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PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 24th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,  
on Monday, 13 July 1998, at 10 a.m.

President:

Mr. OLHAYE  
(Vice-President)

(Djibouti)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
COOPERATION (continued)

- (b) FOLLOW-UP TO POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
(E/1997/110; E/1998/48 and Corr.1, and Add.1)

Mr. CIVILI (Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (E/1998/48 and Add.1), said that the forthcoming review could constitute a turning point in the development process. The trends shaping the new international environment were emerging with increasing clarity and the United Nations, through the Agenda for Development and the conferences held over the past few years, had been able to advance international understanding of the strengths of the system and the international consensus on the responses that were required. The Council's efforts to promote integrated follow-up to those conferences were leading to the definition of cross-cutting priorities to guide the development process and development cooperation.

At the level of the United Nations system, reform processes were being accelerated and were converging, making possible concerted responses to needs that no single organization could meet on its own. All those processes were highlighting the importance of a conducive policy environment, national ownership, institution-building and human resources development as the keys to impact and sustainability.

With regard to resources, it seemed that a more balanced view was emerging on the continuing crucial value of official development assistance (ODA) and on creating conditions in which private flows could grow and be more evenly distributed. At the same time, there were certain trends in the distribution of resources, for example the growing proportion of non-core versus core resources, which ought to be taken into account in policy-making in the context of the triennial comprehensive policy review, and there was a need to include other types and sources of funding within the United Nations system.

Mr. SOEPRAPTO (Observer for Indonesia), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that operational activities for development were of critical importance in enabling the developing countries to take the lead role in advancing and managing their own development processes. At a time when many developing countries had become marginalized or had fallen victim to the risks of globalization and liberalization, operational activities had become more urgent than ever for the promotion of development and eradication of poverty. The Group of 77 and China stressed that operational activities should be conducted for the benefit of developing countries, at their request and in accordance with their own policy priorities for development. The sense of national ownership in such changes and reforms should be increased, and all operational activities should be country-driven rather than donor-driven.

In view of the tragic shortfall of resources, it was necessary to build on the proposals of the executive boards of the United Nations funds and programmes for arresting and reversing the decline in core resources. Otherwise, there would be no option but to drastically reduce the goals and objectives of the United Nations system's development programmes. It was important for the discussions in the funds and programmes to reach a successful conclusion if Member States were to be in a position to provide the necessary guidance for the full implementation of General Assembly resolution 50/120.

The United Nations system had an important advantage in operational activities which should be more fully utilized. At the global level, it was essential to ensure greater coordination and division of labour between the General Assembly, the Council and the funds and programmes. The Council should exercise its role in providing guidance to the various funds and programmes and within operational activities in general. At the regional level, there was a growing need to strengthen coordination in the work of the United Nations system for the benefit of the member countries. In that context, it was important for the regional commissions to be more closely linked with the work of other agencies in the development system. The Secretary-General should give ample focus to the regional dimension of operational activities so as to enable Member States to provide the necessary guidance in that regard.

In an era of globalization and retreating multilateralism, it was more urgent than ever to mobilize economic cooperation among developing countries/technical cooperation among developing countries (ECDC/TCDC). It was

therefore vital to emphasize ECDC/TCDC in the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's final report on the triennial comprehensive policy review.

Mr. SUCHARIPA (Observer for Austria), speaking on behalf of the European Union and the associated countries of Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia, said that there had been many positive changes since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 50/120, but there were some areas where further improvement was necessary. The priority should be to maximize the impact and effectiveness of United Nations operational activities at the country level in support of the efforts of the developing countries to achieve sustainable development.

The European Union believed that effective coordination at the field level was of crucial importance. The Secretary-General's reform measures constituted a major step forward in strengthening the resident coordinator system; however, much still remained to be done, for example in enlisting the full participation of all United Nations development agencies and in ensuring ownership of the resident coordinator system by all the relevant actors. Further improvements were needed in the selection of resident coordinators; the selection process should be transparent and should take into account the need to improve gender balance. Greater emphasis also needed to be placed on the training of resident coordinators. Participating agencies should ensure that their staff were fully trained and briefed on the functioning of the resident coordinator system and their responsibilities within it.

