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PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 30th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,  
on Friday, 7 July 1995, at 10 a.m.

<u>President:</u>	Mr. KAMAL	(Pakistan)
later:	Mr. GERVAIS (Vice-President)	(Côte d'Ivoire)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION:

- (a) UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME/UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND (agenda item 4) (A/50/190-E/1995/73; A/CONF.166/9; A/CONF.171/13 and Add.1; E/1995/Misc. 1)

The PRESIDENT invited the Council to begin its consideration of agenda item 4. He recalled that, in its decisions 1995/213 and 1995/224, the Council had decided that its deliberations would focus on the implementation by the United Nations system of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, and that there would also be a preliminary exchange of views on the follow-up to the World Summit on Social Development.

Ms. SADIK (Executive Director, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)) said that the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) had been a landmark in the discussion of those issues and represented a major departure from conventional thinking. It recognized that population was an intrinsic part of development and that the goal of sustainable development could not be attained without an adequate response to the needs of individual women and men. One of the most important features of the Conference had been its inclusiveness, the attempt to bring together the widest possible diversity of organizations and individuals, and, at all stages, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), particularly women's organizations, had played a significant role.

Implementation of the Conference's recommendations at the intergovernmental level, within the United Nations system, and at the country level had already started. General Assembly resolution 49/128 on the report of the Conference laid down important guidelines for the follow-up, which were closely modelled on chapter XVI of the Programme of Action. It emphasized the importance of the continued and enhanced cooperation of the United Nations system and called on all member organizations to review and, where necessary, adjust their programmes in order to facilitate the implementation of the Programme of Action.

The resolution also stated that the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Commission on Population and Development would constitute a three-tiered intergovernmental mechanism that would play a primary role in the follow-up. The twentieth session of the Commission on

Population, renamed the Commission on Population and Development, had also considered the follow-up to the Conference at its meeting earlier in 1995, and adopted a topic-oriented and prioritized work programme. The Council would be considering the Commission's report and discussing its terms of reference, composition and work programme.

An inter-agency task force had been set up by the Secretary-General, under her own chairmanship, which had met for the first time in December 1994 and set up five working groups, all of which had held meetings, on which she had reported to the Council when it was discussing agenda item 3 (a). The main purpose of the General Assembly guidelines was to help the resident coordinators at the country level and all organizations working on the implementation of the Programme of Action to establish a coordinated framework for implementation and help Governments to develop their national capacity to respond to its recommendations.

The Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) had also discussed the recommendations and designated UNFPA as the lead agency for the follow-up to the Conference; it had emphasized the need for coordination and implementation at the country level through the use of the resident coordinator system and the Country Strategy Notes.

UNFPA had also been extremely active in helping countries to align their policies and programmes in accordance with the directions of the Conference. It had held regional and technical meetings as well as global meetings at Headquarters, and its Executive Board had decided on programme priorities and future lines of action. The areas of emphasis and concentration of resources would be reproductive health, including family planning and sexual health, and advocacy. It had also set up an advisory committee on non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to help it expand its dialogue with the NGO community not only at the international level but also at the regional, national and local levels.

The Council had already discussed the coordination system for the follow-up to all the major conferences, including the ICPD, and it would continue to consider means of ensuring that the entire United Nations system worked together in a coherent manner. The Council might also wish to continue the 20/20 initiative in relation to the full implementation of the comprehensive approach to population as well as social policy.

Clear and well-defined guidance from the Council to all parts of the United Nations system to ensure that all organizations adhered to the agreements reached at international conferences and took into consideration sensitivities of various types in implementing them would be a valuable contribution. She hoped that there would be a firm commitment by the international community to maintain and promote the Cairo consensus at other global conferences, and that it would not be necessary to restart the whole negotiation process at every successive conference.

Mr. DESAI (Under-Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development) said, with respect to the follow-up to the Summit on Social Development, that the Summit had been remarkable in its scope. It had given a very comprehensive meaning to the words "social development", encompassing the functioning of society and all institutions with the overall objective of bettering human conditions. It had also been remarkable in its very explicit references to the role of all actors in social forces in promoting social development, and it had been global in its approach to the mobilization of its institutions, groups and individuals. It had placed the emphasis on principles and values, such as responsibility and solidarity, that could serve as a foundation for human endeavours and political action.

Any follow-up would, therefore, have to recognize the breadth of the Summit's achievements. It would have to be innovative, using existing institutions but reorienting them so as to reflect the breadth and depth of the substantive outcomes of the Summit. The follow-up would also have to be open, just as the Summit itself had been. The universality and globality of the issues addressed - poverty, employment and social integration - should also be reflected in the follow-up. Like the Summit, the follow-up should be holistic, linking not only social and economic issues but also bringing into development cultural, legal, and political dimensions.

Great importance had been attached at the Summit to implementation at the national level and to commitment at that level to the formulation of strategies for social development, to the setting of targets for the eradication of poverty and to the development of quantitative and qualitative indicators of social development. Emphasis had also been placed on the need for a more consolidated national reporting system.

The United Nations system would have to decide what action should be taken at the international level to energize and support such national

follow-up activities. The report of the Summit focused a great deal of attention on the strengthening of United Nations operational activities for development, and specifically recommended that UNDP should support the coordinated implementation of social-development programmes through its network of field offices, and that it should organize the system's capacity-building efforts at the local, national and regional levels, and strengthen coordination at the country level. That particular dimension of the follow-up responsibilities of the United Nations systems, particularly its development operations, fitted in very well with the Council's recent discussion on the coordinated follow-up to major conferences.

Another issue that should be addressed was the involvement of civil society. Much had been done in recent years to involve NGOs in work processes, but he felt that they should be given a more creative role in implementation.

