



Administrative Committee on Coordination

27 May 1998

English only

Summary of conclusions of the Organizational Committee at its first regular session (parts I and II)

Part I (Geneva, 6, 7, 9 and 10 March 1998)

I. Introduction

1. The Organizational Committee (OC) of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) met at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on 6, 7, 9 and 10 March 1998. OC adopted an annotated agenda for the meeting, which is contained in annex I. The list of participants is contained in annex II. The outcome of a further meeting of OC, held immediately after the first regular session of 1998 of ACC, is reflected in part II of the present summary of conclusions; the list of participants for that further meeting (30 and 31 March 1998) is contained in annex III.

II. Preparations for the second regular session of ACC

A. Review of developments affecting international cooperation and development, and their implications for the United Nations system: poverty eradication

2. In preparing for the ACC discussion on this item, OC had before it a joint note prepared by the United Nations, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank. Also before OC were a matrix of actions and recommendations, as well as a United Nations position paper on the subject entitled "Freedom from poverty". The United Nations position paper on the subject centred on the outcome of recent global conferences, and highlighted the

multidimensional character of poverty, issues including the key role that protection of human rights could play in this regard. OC also benefited from the outcome of the discussions on the subject during the session of the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ) that was held immediately before its own meeting.

3. OC noted that the joint note represented an attempt to identify, in concise and inclusive terms, broad policy orientations around which partnerships for action against poverty could be built among the organizations of the system, the donor community, Governments, civil society and the poor themselves. The matrix complemented the note by endeavouring to identify policy measures and their core components at a more operational level, relevant to a concerted approach to poverty reduction, as well as possible areas of inter-agency collaboration.

4. In reviewing the documentation before ACC, OC identified a number of key issues that needed to be especially highlighted, including:

(a) There is a need to empower the poor and ensure their active involvement and participation in poverty reduction strategies and related aspects of democratization and the enhanced protection of human rights;

(b) Action against poverty needs to go beyond economic factors and the enabling environment. Poverty should be addressed in all its dimensions, including providing basic social services for all, as well as promoting employment and sustainable livelihoods;

(c) Women are the main victims of poverty. Gender dimension must be fully integrated into poverty reduction strategies;

(d) A significant majority of the poor live in rural areas and depend on agriculture for much of their livelihoods. Rural development should be a component of poverty reduction strategies for all countries concerned;

(e) Integrated strategies, capacity-building through education and training, targeted assistance programmes and close attention to equity issues are essential to enable the poor to work their way out of poverty;

(f) The linkages between population pressures, natural resources, food security and poverty must be addressed as an essential component of sustainable development policy and decision-making that takes environmental considerations fully into account;

(g) There is a need to help developing countries to take full advantage of the process of globalization and integrate into the world economy in a manner that not only avoids exacerbating poverty but makes a positive, significant contribution to its alleviation;

(h) Initiatives being pursued as an integral part of the follow-up to recent global conferences, such as the 20/20 Initiative, will need to be fully integrated into the system's poverty eradication strategies;¹

(i) The role of the market is critical. In cases of market failure or where markets are rudimentary, the poor risk marginalization. The role of public policy in ensuring equality of opportunity in access to markets and in providing targeted assistance is essential in such situations.

5. OC also noted the comments made by CCPOQ on the draft matrix. Although some members of CCPOQ stressed the need for a holistic approach to the issue of poverty eradication, other CCPOQ members called for selective interventions focusing on priority areas, such as macroeconomic policy frameworks, job and income creation and the building of alliances between the State, donors and civil society, including the private sector. CCPOQ further pointed to the need to identify the structural causes of poverty, and recommended for inclusion in the draft matrix additional elements, such as access to water, HIV/AIDS prevention, and care and health promotion in schools and enterprises. OC members also made a number of specific suggestions for amendments of the draft matrix and the United Nations paper.

6. OC noted that the consideration of this issue by ACC at a time when the task forces on the follow-up to recent global conferences had completed their work and an appraisal was being completed within the ACC machinery of progress achieved in their follow-up was particularly timely, and

should provide a strong point of departure for a renewed concerted effort to develop a coherent framework for action against poverty, in partnership with Governments and civil society. It was also suggested that ACC consider issuing a statement of commitment for action against poverty.

7. OC hoped that as a result of the ACC discussions and subsequent consultations, a set of complementary instruments would be developed to provide a framework for follow-up by the relevant ACC standing committees, especially CCPOQ, the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development (IACSD) and the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality (IACWGE), for devising common and operational approaches and partnerships among relevant organizations of the system, Governments and civil society for action at the country level.

8. In the light of information provided in the background notes and drawing on its discussions on the topic, OC prepared annotations for the consideration of this agenda item by ACC.

B. Strengthening and reform of the United Nations system, including the conclusion of the ACC review of the functioning of the inter-agency machinery

9. The Chairman of the Committee recalled that the Secretary-General, in his letter of 28 January 1998 to executive heads, had stated that the time had come for a comprehensive assessment to be undertaken at the level of executive heads of the system-wide implications of the reform processes under way in both the United Nations and the specialized agencies, and of the way in which the reform processes under way in each organization were affecting its role and place within the system.

10. OC noted that important reform-related developments were taking place in several specialized agencies and United Nations organizations, and recalled that a publication was under preparation, within the framework of the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions (CCAQ), focusing on the common managerial objectives that were guiding those processes.

11. The Chairman noted that it was his intention to include, as part of the annotations to the ACC agenda, a collated set of the responses of executive heads to the Secretary-General's request for their personal assessment on the system-wide implications of the reforms under way in their organizations, which would be used as the main basis for the ACC discussion on reform. He urged organizations that had not

done so to ensure that their responses would be received before the end of the current session of OC.

12. The replies received illustrated the depth and range of the reform processes under way in the various organizations of the system, encompassing far-reaching management reforms, reviews of mission statements and strategies, and significant structural and other organizational changes at the levels of both the governing bodies and the secretariats. Replies also pointed to some of the conditions that could assist in ensuring that those processes maximized their contribution to the overall coherence and effectiveness of the system, and raised a number of issues and concerns that required special attention, which have been summarized in the annotations prepared by OC for ACC's consideration of this item.

13. OC agreed to revert to those matters, including the finalization of the publication on the reform processes under way in the United Nations system, at the post ACC/OC meeting in the light of the outcome of ACC discussions.

14. With regard to the review of the functioning of ACC and the inter-agency machinery, OC drew on the outcome of its informal meeting held at Geneva on 5 and 6 March 1998 immediately before its current session. The Committee also took fully into account the discussions on the issue at its last few sessions as well as those at ACC. Recognizing that a broad consensus was emerging on the conditions that would permit a qualitative strengthening of the effectiveness and impact of ACC's work, OC focused on outlining a set of common objectives that would guide the process in its next phase. These were as follows:

(a) To bring about greater policy coherence and functional complementarity at the level of the system, particularly in the context of United Nations system reform;

(b) To strengthen the system's collective capacity for forward planning and strategic thinking, leading to the formulation of complementary responses to global problems, and the identification of the measures required to carry them out, including strategies for resource mobilization;

(c) To enhance the system's flexibility and rapid response capacity to major international developments and crises, thereby increasing its relevance to current international priorities and concerns;

(d) To those ends, to promote a more continuous dialogue among ACC members, streamline the ACC machinery and make it function more efficiently and effectively so as to provide coherent support to ACC and the organizations of the system;

(e) To demonstrate the relevance and impact of the work of ACC, and make it more visible to the secretariats of the United Nations system, Governments, other constituencies and the public at large.

15. OC also recognized that the comprehensive reform of the functioning of ACC and its subsidiary machinery undertaken in 1993 had led to significant progress in:

(a) Streamlining the ACC agenda and shortening the length of its session; refocusing its work on the key policy issues and challenges facing the system, and, as a result, promoting coordinated responses to system-wide concerns and joint initiatives in such areas as peace-building, human rights, African development and follow-up to global conferences;

(b) Streamlining the subsidiary machinery, reducing the frequency and length of their meetings, introducing innovative and decentralized modalities for inter-agency collaboration, such as the task manager and lead agency arrangements (e.g., in follow-up to Agenda 21, global conferences), and making more effective use of electronic communications.

16. At the same time, further progress was required, including in relation to the quality of the preparations for ACC sessions and the timely preparation and circulation of documentation, which should be more focused and informed by a clear sense of the purpose of each discussion and its expected outcome, as well as in relation to the monitoring of the follow-up to ACC decisions.

17. In the light of that assessment, OC formulated the elements of an operational plan that included the establishment of an ACC information network designed to provide a more systematic and continuous flow of information among ACC members; organizing periodic consultations among ACC members through teleconferencing and the holding of a single annual ACC session; and the establishment of the Office of Inter-Agency Affairs within the United Nations Secretariat in order to provide better secretariat support to ACC and OC.

18. While recommending that those measures become operational during the course of 1998, OC also recognized that the current year should be seen as a transitional one. Thus, it was proposed that ACC might wish to hold a short second session in October/November 1998, or alternatively in December 1998, close to the commemoration by the General Assembly of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on 10 December 1998. OC further considered that that session of ACC could be preceded by an experimental ACC consultation via teleconferencing.

19. The details of those and the other measures included in the operational plan are outlined in annex IV below.

20. Based on the background information before it and discussions within the Committee, OC prepared annotations for ACC's consideration of the item. OC further decided to revert at its post-ACC meeting to issues relating to the functioning and resource requirement of the new Office for Inter-Agency Affairs and its modalities for the exercise of its other role for preparation of an annual work programme for the ACC machinery, and for the preparation of the ACC agendas and discussions, both in connection with periodic teleconference consultations and at its annual sessions.

