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DRAFT REPORT ON THE ANNUAL SESSION  
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Addendum

UNDP/UNFPA SEGMENT

Chapter V. REPORTS TO THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

1. The Executive Board had before it the reports of the Administrator (DP/1996/18/Add.2) and the Executive Director (DP/FPA/1996/17 (Part II)) to the Economic and Social Council, which were introduced by the Associate Administrator and the Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration) of UNFPA respectively.

2. The Associate Administrator provided an overview of the four sections of the report, pointing out that the common format, agreed upon by UNDP, UNFPA, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Food Programme (WFP) represented a major step forward in joint reporting to the Economic and Social Council and would facilitate the work of delegations. Care had been taken to make the report more thorough, detailed and analytical in response to past concerns of delegations.

3. The Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration) highlighted recent developments in the areas addressed by the report, in particular regarding inter-agency collaboration. He emphasized the progress that had been made towards increased harmonization of procedures and coordination of field-level activities. He also identified some of the problems and challenges contained in the report for discussion by the Economic and Social Council.

4. In his capacity as Chairman of the Inter-agency Task Force (IATF) on follow-up to the Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/56, the Director of the Geneva Office, Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA), had been invited to the present session by the President to provide an overview of the work of the task force. He explained that the IATF had been established within the framework of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) in order to facilitate system-wide, coordinated follow-up to the resolution. The role of DHA was to support that work, to ensure that agencies were kept informed of progress in addressing the resolution and to undertake briefings with Member States. The Chairman of the IATF commended the report of the Administrator, indicating that UNDP had been an active member of both IATF and IASC, which was the principal mechanism for coordination among organizations involved in humanitarian activities. In referring further to the report, he highlighted three issues of key relevance to the work being done by UNDP: (a) resources mobilization, (b) the concurrent nature of relief and development activities, and (c) internally displaced persons (IDPs).

5. The Chairman noted that the Inter-Agency Consolidated Appeal (CAP) was not intended to raise resources for development and that additional work was required to establish consultative mechanisms to coordinate the mobilization of resources to meet country needs. In that regard, he referred to the presentation by UNDP of a comprehensive paper on resource mobilization as a positive contribution to the work of the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ) and IATF. Noting that relief activities did not take place in a vacuum but in the context of development and rehabilitation, he also appreciated the work that UNDP had been undertaking in the examination of the connection between relief and development, referring to the UNDP contribution to the CCPOQ examination of post-conflict recovery strategies. Referring to the UNDP paper on successor arrangements, the Chairman also welcomed UNDP initiatives foreseen under target for resource allocation from the core line 1.1.3 (TRAC 3), which reflected a reassessment and contribution to the realignment of relationships between UNDP and other operational agencies. He also welcomed the prospect of UNDP making available increased resources in response to the needs of countries in special development situations. Noting that more work was required to clarify roles within the United Nations system with respect to IDPs, the Chairman of IATF observed the positive direction being taken by UNDP in attempting to provide greater clarity for its own role in that regard.

6. Numerous delegations commented on the structure and contents of the reports of UNDP and UNFPA. Several delegations pointed out that the present session should not be devoted to a discussion of the substance of the reports, which would really be done in the Economic and Social Council but should instead identify specific issues for consideration and recommendations by the Council. Specific comments were presented according to the four major areas of the reports.

7. Format issues. Many delegations welcomed the reports as a clear improvement over previous reports and commended the common format, which

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facilitated comparisons. A few delegations would have preferred a common report. Some delegations commented that the reports could have proposed options for recommendations to the Economic and Social Council, based on a more thorough analysis of problems than contained in the present reports. Paragraphs 2 to 5 of document DP/FPA/1996/17 (Part II) were mentioned as a good example of how issues should be discussed in future reports.

8. Follow-up to the triennial policy review. Speaking on the resident coordinator system, several delegations commended UNDP efforts so far on expanding the pool of recruitment but urged that those efforts be intensified. One delegation requested UNFPA to inform the Executive Board on the results of discussions at the Joint Consultative Group on Policy High-Level Meeting on experiences with the resident coordinator system. It was noted that the system seemed to be functioning more effectively during crisis situations and the factors influencing that should be examined. UNFPA was requested to clarify the future role of the newly designated UNFPA representatives in the context of the resident coordinator system.

9. Follow-up to major conferences. Delegations requested clarification on concrete outputs achieved so far, especially at the field-level, with regard to enhanced coordination and the utilization of guidelines, such as those issued by the inter-agency task force of the International Conference on Population and Development implementation. In that context, there were also questions about the inputs of UNDP and UNFPA to upcoming conferences, namely Habitat II and the World Food Summit. One delegation expressed concern about the absence of population issues in the documents of the United Nations Special Initiative on Africa and requested an update on the integration of population and reproductive health components into the Initiative. Both organizations were asked to inform the Executive Board of their strategies for increased resource mobilization to address the many new concerns that had emerged in the international development field.

10. Several delegations expressed concern at the limited number of country strategy notes (CSN) that had actually been completed and asked about the reasons for the slow progress. Another delegation expressed concern that the programme approach, although a good concept, had achieved limited progress. Regarding national execution, one delegation requested clarification on the role of national implementation units and their implications for national capacity-building, which some delegations pointed out was fundamental for successful national execution. Emphasis should also be given to increased training of government staff and project personnel in order to enhance national capacity. One delegation questioned UNFPA on how the Fund's revision of guidelines on national execution was being coordinated with efforts of UNDP in that area. A few delegations requested more figures and information on decentralization in UNDP. While one delegation emphasized the need for further cooperation with regional economic commissions, another cautioned on the establishment of strengthened mechanisms while the role of the commissions was under review. Regarding common premises, many delegations expressed satisfaction with progress achieved and planned. One delegation suggested that the reports

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should have provided more information about common administrative services. Such services needed to be expanded faster and should include more than information networks.

11. Collaboration with the Bretton Woods institutions. Several delegations stressed the importance of closer collaboration with the Bretton Woods institutions, but encouraged the organizations to inform the Board of any problems in that regard which could be addressed through the intergovernmental process. One delegation requested information on UNFPA input into the policy framework papers of the World Bank and about the Fund's collaboration with the regional development banks. Information was also requested about the absence of any formal agreements on cooperation between UNFPA and the World Bank. Another delegation inquired as to how the Bretton Woods institutions could be involved in the CSN process.a)

12. Monitoring and evaluation. One delegation noted that the reports should have provided more information about the impact of evaluations on policy adjustments of the organizations. Further information was requested on recent developments in evaluation in UNDP, particularly in light of the discussions held at the second regular session of 1996. With regard to strengthening national capacity for the coordination of international assistance, one delegation asked for clarification from UNFPA on the continued relevance of national population councils or units.

13. Humanitarian activities. Numerous delegations expressed appreciation for the issues raised by the report and by the Chairman of IATF. They stressed the importance of defining the role of UNDP in the overall humanitarian context, specifying that the role of UNDP was not in relief but in development. Noting that situations and requirements varied by country, further clarification was also required regarding the role of UNDP in such areas as IDPs, demobilization and de-mining. With the current focus on complex emergencies, it was stressed that UNDP not neglect natural disasters, where the role of the resident coordinator had been important and inter-agency collaboration had often been exemplary. A number of delegations also pointed out the importance of ensuring that practical measures were being taken to ensure collaboration with DHA and with Bretton Woods institutions, especially the World Bank. Many delegations wished to have an opportunity to discuss the matters in more depth and noted that they would return to the subject in the UNDP segment under the discussions of TRAC III (line 1.1.3).

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