The Summit had assigned a central role to the regional level in the follow-up and implementation processes. It had explicitly recommended that the regional commissions, in cooperation with other regional intergovernmental organizations, should meet on a biennial basis at a high political level to evaluate progress in fulfilling the outcome of the Summit, to exchange views and experiences, to adopt appropriate measures, and to report the outcome of such meetings to the Council.

At the international level, the Summit had recognized that the General Assembly should be finally responsible for the review of overall implementation of the Summit outcome and that it should hold a special session in the year 2000 for a comprehensive review of the rate of implementation. The General Assembly would also share responsibility with the Council in promoting international dialogue on critical social issues and coordinating and ensuring coherence in the activities of the system, particularly in the context of a coordinated follow-up to the conferences.

The Summit had also asked the relevant United Nations bodies, especially the Council, to consider new ideas for generating funds. Certain ideas, such as the suggested special fund for social development, which were not included in the outcome, would be discussed in the Council and similar bodies. The Council had a special responsibility in determining how the follow-up should be reflected in the agenda of its own subsidiary bodies, the report of one of which, the Commission on Social Development, had been submitted. The Council

would have to decide what precise role the Commission would play in the intergovernmental follow-up process, the periodicity of its meetings, the question of membership, and how the main actors of civil society could be involved in its work.

The Summit outcome also clearly recognized the special role of the International Labour Organization (ILO) by virtue of its tripartite structure, and suggested that the General Assembly should consider requesting ILO to contribute to the implementation of the Programme of Action.

Mr. MABILANGAN (Philippines), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that both the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the World Summit for Social Development had reaffirmed that man was the raison d'être of development. The Programmes of Action of both the Conference and the Summit contained concrete recommendations for implementation at the national, regional and international levels, and the Group of 77 and China emphasized the importance of maintaining the strong commitment of participating States and international and non-governmental organizations to join in working for the enhanced well-being of all people, particularly those in the developing world.

While the developing countries realized that they bore primary responsibility for implementation at the national level, they must also be given financial, technical, and other forms of assistance, as the Programmes of Action clearly stated. The fulfilment of the developed countries' commitment to devote 0.7 per cent of their GNP to official development assistance (ODA), with an ample share for Africa and the least developed countries (LDCs), was indispensable. The developing countries reiterated their call for the establishment of an international fund for social development.

A substantial increase in resources for United Nations operational activities for development on a predictable, continuous and assured basis was urgently required to meet the increasing needs of the developing countries. The Group had repeatedly emphasized that United Nations multilateral assistance was necessary to support socio-economic development, and it once again expressed its serious concern at the steady decrease in the level of core resources of various funds and programmes which were providing valuable financing for the country programmes of the developing countries.

It should be remembered that, in almost all recipient countries, the country programmes formed part of their national development plans, so that any delay or change in the implementation of the country programme due to lack of resources, affected overall development plans as well. Political will was required to provide new and additional financial resources for development, which would result in a more balanced view of United Nations priorities on resources for peace-keeping, and for humanitarian and emergency activities, on the one hand, and those for financing international development commitments, on the other.

The multilateral financial institutions had an important role to play in the follow-up to the Conference and Summit and, notwithstanding some of the answers given during the policy dialogue with those institutions, the Council, and other United Nations bodies, should continue to consider how to establish close cooperation with those institutions in the interests of development. The Group took the view that, in the light of the increasing costs of the socio-economic development process, all organs of the United Nations system should ensure that their decisions, actions, and plans complemented and reinforced one another.

The Group thanked the Secretary-General for his report on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 49/128 on the report of the International Conference on Population and Development (A/50/190-E/1995/73). In line with the decision of the General Assembly designating the Commission on Population and Development as the functional commission responsible for the follow-up to the Conference, the Commission's membership, term of office, and periodicity of meetings should be brought into line with those of the functional commissions serving as focal points for other major conferences.

The Group also supported the Commission's recommendation to adopt a topic-oriented and multi-year work programme, and its members would participate in the detailed discussion of the topics to be included in that programme. They agreed that it should include international migration, with special emphasis on the linkages between migration and development.

UNFPA had an important role to play in the follow-up to the Conference, especially with regard to the mobilization of resources and the implementation of the Conference's recommendations at the field level. The Fund's experience in the field would enable it to provide substantive assistance to the Commission, and the Group wished to see a strong cooperative and coordinated

relationship between UNFPA and the other members of the secretariat. Duplication and overlap in their activities were costly and reduced efficiency. The increase in the responsibilities of UNFPA raised the question whether it should have a separate executive board, and the Group would welcome discussion of the matter by the Council.

The World Summit on Social Development reflected the collective aspiration to conquer human misery, and the developing countries looked forward to an in-depth consideration by the Council of a system-wide follow-up to the Copenhagen Programme of Action.

Mr. LOPEZ de CHICHERI (Observer for Spain), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and its Programme of Action had brought about a major shift in the consideration of population issues, broadening the focus from demographic objectives to an integrated approach to population and sustainable development, with primary emphasis on individual welfare and the empowerment of women. The United Nations development system must respond by making appropriate changes in its roles and mandates and by reorienting its approach at the field level.

The Union welcomed the establishment by the Secretary-General of an inter-agency task force on the implementation of the Programme of Action, which could play an important part in helping to coordinate the activities of United Nations development partners in the implementation process at the headquarters level. The reformed ACC, to which the inter-agency task force would report, would have to assess the latter's performance and make recommendations thereon to the Council. The members of the Union looked forward to examining the work of the task force on the provision of operational guidelines for field-level activities. Consideration might also need to be given to establishing the task force on a permanent basis, as recommended by the Commission on Population and Development.