C. Staff security

21. OC discussions under this item were based on the conclusions of the high-level meeting of CCAQ, as well as the draft report of the Informal Meeting of Legal Advisers of the Organizations of the United Nations system at their meeting at International Monetary Fund (IMF) headquarters at Washington, D.C., on 20 and 21 January 1998 on the issue of the linkage between the physical safety of United Nations staff and privileges and immunities accorded to them. OC noted that in response to the statement on staff security adopted by ACC at its last session and its request that the issue of staff security be pursued on an urgent basis, the high-level CCAQ meeting had addressed the four aspects of the issue referred to it by OC, namely:

(a) Adequate financial provisions for security, including the establishment of separate budget lines for security;

(b) Security arrangements for local staff, including their possible relocation in crisis situations;

(c) Implementation of security training, particularly its budgetary implications; and

(d) Strengthening of the role of and increased support for the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator (UNSECOORD), particularly a unified chain of command, preferably at the Headquarters level.

22. OC noted that the high-level CCAQ meeting had endorsed, in principle, the development of comprehensive information on dedicated security-cost budgets and expenditures in all organizations of the United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions, and had requested the Ad Hoc Inter-Agency Meeting on Security, in close cooperation with the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions (Financial and Budgetary

Questions) (CCAQ(FB)), to provide further guidance on modalities for the introduction of such financial information that would respect the budgeting practices of the individual organizations and the respective presences of organizations in relevant field locations.

23. In respect of the security of locally recruited staff, the meeting confirmed the existing policy outlined in the field security handbook, and endorsed its application and consistent implementation by all organizations of the United Nations common system. It also decided on further measures for the implementation of a security management system that would integrate locally recruited staff, which are detailed in the report of the high-level CCAQ meeting.

24. Regarding the issue of security training, the high-level meeting decided to support the concept of increasing training of (a) staff at high-risk duty stations, (b) field security officers and (c) staff at Headquarters locations who manage staff in the field, taking into account:

(a) The need to review, with CCAQ(FB), the financial implications of the proposed training activities with a view to seeing if economies might be introduced;

(b) The need to determine with CCAQ(FB) which of the current cost-sharing formulae would be appropriate for the allocation of such costs or whether a new formula should be established;

(c) The extent to which external financial support could be mobilized to meet some or all of the training costs.

25. The high-level meeting also addressed the issue of the strengthening of the role of and increased support for UNSECOORD, and decided that in order to render the security coordination system more effective, a unified chain of command would be phased in. Thus, one office would be responsible for security management, headed by the United Nations Security Coordinator, reporting directly to the Secretary-General.

26. The representative of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) expressed satisfaction that the recommendations and decisions of the high-level CCAQ meeting had addressed adequately the issues raised by the High Commissioner at the last meeting of ACC. However, she stressed the importance of having the outcome of the Ad Hoc Inter-Agency Meeting on Security, scheduled to be held at Montreal in March 1998 after part I of the first regular session of OC, also brought to the attention of ACC. She also emphasized the need for clarity in the allocation of responsibility for undertaking follow-up action on the recommendations and decisions of the high-level CCAQ meeting.

27. In conveying the recommendations and decisions made by the high-level CCAQ meeting to ACC, OC expressed the hope that the Ad Hoc Inter-Agency Meeting on Security, at its meeting in March 1998, would make progress, in close collaboration with the CCAQ(FB) wherever necessary, in the elaboration of a comprehensive operational plan for the speedy implementation of the required actions.

28. OC also noted that an informal meeting of the legal advisers of the organizations of the United Nations system had been held at IMF headquarters at Washington, D.C., on 20 and 21 January 1998, to consider legal aspects of staff security, particularly regarding the matter of the linkage between the physical safety of United Nations staff and the privileges and immunities accorded to them. The informal meeting had recommended that ACC remind Member States of their obligations under international law vis-à-vis officials of the United Nations family, as well as technical assistance experts of those organizations. Each agency could build on the success that others had had in the context of headquarters agreements, and other ad hoc arrangements for missions and conferences. In that regard, ACC might wish to urge Member States to cooperate in exploring those bilateral solutions. An individual agency might wish to consider pursuing an expansion of immunities for its own staff by amending its annex to the United Nations Specialized Agencies Convention so as to provide, for example, for immunity from arrest and detention for staff on mission. Signatory countries would then decide, on a country-by-country basis, whether to accept the amended annex.

29. In the light of the information provided in the summary of conclusions of the high-level meeting of CCAQ and the informal meeting of legal advisers of the organizations of the United Nations system, and of the Committee's discussions, OC prepared annotations for ACC consideration of the item.

D. Other matters

1. Administrative questions

30. OC discussions under this item were also based on the conclusions of the high-level meeting of CCAQ held at the United Nations Office at Geneva on 9 February 1998. The Associate Secretary of the Committee drew OC's attention to those aspects of the Committee's work requiring the attention of ACC.

31. OC noted that the high-level CCAQ had concluded that it should focus on strategic management issues with a view to reaching decisions or providing advice to ACC thereon and guidance to the ACC subsidiary machinery; be a forum for a

continuing dialogue on the reform processes under way in the organizations of the system; without prejudice to ACC's role in reviewing personnel matters and meeting with representatives of the staff bodies, review issues of an administrative nature on behalf of ACC, and take action on behalf of ACC on any issues referred specifically to it by CCAQ (FB), the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions (Personnel Questions) (CCAQ(PER)), and the Information Systems Coordination Committee (ISCC); and deal with issues of an administrative nature raised by other bodies such as the Ad Hoc Inter-Agency Meeting on Security and the meetings of Fellowship Officers. In drawing ACC's attention to these conclusions, together with the Meeting's conclusions on its future methods of work and periodicity of meetings, OC recalled that ACC had already adopted terms of reference for the Committee, and that the Committee's conclusions concerning its future work programme should be set in the context of these terms of reference.

32. OC further noted that the Committee envisaged only occasional meetings with staff representatives, and appeared to have proceeded on the assumption that ACC itself would continue to provide the main forum for periodic consultations with staff representatives. It felt that executive heads might wish to express their views in that regard. A number of OC members also stressed that the timing of high-level CCAQ meetings should be fixed to ensure continued high-level representation from the organizations of the system. The issue was also raised of the desirability of CCAQ organizing, from time to time, informal meetings with the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ).

33. OC also noted that the high-level CCAQ meeting had adopted on behalf of ACC a statement on the reform of human resources management.

34. OC prepared annotations for the ACC's consideration of the item based on the conclusions of the meeting of the high-level CCAQ and its own discussions.

2. Follow-up to recent ACC conclusions

(a) United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa

35. An information note was made available to OC by a representative of the Secretariat of the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa. OC agreed to reflect the contents of the note in its annotations to ACC, and noted that any further issues requiring ACC's attention arising from a meeting of the Steering Committee, scheduled to meet on 26 March 1998 at Geneva, would be conveyed orally to ACC

by the Administrator of UNDP in his capacity as Co-Chair of the Steering Committee.

(b) Integrated and coordinated follow-up to recent global conferences

36. OC recalled that ACC, at its last session, had undertaken a review of the work of the inter-agency task forces established to promote an integrated and coordinated follow-up to conferences and reached a number of conclusions/decisions. In that regard, it had identified the elements on which its comprehensive review of the follow-up to those conferences would be based, including, in addition to the outcome of its own review of the work of the task forces, (a) relevant conclusions and recommendations of CCPOQ and IACSD formulated at their eleventh and tenth sessions, respectively, as well as those of its Organizational Committee; (b) the notes and common overview prepared by the conveners of the task forces and made available to ACC during its second regular session in 1997; (c) and any additional information that participants in the task forces and other members of ACC might wish to provide.

37. OC was briefed on the outcome of a workshop on coordinated follow-up of United Nations global conferences at the field level which CCPOQ had convened at Turin in early December 1997 following the second regular session of ACC in 1997. The representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) also briefed OC on arrangements for inter-agency coordination in the implementation of the World Food Summit, on which a report would be submitted to the Intergovernmental Committee on World Food Security in June 1998.

38. With regard to further follow-up actions, the Committee highlighted the importance of bringing the substantive work of the ACC task forces and other follow-up mechanisms to bear on operational activities, and in that connection the need to develop a package of harmonized procedures and an oversight framework to underpin coordinated field level follow-up.

39. Reviewing the draft guidance note for the resident coordinators and country representatives of the organizations of the system, OC members noted that the role of recipient country Governments should to be emphasized in the introduction. The core of the document reflected follow-up action at the country level, and that should also be made more explicit. Resort to networking arrangements, such as the FAO network on rural development and food security, was an effective means of following up and building on the substantive momentum of the work of the task forces.

40. OC made a number of specific comments on the draft note, and suggestions were made for a more detailed elaboration of key action in the areas of gender, human rights, poverty eradication and environment. OC also suggested that in order to avoid overburdening the resident coordinator system with excessive documentation, an attempt should be made to provide a set of consistent, compact, well packaged and action-oriented guidelines.

41. OC noted that the United Nations Staff College, through its field coordination workshops, was well placed to reinforce the dissemination of best practices and policy dialogue to sustain advocacy in support of the conferences goals, as well as to assist in identifying the best entry points for the resident coordinator system. To that end, the College would be organizing country and subregional workshops, and urged agencies to earmark funds for their participation.

42. OC was informed that at the same time, consultations by correspondence had been taking place, as recommended by ACC, in connection with the preparation of the Secretary-General's report to the session of the Economic and Social Council on the follow-up to conferences to be held in New York from 13 to 15 May 1998. OC noted that in accordance with the relevant ACC decision, that report would reflect all the elements of the comprehensive review identified by ACC.

43. OC also noted that CCPOQ, at its session held immediately prior to the meeting of OC, had reviewed the outline of the report and made a number of suggestions for its improvement, namely that the report should highlight new approaches to development as a consequence of the conferences, including the new role for government, a holistic view of development, emphasis on market intervention, the role of the conferences in fostering closer cooperation between the United Nations and Bretton Woods institutions and partnerships with non-state actors. CCPOQ considered that the report also needed to build on the substantive lessons gleaned from the experience of the task forces and other follow-up mechanisms. Another area to be addressed in the report concerned the challenges faced by the United Nations system in balancing the concern of Member States to integrate commitments in the continuum of conferences with the need for diversity in country and agency responses, taking into account the specificities of country situations and agency comparative advantage. Care should be taken to ensure the linkage between the governance responsibilities of agencies and that of the Council in conference follow-up.

