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PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 32nd MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 17 July 1998, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. SOMAVIA (Chile)
later: Mr. SYCHOU (Belarus)
(Vice-President)
later: Mr. FULCI (Italy)
(Vice-President)

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

TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY OF MR. MAHBUB UL-HAQ

The PRESIDENT paid tribute to the memory of Mr. Mahbub ul-Haq, a leading thinker on development issues and the creator of the United Nations Human Development Report.

At the invitation of the President, the members of the Council observed a minute of silence.

Mr. Sychou (Belarus), Vice-President, took the Chair.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS (continued)
(E/1998/82/Add.2)

The PRESIDENT drew the Council's attention to document E/1998/82/Add.2, which contained requests from non-governmental organizations for hearings in addition to those recommended by the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations at its meeting on 26 June 1998. The Bureau could confirm that all those organizations were in consultative status with the Council. He took it that the Council agreed to hear statements by the non-governmental organizations listed in the document.

It was so decided.

SPECIAL ECONOMIC, HUMANITARIAN AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE (E/1998/L.15)
(continued)

The PRESIDENT invited the Council to turn to document E/1998/L.15, containing the draft agreed conclusions on the humanitarian affairs segment, which he had submitted to the Council in his capacity as Vice-President, on the basis of informal consultations.

Ms. LEU AGOSTI (Observer for Switzerland), Facilitator, said that the negotiation of the draft agreed conclusions had taken place in a serene and sincere atmosphere and thanked all the participants for their input and for the spirit of partnership they had displayed during those negotiations.

The PRESIDENT said he took it that the Council wished to adopt the draft agreed conclusions.

The draft agreed conclusions, as contained in document E/1998/L.15, were

adopted.

Mr. Fulci (Italy), Vice-President, took the Chair.

COORDINATION OF THE POLICIES AND ACTIVITIES OF THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND OTHER BODIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM RELATED TO THE FOLLOWING THEME: COORDINATED FOLLOW-UP TO AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE VIENNA DECLARATION AND PROGRAMME OF ACTION (E/1998/60)

The PRESIDENT invited the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to introduce the report of the Secretary-General contained in document E/1998/60.

Ms. ROBINSON (United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights) said that the five-year review of the implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action would provide the international community with a means of recognizing achievements and determining where efforts should be reinforced. The Council was the most competent forum for evaluating the past and designing the future of system-wide cooperation in the economic and social sectors, which were of basic importance to human rights. A comprehensive approach to the implementation of the recommendations of the World Conference on Human Rights was essential, incorporating activities both explicitly and implicitly linked to human rights, encouraging stronger input from all relevant parts of the United Nations system and promoting the implementation of the recommendations of other major United Nations conferences. Consistency and complementarity in the approach to human rights and related matters, close intra-system cooperation and better coordination were all of fundamental importance to achieving the goals of the conferences and utilizing the full potential of the United Nations.

The Secretary General's report identified ways of achieving a system-wide approach to human rights; examples of valuable experience in implementing the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action; areas of responsibility requiring efforts to fully implement that Declaration within the United Nations system; and plans for improving inter-agency cooperation and coordination in strengthening implementation.

Important efforts had already been made by various parts of the United Nations family to include human rights in specific programmes, and human rights had become part of coordination efforts between agencies and within the United Nations system, where the Council's continuing support was particularly important.

While encouraged by the growing involvement of her Office in country and

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regional projects around the world, she stressed the continuing importance of swift and professional responses to the existing needs. The United Nations should harness all actors by improving coordination at headquarters and field levels, so as to put scarce resources to efficient use and provide effective assistance. The system-wide approach to human rights committed to by Governments at Vienna had yet to be fully developed, and the promotion and protection of economic, social and cultural rights and the right to development continued to lack the comprehensive implementation projects necessary for success. A further serious shortcoming was the inadequacy of the resources dedicated to United Nations human rights activities, despite calls by the Conference for substantial increases in those resources.

The PRESIDENT invited the Council to begin its discussion of the item.

Ms. ROBINSON (United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights) said that the World Conference on Human Rights had produced a unique document containing a set of basic principles and a programme of action which fundamentally and comprehensively addressed the conditions necessary for a life in dignity. The Conference had been able to move beyond differences, generate the famous "Spirit of Vienna" and envisage a truly global perspective on human rights.