Special attention should be paid by the Council to adjustments by the United Nations development system to the requirements of the Programme of Action. The Union welcomed the steps being taken by the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board and the Executive Director of UNFPA to reorient and sharpen the focus of UNFPA activities in the wake of the Conference.

The World Health Organization (WHO) also had an important contribution to make, and the Union trusted that it would take steps to operationalize the



definition of reproductive health so that it could be effectively implemented at the country level. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) also had a contribution to make and was preparing a paper on health strategy. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) had a special role at the country level in view of its responsibility for the resident coordinator system.

In view of the fierce competition for scarce resources, a shift in priorities and a revision of the current system of allocating the available resources was needed. The system must work at the field level in a genuinely complementary way based on shared objectives and a clear division of responsibilities. At all levels, the mobilization of civil society, including NGOs and the private sector was of fundamental importance.

Reporting was another area that posed a challenge and yet offered an excellent opportunity for improved coordination. Reports by the bodies of the United Nations system should be integrated and simplified to the greatest extent possible. The reports presented to date by the funds and programmes on the implementation of the Programme of Action had not been entirely satisfactory.

At the World Summit for Social Development, all countries had committed themselves to formulating or strengthening their social-development strategies by 1996. International support was necessary for the formulation of those strategies, the assessment of progress towards implementing the Summit's decisions and the generation of improved concepts and programmes for the collection and dissemination of social-development indicators.

The Union welcomed the fact that UNDP had just committed itself to devoting 88 per cent of its resources to low-income countries and 60 per cent to the LDCs. Other agencies also had an impressive record in fighting poverty. Nevertheless, the international system had had difficulty in developing a coordinated approach to poverty in all its dimensions.

Effective mobilization of financial resources for social development in both the public and the private sectors and more effective orientation of development cooperation towards that goal needed to be fully explored. Efforts to reduce substantially the debt burden of the poorest and most heavily indebted countries and to ensure that structural-adjustment programmes incorporated social-development goals needed to be pursued. In keeping with the recommendation in the Programme of Action that recipient countries strengthen their coordination mechanisms, a focused discussion on the

definition of basic social services and the actions and resources needed to facilitate the provision of such services might be useful.

International financial institutions should also help to mobilize resources by integrating social-development goals into their policies, programmes and operations. The Council would have the responsibility of overseeing system-wide coordination in the implementation of the Summit's decisions. The Commission for Social Development should play a central role in assisting the Council in its coordinating functions, and the Council should therefore establish a multi-year programme of work for the Commission up to and including the year 2000.

The Union attached great importance to the forthcoming triennial policy review of operational activities for development, which should be carried out in a more focused manner and with particular attention to the problems encountered at the field level. In addition, the coordination at field level of the activities of the various funds and programmes in the United Nations system needed improvement. Enhancing the central role of the resident coordinator and promoting a wider use of Country Strategy Notes and of the programme approach would help to achieve that goal. Special efforts should also be made to assist in capacity-building, particularly through national execution.

Mr. OWADA (Japan) said he welcomed the successful outcome of the World Summit for Social Development which, together with the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), had established the goals towards which the international community must work in the years to come. The United Nations system had an important contribution to make in following up the two conferences and that task should become a priority one. More time should be devoted to it at the intergovernmental level and more resources allocated at the secretariat level.

His delegation fully supported the views submitted by the Commission on Population and Development concerning the follow-up to the ICPD (E/1995/27-E/CN.9/1995/8, annex I). For the sake of efficiency and cost-effectiveness, it would be desirable to maintain the Commission's membership at 27.

UNFPA had a central role to play in operational activities and his delegation fully supported the recent decision of the UNDP/UNFPA's Executive Board on the future work of the Fund, whereby the focus should be on

reproductive health, population policy and advocacy, and that the Fund should strengthen cooperation with donors and non-governmental organizations and emphasize South-South cooperation. The idea of creating a separate executive board for UNFPA was premature. Though UNFPA's functions must be reinforced, the advantages to be gained from a separate executive board would not justify the consequential increase in expenses.

From the submissions by specialized agencies and other United Nations organizations (E/1995/MISC.1), it appeared that the entire United Nations system was adjusting its activities to follow up ICPD. However, the submissions by ILO and FAO raised the issue of the shortage of resources. The United Nations system must reallocate existing resources to ensure effective follow-up to the various major conferences and the Council should make that clear to the rest of the system.

The regional commissions had a significant role to play in such activities, since there were differences from region to region as well as common elements in population-related issues. To reinforce the follow-up capacity of the regional commissions, their cooperation with the competent United Nations bodies, including UNFPA, should be strengthened. The regional commissions should also play an important role in the follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development.

His delegation attached particular importance to comprehensive and coherent follow-up to the Summit. Since its three themes of eradication of poverty, expansion of productive employment and social integration were closely interrelated, and since various United Nations bodies were involved in those fields, the Council had a critical role to play as a coordination centre.

The functions of the Commission for Social Development must be strengthened to enable it to assume the central role in implementing the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action and to enhance its capacity to give expert advice on the social dimension of United Nations policies and measures. It should open its debates to experts and the main actors in civil society, such as NGOs and the private sector, with a view to benefiting from their knowledge and insight. His delegation was in favour of the idea of holding an annual meeting of the Commission and thought that its membership should be maintained at 32.

Finally, he reiterated Japan's commitment to assisting the developing countries in their efforts to achieve broad-based sustainable development through the implementation of the programmes of action of the various conferences.