44. The draft of the report of the Secretary-General to the session of the Council on coordinated follow-up to conferences would be made available to OC members during

part II of its current session, and would be finalized through correspondence.

(c) Relationship between the United Nations system and civil society

45. OC recalled that at the second regular session of ACC in 1997 and at the ACC “retreat”, executive heads had held a wide-ranging discussion on this issue, and had taken a number of decisions to guide and intensify the relationships between the organizations of the United Nations system and civil society. OC recognized that given the diversity of mandates of the organizations of the system, practices in relation with civil society were bound to continue to vary from organization to organization. The objective of future work in this area should not be harmonization as such but a sustained dialogue at the inter-agency level so as to learn from each other’s experiences and assess the implications of developments in different organizations for the system as a whole.

46. OC further noted that the Secretary-General had placed special emphasis, in the context of the follow-up to the ACC conclusions, on the strengthening of arrangements for the exchange of information and the sharing of experience at the inter-agency level on cooperation with the private sector. OC agreed on the main elements of a questionnaire that the Chairman of OC would send to OC members for completion by the end of April 1998 as follows: (a) a brief description of rules and regulations applicable to relations with business; (b) a history of cooperation with business, origins and major trends and motivations for cooperation; (c) the current status of cooperation: areas and nature of cooperation; (d) major planned activities; (e) characteristics of successful cooperation; (f) problems encountered; (g) implications for relations with Governments and other parts of the system; and (h) suggestions for follow-up.

(d) Universal access to basic communications and information services

47. At its last session, ACC, following a review of the status of implementation of the inter-agency project on universal access to basic communications and information services, had called on all organizations of the system to collaborate with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in ensuring an effective follow-up to the process, including implementation of pilot projects in the areas identified in the annex of the ACC statement on this topic.

48. During OC’s consideration of this issue at its last session, the representative of ITU had noted that given the magnitude of the investments required to implement such

projects, a catalytic fund would need to be established, and OC members had agreed to pursue within their respective organizations, as appropriate, modalities for the establishment of such a fund.

49. The representative of ITU briefed OC on developments since the last OC meeting. He encouraged organizations that had not yet done so to bring the ACC statement on universal access to basic communication and information services to the attention of their governing bodies. OC members agreed to expedite consultations within their organizations on modalities for the establishment of the proposed fund, as well as the review of pilot projects, and encouraged ITU to continue to take the lead in promoting within the system sustained follow-up to the ACC statement.

(e) International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction

50. OC recalled that ACC, at its last session, in calling upon the organizations of the United Nations system to contribute actively to the preparatory process for the closing events of the Decade and to give due attention to the activities to be undertaken beyond the year 2000, had proposed to issue a statement at its next session. The representative of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) introduced a draft of the statement, which had been prepared in consultation with the secretariat of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction.

51. OC reviewed and amended the draft, and agreed to refer it to ACC for adoption.

(f) Peace-building

52. In preparing for the ACC discussion on this topic, OC had before it a background paper prepared by the United Nations that included a draft of the strategic framework for Afghanistan, a draft assistance strategy for Afghanistan, and draft generic guidelines for response to and recovery from crisis. A representative of the United Nations briefed OC on developments since the last session of the Committee. He noted that although the testing of the strategic framework approach in Afghanistan had not yet yielded definitive results, the experience that was being gained was sufficient to warrant an assessment by ACC of what has been learned so far. A conceptual basis now existed for further debate on future collaborative work by national and international partners towards a more coherent, comprehensive and participatory approach in accomplishing the goal of more effective action in conditions of crisis.

53. In commenting on the draft strategic framework for Afghanistan and the draft generic guidelines, OC members

noted that the approach which was being developed in Afghanistan was still a test, and that further experience needed to be gained before it could be generalized. The importance of partnerships to ensure a commitment to participating in the approach by all concerned entities of the United Nations system was also stressed. It was recognized that the conditions in Afghanistan presented the system with difficult challenges in a situation fraught with conflict, volatility, continuing humanitarian needs and human rights violations. The importance of principles, particularly with regard to the issue of gender, was critical. The strategic framework approach represented a first attempt at developing a principled approach for the United Nations system in countries in or recovering from crisis, and bringing added coherence to the overall activities of the system in the particular country. In this regard, the strategic framework not only addressed the assistance requirements of the United Nations system in countries in crisis but was also intended as the normative framework for the development of both a peace-building and an assistance strategy for Afghanistan. How best to link those two important objectives continues to be an important challenge for the system.

54. OC noted that CCPOQ had broadly endorsed the process of the strategic framework for Afghanistan and proposed to establish a small working group to distil lessons learned and prepare generic guidelines drawing on experience gained. With regard to the proposal that a small dedicated inter-agency team be established at headquarters to provide institutional backstopping and support farther application of the strategic framework approach, both CCPOQ and OC stressed the importance of working through existing inter-agency bodies and mechanisms. In that regard, the Chairman of OC pointed out that the new Office of Inter-Agency Affairs could provide a suitable focal point for this work.

55. OC recalled that ACC, at its first regular session of 1997, had selected Afghanistan and Mozambique as countries representing two distinct peace-building situations where the strategic framework could be tested. It was now proposed not to proceed with a mission to Mozambique but to select for that purpose another country: Somalia or Sierra Leone had been suggested. Without prejudice to the ACC decision on whether to proceed with a second mission, OC members cautioned against limiting the application of the framework to only one type of situation that would restrict involvement in the exercise to organizations principally involved in humanitarian activities and remove the potential for linking the humanitarian and development dimensions of peace-building. Some members also cautioned against

proceeding with testing in a second country when a number of issues still remained unresolved.

56. In the light of the background information before the Committee and its own discussions, OC prepared annotations for ACC's consideration of this item.

(g) Assistance to countries of the Great Lakes Region

57. OC recalled that the Secretary-General, in his letter to executive heads of 28 November 1997, regarding the situation in the Great Lakes Region, following up on discussions held at the private meeting of the last session of ACC, had emphasized the importance of providing effective and well coordinated assistance to the countries of the region. Many executive heads, in their responses, had provided information on a range of activities that their agencies were undertaking or proposed to undertake in support of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and other countries in the region. Additional information on the most recent developments conveyed to the Committee had been included in a background note for the information of ACC.

(h) International drug abuse control

58. The representative of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) briefed the Committee on the arrangements for the convening of the special session of the General Assembly devoted to the fight against the illicit production, sale, demand, traffic and distribution of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, and provided members of the Committee with a background note on those arrangements. She informed OC that a joint statement of ACC on the issue would be submitted to the special session, a draft of which had already been discussed and adopted by CCPOQ. She stated further that the Executive Head of UNDCP would be inviting heads of United Nations organizations to attend the special session and address the Committee of the Whole. OC agreed to include the note in the background information being provided to ACC. Members of OC made several comments on the draft joint statement of ACC, and agreed that the text should be finalized through correspondence.

(i) Observance of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the five-year review of the Vienna Declaration and Plan of Action

59. OC agreed that the background note prepared by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the observance of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the five-year review of the

Vienna Declaration and Plan of Action would be reflected in the annotations to be prepared for ACC.

III. New or restored democracies

60. OC agreed to consider the issue at part II of its current session (see paras. 81-82 below).

IV. Work of ACC consultative committees and other inter-agency bodies

A. Work of ACC consultative committees and inter-agency bodies

1. Report of the eleventh meeting of the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development (ACC/1998/1)

61. Relevant aspects of the work of IACSD to be brought to the attention of ACC were considered by the Committee; OC agreed to consider the other parts of the IACSD report during part II of its current session (see paras. 83-84 below).

2. Report of the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality on its third session (ACC/1998/3)

62. Relevant aspects of the work of IACWGE to be brought to the attention of ACC were considered by the Committee. OC reviewed and amended the draft statement of ACC entitled "Gender equality and mainstreaming in the work of the United Nations system: a commitment for action", and recommended it for approval by ACC. OC agreed to consider the other parts of the IACWGE report during Part II of its current session (see paras. 85-86 below).

3. Report of the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions on its twelfth session (ACC/1998/7)

63. Relevant aspects of the work of CCPOQ to be brought to the attention of ACC were considered by the Committee; OC agreed to consider the other parts of the CCPOQ report during part II of its current session (see paras. 87-90 below).

B. Reports of bodies reporting to OC

1. Report of the Information Systems Coordination Committee on its fifth session (ACC/1997/19)

64. OC agreed to consider the issue at part II of its current session (see paras. 91-94 below).

V. Other matters

A. Other issues

65. The Chairman briefed members of the Committee on two communications that the Chairman of the Meeting of Legal Advisers of Organizations of the United Nations system had sent to the Secretary-General as Chairman of ACC on (a) a review of legality of decisions taken by the Information Systems Coordination Committee (ICSC) and (b) the advisability of introducing a second-tier appellate mechanism with a view to enhancing the system of administration of justice in the United Nations and related organizations. OC agreed to refer to that correspondence in the annotations to the ACC agenda.

66. The representative of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) briefed OC on arrangements for the convening of a special session of the United Nations General Assembly in 1999 to undertake the five-year review of the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), which had been held at Cairo in 1994. OC noted that the major features of the preparations would be a series of round tables and technical meetings to be convened over the latter part of 1998, as well as regional reviews undertaken by the regional commissions in collaboration with other United Nations entities. The round tables would focus on:

- (a) Adolescent sexual and reproductive health;
- (b) Reproductive rights and implementation of reproductive health programmes, including women's empowerment, male involvement and human rights;
- (c) Partnership with civil society in the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action;
- (d) Population and macroeconomic linkages.

The topics of the three technical meetings would be international migration issues, reproductive health in crisis situations and population ageing. In addition, UNFPA was planning to convene in the Netherlands in 1999 an international forum from 22 to 27 February 1999. The UNFPA representative also noted that strong emphasis would again be placed on an inclusive process for the preparations of the special session, whereby non-governmental

organizations and other elements of civil society would be actively involved. She also stressed the importance of inter-agency involvement and inputs by all parts of the United Nations system to the five-year ICPD review process.

