACC considered a draft statement on personnel matters prepared by CCAQ(PER). The statement, which was revised in light of the discussions, was adopted by ACC for submission to the General Assembly as follows:

"The organizations which make up the United Nations common system are responsible for increasingly diverse and complex programmes. New demands are being placed on them continuously by the international community, whether it be for peace-keeping, for development assistance, for meeting the needs of uprooted populations, or for the provision of technical advice. The pace and the extent of these demands are straining the human and financial resources of the organizations to the limit.

"Furthermore, in many instances the staff are required to carry out their duties in conditions which pose a real threat to their security. Lives have been lost.

"In these circumstances it is of paramount importance that the conditions of service of United Nations common system staff be competitive. This means improving conditions where they are shown to be deficient, and it means not reducing the conditions which have given proof of their viability over the years.

"The conditions of the Professional and higher categories of staff are not competitive; those of the General Service category staff are. The solution lies not in reducing the conditions of staff in the General Service category but in enhancing the conditions of their Professional and higher-category colleagues. ACC welcomes the improvements proposed by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) to the General Assembly this year on the education grant, base/floor salary scale, mobility and hardship allowances and dependency allowances. But much more needs to be done.

"ACC believes that action is needed now. Lack of concerted and timely action will continue to provoke individual attempts to remedy what are seen as the most glaring deficiencies, with attendant risks to the cohesion of the common system. The organizations are anxious that the common system should move forward as one on these vital questions.

"Accordingly, ACC requests the General Assembly:

---

1/ The proposals of the Secretary-General on the restructuring and streamlining of the ACC machinery are contained in his letter of 23 December 1992 to execute heads.



"(a) To endorse the recommendations of ICSC with regard to the base/floor salary scale, mobility and hardship allowances, education grant and dependency allowances;

"(b) To invite ICSC to pursue its examination of the competitiveness of the common system and, in particular, that of staff in the Professional and higher categories, by considering as a matter of urgency and for consideration by the General Assembly in 1993 an updated application of the Noblemaire principle so that all relevant features of the highest paid civil service are taken into account as well as remuneration levels offered by international employers, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, which are known to be more competitive than the common system;

"(c) To note the concern of ACC that, in considering the salary and pension methodologies for the General Service category, any modifications should be technically sound and should not result in an erosion of current conditions. ACC urges that the recommendations of ICSC pertaining to the methodology for determining pensionable remuneration be deferred until the results of using the new recommended salary survey methodology are known;

"(d) To consider positively at the current session the recommendations of ICSC already before the Assembly calling for an increase of between 7 and 11 per cent in the remuneration at the ASG and USG levels as well as the recommendations of ACC to the Commission concerning increases of 3 and 5 per cent at the levels of D-1 and D-2, respectively."

Other matters

13. ACC approved the draft annual report of ACC to the Governing Council of UNEP.

14. With respect to operational activities, ACC took note of a statement prepared by its Organizational Committee and subsequently revised in light of its discussions. In view of the reservations expressed, it was decided that the Secretary-General would make the concerns of ACC known to the General Assembly in the manner he deemed most appropriate.

-----