Mr. BERTHELOT (Executive Secretary, Economic Commission for Europe), speaking on behalf of the five regional commissions, said they had extremely close ties with the Governments, NGOs and enterprises of their regions, had developed a number of standards, conventions and guidelines and were multisectoral in their vocation. Their network of relations and expertise should be mobilized to furnish operational assistance to countries in the various regions and contribute effectively to the implementation of decisions adopted by the major international conferences, a matter that should receive more attention from the Council.

The regional commissions had only modest resources: their funds for technical assistance amounted to only 5 per cent of the United Nations budget for such activities. However, the General Assembly's decision to decentralize some of the resources of the programme budget had enabled them to strengthen their advisory services, which offered flexibility and a capacity to respond to a wide variety of requests. Meetings were held twice a year with the Under-Secretary-General for Development Support and Management Services, in order to coordinate the provision of assistance.

Another source of funding for the regional commissions was voluntary contributions from multilateral and bilateral sources, especially UNDP. The commissions and UNDP had set up a task force which had so far adopted two decisions: to involve the regional commissions in the preparation of the sixth UNDP programming cycle and likewise to include them in the preparation of the Country Strategy Notes. The multisectoral thematic approach of the regional commissions was very compatible with the programme approach adopted by UNDP and advocated by the recent global conferences. Their contribution to the Country Strategy Notes could help forge a link between operational activities at the national level and regional programmes or the regional aspects of the follow-up to international conferences.

General Assembly resolution 47/199 encouraged the resident coordinators to cooperate with the various funds, programmes and specialized agencies at the regional and subregional levels, but only in response to specific requests by recipient Governments. Given the importance of the regional dimension, the

regional commissions should be called on more frequently to engage in such efforts, and resolution 47/199 should be revised along those lines.

The Secretary-General's initiative to strengthen coordination at the regional level in the context of ACC under the leadership of the regional commissions was an important one and would reinforce the effectiveness of the follow-up to the decisions of the major international conferences. The regional commissions regularly met the regional institutions of the major United Nations bodies to discuss means of implementing such decisions in the various regions and to identify areas for inter-agency cooperation in operational activities. The regional commissions had also been cooperating more actively with regional development banks and with the World Bank. In addition, there was growing cooperation between the commissions and subregional groupings of countries. That was extremely desirable, since many operational activities were meaningful only if implemented at the subregional or regional level.

Lastly, the regional commissions had to cooperate among themselves in operational activities: the expertise accumulated in one commission could be of great help to another. At the initiative of several member Governments, for example, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) intended to meet to exchange experience. The Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and the ECA were preparing joint efforts in the Mediterranean area, and ECE and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) were working together, especially in the transport field, in central Asia.

Mr. NIELSON (Denmark) said that everyone agreed that there was a need for coordinated action by the United Nations family in the development field, but the activities of both the political organs and the executing agencies of the United Nations system had a tendency to overlap, resulting not only in a waste of financial and human resources but also sometimes adversely affecting the people that were supposedly being assisted. The need for coordination was all the more obvious in reference to the follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the World Summit for Social Development. Individual nations had a fundamental responsibility in that endeavour at the national level. One aspect that had

received special attention at the Summit had been the 20/20 principle and Denmark was willing to enter into such agreements with its developing partners.

Just as important as national follow-up, however, was international follow-up, and that was where the Council came into the picture. It should develop into a genuine coordination forum and give political guidance to the work of the international bodies engaged in such efforts. The multilateral financial institutions, including the regional development banks, should participate in its discussions.

Preparations for the Council's discussion of the follow-up to the major international conferences would require an extra effort by the Council's secretariat and also an effort by its member States to ensure that the Council functioned properly. The secretariat should refrain from issuing repetitive and lengthy statistical reports that were virtually unreadable and the member States should engage in a real dialogue, not simply deliver prepared statements.

Much remained to be done to avoid useless repetition of work in the various organs, including the Council and the General Assembly. The agenda of the General Assembly should be further streamlined, and Member States should avoid repeating in the Assembly statements already made in the Council.

Financial institutions had a special responsibility for implementing the recommendations on debt made at the World Summit. His delegation had proposed that the multilateral development banks should extend grants to the poorest countries rather than soft loans. At the operational level, it was the governing bodies of the multilateral financial institutions, specialized agencies, funds and programmes that must bear the greatest responsibility.

None of the bodies he had mentioned could claim "ownership" of the issues raised at the Summit. One way to stimulate continuing debate at the national as well as international level would be to establish an independent forum on social-development issues. Its role would be to supplement and serve as an auxiliary to existing forums: for example, by compiling and analysing statistical data and information on such issues.

Implementing the decisions of the Summit and the ICPD was a tremendous challenge to the Council to prove its worth. If it did not seize that opportunity, it would be difficult to justify its continued existence. The

necessary decisions on the entire international follow-up mechanism should be adopted as soon as possible, so that the General Assembly could take the necessary action at its fiftieth session.

Mr. HANSENNE (International Labour Organization (ILO)) said that ILO had been given a special role to play in implementing, in areas relating to labour, the Declaration and Programme of Action adopted at the World Summit for Social Development. The most recent session of the International Labour Conference had been largely devoted to analysing the follow-up to the Summit, including a meeting for information to and feedback from ministers of labour and the social partners, and, in fact, the discussions at the Conference had resulted in a number of conclusions.

ILO intended to assume fully the important role assigned to it by the Summit but that did not mean that it would play an exclusive role: its activities aimed at job creation must be part of concerted, broader efforts to combat poverty and social exclusion. It thus called for close cooperation with other bodies so that the international community would have coherent guidelines on how national economies and the world economy as a whole could generate more employment, a process in which employers' and workers' organizations also had to be involved.