The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) marked a significant step forward in programme coordination and harmonization at the field level and should lead to the development of common thematic priorities for the participating agencies. It was already clear that, for maximum effectiveness, the specialized agencies should participate fully in the UNDAF process; the Secretary-General should continue his efforts through the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) to ensure their full involvement. It was also important for the Bretton Woods institutions to be involved to the maximum extent possible and to ensure coherence between UNDAF and the World Bank's country assessment strategy. Dialogue on UNDAF should be maintained with other relevant actors, such as bilateral donors and civil society organizations, and the relationship between the country strategy note and UNDAF needed to be

clarified. The European Union believed that UNDAF should become the sole programming framework for United Nations operational activities and that programme country Governments should have ownership of the UNDAF process.

There were other programme-related issues where further work was required, including the simplification of planning and administrative procedures, harmonization of procedures, including the delegation of authority to the field level, and emphasis on national capacity-building to secure improvements in the national execution modality, ensure the sustainability of programmes and enhance national ownership of them.

Follow-up to major United Nations conferences must be pursued effectively in all operational activities. Further work was needed to integrate fully the strategy and major targets emanating from a global conference into the work of the United Nations agencies and UNDAF. A common set of core indicators must be developed to measure progress towards meeting international development targets; and the effective integration of cross-cutting issues must be ensured.

The European Union believed that there was still room for improvement in the way the United Nations monitored and measured the impact of its operational activities at the field level. Timely evaluations with clear criteria should be built into all projects, and lessons learned should be fed back into the system, within organizations and between them. External evaluations were also useful at times. The lack of progress in carrying out joint evaluations was disappointing.

The European Union welcomed the establishment of "United Nations houses" but felt that greater efforts were needed to establish common United Nations administrative services at the field level, and where appropriate at headquarters level, on a case-by-case basis. It welcomed the ongoing work of the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ) in preparing guidelines on administrative management for the resident coordinator system.

The importance of a coordinated approach by the whole United Nations system and the broader international community in the area of post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation could not be over-emphasized. The ongoing work in ACC to draw up country-specific strategic frameworks was therefore welcomed.

The European Union reaffirmed the need for the greatest possible level of complementarity between United Nations operational activities and the field-level activities of the Bretton Woods institutions. The quest for complementarity should focus on better cooperation on policies, programmes and activities at headquarters and in the field, and on eliminating duplication of work. UNDAF was very important in achieving that goal.

As the provider of a large share of the resources for United Nations operational activities, the European Union recognized the crucial importance of sound and predictable funding for United Nations programmes and activities, including more effective and efficient use of the funds available. In dealing with the issue of resources in the triennial policy review, it was important to take into account other relevant ongoing processes, in particular the consideration in the executive boards of the funds and programmes of their funding arrangements as part of the follow-up to General Assembly resolution 50/227.

Mr. Dae-Won SUH (Republic of Korea), drawing attention to paragraph 20 of the report of the Secretary-General in document E/1998/48, which clearly pointed to a lack of adequate institutional memory at the country level and inadequate documentation of initiatives and lessons learned, said it was clear that the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) should develop a standard methodology for systematic data collection.

The regional dimension of operational activities was of great importance, particularly in areas which lacked a distinct cooperation framework. The United Nations system had a comparative advantage in tackling difficult transboundary issues in politically sensitive areas, and efforts should be made to increase the non-traditional resources allocated for that purpose. The development agencies should also endeavour to ensure that the principles of universality, impartiality and neutrality were embodied in their operational activities.

His Government, which had recently financed a study of the future role of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) country office in the Republic of Korea, considered that the process of strengthening the resident coordinator system should include an in-depth study on transition plans. While his delegation supported the ongoing reform process, field-level coordination must lead to increased effectiveness of operational activities. The combination of enhanced coordination and delegation of authority seemed, in many cases, to have

placed an excessive burden on resident coordinators. It was therefore essential that UNDG should monitor that workload and that functional and operational duplication should be eliminated.