Pursuant to the recommendations of the Conference, the United Nations should create the capacity for responding swiftly to the needs of Governments and societies with a view to promoting a human rights culture, preventing human rights violations, protecting individuals against such violations, ensuring assistance to victims of violations, and ensuring respect for human dignity. It should establish intra-system capacities through cooperation, coordination and streamlining of efforts, and the increase of resources.

It was not easy to measure the progress achieved since the Conference in creating United Nations capacity to offer assistance. While the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action had had a positive impact on the protection and promotion of human rights worldwide, the United Nations system could not yet effectively prevent human rights violations or respond to the needs of people suffering under oppression, extreme poverty, famine, lack of basic social services, and discrimination. Nor would it be able to mount an effective response unless effective prevention significantly reduced the range of those phenomena.

The foundation for system-wide cooperation had been established in the programmes, but the process of mainstreaming human rights, including the gender perspective, had not been completed. Human rights had been placed in the broader context of other United Nations activities, in particular democratization, sustainable development, humanitarian affairs and peace-building. The principle of the indivisibility of all human rights had been integrated into programmes throughout the United Nations system and greater emphasis was being placed on the right to development. That had modernized the focus of the United Nations human rights programme, which was attempting to be responsive to the needs of Governments and societies at the field level.

The human rights field presence added a practical operational dimension to the link between democracy, sustainable development and human rights, for example, in Cambodia, the former Yugoslavia and Latvia. Considerable progress had been made in the coordination of human rights activities, although much remained to be done. Examples of such progress were the establishment of the Working Group on the Right to Development by the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) on the initiative of her Office and the establishment of the Coordination Panel on technical advice and assistance in juvenile justice. A system-wide training programme that would increase the knowledge of United Nations staff in the field of human rights and facilitate agency involvement in human rights activities was required.

As a result of the Conference, the Commission on Human Rights had created numerous new mandates, requests for technical cooperation from Governments had increased, and several new human rights field offices had been established. Unless more resources were earmarked for human rights activities, however, it would be impossible to cover the spiralling increase in needs.

Mr. SPETH (Administrator, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)) said that, at the outset, he wished to pay tribute to the memory of the late Mahbub ul-Haq of UNDP, whose efforts had been critical in promoting the concept and practice of human development and the right to human development.

UNDP was committed to working with the High Commissioner in connection with the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and the five-year review of the implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. The endorsement of the Declaration on the right to development by the Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-third

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session provided important new direction to the work of UNDP. In keeping with the view of the Secretary-General that human rights were a cross-cutting element of development activities, UNDP had worked with its partners in UNDG, and in particular the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR), to ensure that the right to development was central to its poverty-eradication activities. Freedom from poverty was one of the most fundamental human rights. With the help of the High Commissioner, UNDP had published a paper the year before entitled "Integrating human rights with sustainable human development".

At the operational level, UNDP had sought to meet the growing demands of programme countries, mainly by providing support to good governance in the context of poverty eradication and human rights activities. UNDP played a complementary role to UNHCHR and, pursuant to a memorandum of understanding between UNDP and UNHCHR, signed in March 1998, it was responsible for capacity-building for the promotion of human rights. Many of the country cooperation frameworks approved by the UNDP Executive Board included support for capacity-building at the institutional level; the integration of the right to development at the policy level; and follow-up to United Nations conferences.

Concretely, UNDP had been playing a significant role in Central American countries ravaged by civil war. Its activities included judicial reform; the enhancement of human rights protection; the establishment of public defence systems and forensic laboratories; the creation of civilian police forces; and the training of police in human rights. UNDP, together with the High Commissioner for Human Rights, had assisted Latvia in establishing a national human rights office that handled individual complaints; ensured consistency between national legislation and international human rights treaties; and acted as a focal point for human rights information, education and training. In Cambodia, UNDP had provided human rights training to military personnel, police officers, commune leaders, monks, women's groups and teachers. In cooperation with the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), it had spearheaded a regional human rights campaign to combat violence against women and girls in Latin America and the Caribbean. It had supported democratization processes and elections and electoral reform in over 70 countries. Moreover, many UNDP projects around the world reinforced the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action.