The deliberations of the Conference clearly revealed the importance attached by ILO to a high level of coordination within the United Nations system. It would, however, like to be given some indication by the Council of what it was expected to do in the years to come. Being anxious to achieve good coordination of operational activities, especially at national level, it had, in fact, strengthened its presence in the field by establishing multidisciplinary teams to work with Governments and the social partners in defining and implementing their labour strategies.

There was nevertheless a real danger that, if all international organizations became involved in all United Nations activities, precious financial resources would be squandered and the result would be chaotic. ILO would thus endeavour to play its role in cooperative efforts, but it should be borne in mind that labour problems did not affect solely the countries involved in the development process. Consequently, the significance of labour in the whole context of economic globalization must not be underestimated and effective international mechanisms should be devised to use the results of economic globalization to promote social progress and ensure that trade

liberalization and capital movements would work to increase the well-being, employment and living standards of people throughout the world. He therefore welcomed the statements by the heads of WTO and IMF on the willingness of those organizations to cooperate with ILO within the contexts of their respective mandates.

The suggestions made at the Summit concerning greater coordination between IMF, the World Bank and ILO had not, unfortunately, been taken up, but they offered a useful way of improving overall policy coordination to reconcile the objective of economic stringency and the achievement of greater social justice throughout the world.

Mr. RUNGE (Germany) having endorsed the statement of the observer for Spain on behalf of the European Union, said that his delegation attached the highest priority to finding a common framework for the implementation and monitoring of the results of the major United Nations conferences. While primary responsibility for implementing those results lay with each individual State, the operational activities of the United Nations system should assist the developing countries in achieving the goals set. The Council's tasks were to secure system-wide coordination, make clear recommendations and achieve a close working relationship with the specialized agencies.

His delegation welcomed the efforts made by the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system to implement the ICPD Programme of Action. The efforts by UNFPA to focus its work on the priority areas of reproductive health and family planning, population policy and advocacy, represented a significant step in the right direction which was likely to lead to a more efficient use of resources. The Fund's main task in the follow-up to the ICPD would be to take the lead in coordinating and implementing operational activities in the field. The work of the inter-agency task force on the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action must be closely coordinated with ACC to avoid duplication.

Monitoring functions, including the area of resource mobilization, must remain under the guidance of the Commission for Population and Development, with the support of the Population Division. In order to allow sound analysis and discussion, the Commission's programme must not be overloaded, and the Commission did not need to be enlarged.

Experience of the UNFPA/UNDP Executive Board had shown that the new framework allowed enough time for attention to UNFPA matters, while



facilitating cooperation and coordination with UNDP. The latter was one of the focal points for implementing the outcome of the Summit, particularly with regard to poverty eradication. The recent decisions of its Executive Board had greatly strengthened its ability to fulfil that role. His delegation supported the central role of UNDP in operational activities and its efforts to support South-South cooperation and technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC) and to increase the involvement of civil society, as called for in the Summit's Programme of Action. It also supported the special role of ILO in developing, implementing and monitoring political and conceptual strategies. Such considerations concerning a common framework for implementing and monitoring the outcome of United Nations conferences should also be borne in mind by the delegations to forthcoming conferences.

His Government was prepared to continue to provide substantial funds, on a voluntary basis, to United Nations operational activities, which could provide important support for Governments in implementing the results of world summits and conferences.

Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan), having endorsed the statement made by the representative of the Philippines on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Prime Minister of Pakistan had taken part in the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and had outlined Pakistan's policies for dynamic social development in ways consistent with the country's traditional values and culture. His delegation endorsed the recommendation that the membership, composition and terms of office of the Commission on Population and Development should be on a par with those of similar bodies. It also supported the recommendation that UNFPA should, in view of its growing responsibilities, have a separate executive board.

His Government was committed to implementing the far-reaching social action programme stemming from the World Summit for Social Development. Success in implementing the programme in sectors such as primary education, health, population control, water supply and sanitation, was essential for progress in the market-oriented reforms it was introducing.

While welcoming the expressions of support, reflected in the decisions adopted at the two conferences, for the goal of comprehensive development, his delegation noted with concern that they were not being matched by funding. The resources available for development purposes, especially for UNDP, which

were supposed to increase by 8 per cent per annum, seemed likely to decline by up to 30 per cent, and were currently far short of the programme figures indicated at the start of the five-year cycle.

The Council had heard a number of statements to the effect that resources would be made available provided that the United Nations development system could be reformed; his delegation, while agreeing that reform was needed, felt that it could not be made a precondition for the availability of the resources required to implement decisions taken by Governments at major world conferences.

His delegation hoped that the triennial review of operations, to be undertaken by the General Assembly at its fiftieth session, would be an occasion for examining constructive ideas to reform the United Nations development system and enhance its efficiency. For a start, national Governments should appraise their own national agencies, comparing their efficiency and cost-effectiveness with those of the multilateral system - a matter not hitherto addressed in the Council's debates. And the international community should accept the principle that enhanced resources were more vital than reform.

The General Assembly, at its forthcoming session, was to consider ways and means of mobilizing additional resources for the United Nations development cooperation system. It was opportune, therefore, to consider new ideas; donors should review the utility of multilateral and bilateral programmes and think of possible new methods, such as the mobilization of resources from public, non-governmental and private-sector sources, as well as the concept of international taxation, with a view to producing a set of recommendations at the Assembly's next session.

Mr. VOLLEBAEK (Norway) said that, in the course of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), the international community had reached agreement on a new and integrated approach to population activities; but only the ability to translate the Programme of Action into practice would demonstrate the Conference's impact. Division of labour, coordination and cooperation were essential; it was imperative, therefore, for every organization working with population-related issues to be given a clear mandate and area of competence.