It was true that different types of emergency required different solutions and that development agencies should be present in the field at the earliest stages of emergency operations in order to facilitate the transition from relief to development. However, the differing rules of the resident coordinator and the humanitarian coordinator should not hinder inter-agency coordination or send mixed messages to stakeholders, and there was a need for better cooperation between the two coordinators at the operational level.

It was disturbing that core resources were decreasing at a time when the need for development was becoming increasingly acute. It was important to increase the involvement of the private sector and the Bretton Woods institutions and to strengthen the partnership between the United Nations agencies and recipient and donor countries.

Mr. ROHNER (Observer for Switzerland) said that the triennial comprehensive policy review was particularly important in light of recent events, including the rapid globalization of markets, the Asian financial crisis, the internal conflicts in numerous countries, dwindling development assistance and the ongoing United Nations reform. Decreasing levels of ODA would require the United Nations development agencies to further improve their performance and to seek new, additional financing from public and private sources as well as traditional donor countries.

He welcomed the report's focus on the growing interrelatedness of development activities, emergency assistance, rehabilitation and post-conflict peace building. It was surprising that greater attention had not been paid to United Nations activities at the regional, interregional and global levels since the Organization had a comparative advantage over other funding sources in those areas. Furthermore, although the chapters devoted to coordination and programming were excellent, the chapter on resources and funding was somewhat disappointing.

He welcomed the general consensus that UNDP should continue as the manager and founder of the resident coordinator system; any change in that situation would oblige his Government to decrease its contributions to that Programme.

The role of UNDP as coordinator, facilitator and catalyst benefited not only the United Nations system, but the entire donor community.

It was equally important to improve coordination between the programmes of the various United Nations bodies. He hoped that the lessons learned from the national technical cooperation and assessment programme (NATCAP) and the country strategy note would permit UNDAF to focus system activities on follow-up to the major international conferences. His Government had made a special contribution to the implementation of the UNDAF pilot phase project and trusted that the ongoing evaluation of that experiment would make possible the development of simple, clear guidelines applicable to a variety of situations.

The relevant agencies should study the evaluation of the impact of operational activities on capacity-building in programme countries and, if possible, hold a joint discussion of the lessons learned. He suggested that the results of that evaluation should be communicated to the development assistance community.

Mr. PEDROSO (Cuba) said it was a matter of great concern that, despite fundamental changes in the functioning of the funds and programmes and, in particular, of operational activities at the field level, there had been a significant decrease in levels of funding since 1995. His delegation was convinced that unless those resources were substantially increased on a predictable, continuous and assured basis and in accordance with the growing needs of recipient countries, it would be impossible to achieve greater effectiveness of development activities. If not reversed, current trends would eventually lead to a total breakdown, not only of country programmes but of the United Nations development system as a whole.

While it was important to implement the Secretary-General's reform proposals as quickly as possible, the opinions of some Member States regarding the steps to be taken and the role of the Governments of programme countries had not been taken into account. He hoped that the next triennial comprehensive policy review would include an in-depth study of the responsibilities of UNDG with respect to, inter alia, counterpart agreements at the field level, UNDAF and the functioning of the resident coordinator system.

Just as the resident coordinator system could not replace national coordination instruments, UNDAF was no substitute for national strategies and priorities as a framework for operational activities for development within the



framework of the United Nations system or that of other multilateral agencies. The resident coordinator system should serve as a link between United Nations activities and national development objectives rather than merely providing implementation and follow-up to the recommendations made at international conferences.

While the documentation concerning the oversight role of the Council (E/1998/CRP.1) and the consolidated list of issues relating to the coordination of operational activities (E/1998/CRP.3) were extremely interesting, he suggested that, in view of the nature of the recommendations they contained, their consideration should be left to the General Assembly when it took up the triennial comprehensive policy review.

Mr. BAHAMONDES (Canada) said that United Nations reform could not be considered a success unless it led to more focused programming and more expeditious delivery at the operational level, leading to a measurable improvement in the quality of life in developing countries. At the country level, the United Nations system must be able to demonstrate progress towards the goals established at major international conferences by developing strengthened monitoring, evaluation and performance measurement systems, improved coordination and joint evaluations. He encouraged the funds and programmes to pursue their commitment to a results-based reporting system.