67. The representative of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) informed OC of the designation by the Secretary-General of the Executive Director of UNEP as the focal point for coordinating the United Nations response to the forest fires that had broken out in South-East Asia, in particular Indonesia, and indicated that the Executive Director would brief ACC members on action being taken or proposed to be taken in response to this major environmental calamity.

1. Appointment in the ACC subsidiary bodies

68. There has been one development since the last session of ACC regarding action that subsidiary bodies propose to take with regard to appointments: the extension of the appointment of Mrs. Mary Chinery-Hesse of the International Labour Organization (ILO) as Chairperson of CCPOQ for the period June through October 1998.

2. Meetings of ACC subsidiary bodies

69. Meetings of ACC subsidiary bodies proposed to be held before the next session of ACC are as follows:

IACSD	United Nations Office at Geneva	14 and 15 September 1998
CCPOQ	New York	21 to 25 September 1998

Part II (Geneva, 30 and 31 March 1998)

I. Introduction

70. The Organizational Committee of the Administrative Committee on Coordination met on 30 and 31 March 1998 at the Palais des Nations, Geneva to consider the follow-up to the decisions taken and conclusions reached by ACC at its first regular session of 1998 on 27 and 28 March 1998 (see ACC/1998/4), and to conclude the consideration of a number of issues included in the agenda of the first part of its session (see paras. 1-69 above).

71. The list of participants at part II of the first regular session of OC is contained in annex III.

II. Preparations for the second regular session of ACC

A. Review of developments affecting international cooperation and development, and their implications for the United Nations system: poverty eradication

72. OC reverted to a discussion of this issue with a view to determining arrangements for finalizing the policy statement requested by ACC and the most appropriate timing for its issuance. With regard to the finalization of the statement, OC noted that the Chairman, after consultation with the authors of the joint note submitted to ACC, would circulate a draft to OC members for clearance on behalf of ACC. Members of OC stressed that the statement should be forward-looking, should reflect the debate that ACC had held on the issue and should take into account the points made in paragraph 8 of the annotations to the ACC agenda. In that connection, a number of points were reiterated or highlighted, including the need to impress upon Governments their primary responsibility in this area; observance of the fact that human rights and good governance are central to development and hence integral components of any policies geared to the eradication of poverty; the need to create a microlevel environment that would create the conditions for targeting assistance to the poor; the recognition of the fact that the poor themselves should be seen as and be enabled to be the main actors in poverty eradication; the need to place special emphasis on rural poverty; the importance of the empowerment of women, particularly given their significant contributions in both the rural and informal sectors of the economy; provision of energy for the poor; preparedness against natural disasters; and the importance of addressing global poverty to include the poor in developed countries. It was agreed that the statement should seek as its main objective to maximize external impact and also highlight the unity of the United Nations system in addressing the eradication of poverty.

73. Regarding timing, OC considered that it would be useful to have the statement issued at the time of the session of the Economic and Social Council on the coordinated follow-up to recent United Nations global conferences scheduled to be held at United Nations Headquarters, New York, from 13 to 15 May 1998, bearing in mind that the eradication of poverty was an underlying and cross-cutting theme of all the recent global conferences.

74. OC members agreed that the matrix that had been made available to ACC should also be completed and be the subject of another round of consultations within CCPOQ. The importance of providing a comprehensive picture of the range

of contributions being made by the different organizations of the system in that area was emphasized.

B. Strengthening and reform of the United Nations system, including the conclusion of the ACC review of the functioning of inter-agency machinery

75. OC reverted to a discussion of this issue, focusing on the functions and staffing requirements of the new Office for Inter-Agency Affairs. The Chairman indicated that he envisaged a core staff of some four professionals who would provide substantive support on a full time basis to ACC and OC, including the management of the new information network being established and the servicing of ACC subsidiary bodies for which the United Nations provided the secretariat, and at the same time would liaise with groups of agencies. He reiterated that secondments from agencies to the Office could be for fixed periods or in relation to specific assignments. He added that since the new Office should provide a means for better reflecting the concerns of agencies in coordination activities, the expertise of its staff should cover broadly the disciplines and fields of activities in which the system was engaged. Another important aim of the Office should be to contribute to policy coherence in the functioning of ACC machinery. To that end, the Office and the jointly financed secretariats of ACC subsidiaries should operate as a network and collaborate closely in preparations for ACC. In that context, information on proposed arrangements for the functioning of the office was made available.

76. In response to questions, the Director of the Office stressed that the Office would essentially provide a support function to facilitate the effective operation of the inter-agency machinery. A key aim would be to improve the substantive policy content of the documentation submitted to ACC for its consideration.

77. Members of OC reiterated the interest of their organizations in supporting the effective functioning of the Office. The wish was expressed that further details be provided on specific assignments within the Office so as to facilitate staff secondments.

78. It was noted that the operational plan approved by ACC would be adjusted in the light of the discussion in the Committee and circulated to OC members to assist OC in guiding its implementation, as requested by ACC.

79. With regard to the reform process under way in different organizations and agencies of the system, OC agreed that the publication under preparation should be finalized soon since

it would serve to convey to Member States the reform initiatives being undertaken in individual organizations, as well as how the system as a whole was undergoing significant reforms. In that regard, the Chairman informed OC members that he would consult with the secretariat of CCAQ to have the publication completed by the middle of 1998.

C. United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa

80. Some OC members suggested that the periodicity of the consideration of this item by ACC should be reviewed so as to avoid repetitive discussions at every session. It was also recalled that a time-frame had originally been envisaged by ACC for the Steering Committee. The importance of improving the quality of documentation on this item to enable ACC to have more substantive discussions on the subject was also stressed. The documentation should also take into account other activities being carried out by the system in Africa alongside the Special Initiative.

III. New or restored democracies

81. The Chairman referred to discussions he had had on this item with the Department for Political Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat as well as the Chairperson of the Preparatory Committee for the International Conference on New and Restored Democracies on Democracy and Development. The General Assembly, in its resolution 51/31, had requested, *inter alia*, that the different organizations of the United Nations system as well as other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, contribute actively to the follow-up process of the Third International Conference on New or Restored Democracies. It was the intention of the United Nations to seek inputs from the relevant organizations of the United Nations system in the preparation of the Secretary-General's report to the General Assembly. In that regard, organizations were invited to designate focal points who could be contacted to participate in the preparation of the report.

82. OC, on behalf of ACC, welcomed the opportunity that would be provided for United Nations agencies and organizations to consult with the United Nations Secretariat in the preparation of the Secretary-General's report. Members agreed to inform the Secretary of OC as soon as possible of the names of their respective focal points.

IV. Work of ACC consultative committees and other inter-agency bodies

A. Work of ACC consultative committees and other inter-agency bodies

1. Report of the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development on its eleventh meeting (ACC/1998/1)

83. Relevant aspects of the work of IACSD to be brought to the attention of ACC were considered by OC during part I of its current session (see para. 61 above). Reverting to the report of the eleventh meeting of IACSD at the second part of the session, OC was informed by the Secretary of IACSD of plans for the convening of the World Conference on Science for the Twenty-first Century, to be organized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the International Council for Scientific Unions (ICSU) in July 1999 at Budapest. The representative of UNESCO confirmed that her agency had invited concerned United Nations agencies and programmes to extend their full cooperation in the organization of the Conference, including its preparatory process. In that regard, the representative of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) expressed the interest of her organization in co-sponsoring that special event.

84. OC members also enquired about planned arrangements for inter-agency consultations on energy in preparation for the intergovernmental process to be launched under the auspices of the Commission on Sustainable Development in the period 1999-2001, in the light of the postponement of the meeting of the Committee on New and Renewable Sources of Energy. The representative of the United Nations and the Secretary of OC explained that despite the postponement of the session of the Committee and the uncertainty of knowing exactly when its next session would be held, arrangements were being made for the inter-agency task force on energy established at the eleventh meeting of IACSD to meet later in the year.

2. Report of the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality on its third session (ACC/1998/3)

85. Relevant aspects of the work of IACWGE to be brought to the attention of ACC were addressed during part I of the current session of OC (see para. 62 above). Reverting to this item at the second part of the session, OC members were informed about a study conducted concerning the health and

psychological impact of societal changes on young males. Members considered that the matter should be pursued by IACWGE in the overall context of its consideration of the mainstreaming of gender issues.

86. It was suggested that there should be closer interaction and collaboration between IACWGE and other standing committees of ACC, including participation in their sessions, as a means of enhancing policy coherence in the work of the inter-agency machinery.

3. Report of the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions on its twelfth session (ACC/1998/7)

87. Relevant aspects of the work of CCPOQ to be brought to the attention of ACC were considered during part I of the current session of OC (see para. 63 above). Reverting to this item at the second part of the session, the Chairman referred to a letter dated 20 March 1998 addressed to him in his capacity as Secretary of ACC by the Chairman of JIU, seeking proposals for the JIU work programme for 1999. He suggested that without prejudice to any proposals that individual organization might wish to make in response to similar letters they might have received, a consolidated reply on behalf of the system might be desirable. The Secretary of CCPOQ had also received a similar communication from JIU and was consulting Committee members. The CCPOQ secretariat had had considerable experience in preparing ACC comments on JIU reports, and might, as such, be a suitable focal point for consolidating suggestions from different parts of ACC machinery and from the various organizations of the system.

88. Some OC members, while agreeing that a consolidated response should be sent to JIU, felt that designating the CCPOQ secretariat as the focal point for that purpose would not be in line with their organizations' understanding of the focus of the JIU mandate, which was on administrative and managerial issues rather than on policy and programme matters. Moreover, the JIU focal points in the various organizations were not normally part of the CCPOQ "constituency".

89. The Chairman suggested that the new Office of Inter-Agency Affairs might in the future be a suitable point of contact for consolidating such responses on behalf of the system, in consultations with the CCPOQ and CCAQ secretariats. Meanwhile, he would consult with the Secretary of CCPOQ, with a view to consolidating suggestions that he or the CCPOQ secretariat might receive and arrange for a single response. Any such suggestions should be received in

the coming two weeks so as to meet the end-of-April 1998 deadline set by JIU.