Ms. BELLAMY (Executive Director, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)) said that the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action had generated tremendous momentum for the defence of the rights of the child by echoing the mandate of UNICEF, namely, that non-discrimination and the best interests of the child must be the primary considerations in all actions concerning children. As a result, the rights of the child not only informed the United Nations development and humanitarian agendas but had been involved in a debate on peace and security by the Secretary-General's Special Representative for children and armed conflict.

The World Conference on Human Rights had given impetus to universal acceptance of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which had been ratified by 191 countries in less than a decade. Besides transforming children's needs into rights that adult society was morally obligated to guarantee, the Convention provided insights into discrimination and inequities that lay at the root of illhealth, preventable deaths, disability and child abuse. It also addressed the specific needs of the most vulnerable groups, including children in armed conflict, street children and children who were exploited for commercial sexual purposes.

The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action had led UNICEF to take a rights-based approach to its programming for women and children at the country level. With the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNICEF was co-chairing the Working Group on the Right to Development within UNDG.

Ms. KING (Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women) said that, at their most recent sessions, both the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission on Human Rights had emphasized that women's human rights were a priority concern. She hoped that, during the commemorative year of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, headway would be made towards universal ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Members States should review their reservations to that Convention and to provisions on women's equality in other human rights treaties. A statement on reservations to the Convention, adopted the week before by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), provided important guidance in that regard.

Women's enjoyment of human rights did not occur automatically as a result of the overall protection and promotion of human rights; proactive measures were necessary. In that context, the entities of the United Nations system had two complementary roles to play: they must ensure that women's human rights were mainstreamed in all human rights policies and programmes; and they must support Governments' efforts to promote and protect women's human rights.

Improved coordination within the United Nations system had been instrumental in building awareness of the gender dimension of human rights. The high level commitment and leadership displayed by the Secretary-General and the High Commissioner for Human Rights were crucial. She welcomed the joint work plans of the Division for the Advancement of Women and UNHCHR and their first ever joint report on women's full enjoyment of human rights, particularly in the economic area. Violence against migrant women workers or trafficking in women would be appropriate topics for future joint reports.

Other entities of the United Nations system were making efforts to reflect women's human rights prominently in their work. In particular, she noted the landmark round table on women's reproductive rights and health in the work of treaty bodies, organized by the Division for the Advancement of Women, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and UNHCHR. She expressed appreciation to the Administrator of UNDP for conveying the concluding comments of CEDAW to a number of residents coordinators and for the work of UNDP in promoting ratification of the Convention and withdrawal of reservations. She acknowledged the contributions of UNIFEM in facilitating the participation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the CEDAW session and of UNICEF for supporting the implementation of the Convention and providing country-specific information to CEDAW. The workshop on a rights-based approach to women's empowerment and advancement, which she was convening as Chairperson of the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality, would provide an excellent occasion for the United Nations system as a whole to share experiences and identify challenges.

With a view to integrating women's human rights in all human rights activities, the four Executive Committees established pursuant to the Secretary-General's reform proposals should stress gender considerations in their work. New United Nations entities should actively participate in the mainstreaming effort, guided by the Council's agreed conclusions 1997/2 on gender

mainstreaming, which were endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 52/100. Formalized structures of accountability would ensure that mainstreaming took place.

Gender concerns should also be addressed by the technical and advisory services of various parts of the United Nations system. A project on gender in the technical cooperation programme of UNHCHR, which included the participation of the Division for the Advancement of Women, provided a framework for such actions. Needs assessment missions, human rights education, literacy and law reform efforts, United Nations human rights field presences and the human rights components of peacekeeping or humanitarian operations were some of the areas in which gender concerns must be explicitly addressed. The United Nations system must also protect women's rights in countries in crisis as a result of natural disaster, conflict, population displacement or legislation, the introduction of laws and policies which negated women's rights. National machinery for the advancement of women should be involved in all human rights capacity-building initiatives at the country level. The Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality was prepared to cooperate with all human rights coordination mechanisms in order to implement the gender-related recommendations of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action.

Mr. BASSIOUNI (Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)) deplored deliberate attacks on civilian populations during warfare and on the humanitarian personnel attempting to assist them. The issue of access was at the core of human rights protection and effective humanitarian action in conflicts and crises, such as those in Rwanda and Bosnia. The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action affirmed the right of victims to be assisted by humanitarian organizations and called for safe and timely access for such assistance (sect. I, para. 29); that principle must be observed. It also held that non-governmental organizations should be free to carry out their activities, without interference, within the framework of national law and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Sadly, the personnel of NGOs had suffered heavy casualties and had been the victims of assault, kidnapping and harassment.