He welcomed the progress made by UNDG and UNDAF and the measures taken to strengthen the resident coordinator system by, inter alia, broadening its recruitment base. His delegation supported the introduction of programmes to teach the resident coordinators team-building, leadership and inter-personal skills and the development of improved selection criteria and skill profiles for recruitment to those posts.

With respect to UNDAF, it was important to ensure the full participation of the specialized agencies; strengthen cooperation between the funds and programmes, the Bretton Woods institutions and the regional development banks, bearing in mind the neutrality of United Nations operations; and harmonize the country programming processes of the funds and programmes.

It was important to retain a programme approach whenever possible by strengthening local capacities and facilitating national ownership, long-term sustainability and effective country-level follow-up to United Nations conferences. Of particular interest was the relationship between emergency,

peace-building and development activities. There should be a clearer definition of the roles of the various United Nations agencies in the area of peace-building and a better transition from humanitarian relief to development assistance, since the current gap between those stages complicated programming and exacerbated problems at the country level.

There was a need to establish an assured, predictable financial base for the various funds and programmes, and he hoped that discussion of that matter during the upcoming sessions of the Executive Boards would lead to consensus on a package that would allow that goal to be achieved.

Mr. ISSAKOV (Russian Federation) said that his delegation commended the efforts of operational funds and programmes to implement General Assembly resolution 50/120 and noted the significant progress made in building up the national potential of programme countries, strengthening inter-agency coordination at the headquarters level and in the field, and linking programme activities more closely with national priorities for socio-economic development. It shared the view that the strengthening of national capacity was of great importance for enhancing the effectiveness of assistance and attached particular significance to the training of national personnel, the expansion of national execution, the strengthening of democracy and management, and the involvement of civil society in the development process.

There was clearly room for the further strengthening of inter-agency coordination; the operational funds and programmes should strive to increase coordination, particularly through active participation in the UNDAF process. Coordination in the field should be enhanced by strengthening the system of resident coordinators. It was important to establish a single inter-agency team with collective responsibility for the formulation and implementation of country programmes and to give the resident coordinator greater powers, including closer relations with the host country and the Bretton Woods institutions.

His delegation welcomed the increase in the number of resident coordinators from other organizations of the United Nations system and believed that the practice of linking the duties of the resident coordinator and those of the UNDP resident representative was fully justified. UNDP had the broadest mandate in the area of development and could effectively coordinate and support the efforts of the United Nations system in the field. That practice had proved successful in Central and Eastern Europe.

In general, the operational programmes and funds had made significant progress in increasing the effectiveness of their activity in recipient countries, and to a considerable extent that was due to the improvement of monitoring and evaluation and to accountability on the basis of a system of objective criteria. It was now necessary to concentrate on a more active use of the results of monitoring and appraisal to adjust policy and improve programme activity at the local level. One way of achieving that goal was to improve the access of country offices to information on the results of evaluations and establish accountability for the fulfilment of recommendations.

Mr. YUAN Shaofu (China) said that the operational activities of the United Nations system for development cooperation had a unique role to play because of their multilateral, universal, neutral and grant-based nature. The "peace dividend" promised to developing countries at the end of the cold war had not materialized, and a lack of core resources had slowed or prevented the implementation of numerous assistance programmes. Without a strong sense of responsibility and political will, no solution would be found. His Government considered that core resources should continue to be provided through the contributions of developed countries, particularly those currently in arrears. He hoped that General Assembly resolution 50/120 and other relevant resolutions would be implemented and that a predictable, continuous and assured increase in core resources for development would soon be achieved.

His delegation looked forward to the evaluation report on the UNDAF pilot projects and favoured expansion of that programme. It was important for UNDAF to be country-driven and to reflect the development priorities and strategies of programme countries.

He welcomed the United Nations development system's efforts to implement the Secretary-General's reform proposals and to strengthen coordination at the headquarters, regional and country levels. His delegation considered that the resident coordinator should also be the country representative of a fund or programme and that the processes of decentralization, procedural simplification and expansion of national execution should be further pursued. The issue of whether non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society organizations should participate in operational activities should be decided by the Governments of recipient countries. While private capital should be allowed to play a complementary role, the nature of United Nations operational activities

must remain unchanged. Lastly, those activities should not be subject to political considerations.