90. The Chairman also recalled that JIU was planning to undertake a review of the functioning of ACC machinery, and that in that connection he, along with the Secretaries of OC, CCAQ(FB), CCAQ(PER), CCPOQ and IACSD, would be meeting with the JIU inspectors carrying out the study.

B. Reports of bodies reporting to OC: report of the Information Systems Coordination Committee on its fifth session (ACC/1997/19)

91. OC considered the report of ISCC on its fifth session (ACC/1997/19). The Chairman brought to the attention of OC members the main recommendations contained in the report to be addressed by OC, related to:

- (a) The draft executive statement on migration to contemporary document management;
- (b) Enhanced use of video conferencing by ISCC;
- (c) The desirability for agencies which have not yet done so to arrange for access to video conference facilities;
- (d) Appointment of next Chairperson of the Committee;
- (e) Proposed date and venue for the sixth session of the Committee.

92. OC agreed to clear the statement on migration to contemporary document management by correspondence.

93. OC noted that ISCC was making effective use of video conferencing in carrying out its work programme, which made it possible, *inter alia*, for its various task forces to conclude their work often ahead of schedule and at no travel cost for the agencies concerned. Recognizing the valuable work being accomplished through these task forces, OC considered it important that they be regarded as time-bound mechanisms, to be discontinued as soon as the task at hand had been completed. OC also strongly supported the recommendations of ISCC concerning access to video conference facilities by United Nations organizations that had not yet made arrangements in that regard. ISCC's programme budget proposals were generally supported by OC.

94. OC endorsed the recommendation of ISCC that Mr. Giuseppe Pace of FAO serve as the next Chairperson of the Committee for the period September 1998 to September 2000. Regarding the proposed dates of the next session of the Committee (27-30 October 1998 at Geneva) OC considered

that the date of the meeting should be advanced to September 1998, prior to its own session, to enable OC to give appropriate consideration to issues arising from ISCC and requiring the attention of ACC at its fall session of 1998.

V. Other matters

A. International drug abuse control

95. OC reverted to a discussion of this issue, finalized on behalf of ACC the joint statement of ACC, taking into account the comments of members of ACC (see annex V below), and agreed that the statement would be submitted to the special session of the General Assembly devoted to the fight against the illicit production, sale, demand, traffic and distribution of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, to be held from 8 to 10 June 1998.

B. Communications from the Meeting of Legal Advisers of the United Nations System

96. OC reverted to the item in the light of the discussions undertaken within ACC. On the issue of the review of legality of decisions taken by ICSC, OC noted that the Meeting of the Legal Advisers of the United Nations System had been considering three possible options as a basis for taking further measures:

- (a) To allow for ICSC or the executive head of a participating organization to seek the opinion of the Meeting of Legal Advisers of the United Nations System on legal questions raised by a particular decision or proposed decision;
- (b) To amend the statutes of the Administrative Tribunals to allow ICSC or the executive head of a participating organization to seek an advisory opinion from the Administrative Tribunals or from a joint panel of both Tribunals;
- (c) To amend the statute of ICSC to establish a panel of its own, perhaps drawing on the Presidents of the Administrative Tribunals and a third member jointly agreed, from which ICSC or the executive head of a participating organization could seek an advisory opinion.

A number of members indicated that the preference of their organizations was for the third option, and requested that that view be conveyed to the meeting of legal advisers of the organization of United Nations system.

C. Collaboration with non-governmental organizations

97. A number of members of OC enquired about the background to a request that agencies had received from the Assistant Secretary-General for External Relations of the United Nations Secretariat for information on collaboration with non-governmental organizations. It was explained that the communication from the Office of the Assistant Secretary-General for External Relations was directly related to a request from the General Assembly for the preparation of a report on how the United Nations and other organizations within the system were working with non-governmental organizations. OC members recalled that organizations had earlier submitted information on this issue to both the Secretary of OC and the ILO representative in OC in connection with the preparation of the background document on collaboration between the organizations of the United Nations and civil society, which had been considered by OC at its first regular session of 1997. Many aspects of that issue had also been under discussion for some time in CCPOQ. They suggested therefore that the Office of the Assistant Secretary-General for External Relations could draw on that information, in addition to any updated information that organizations might be in a position to provide at the present time, in preparing the report to the General Assembly.

98. The Chairman of OC recommended that agencies, in their replies, refer to their earlier contributions, while at the same time taking the opportunity to update them. He indicated that the new Office of Inter-Agency Affairs, when fully operational, including the information network, would be in a position to provide an institutional base for the exchange and updating of that type of information, thereby helping to avoid duplicative requests for information from different parts of the United Nations and the system as a whole.

D. ACC Subcommittee on Nutrition

99. Some OC members referred to information that they had received concerning a new name being used or proposed for the Subcommittee, and noted that any such change would need to be approved by or on behalf of ACC. The Chairman was asked to enquire about the matter with CCPOQ and revert to OC.

E. Brochure on the way the activities of the various organizations of the system are affecting the daily lives of people

100. The Secretary of OC briefed members of the Committee on the status of preparation of the brochure. He indicated that a draft of the brochure had been prepared within the Office of the Assistant Secretary-General for External Relations based on contributions received from all agencies. Draft texts of individual United Nations organizations' chapters were shared with them and revised on the basis of comments received. It was envisaged that the final version would be available for distribution towards the end of April 1998.

101. Members of OC, while welcoming the advanced state of preparation of the brochure, considered that the draft as a whole should be circulated again to organizations before issuance. The Chairman of OC undertook to raise the matter with the Assistant Secretary-General for External Relations.

F. Future meetings of ACC and the Organizational Committee

102. OC considered three possible options for the dates of the second regular session of ACC in 1998: 23 and 24 October, 30 and 31 October, and 6 and 7 November. It was agreed that the Chairman, after consulting on the Secretary-General's own availability, would write to members of OC asking them to indicate the preferences of the executive heads among those options. The Chairman suggested that in the light of those possible dates OC should aim to meet in the first week of October 1998. The exact dates would be fixed in the light of the final decision to be taken on the dates of the ACC session.

Farewell to Mr. Labastida

103. The Chairman, on behalf of all members of OC, thanked Mr. Labastida of the International Maritime Organization for his long-standing and valuable contribution to the work of the Organizational Committee, and conveyed best wishes to him in his future endeavours.

Notes

¹ The 20/20 Initiative, an outcome of the World Summit for Social Development, calls upon developing and developed countries to enter into a reciprocal agreement to mobilize sufficient resources for basic social services: 20 per cent of national budgets and 20 per cent of official development assistance allocations.

Annex I

Annotated agenda

- 1. Adoption of the agenda**
- 2. Preparations for the first regular session of ACC**

In his letter to members of ACC of 28 January, the Secretary-General stated that:

“The Fall session of the ACC and the subsequent ‘retreat’ were, I believe, especially fruitful and I am anxious to ensure that there is sustained follow-up to the decisions and initiatives we took on that occasion. In that light, I would propose that we concentrate, at the next ACC session, on two items: a substantive item aimed at reviewing and refocusing the system’s work on poverty alleviation; and an item which would enable us to assess the system-wide implications of the reform processes under way in our organizations, and finalize, in that context, our ongoing review of the functioning of the ACC machinery.”

Executive heads who replied as of the time of the finalization of these annotations concurred with these proposals; the present draft agenda has, accordingly, been prepared on that basis.

- (a) Review of developments affecting international cooperation and development, and their implications for the United Nations system: Poverty alleviation.**

In discussing preparations for this item, the Secretary-General’s letter of 28 January notes that:

“Our discussions on poverty alleviation should build on the appraisal we have been conducting of the work of the Task Forces on the follow-up to recent global conferences, which had poverty alleviation as a common underlying theme. They should also benefit from the paper, setting out proposed elements of a system-wide framework for action against poverty, that I invited Mr. Speth, during the ‘retreat’, to develop jointly with the World Bank. Work on this paper has begun. I will arrange for a draft to be circulated well in advance of the session, so that the views of all concerned ACC members, together with inputs from the relevant ACC subsidiary bodies, may be taken into account by our Organizational Committee in finalizing preparations for this discussion.”

The paper referred to in the Secretary-General’s letter will shortly be the subject of a further communication to members of ACC. In preparing for the consideration of this item by ACC, OC will also have before it, in addition to any inputs that may be received from individual organizations and agencies in response to that communication, the report of CCPOQ, which has dealt with poverty-related issues in the past and will address questions relevant to this item at its forthcoming session. The ongoing review of the outcome of the work of the ACC task forces on the follow-up to recent global conferences (see item 2 (d) (ii) b. below) is also relevant and should be fully drawn upon.

- (b) Strengthening and reform of the United Nations system, including the conclusion of the ACC review of the functioning of the inter-agency machinery**

The Secretary-General’s letter of 28 January refers to this item as follows:

“Our discussions on reform should build on the ACC joint statement on the subject (ACC/1996/20), and the very positive, forthcoming exchanges of view we had at the last ACC session and at our ‘retreat’. As you know, the General Assembly has endorsed

many elements of my reform programme and has asked me to pursue a number of proposals I had put forward in connection with that programme. Important reform-related developments have meanwhile also taken place in the World Bank and several other specialized agencies and United Nations organizations. A publication is under preparation, within the framework of the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions (CCAQ), focusing on the common managerial objectives that are guiding these processes. I believe that the time has come for a comprehensive assessment of the way in which these processes impact on each other, and of the extent to which they are contributing to the overall coherence of the system, as a basis for setting some common objectives to guide our executive decisions in pursuing these processes in the future.

I understand that a first exchange on the system-wide implications of the reform processes under way in both the United Nations and the specialized agencies has taken place within our Organizational Committee and will be pursued at a high-level meeting of the CCAQ in early February. I think it is important, however, that there should be, at this stage, a reflection on these issues at the level of the executive heads. I would appreciate receiving in the coming weeks (if possible by the second week of February) your personal assessment of the way in which the reform process under way in your organization is affecting its role and place within the system, and of what further reforms, at the level of individual organizations and at the level of the system as a whole, would be desirable to further enhance the system's credibility and maximize system-wide coherence and impact. I will then arrange for these views to be collated and circulated, as the main basis for our discussions on reform in the ACC.