The General Assembly had decided that a three-tiered intergovernmental mechanism, consisting of the Assembly itself, the Council and a revitalized

Commission on Population and Development, should play the primary follow-up role. In that regard, if the Council was to oversee the process and elaborate relevant guidelines, its role must be clarified, and it must receive, from the organizations and commissions involved, concise reports which pinpointed the problems and described optional solutions and their implications. The inter-agency task force would have an important catalytic and coordinating role to play, and must essentially focus on country-level cooperation; and the Commission on Population and Development should keep the Council continuously informed about the task force's work.

Since current population policy also embraced health and socio-economic aspects, not least the empowerment of women, implementation of the Conference's recommendations entailed new demands on all the partners, including the Commission on Population and Development, which was to review, monitor and assess the follow-up and, through action-oriented advice, contribute to the Council's coordinating role. In that regard, it was especially important to define and separate the functions of UNFPA and those of the Population Division of the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis.

The Commission's success as an independent monitoring agency would depend on its professional integrity and working conditions. It would need a greater range of expertise; but the proposed expansion would not necessarily improve its professional competence, and indeed might reduce its efficiency and capacity to act. Its size, therefore, should be kept unchanged.

A common executive board for UNDP and UNFPA facilitated the coordination so important to the United Nations system's future activities. Nevertheless, UNFPA issues should be discussed separately; there had been welcome improvements recently in that area. His delegation supported the proposal to upgrade the UNFPA country directors to UNFPA representatives; measures must be adopted to ensure that they actively supported the resident coordinators, thus setting an example for other United Nations funds and programmes. In addition, population issues should be better reflected in the broader development strategies, such as the Country Strategy Notes.

The follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development was a particularly challenging task for a United Nations system largely organized along sectoral lines, since the Summit's scope was not limited to the social sectors or social-welfare policies but had emphasized the need for integrated

policies to promote people-centred, sustainable development. In that regard, he endorsed the observations made by the representative of Denmark, and emphasized that the agenda should not belong to any single agency or functional commission.

The Council would have an important role in determining the thematic distribution of tasks among the various bodies so as to ensure a coordinated follow-up of those issues that the Summit shared with other conferences. Only if some important theme was found not to be covered by any existing mandate should an enlarging of the mandate of the Commission for Social Development, or of any other commission, be considered.

The relevant United Nations entities should be challenged to develop strategies accordingly, based on their respective competence and comparative advantage. All parts of the development system would very probably have a role to play in poverty eradication, but the responsibilities should be more clearly delineated through ACC.

As for the interrelationship between economic and social development, emphasized by the Summit, the development agencies, instead of setting up separate sectoral mechanisms, should seek to assist Governments in integrating the Summit's recommendations into their national plans. At the country level, established mechanisms, particularly the resident coordinator system and the Country Strategy Note, should be fully utilized. The Council could consider ways to strengthen coordination mechanisms when it discussed the triennial policy review of operational activities.

Mr. NAIDOO (South Africa) said that his Government viewed development as a long-term task which called for a national strategic vision designed to secure the economic growth and social development which the country as a whole required. The aim was to harness the resources of society as a whole and forge a partnership between the Government, business, labour and the community. The national strategic vision recognized the inseparability of socio-economic development and human rights; bearing in mind the fact that rights entailed responsibilities also, and each social partner must share responsibility for the entire development process.

A National Economic Development and Labour Council had been established, dealing with issues of macroeconomics and public finances, trade and industry, labour and development; the normal tripartite participation of Government, labour and business would be supplemented by representatives of other mass

organizations. The aim was to promote sustainable economic growth so as to make the country competitive in the global economy, while meeting its people's basic needs. The core strategies involved such issues as balancing urban and rural development, enlarging scientific and technical capacity, investing in human resources and elaborating an industrial strategy, providing links between local development and a national strategy.

To that end, his Government had begun a rigorous programme of public-sector restructuring. All budget expenditure would be measured against the criteria of the Reconstruction and Development Programme, and would focus on priorities such as water, electricity, sanitation, education, health and housing. A restructured civil service would be smaller and more customer-oriented, and State assets would be so reallocated as to improve the core functions of the public service; various options, including private-sector partnerships, were being considered; and government investment would be optimized through more rigorous planning and monitoring.

It was hoped that infrastructure investment would boost economic growth while meeting the people's basic needs. At the subregional level also, cooperation in infrastructure development in spheres such as electricity, transport, telecommunications and water supplies would enable South Africa's economic potential to enhance the growth of all the States of the subregion.

The success of such national strategies depended in part on political stability and popular support and on the international community's important assistance, inter alia by providing information to Governments and the social partners for decision-making, recognizing each country's particular needs and capacities.

In South Africa, one of the major factors for development was investment in human resources and for economic diversification, which called for major inputs of science and technology, foreign direct investment (FDI) and equitable investment and trade conditions - areas in which the international community could help.

The Government had to recognize the role of NGOs, whose experience should be optimized at all stages of policy formulation, planning, implementation and coordination - a challenge to international and national agencies alike. Coordination was particularly important, since it involved interlinked issues such as the status of women, human-resources development and poverty alleviation, which required a multidisciplinary approach. A good first step

towards greater coordination would be to ensure consistency among the organizations of the United Nations system, so as to make their inputs more complementary than heretofore.

Mr. NORBERG (Observer for Sweden) said that the follow-up activities to the recent major United Nations conferences presented a challenge to the United Nations system's operational activities. The Council's attention had already been drawn, in the coordination segment, to the need for a common framework for that purpose as well as to the importance of a balance between maintaining an integrated perspective which recognized the common themes of the conferences and the need to pursue a set of coherent objectives arising from each conference. A common framework should thus be agreed upon as soon as possible.