Mr. SFEIR-YOUNIS (World Bank) said it had been suggested at an earlier meeting that the World Bank was a newcomer to poverty alleviation and that, as a lending institution, it had only a limited role to play in that regard. In fact, however, the Bank had always provided assistance with poverty reduction. In the 1940s and 1950s, it had helped to develop key infrastructures that had greatly benefited the poor; in the 1960s and 1970s, it had promoted agricultural and rural development and the improvement of human settlements in urban areas; and, during the past two decades, it had strengthened its commitments through improved macroeconomic management and programmes in the areas of the environment, socially sustainable development, the design and implementation of comprehensive social policies and the promotion of participation by civil society at all levels of decision-making.

According to paragraph 115 of the Secretary-General's report on the triennial comprehensive policy review (E/1998/48), the Bank's decentralization process was viewed favourably. While the Bank welcomed proposals for closer interaction with the United Nations, such collaboration had to be a two-way process. Coordination of assistance was the prerogative of Governments since they were responsible for defining institutional mandates and approving programmes of work.

It was clear that the procedures and approach associated with the UNDAF process must be tailored to individual country situations. The Bank had participated actively in the pilot projects in Viet Nam and Mali and was awaiting the evaluation of those experiments. However, whereas the Bank's country assistance strategy was the product of discussion with Governments and consultation with civil society, UNDAF was an internal document and, as such, was not subject to general consensus or distribution.

Mr. TANASESCU (Romania) said that the Secretary-General's reform programme would help to promote a new culture of multilateral assistance, based on better coordination at the country level. In that regard, at the next substantive session the operational activities segment should consider consolidated reports on the United Nations Development Group, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, the resident coordinator system and the United Nations House, in addition to reports from heads of funds and programmes.

In view of the declining resources available for United Nations funds and programmes, it was important for the triennial policy review to be based on the principles which had guided development activities from their inception: universality, neutrality, multilateralism and voluntary contributions. Equitable geographical representation should apply to all funds and programmes, and the predictability of core resources should become another agreed principle guiding operational activities for development. Special attention should be given to evaluation.

Romania had been included in 1997 in the pilot phase of UNDAF, which had responded successfully to its assistance needs in a period characterized by deep political, economic and social transformation. In the long run, UNDAF would strengthen the resident coordinator system, would require better coordination at the headquarters level, and would increase the role of UNDG. Further efforts should be made to determine to what extent other specialized agencies and institutions of the system were prepared to take part in UNDAF.

Mr. WIJAYADASA (Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)) said that UNAIDS had been intended as one of the first manifestations of the United Nations resident coordinator system in action. Many resident coordinators had established theme groups on HIV/AIDS and were including summaries of UNAIDS activities in their annual reports to the Secretary-General. The lessons learned by UNAIDS since its establishment in 1996 in pioneering a country-level approach were directly relevant to the concept of coordination in the operational activities area.

UNAIDS operated at the country level through United Nations theme groups on HIV/AIDS, which comprised country representatives of all co-sponsors and other members of the United Nations system. Those groups, currently operating in 126 countries, provided a structure enabling various agencies to assist Governments in planning national responses to HIV/AIDS; coordinate agency policies in the field of HIV/AIDS; encourage members to increase support, funding and activity in that field; provide technical support to partners in the national response to HIV/AIDS; expand partnerships between groups contributing to the national response to HIV/AIDS; and provide a forum for information exchange. The Groups had effectively increased coordination between national Governments and United Nations agencies.

Mr. CHANDAVARKAR (United Nations Development Programme) said that UNDP had adopted a body of legislation designed to strengthen the country-level development presence of the United Nations and reaffirm the principles guiding UNDP operational activities. It had undertaken a series of reforms to ensure maximum impact on its country-level activities. For example, it had collaborated with UNDG and the World Bank to formulate the first ACC statement of commitment for action to eradicate poverty and had introduced such new programming tools as successor programming arrangements and country cooperation frameworks.