Humanitarian agencies were concerned that human rights advocacy or the publicizing of violations could endanger their access to victims. It was equally of concern, however, that silence prejudiced the interests of victims.

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In Afghanistan, where Taliban regulations restricted women's access to health care and education and their ability to travel and work, the humanitarian community had protested, citing the Vienna Declaration with regard to the harmful effects of certain traditional or customary practices, cultural prejudices and religious extremism (sect. II, para. 38).

The humanitarian community was duty-bound not to collude with the war aims of particular groups or perpetuate suffering in providing assistance. However, its capacity to analyze the potential negative consequences of its actions were limited, particularly where a rapid response was required. A closely related issue was the delivery of aid without adequate attention to the rights of victims. The mainstreaming efforts of UNHCHR and the establishment of the four Executive Committees by the Secretary-General had heightened awareness of the importance of human rights protection for humanitarian activities, particularly in conflict countries.

A number of initiatives should be launched on a priority basis, including the development of guidelines to assist humanitarian workers to deal with human rights abuses; the examination of the relationship between relief inputs, war economies and structural inequalities; a review of possible linkages between humanitarian strategies and rights-based agendas aimed at seeking immediate and long-term solutions to violent conflicts; an examination of the relationship between international humanitarian law and human rights; and the identification of training needs and materials for humanitarian, human rights and other personnel who provided assistance to victims of crises.

Mr. SUCHARIPA (Observer for Austria) asked how cooperation between UNHCHR and other parts of the United Nations system was conducted at the field level on a day-to-day basis; what was being done in terms of human rights impact assessments within the different parts of the United Nations system; what activities were being carried out in the United Nations system other than UNICEF in relation to implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child; and what could be learnt from the positive experience of UNICEF in that regard.

Sir Jeremy GREENSTOCK (United Kingdom) said that his delegation was concerned about programme implementation; it was one thing to agree on the recommendations in the Secretary-General's report and the reports of agency heads, but another to achieve concrete results on the ground, especially in the most difficult cases of conflict, abuse and refusal to heed the call for

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improved international standards. The standards of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Vienna Programme of Action could not be imposed by force; the United Nations system must exercise its authority to ensure a healthy response worldwide.

His Government had recently decided to increase its budget for international development over the next three years by an additional \$US 2.5 billion. A significant proportion of that amount would go to the implementation of programmes relevant to the current debate.

With regard to the recommendations in the report of the Secretary-General, one of the key elements of greater coordination of human rights activity must be better integration across the United Nations system of the work of human rights mechanisms, for example special rapporteurs. Unless targets were set, in cumulative steps, it would not be possible to secure the desired results.

Ms. ROBINSON (United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights) said her Office believed that it was important to respond to requests from Governments for assistance in building their capacity in human rights areas. Such work was often carried out in cooperation with UNDP and other parts of the United Nations system, and with regional organizations.

She believed that much more needed to be done in terms of human rights impact assessments. At the same time, national human rights plans were important; a number of Governments had adopted such plans, and others were currently doing so. Her Office was ready to provide assistance to them.

UNICEF had taken a very active approach to the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. She was in favour of taking a similar approach to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, although she emphasized that much more needed to be done.

She had established an in-house task force which was reviewing human rights mechanisms and treaty bodies and would be producing an interim report. In considering the question of resources, the Council should bear in mind that the number of human rights officials had diminished, while the workload had increased because of the rise in the number of ratifications and of reports from States parties. She was aware of her responsibility for integrating the work of special rapporteurs and treaty bodies.

Mr. SPETH (Administrator, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)), said that UNDP was endeavouring to put human rights concerns, including

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the right to development, into the United Nations development assistance framework (UNDAF) process. There was increasing partnership and collaboration at the field level between UNDP and UNHCHR, and a meeting would be held in the following week to assess the progress made. The memorandum of understanding between UNDP and UNHCHR covered the question of cooperation in providing advice on the ratification of human rights instruments.

Human rights impact assessments had to be part of the process of measuring the impact of the work of United Nations agencies, in the context of a more results-oriented approach.