I intend to draw on the conclusions we will reach in this discussion in guiding the further implementation of my reform programme, and in pursuing in the General Assembly issues arising from my reform report, such as the proposal for the establishment of a Ministerial Commission to review the constitutional instruments on which the system is based, which are of wider inter-agency concern.

Although I have been concerned that the proposed publication on the reform processes under way within the system should be issued as soon as possible, I believe it would be worthwhile, at this stage, to hold its issuance until April, so that we may reflect, in an introductory part of the publication, the outcome of our discussion in the ACC.”

Replies being received from executive heads, containing their assessment of the way in which the reform processes under way in their own agency is affecting its role and place within the system, and “of what further reforms at the level of individual organizations and of the system as a whole would be desirable to further enhance the system's credibility and maximize system-wide coherence and impact”, are being collated as the main basis for the ACC discussions and will be available at the time of the OC session. Also available to OC to assist it in preparing for the ACC discussions will be: relevant elements of the report of the last high-level meeting of CCAQ (Geneva, 9 February 1998); and the latest draft of the main body of the publication on reform processes under way within the system currently being finalized within the framework of CCAQ.

The Secretary-General's letter of 28 January went on to propose that under this agenda item, ACC might also finalize its ongoing review of the functioning of the ACC machinery. The Secretary-General noted, in this connection, that:

“From the preparatory work in the Organizational Committee, and our own discussions in the ACC and at the ‘retreat’, a broad consensus is, I believe, emerging

on the conditions that would permit a qualitative strengthening of the effectiveness and impact of ACC's work. Chief among them, is our capacity to distinguish between issues requiring concerted action by different groups of organizations within the system, while keeping all ACC members fully informed, and policy issues and themes of key importance for the system as a whole that need to be addressed at the level of the ACC itself. This, in turn, requires arrangements for a much more systematic and continuous exchange of information and policy dialogue among the organizations of the system than exist at the moment.

A first step to this end, which was repeatedly raised during the 'retreat', is the establishment of a dedicated, interactive ACC information network. In developing such a network, we should, I believe, focus, in the first instance, on exchanging information on major initiatives and policy developments within our organizations geared to the executive level, and eventually seek to expand it to include ongoing information on programme activities for use by programme managers. For this effort to succeed, each organization within the system will need to assume responsibility for selecting, posting and updating relevant information on a timely and periodic basis. I trust I can count on your cooperation in this endeavour."

After referring to measures he had taken with regard to the position of Secretary of ACC and the establishment of an identifiable Office for Inter-Agency Affairs, the Secretary-General's letter added that:

"These arrangements, together with a decentralization of authority to the Organizational Committee and the ACC Consultative Committees, should contribute to more selective and policy-relevant agendas for the ACC. At the same time, I expect policy issues deserving the collective attention of the executive heads to increase rather than diminish in the future. And there is, indeed, no substitute for direct interactions among executive heads to nurture the spirit of collegiality and share responsibility on which the system rests.

Two annual sessions of the ACC in the manner in which they have been organized so far are proving increasingly difficult to schedule because of conflicting commitments of executive heads. They are, at the same time, insufficient to maintain the kind of continuous dialogue that is increasingly necessary among ACC members. In this light, I would propose for your consideration that, in addition to task force arrangements and other subject-oriented consultations engaging groups of executive heads, we provide for one annual session of the ACC in a single location (say at the end of June, alternatively in New York or Geneva, immediately prior to the annual session of the Economic and Social Council), but that we complement these sessions with a number of periodic consultations (say in February, April, September and November), making use of tele-conferencing, so as to avoid the need for travel. These consultations would serve to review emerging developments of system-wide policy significance, monitor the follow-up given to ACC decisions and policy directives, and for selective briefings by executive heads on major developments in their organizations which have implications for the system as a whole. Two or three hours for each such consultation should be sufficient.

If you are in broad agreement with this approach, I would suggest that we request the Organizational Committee to draw up an operational plan for its implementation, which we would then act on at the end of March in the ACC."

The finalization of the “operational plan for implementation” referred to above should, accordingly, be a main focus of the OC session. Informal consultations with members of OC on the most appropriate format for such a plan will be carried out prior to the OC session.

(c) Staff security

ACC, at its last session, focused its discussions on administrative questions on the issue of the security of staff. ACC adopted a statement on the matter and stressed that the issue should be pursued on an urgent basis. OC was requested to examine further the issue with a view to facilitating and expediting follow-up action. OC accordingly reverted to this item at its meeting immediately following the ACC session and identified the following as requiring specific follow-up:

- (a) Adequate financial provisions for security, including the establishment of separate budget lines for security;
- (b) Security arrangements for local staff, including their possible relocation in crisis situations;
- (c) Implementation of security training, particularly its budgetary implications;
- (d) Improved arrangements for the establishment of thresholds for determining the timing of suspension and/or termination of operations at the field level;
- (e) Implementation of programmes for stress management;
- (f) Improved information management to facilitate staff security operations;
- (g) Coordination of security policies with peacekeeping missions;
- (h) Improved coordination on staff security policies with NGOs;
- (i) Operational aspects of staff security policies – common security logistics;
- (j) Strengthening of the role of, and increased support for UNSECOORD, particularly a unified chain of command, preferably at the Headquarters level.

It was agreed that sub-items (a) to (c) and aspects of (j) pertaining to increased support for UNSECOORD be pursued as a matter of priority at the next high-level meeting of CCAQ, and that sub-items (d) to (i) would be acted on at a special session of the ad hoc inter-agency meeting on security. It was noted that action on sub-item (a) would need to involve seeking the views of organizational budget officers, and where regular budgets are concerned, guidance and/or endorsement from governing bodies.

It is suggested that the items referred to CCAQ should be those on which ACC should focus at its next session, in the light of the report of the high-level meeting of CCAQ held at Geneva on 9 February 1998. The items referred to the Ad Hoc Inter-Agency Meeting on Security, to be held in March 1998 after the OC session, might be taken up by OC at its meeting immediately after the ACC session, and if necessary pursued by ACC at a subsequent session.

(d) Other matters

(i) Administrative questions

Under this item, the report of the meeting of the high-level CCAQ, held at Geneva on 9 February 1998, will be available.

As far as arrangements for consultations with staff representatives are concerned, the annotated agenda for the second regular session of ACC included the following observations:

“The institutionalization of high-level meetings of CCAQ would make possible a further streamlining of future ACC agendas, by eliminating the standing item on administrative questions and including in the ACC agenda only selected policy issues in the administrative and management areas requiring collective attention at the executive heads’ level. The high-level CCAQ could also become the continuing forum for policy dialogue with staff representatives. At the ACC level, current arrangements have not proved conducive to an effective exchange of views among executive heads, staff representatives and the Chairman of ICSC. A more substantive annual interaction on one or two key policy issues, prepared by the high-level CCAQ, could be more productive.”

The report of the high-level CCAQ is expected to include further recommendations on this matter.

(ii) Follow-up to recent ACC conclusions

Under this item, OC may wish to undertake a review of the follow-up to ACC recent decisions and prepare, on that basis, a note for ACC’s attention. The issues involved include:

a. African economic recovery and development

ACC, at its last session, decided that it would review, at its next session, progress being made in the implementation of the Special Initiative. A background note by the secretariat of the Special Initiative on developments in the implementation of the Special Initiative will be circulated to OC members before the session. Any further issues requiring ACC’s attention arising from a meeting of the Steering Committee, scheduled to meet on 26 March 1998 at Geneva, will be conveyed orally to ACC.

b. Integrated and coordinated follow-up to recent global conferences

ACC, at its last session, undertook a review of the work of the inter-agency task forces established to promote an integrated and coordinated follow-up to conferences and reached a number of conclusions/decisions. At the same time, ACC identified the elements on which its comprehensive review of the follow-up to these conferences would be based, which included, in addition to the outcome of its own review of the work of the task forces, relevant conclusions and recommendations of CCPOQ and IACSD formulated at their eleventh and tenth sessions, respectively, as well as those of its Organizational Committee; the notes and common overview prepared by the convenors of the task forces and made available to ACC during its second regular session in 1997; and any additional information which participants in the task forces and other members of ACC may wish to provide.

Following the ACC session, CCPOQ convened at Turin in early December 1997 a workshop on coordinated follow-up of United Nations global conferences at field level, and CCPOQ will revert to the matter at its next session, immediately before the OC session.

At the same time, consultations by correspondence have been taking place, as recommended by ACC, in connection with the preparation of the Secretary-General’s report to the special meeting of the Economic and Social Council on the follow-up to conferences (to be held in New York from 13 to 15 April 1998). In accordance with the relevant ACC decision, that report is to reflect all the elements of the comprehensive review identified by ACC.

In advising ACC on developments since its last session and on further actions required, OC may wish to draw ACC’s attention to the linkages between this exercise and the actions it will take on the agenda item on poverty alleviation (see ACC/1997/20, para. 25, third subparagraph).

c. Relationship between the United Nations system and civil society

At the last regular session of ACC in 1997 and at the ACC “retreat”, executive heads held a wide-ranging discussion on this issue, and took a number of decisions to guide and intensify the relationships between the organizations of the United Nations system and civil society (see ACC/1997/20, paras. 5 to 10 and conclusions/decisions at para. 11).

In his letter of 28 January 1998, the Secretary-General placed special emphasis, in the context of the follow-up to these conclusions, to the strengthening of arrangements for the exchange of information and the sharing of experience at the inter-agency level on cooperation with the private sector. This will be the subject of a separate communication to member of OC.

In advising ACC on further actions required, OC may wish to specify the role that various ACC subsidiary bodies, including OC itself, may play in the follow-up process.

d. Universal access to basic communications and information services

At its last session, ACC, following a review of the status of implementation of the inter-agency project on universal access to basic communications and information services, called on all organizations of the system to collaborate with ITU in ensuring an effective follow-up to the process, including implementation of pilot projects in the areas identified in the annex of the statement.