UNDP had worked vigorously with its partners to implement UNDAF at the country level and was planning to ensure greater participation of programme countries in UNDAF design. The United Nations system agencies had still to agree on a common programme definition and implementation strategy and to adopt an operational tool allowing joint programming at the country level.

The new UNDP guidelines on national execution issued in April 1998 had been based on in-depth consultations with United Nations system partners. UNDP had worked with programme countries and other partners to strengthen the evaluation function and use the results to improve its performance at all levels. With regard to logistics, it was important that co-located agencies should also share access to information and knowledge networks so that the system could function as a whole at the country level. The resident coordinator system enabled programme countries to increase coherence among United Nations operational activities, and UNDP was committed to strengthening that system. It was also working to ensure growing and predictable core resources for development operations.

Mr. NISHIGAHIRO (Japan) said that the current triennial comprehensive policy review was especially important because it took place in the middle of the process of implementing the Secretary-General's reform proposals. His delegation fully supported the reforms in progress, especially the establishment of UNDG, the promotion of UNDAF, and the strengthening of the partnership with the Bretton Woods institutions.

While still at an initial stage, the UNDAF process was extremely important for promoting the organic linkage of the various development entities in the United Nations system and thus required careful monitoring and refinement. The frameworks should also be used by other agencies, and the list of participating

countries and agencies should be expanded to include the Bretton Woods institutions. Strengthening of the resident coordinator system and training programme would greatly contribute toward the success of the UNDAF process. In that regard, he requested further details on training programmes offered at the United Nations Staff College.

In conclusion, he stressed the importance of coordination at every stage of the development process. In order to avoid burdening recipient countries, there was a need to standardize programme cycles and simplify procedures, as well as for building the capacities of individuals and institutions in the recipient countries. Common monitoring indicators and the enhancement of South-South cooperation were also essential components of the coordination effort.

Mr. BAHLOULI (United Nations Industrial Development Organization) said that in October 1997, as part of a decentralization process, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) had signed new arrangements with UNDP to strengthen coordination at the country level. Decentralization was aimed at making UNIDO more responsive to the needs of its member States, which had called for further steps to decentralize and strengthen field representation. UNIDO was also seeking to improve coordination between its own field representation and that of other United Nations bodies and to integrate its offices in a unified United Nations representation wherever feasible.

In January 1998 a meeting of UNIDO country directors had been convened to discuss those issues. The meeting had served as a forum for dialogue with United Nations agencies and bilateral development institutions on the establishment of better cooperation and coordination mechanisms at the field level. It had been decided that UNIDO would fully interact with the United Nations system through joint programmes, full participation in the UNDAF process and the development of common tools to strengthen operational activities at the country level.

The proposals approved under the Secretary-General's reform programme had become part of the operational activities of UNIDO and were being implemented by all its field offices. UNIDO had recently entered into a new partnership alliance with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) on investment promotion and technology transfer and was negotiating similar agreements with other United Nations system organizations.

Ms. KING (United States of America) said that the report drew attention to the progress made in operational activities since the last triennial policy review in 1995 and to the growing possibility of a coordinated approach to development activities. However, there was a need to identify ways to improve operational activities over the coming three years; to continue implementing and fine-tuning the Secretary-General's reforms, especially at the country level; and to identify areas needing follow-up.

UNDG had made significant strides in improving coordination of field-level operational activities, but further strengthening of the resident coordinator system remained a priority. While commending the Group's efforts to create a transparent, objective selection process for resident coordinators and to promote the selection of qualified candidates from the widest possible pool of United Nations agencies, the funds and programmes should consider further changes to reward and encourage service in that post. Further efforts were also needed to improve training of resident coordinators so as to ensure that the best team-building practices were followed and that all mandates were carried out, even when an agency was not represented at the country level. The duties of the resident coordinator should be performed with the greatest possible impartiality and neutrality while maintaining the link between that post and the UNDP resident representative, thus ensuring a substantive role for the resident coordinator in the programming process.