Lessons had been learned from UNICEF across a wide front, including implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The main lesson was the importance of taking a rights-based approach. UNDP was taking that approach in relation to development.

Ms. BELLAMY (United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)) said that UNICEF was working with partner Governments in designing rights-based programmes and had issued guidance to all its country teams. Although it had gained valuable experience from monitoring the goals of the World Summit for Children, it was still in the process of developing indicators. UNICEF was working with Childwatch International to involve Governments and Civil society in the national monitoring process. It was developing a monitoring and evaluation training package for its staff around the globe and had provided support to the Committee on the Rights of the Child for its monitoring function.

Ms. KING (Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women) said that the techniques developed by UNICEF were invaluable in dealing with the exceptionally high number of reservations to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

UNICEF was directly involved in the work of CEDAW; it participated in the pre-session working group and provided country-specific information. The Committee, in turn, had collaborated very closely with UNICEF in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. Cooperation between CEDAW and the special rapporteurs was beneficial to both sides, and it was hoped that further progress would be made in that area.

Mr. BASSIOUNI (Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)) said that the United Nations had no choice but to go where the needs existed, even when partners did not accept responsibility for international

norms and standards. His Office had started developing principles for such situations.

Mr. REYES RODRIGUEZ (Cuba) said that Cuba welcomed the work of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, especially the greater attention being paid to economic, social and cultural rights and to the right to development, and the new approach to dialogue and cooperation, including the promotion of North-South cooperation.

The conceptual basis for the coordination of United Nations human rights activities apparently derived from the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, which referred to the need to strengthen, rationalize and streamline activities and to avoid duplication (sect. II, para. 1). More recently, the concept of the mainstreaming of human rights had emerged. He asked what efforts had been made to apply that concept. His delegation believed in the need to maintain comparative advantages. For example, UNDP must concentrate on poverty eradication, since it was difficult to ensure the enjoyment of human rights for persons living in poverty. Technical assistance to countries in developing institutions for human rights protection should be left to UNHCHR. Member States had a responsibility to maintain a balance between civil and political rights, on the one hand, and economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development, on the other.

His delegation would like to know how the High Commissioner for Human Rights section II, paragraph 17, of the Vienna Programme of Action, which referred to the necessity for a continuing adaptation of the human rights machinery to changing needs. He asked whether the High Commissioner planned to present a report to the Third Committee of the General Assembly.

Mr. KAMITANI (Japan) asked what measures were being taken to provide education in human rights, including women's rights, to staff members of the United Nations; what lessons had been learnt from the experience of Latvia regarding coordination between UNHCHR and UNDP; and what kind of cooperation was being received from the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in ensuring the safety of human rights field personnel.

Mr. MUKHOPADHAYA (India) said that his delegation welcomed the High Commissioner's views on the relationship between peace, democracy, development and human rights and her focus on economic and social rights, a preventive approach to crises and the need for technical assistance and increased

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financing. However, he feared that any additional funding might be allocated at the expense of other development activities. While he agreed that there was a need to implement article 4 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and was pleased that UNICEF was moving from a needs-based to a rights-based approach, the shortage of resources made it difficult to find a balance between the two. The right to development must be addressed at the international as well as the country level. Furthermore, the question of funding involved not only selective allocation, but the total amount of financing available.

Ms. KING (United States of America) said she was pleased that UNICEF had decided to promote a rights-based approach to development and that other agencies had decided to join the Fund in developing common indicators to monitor that process.

Mr. RONNAS (Sweden) said that his Government supported efforts to integrate human rights into the work of all United Nations agencies. The international conventions and covenants provided a common platform and a treaty-based system for Member States' obligations in that regard and for international cooperation in the areas of implementation and the development of universally agreed norms.

He asked to what extent the reports of States parties and the resulting observations and recommendations of the treaty bodies formed a basis for dialogue between the Governments concerned and other bodies.

Ms. ROBINSON (United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights) said that she referred to speak, not of "mainstreaming", but of a coordinated system-wide approach, based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, as a means of incorporating the question of human rights into the work of United Nations system bodies. One example of such coordination was the cooperation between the agencies and programmes which had provided input to the report of the Secretary-General (E/1998/60). With respect to the necessity for a continuing adaptation of the human rights machinery to changing needs, she said that she was responsible for reporting to the Secretary-General on the functioning of that machinery and on the work of the treaty bodies and welcomed the call of the Commission on Human Rights for a review of those processes.