The Council should play an active overall guidance role, based on the various programmes of action, to ensure the requisite division of labour within the United Nations system. To facilitate its task, the Secretariat - with the assistance of the operational agencies - should submit more analytical reports and clearer presentations of recommendations and options. It should also be emphasized that United Nations machinery had an important role to play in facilitating the continuous, coherent and comprehensive monitoring of implementation at both the national and international levels.

The holistic approach adopted by the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the World Summit for Social Development emphasized more than ever the need for United Nations agencies to coordinate their activities at both the headquarters and field levels, especially in view of the cross-sectoral nature of those conferences' recommendations. For the purpose of coordination on the basis of operational comparative advantage, the relationship between the Council and the functional commissions, and the division of labour between the relevant commissions, must be clarified. It was also vitally important to establish coherent thematic strategies, in close cooperation between the Member States and the Secretariat, allowing enough flexibility for revision as a result of monitoring and evaluation.

Implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action constituted a major challenge to the whole United Nations system. UNFPA had a key role to play in conveying the holistic approach, to other United Nations bodies, outside organizations and national Governments. The Government would, however, have the main responsibility for implementing the Programme of Action. The

resident coordinator system could play an important role in helping to formulate population strategies and programmes; and close involvement of the Governments in the Country Strategy Note process would facilitate coordinated follow-up. In addition, ACC, working closely with the relevant inter-agency task force, could promote coordination at the headquarters level. In that connection, the task force's subgroup responsible for defining a common data system for a set of definitions on the broader concept of population and development was particularly important.

His delegation attached great importance to an integrated follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development, and to the establishment of a common framework for that purpose.

National Governments would have the main responsibility for implementing the decisions of the major conferences. However, the developing countries' efforts should be supported by the international community. Foreign aid represented the most important source of external finance for many of the poorest countries. If all donor countries met their international commitment of 0.7 per cent of GNP, a great step would have been taken towards achieving the global sustainable development envisaged by those conferences. The world community must also give higher priority to the developing countries' debt problem and to the need for further debt relief for the poorest among them.

Mr. RICHELLE (Netherlands) said that a core area in the follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) was reproductive health and the acceptance by the international community of that new concept was one of the important achievements of the Conference. It was essential to enable people, whether married or unmarried, individuals or couples, adolescents or adults, to make informed and responsible choices. It was of the utmost importance, therefore, that that concept be implemented fully.

UNFPA had to be a strong advocate for reproductive health and help those unfamiliar with the concept to understand its relevance and merits. It should work side by side with WHO, which should set the technical standards and stimulate the necessary research, giving advice on how to integrate reproductive health into overall health structures, particularly at the level of primary health care. UNICEF had a contribution to make through its work with adolescents, a group that clearly needed information and services

regarding reproductive health and rights. Education was a key factor and UNICEF was working on a health strategy paper and on a further elaboration of its strategy on the follow-up to ICPD.

Governments, all parts of civil society, and international agencies should focus attention on the concrete implementation of the Cairo and Copenhagen agreements and Action Programmes and ensure adequate monitoring of that implementation.

While agreement had been reached on texts and standards, agreed texts were repeatedly questioned in practice at every successive conference. That was a waste of time, money, energy and credibility, which it was difficult to explain to parliaments and the general public. In that respect, his delegation was concerned about the preparations for the forthcoming conference on women.

With regard to monitoring, one of the essentials would be to develop methods, techniques and parameters for national reporting, which would improve comparability of data and make the intergovernmental discussion on the follow-up more relevant. The United Nations could make an important contribution in that regard, and his Government was willing to consider furnishing technical and financial support.

As far as the concrete implementation of the World Summit for Social Development was concerned, it was his Government's opinion that the 20/20 concept was a promising one that deserved further and speedy elaboration.

Mr. SOMAVIA (Chile), referring to the follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development, said that it had been extremely difficult to decide where such follow-up should take place. The history of the United Nations system showed that it was extremely difficult for the various agencies to work together and the world could not risk jeopardizing the implementation of the Summit's results and postponing action simply because various organizations could not reach an agreement. However, in the four months that had elapsed since the end of the Summit, things had been happening. Efforts were being made by the country coordinators to support the outcome of the Summit, ILO had devoted a special meeting to the Summit and the Secretary-General had stated his intention of setting up a task force to examine ways in which the various parts of the Secretariat could help appraise the implementation of the Summit's results. The regional commissions also had an important role to play vis-à-vis regional bodies and NGOs. All in all, it had become clear that the



system was pledged to implementing the objectives of the Summit and that the traditional confrontation between the parochial interests of the various agencies was not occurring. He welcomed, in particular, the assurances given at a previous meeting of the Council by the President of the World Bank, the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund and the Director-General of the World Trade Organization that the important decisions reached at the Summit would constitute a reference framework for the policies of their organizations.

Mr. KELLER (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) said that the triennial review of operational activities for development undertaken by the United Nations system demonstrated the new elements which continued to affect the system's coordination and activities. It was essential to emphasize how much those elements conditioned the system's actions for the development of States.

On the one hand, new States were emerging in both the east and the south and, on the other, for the first time in 20 years, ODA was being reduced, with significant budgetary consequences for a number of financing agencies such as UNDP. Another factor was the growing importance of emergency aid to the detriment of development aid, at a time when new requests from States implied new modalities and new partnerships, often defined at the major conferences.