During OC’s consideration of this issue, the representative of ITU noted that given the magnitude of the investments required to implement such projects, a catalytic fund would need to be established. OC members agreed to pursue in their respective organizations, as appropriate, modalities for the establishment of such a fund.

OC may wish to exchange information on the results of consultations within agencies regarding modalities for the establishment of the proposed fund. It should also consider how implementation of the recommendations for pilot projects contained in the report of the inter-agency project can best be pursued, with the support and participation of the relevant agencies and organizations of the system.

e. International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction

At its last session, ACC called upon the organizations of the United Nations system to contribute actively to the preparatory process for the closing events of the Decade and to give due attention to the activities to be undertaken beyond the year 2000. In this regard, it was proposed that ACC issue a statement at its next session.

A draft statement is under preparation, and will be made available to OC members in advance of the OC meeting.

f. Peace-building

At its April 1997 session, ACC endorsed the elements of a strategic framework for response to and recovery from crisis, and decided that the proposed framework be tested in two countries: Afghanistan and Mozambique. At its last session, OC was informed of developments in the testing of the strategic framework in Afghanistan, including a preliminary briefing on the outcome of a mission that had visited Afghanistan for this purpose during the period 9 September to 15 October 1997, and of the circumstances that had until then prevented dispatching a similar mission to Mozambique. The view was expressed in OC that the recommendations of the mission to Afghanistan should be submitted to ACC for guidance on further follow-up action.

A note by the United Nations on peace-building, including the recommendations of the Afghanistan mission, will be made available to OC.

g. Assistance to countries of the Great Lakes Region

In his letters to executive heads of 28 November 1997 and 15 December 1997, regarding the situation in the Great Lakes Region, the Secretary-General, following up on discussions held at the private meeting of ACC on 31 October, emphasized the importance of providing effective and well coordinated assistance to the countries of the Region. Many executive heads, in their responses, provided information on a wide range of activities that their agencies were undertaking or proposed to undertake in support of the Democratic Republic of Congo and other countries in the Region.

OC may wish to draw ACC's attention to recent developments in promoting inter-agency cooperation in support of reconstruction and development in the Great Lakes Region, in the overall context of its report to ACC on the follow-up to recent ACC conclusions.

h. International drug abuse control

OC may wish to inform ACC of developments in the follow-up to the conclusions it adopted on the subject at its first regular session for 1995 and, in that context, apprise ACC of the state of preparations and of aspects of inter-agency concern of the expected outcome of the Special Session of the General Assembly devoted to the fight against the illicit production, sale, demand, traffic and distribution of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and related activities, to be held in New York from 8 to 10 June 1998.

i. Observance of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the five-year review of the Vienna Declaration and Plan of Action

OC may wish to bring to the attention of ACC relevant developments, in the light of the conclusions reached by ACC on the above subject at its second regular session of 1997.

3. New or restored democracies

The General Assembly, in its resolution 52/18, invited the Secretary-General, Member States and the relevant specialized agencies and bodies of the United Nations system, to contribute actively to the follow-up process of the Third International Conference of New or Restored Democracies on Democracy and Development. The Secretary-General will draw on the inputs of relevant agencies and organizations of the United Nations system in reporting on the implementation of the resolution to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session.

A background note on the subject is under preparation, and will be made available to OC members in advance of the session.

4. Work of ACC consultative committees and other inter-agency bodies

(a) Work of ACC consultative committees

(i) Report of IACSD on its eleventh meeting

(ii) Report of the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality on its third session

(iii) Report of the twelfth session of the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions

(b) Reports of bodies reporting to OC

(i) Report of the Information Systems Coordination Committee on its fifth session

5. Other matters

OC will need to make recommendations on ACC's work programme and decide on its own programme for the second regular session in 1998.

Annex II

List of participants (part I, Geneva, 6, 7, 9 and 10 March 1998)

Chairman: P. **Civili** (United Nations)

Secretary: C. **Hackett** (United Nations)

United Nations entities and programmes

United Nations

Department of Economic and Social Affairs	S. Khan
Office for Inter-Agency Affairs	S. Fareed
Office of the Emergency Relief Coordinator	A. Donini

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development	J. Burley M. Plehn-Mejia
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United Nations Environment Programme	A. Z. Amin
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United Nations Children's Fund	A. Vaher
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United Nations Development Programme	N. Chandavakar
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United Nations Population Fund	M. Simonen
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Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	P. Kourula J. Menning R. Weil
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United Nations International Drug Control Programme	A. S. Noyan
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World Food Programme	V. Sequeira
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Specialized agencies, IAEA and WTO

International Labour Organization	M. A. Ducci
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Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	W. Mann
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United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	L. Schaudinn M. Landry
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International Civil Aviation Organization	G. Griffiths
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World Health Organization	Y. Kawaguchi Maaza Bekele
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World Bank	E. Pachter
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International Monetary Fund	J. B. Zulu
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Universal Postal Union	G. Kalicki
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International Telecommunication Union	K. Boussaïd V. Paratian
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World Meteorological Organization	S. Chacowry
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International Maritime Organization	D. D. C. Don Nanjira
World Intellectual Property Organization	F. Labastida
International Fund for Agricultural Development	J. Rogé
United Nations Industrial Development Organization	U. Abhyankar
	R. C. Sersale di Cerisano
	M. Touré
* * *	
International Atomic Energy Agency	M. Opelz
* * *	
World Trade Organization	A. Frank
	C. Trolliet
* * *	
Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions (Financial and Budgetary Questions)	P. Leslie
Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions	E. Hein

Annex III

List of participants (part II, Geneva, 30 and 31 March 1998)

Chairperson: P. **Civili** (United Nations)

Secretary: C. **Hackett** (United Nations)

United Nations entities and programmes

United Nations

Department of Economic and Social Affairs	S. Khan
Office for Inter-Agency Affairs and Coordination	S. Fareed
Department of Political Affairs	M. Möller
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development	M. Plehn-Majia
United Nations Environment Programme	A. Z. Amin
United Nations Children's Fund	A. Vaher
United Nations Development Programme	N. Chandavakar
United Nations Population Fund	M. Simonen
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	P. Kourula
United Nations International Drug Control Programme	A. S. Noyan
World Food Programme	V. Sequeira

Specialized agencies, IAEA and WTO

International Labour Organization	M. A. Ducci
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	W. Mann
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	L. Schaudinn
International Civil Aviation Organization	G. Griffiths
World Health Organization	Maaza Bekele
World Bank	A. Sfeir Younis
International Monetary Fund	J. B. Zulu
Universal Postal Union	G. Kalicki
International Telecommunication Union	V. Paratian
World Meteorological Organization	S. Chacowry

International Maritime Organization F. Labastida

World Intellectual Property Organization J. Rogé

United Nations Industrial Development
Organization M. Touré

* * *

Consultative Committee on Programme
and Operational Questions E. Hein

Annex IV

Improving the functioning of ACC machinery: elements of an operational plan

1. In the discussions on the review of the functioning of ACC, at the last few sessions of the Committee, a broad consensus has been emerging on the conditions that would permit a **qualitative strengthening of the effectiveness and impact of ACC's work**. These discussions as well as ACC's deliberations on the reform of the United Nations system also provide the context for setting some **common objectives** to guide the process in its next phase. The broad objectives to be pursued in this regard could be outlined as follows:

I. Objectives

To bring about **greater policy coherence and functional complementarity** at the level of the system, particularly in the context of United Nations system reform.

To strengthen the system's collective capacity for **forward planning and strategic thinking**, leading to the formulation of **complementary responses to global problems**, and the identification of the measures required to carry them out, including **strategies for resource mobilization**.

To enhance the system's **flexibility and rapid response capacity to major international developments** and crises, thereby increasing its relevance to current international priorities and concerns.

To these ends, to promote a more **continuous dialogue among ACC members, streamline the ACC machinery** and make it function more efficiently and effectively so as to provide coherent support to ACC and to the organizations of the system.

To **demonstrate the relevance and impact of the work of ACC**, and make it more visible to the secretariats of the United Nations system, Governments, other constituencies and the public at large.

II. A policy-oriented and forward-looking ACC agenda

2. A critical step in the next phase is to devise a more systematic approach to developing policy-oriented and forward-looking agendas for ACC in light of these broad objectives.

3. In the ACC deliberations on the strengthening and reform of the United Nations system, in particular, its joint statement on the subject, adopted at its second regular session of 1996, ACC has identified key policy issues of system-wide concern that it would need to address to bring about a greater convergence on the broad priorities to be followed by the system. The types of issues that have been identified include:

(a) **Issues arising from international developments and trends**, such as the linkages between peace, development, the environment, democratization and human rights and their implications for the work of the system as a whole, and the many interrelated facets of globalization as they relate to the work of the system;

(b) **Issues that affect the functioning of the system as a whole**, such as the erosion of confidence in the system, threats to multilateralism and resource flows for development,

or issues that cut across sectors and organizational boundaries, such as mainstreaming the gender dimension and population;

(c) **Policy and strategic aspects of administrative, financial and management issues** that are of particular concern to the future of the common system.

III. Progress and outstanding issues

4. The comprehensive reform of the functioning of ACC and its subsidiary machinery undertaken in 1993 has led, in recent years, to significant progress in:

(a) Streamlining the ACC agenda and shortening the length of its sessions; refocusing its work on the key policy issues and challenges facing the system, and, as a result, promoting coordinated responses to system-wide concerns and joint initiatives in such areas as peace-building, human rights, African development and follow-up to global conferences;

(b) Streamlining the subsidiary machinery, reducing the frequency and length of their meetings, introducing innovative and decentralized modalities for inter-agency collaboration, such as the task manager and lead agency arrangements (e.g., in follow-up to Agenda 21, global conferences) and making more effective use of electronic communications.