In reply to the question by the representative of Japan, she emphasized the importance of human rights education and of a rights-based approach to technical

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cooperation and assistance. As an example of a cooperative approach to the protection of human rights, she said that 36 Asian States had met in Teheran in late February 1998 and had agreed on a framework for human rights that included national plans and institutions, human rights education and strategies in the areas of economic and social rights and national development. States had been asked to hold annual workshops to review progress in those areas.

While she agreed with the representative of UNDP that it was sometimes necessary to take action against those who committed human rights violations and was prepared to do so, other approaches were sometimes called for. Her Office had recently cooperated with UNDP in helping to establish a human rights ombudsman in Latvia and a regional human rights resource person for the Southern African Development Community in Pretoria. It had also worked with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to promote capacity-building in the field of human rights in Angola and Sierra Leone.

Regarding the development of benchmarks in the promotion of economic and social rights and of the right to development, she said that a round table on that subject had recently been held in Geneva and that the statements made on that occasion by the representatives of the International Labour Organization, the World Health Organization and other agencies would soon be published. The Human Development Report was another source of useful information. Not only national, but also international progress indicators were required, and the Bretton Woods institutions must be involved in that process. Furthermore, a rights-based approach must be reflected in the development of benchmarks at the international level.

She agreed with the representative of Sweden that it was important to take advantage of existing machinery. Her Office was considering ways of making better use of the observations and conclusions of the human rights treaty bodies, particularly CEDAW and the Committee on the Rights of the Child, and those of the thematic rapporteurs.

Mr. SPETH (Administrator, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)) said it was unfortunate that many of the industrialized countries did not yet recognize the right to freedom from poverty as a fundamental human right. UNDP was reviewing the lessons learned during the implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. It had also cooperated with UNHCHR in setting up projects in Moldova and Belarus with a view to improved partnership

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and effectiveness.

While it was true that funding allocation involved difficult trade-offs, those choices were made at the country level and in cooperation with the Governments concerned. All the agencies were seeking common indicators for a rights-based approach as part of the follow-up to the major international conferences. It was particularly difficult to develop indicators for the promotion of civil and political rights. UNDP was disseminating the recommendations and conclusions of CEDAW to the resident coordinators for use in dialogue with Governments at the country level and hoped to extend that process to the other treaty bodies.

Ms. BELLAMY (Executive Director, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)) said that the United Nations system was still at an early stage of rights-based programming. UNDAF and the common country assessments provided an opportunity to establish global indicators for use at the country level, but much remained to be done in that regard.

In its discussions on the right to development, UNDG had discussed the possibility of consulting the concluding observations of the treaty bodies within the framework of the country programmes. Moreover, article 45 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child mentioned the role of UNICEF in the consideration of States parties' reports. UNICEF was drawing on the recommendations of the committee on the Rights of the Child in developing its country programmes and had had the Convention translated into many languages, some of them local or indigenous.

She saw no dichotomy between needs and rights; for example, children's need for immunization was fully consistent with their right to health, and sustainable development required the establishment of a framework for health and education. UNICEF had developed programmes to train journalists, police, judges, prosecutors and child welfare workers in the human rights of children. As the High Commissioner had noted, UNICEF was cooperating with her Office to produce a handbook on the implementation of children's rights.

Ms. KING (Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women), replying to a question from the representative of Japan, said that the Office of Human Resources Management offered staff training programmes on gender mainstreaming and women's rights and that the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, UNICEF and the Division for the Advancement of Women

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had developed programmes to train the police and the military in respect for human rights during armed conflict. The upcoming workshop should clarify the issue of the tension between the rights-based and needs-based approaches. In reply to the representative of Sweden, she said that UNDP was disseminating the concluding observations and recommendations of the treaty bodies and working with Governments to implement them; UNIFEM had organized gender theme groups to address questions such as legal literacy, training of the judiciary and legislation; and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee was working with UNICEF and UNDP to promote good practices.

Mr. BASSIOUNI (Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs), speaking on the question of resource allocation, said that, unfortunately, it was sometimes necessary to provide emergency relief at the expense of development programmes. He also noted that human rights must be respected during field-level operations; otherwise humanitarian work could not be successful.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.