It was true that the system had readapted its coordination methods in response to General Assembly resolutions and was continuing to do so. Nothing was perfect, especially the work of human hands, but new ways had been devised of strengthening the complementarity between institutions and funds, the coherence of their policies and the coordination of their activities. Those methods certainly deserved to be reinforced but it should not be overlooked that their application depended not only on coordination within the system but also on the political will of every State.

In the process of improvement which the system must carry out in order to coordinate its operational activities, it was also important to take account of the differences that existed between regions and, within the same regions, between States. The capacities to develop national strategies, manage sectoral policies and execute national programmes and projects differed considerably from one country to another. While it was essential for the

system to work for a development that was elaborated and managed by the States that were to benefit from it, success could be achieved only by adapting the system's intervention to the real capacities of each State.

A recent case in which the system had played a central role for international cooperation for development was exemplary in that regard. The programme of assistance to the Palestinian people, which UNESCO had prepared at the request of and for the Palestinian authorities, included a number of priority projects. In executing the programme, UNESCO was collaborating closely with UNDP and the World Bank and, for specific projects, with UNICEF, UNRWA and ILO. In that case, the lead role of UNESCO was to provide technical assistance to the Palestinian authorities so that they could identify their sectoral priorities and those of their main bilateral and multilateral donors.

With respect to the follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development, UNESCO had already established an innovative and transdisciplinary inter-agency cooperation project that sought, in collaboration with WHO, ILO, FAO and UNFPA, a new approach to education, training and information activities designed to deal with the interrelated issues of population, environment and development. Moreover, UNESCO had been entrusted by UNFPA with the execution of over 90 regional, interregional and national projects in the area of population education.

Education was a key factor in development and, as indicated in the Cairo Programme of Action, there was an interdependent relationship between education and demographic and social change. In addition to expanding "basic education" as part of the "Education for All" initiative undertaken in partnership with UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and the World Bank, UNESCO had made the renewal and advancement of education and the reform of the educational system as a whole important areas of priority.

Mr. Gervais (Côte d'Ivoire), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Mr. SPETH (Administrator, United Nations Development Programme) said that the World Summit for Social Development and the International Conference on Population and Development had been turning-points for the entire development community. Both conferences had underscored the crucial role that development played in addressing population challenges and in tackling some of the most daunting and widespread problems: worsening poverty, massive unemployment and underemployment, the unequal status of women and the unravelling of entire societies. At those conferences, the

international community had formally acknowledged that most of its great goals could be achieved only in the context of equitable, people-centred and sustainable development.

The paradigm of people-centred sustainable development recognized that reducing population growth was more complex than providing countries with family-planning services and that providing people with lasting and meaningful jobs and other income-earning opportunities could not be accomplished solely by building factories and infrastructure. Henceforth, development for people must be at the heart of all the efforts of the system. For most people, economic growth was the sine qua non of development, but it must be growth with equity, employment, environment and empowerment.

Eliminating poverty was one of the four areas on which UNDP focused its activity. The other three were advancing women's role in development, protecting and regenerating the environment, and providing family livelihoods. Of those four areas, poverty elimination should be its highest priority. Its focus on poverty was strongly grounded in the distribution of UNDP core resources among countries, 90 per cent of which went to countries with per capita incomes of less than \$750 per year. UNDP was moving to bring its work in advancing women, regenerating environmental resources and providing sustainable livelihoods within a broad drive to eliminate poverty. That approach had been strongly endorsed by the UNDP Executive Board the previous month, when it had said that poverty elimination should be UNDP's "overriding priority".

UNDP should make the successful implementation of the Copenhagen agreements its primary objective in the years ahead. As UNICEF had championed the World Summit for Children and UNFPA the ICPD, UNDP would be the champion of the Social Summit.

UNDP would make a major effort to encourage and assist Governments in developing and implementing national poverty-eradication strategies as called for in the Copenhagen Programme of Action. It planned to facilitate dialogue between Governments and civil society every step of the way and would do all it could to ensure that overall development policies promoted equity rather than disparity. UNDP also planned to support Governments in order to make their poverty-eradication strategies and plans as comprehensive, participatory and realistic as possible.

Within its broad cross-sectoral mandate and with its presence in 35 programme countries, UNDP could and should play an important role in the follow-up to both the Cairo and Copenhagen Conferences. UNDP was already doing a lot to achieve some of the goals of the ICPD, even at a time when its resources were severely limited. The main thing that UNDP could do to help in meeting the ICPD goals was to do its job well in its work on poverty elimination and the advancement of women, including the extraordinarily important work of UNIFEM, which it hoped would be strengthened at the forthcoming conference on women. In all its work, it cooperated closely with UNFPA and greatly appreciated the work being done by that Fund. UNDP's experience showed that making even small adjustments to projects to take greater account of the ICPD recommendations could have a great impact on the success of projects.

UNDP had also carried out other activities since the Cairo Conference. It had been aiding the dissemination of ICPD results at the country level and encouraging Governments to develop national implementation strategies. At the country level, its resident representatives were helping in their role as United Nations coordinators to coordinate the United Nations implementation of those recommendations. It had also been building key partnerships, particularly with UNFPA, in areas where their mandates overlapped.

The United Nations was dedicated to improving people's lives, but it must also show that its formerly fragmented system was coming together in a new collaborative framework. The future of the system hinged on its success in joining efforts and in following through on the commitments the nations had made at recent conferences.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS (agenda item 1)  
(continued) (E/1995/106)

The PRESIDENT drew the Council's attention to the report of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations (E/1995/106) in which it had decided to recommend that the various organizations be heard under the agenda items it indicated. He took it that the Council was prepared to hear requests from the non-governmental organizations listed in the Committee's report.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.