The funds and programmes were to be commended for their work on the 18 pilot UNDAFs, but the formal frameworks should be developed on the basis of country strategy notes, where available, or in close consultation with Governments lacking such notes, so as to ensure consistency with national priorities. Field coordination and the UNDAF process should continue to serve as a means of achieving coordinated conference follow-up and building national follow-up capacity. The Secretary-General should also consider further steps to integrate the specialized agencies into the UNDAF process, addressing in particular problems arising from differences in field-level programme and expenditure capabilities. Deeper field-level collaboration with the Bretton Woods institutions also was to be strongly encouraged.

While progress towards common premises should be the goal, a flexible approach that weighed costs and benefits was required. Where common premises were not currently an option, new technology should be used to facilitate



cooperation within the United Nations family in the field. The role of operational activities for development in complex emergencies and post-crisis situations should be an important priority of the triennial policy review, and ACC should be encouraged to develop guidelines for United Nations activities in countries in special circumstances. She supported the efforts of the funds and programmes to ensure a smooth transition from relief to development, especially in countries recovering from armed conflict, and urged the consideration of ways to incorporate development components in the response to humanitarian emergencies, in the context of cooperation with civil society and private sector entities. In conclusion, she stressed her Government's commitment to finding a satisfactory solution for the problem of resource mobilization.

Ms. ROUCHET (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)) said that the role of the specialized agencies in the UNDAF process needed further discussion, especially as those agencies had not participated in the formulation of the UNDAF guidelines or benchmarks. There was a clear need to streamline and harmonize the programming cycles of all the United Nations system entities, with a single, unified programming framework as the ultimate goal.

UNDP should play a central role in the strengthening of the resident coordinator system. The resident coordinators, in turn, must be fully familiar with the potential contributions of all participants in the development system. In undertaking its reform process, UNDP itself should cultivate greater sensitivity to the needs of the specialized agencies and other participants not based in New York. In conclusion, she stressed the need for a flexible and bilateral approach towards common premises and services.

Mr. ABDELLATIF (Observer for Egypt) said that the report before the Council in document E/1998/48 and Add.1 provided a good basis for its last triennial policy review of the century. Given the importance of evaluation, it was astonishing that so much time had elapsed without an impact evaluation taking place, and the results from the six countries evaluated showed the importance of extending the exercise to other countries.

The report failed to indicate clearly the current role of UNDG and how it was expected to evolve. Although the results of the 18 pilot projects were not yet available, his delegation shared the Secretary-General's concern to ensure that UNDAF did not undermine the authority and independence of individual

fund-raising by programmes. It would also be important for the UNDAF document to be prepared with the approval of Governments and other partners.

The report placed too much emphasis on the resident coordinator system, while paying too little attention to such issues as resources and national execution. The most important question continued to be the securing of stable and predictable resources, without which operational activities would be imperilled.

Mr. LITTAWA (World Health Organization) said that the World Health Organization (WHO) welcomed the first evaluation of the impact of United Nations system support for capacity-building. The three case studies in basic health and education were of particular relevance, since they indicated efforts to support capacity-building at the country level and attempted to assess the impact and sustainability of United Nations operational activities.

At the policy level, United Nations system organizations needed to work together to have an impact at the country level, while in operational activities equal partnerships had to be developed between international organizations, recipient Governments and civil society. In terms of management, there must be clearer definitions of objectives in the context of capacity-building and of the roles of United Nations agencies in that regard. There was also a need for adequate data and evaluations of United Nations activities.

Mr. CIVILI (Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs) said that the comments made by delegations had been noted and would be reflected in a revised document to be submitted to the General Assembly. The matter of participation by specialized agencies would shortly be the subject of discussion in CCPOQ. It should be noted that while impact evaluation was new, evaluation of operational activities was not.

Mr. HAEMMERLIE (Chief, Development Cooperation Policy Branch, Department of Economic and Social Affairs) said that training for resident coordinators operated at two levels: the United Nations system and individual training. At the system level, workshops were held for country teams in an effort to improve collaboration, an exercise which had resulted in many innovations, despite the cost involved. Individual training, for both new and more experienced resident coordinators, was coordinated by UNDP.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.