5. The assessment of the 1993 reform that ACC has carried out over the past two years has, however, clearly demonstrated that further measures need to be taken to address a number of outstanding issues and introduce further improvements in methods of work that should result in a qualitative strengthening of the effectiveness and impact of the work of ACC and its subsidiary bodies. In that context, the issues to be addressed include:

(a) A further effort to **strengthen information flows among ACC members** and promote a continuous dialogue among executive heads;

(b) **More substantive and timely preparations for ACC sessions** to enable the executive heads to focus on selected strategic issues;

(c) **Providing the substantive support capacity required by ACC** to pursue a policy-oriented, forward-looking and topical agenda, drawing more systematically upon the work of all the organizations of the system, so that its decisions are relevant to and have an impact on their programmes and operational concerns;

(d) Introducing **more flexible approaches to the functioning of ACC** that reflect the different types of issues addressed and the different outcomes to be sought, **differentiating between issues** that are relevant to and require the attention of different groups of organizations, while ACC is kept fully informed, and issues that require consideration by ACC as a whole. The development of an "issue management system" is particularly relevant in that regard;

(e) **Delegation of authority to OC and the ACC standing committees with accountability**, allowing ACC to devote attention to a few policy issues to which the system must respond in light of major international developments, and thereby strengthen its linkages with and impact on intergovernmental bodies;

(f) **Increasing efficiency and coherence in the functioning of the subsidiary bodies** of ACC by introducing new and innovative methods of work, cutting back on meeting requirements while making full use of networking arrangements, including through electronic communication technologies, and providing better integrated secretariat support to those bodies;

(g) **Strengthening the linkages between the ACC and the central intergovernmental bodies**, particularly the Economic and Social Council, and the governing bodies of the system.

IV. Elements of an operational plan

6. Many of the above issues have been addressed in the Secretary-General's letter on the subject of 28 January 1998. The implementation of the suggestions made by the Secretary-General with regard to a more systematic and continuous flow of information among ACC members, a more selective and policy-oriented agenda for ACC, organizing periodic consultations among ACC members through teleconferencing and the holding of a single annual ACC session will involve a major shift in the modalities for supporting the work of ACC and OC and for the preparation of ACC sessions and other periodic consultations. A similar shift will also be necessary in the methods of work and functioning of its subsidiary machinery.

7. To that end, the following measures will be implemented:

(a) Steps will be initiated by OC, with the support of the new Office for Inter-Agency Affairs and in consultation with the concerned organizations, **to develop an integrated capacity to monitor developments and trends in the international environment with a view to bringing to the attention of ACC topical and critical development issues that require coordinated or complementary responses by the system.** Existing capacities within the system (such as those relating to knowledge management and forecasting, food security, environment, climate, debt, finance and trade) will be drawn upon;

(b) **An ACC information network will be completed in phases** under the guidance of OC, using, wherever possible, existing modes and capabilities in the system, and drawing on the capacity of the Information Systems Coordination Committee. In the first phase, a network will be developed for exchange of information, geared to the senior management level of the various organizations, focusing on major initiatives and developments within individual organizations. In a second phase, the network will be expanded to cover information on programmes and activities in member organizations that are relevant to other parts of the system;

(c) **The Office of Inter-Agency Affairs will develop close contacts and linkages with inter-agency secretariats** in order to provide better and more coherent secretariat support to ACC and OC;

(d) Immediate steps are being initiated to implement these arrangements and it is envisaged that **these will become operational during the course of 1998.** The operational details of setting up the ACC information network, including its technical, personnel and financial aspects, and the secretariat networking arrangements of the Office for Inter-Agency Affairs, as well as issues relating to its terms of reference, work programme and resource requirements, will be pursued by OC following the ACC session;

(e) **The current year is proposed as a transitional one** in relation to the new proposed pattern of ACC meetings, involving periodic consultations making use of teleconferencing and the holding of one annual session in a single location. Thus, **ACC may wish to hold this year a short second session in October/November 1998 or, alternatively, in early December 1998, close to the commemoration by the General Assembly of the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on**

10 December 1998. This session could be preceded by an **experimental ACC consultation through teleconferencing**;

(f) The **Organizational Committee will henceforth use its post-ACC meeting to organize and manage the ACC agenda, within the framework of a flexible annual work programme**;

(g) The Office for Inter-Agency Affairs, in close consultation with members of the Organizational Committee, will propose to OC the **modalities for preparing ACC discussions at both the annual sessions and in periodic consultations**, by distilling relevant policy considerations from the work of the subsidiary machinery of ACC and making the best use of the knowledge and expertise available throughout the system, including through task manager and lead agency arrangements;

(h) The **ACC standing committees and their subsidiary bodies will be asked to align their working methods and meeting arrangements to those of ACC itself**, and to develop working arrangements that minimize the need for meetings and travel and use modern communication means and innovative methods for periodic consultations;

(i) The **standing committees will be delegated the authority to take decisions on behalf of ACC while submitting to ACC selected policy issues that require its attention**. Such an approach would also imply careful monitoring and accountability arrangements to be managed by the Organizational Committee;

(j) **The timing and sequencing of the meetings of the standing committees will be coordinated by OC on behalf of ACC**, taking into account the specific conditions and needs that influence the scheduling of meetings of the various Committees, particularly in the administrative and technical areas.

Annex V

ACC statement on international drug abuse control

1. We, the executive heads of the organizations and agencies of the United Nations system, are pleased to take this opportunity to bring to the attention of the General Assembly our shared commitment to reduce and prevent the illicit production, sale, demand, traffic and distribution of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, strengthen sustainable development and achieve better allocation of resources.

2. This commitment was affirmed during the first 1995 session of ACC, when we expressed strong support for concerted action and agreed on a number of steps to be taken. As a result, we have undertaken measures to develop not only coordination, but real collaboration, having consulted one another, both formally and informally, and having examined drug-related implications in our work, especially at the field level. In several seriously affected countries, thematic groups are now instrumental in joint programming, thereby interlinking our respective activities. Under the auspices of the ACC Subcommittee on Drug Control, our agencies have engaged in the elaboration of a system-wide action plan on drug abuse control based on subsectoral plans of action. This policy framework, built upon shared objectives and analyses of the problems, illustrates the extent to which we can each contribute to the fight against drug abuse and, by doing so, how our individual mandates are better served.

3. Given that the global and multifaceted nature of the drug problem necessitates a holistic and balanced approach, we firmly believe that the United Nations system is well placed to offer a wide range of expertise, which can be drawn upon to create synergies among our agencies. We are determined to strengthen our effectiveness in overcoming the impediments to sustainable social and economic development that drug abuse entails and reaffirm our commitment to collaborate closely with the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, which has been entrusted with the responsibility to coordinate all United Nations drug control activities.

4. Within the context of reform of the United Nations and the strengthening of the resident coordinator system, we stress the importance of including drug-related issues in the planning of assistance programmes in the context of country strategy notes and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework. The ongoing reform process offers an opportunity to reassess and intensify our contribution to drug control, while at the same time streamlining the efficiency of the United Nations system.

5. Many of the cross-cutting issues that the United Nations system addresses, some of which have been the subject of major international conferences in the 1990s, have drug control implications. In this connection, we recognize the necessity of incorporating the gender perspective in all our assistance programmes. We are resolved to take the drug control dimension into consideration in planning and executing our own activities. Specifically:

(a) We are committed to the overriding development goal of eliminating poverty worldwide, and recognize the relevance of alternative development programmes in achieving this goal in illicit cultivation zones. We shall, therefore, encourage the inclusion, when appropriate, of alternative development measures in United Nations system programmes coordinated by the resident coordinator to promote sustainable development, and look forward to contributing to the global strategy for the elimination of illicit crops; and mobilize national and international resources to support alternative development measures essential to their effectiveness.

(b) We strongly support the emphasis given to drug demand reduction, including prevention, treatment and rehabilitation, welcome the Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction, and commit ourselves to working together to prevent related problems in schools, the family, the workplace and the community as a whole, including through education and training.

(c) The human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) epidemic has several implications for and is an additional burden to the economic and social development of countries. The United Nations system as a whole is committed to coordinating and accelerating programming to contain the epidemic, reduce its impact and address HIV/AIDS issues related to drug abuse since it is now recognized that intravenous drug use plays a critical role in the unfolding of HIV epidemics in various regions.

(d) Addressing the needs of children and youth, especially those in need of special protection measures, is a priority. Committed to the terms of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, we are encouraged by the joint efforts already under way to provide shelter, health care, education and economic opportunities to this important segment of society, and recognize that young people constitute a key resource in efforts to prevent drug abuse. Programmes to reduce demand for drugs should be part of a comprehensive strategy to reduce demand for all substances of abuse. We acknowledge and support the Charter of Young People for a Twenty-first Century Free of Drugs launched in Paris in February 1998.

(e) The renewed effort of the United Nations system to interface with civil society is an important component of the current reform of the United Nations. The work of voluntary organizations and other civil society groups to prevent drug abuse through education at the community level calls for our wholehearted support. The role of the media and Internet are indispensable in this regard.

(f) Supply reduction activities are also steps towards protection of the environment since the illicit cultivation and production of drugs can have alarmingly detrimental environmental effects, such as tropical forest clearance and river pollution. The political will, commitment and collaboration of various agencies is essential in order to maximize the impact of their action in this field as well.

(g) There are strong links between drug control and the fight against organized transnational crime, as well as between drug trafficking and the trafficking in human beings. We therefore welcome the Secretary-General's decision to create the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention. We also recognize the crucial role of anti-money-laundering policies and legislation for the success of the fight against drug trafficking.

(h) Similarly, the issue of corruption is also linked to drug control. We are all committed to the task of promoting good governance and creating and enhancing professionalism, integrity and ethical values in public service as a means of fighting corruption. We therefore welcome drug control efforts that will help to accomplish this.

(i) In the context of peace-building in conflict and post-conflict situations, we agree to take the drug dimension fully into account in the strategic planning of rehabilitation programmes so that lasting peace, reconstruction and development can be achieved.

6. In reaffirming our commitment as members of ACC, we welcome this occasion as an opportunity for Member States to renew their own commitment to the global fight against illicit drugs. We also appeal to Member States, both individually and collectively, to support our efforts with a political will and resources commensurate to the daunting challenge ahead.