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PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 24th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,  
on Tuesday, 13 July 1999, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. MANGOELA (Lesotho)  
(Vice-President)

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ORGANIZATION OF WORK

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In the absence of Mr. Fulci (Italy), Mr. Mangoaela (Lesotho),  
Vice-President, took the Chair

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
COOPERATION (agenda item 3) (continued)

- (b) FOLLOW-UP TO POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
(continued) (E/1999/55 and Add.1 and Add.2; E/1999/CRP.1)
- (c) REPORTS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARDS OF THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT  
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- (d) ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES  
(DP/1999/L.12)

Mr. CIVILI (Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs), referring to the Council's role in the triennial review and its monitoring role in respect of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 53/192, said that Section IV of the resolution clearly suggested that such monitoring, involving the executive heads and executive boards of the funds and programmes as well as the Council, should be mutually reinforcing. While it specifically identified the policy issues on which the Council should focus between the previous and forthcoming triennial reviews, it dealt in general terms only with the roles of the Council and the boards in the implementation management process.

The Council's role in the next three-year cycle could be divided into three phases: in year one, it would identify areas of special concern, ensuring the establishment of appropriate management processes in keeping with General Assembly guidelines; in year two, it would assess progress on the basis of the reports received; and in year three, it would consider the Secretary-General's independent and comprehensive assessment, supported by earlier impact evaluation studies. The executive boards' monitoring programmes would, of course, be adjusted to the Council's own.

The Annex to the Secretary-General's report (E/1999/55/Add.1) contained the basic components for managing the implementation of the resolution, prepared in consultation with all the relevant organizations, and reflected a firm commitment to systematic follow-up. The documentation distributed,

covering as it did developments relating to the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), the strengthening of the resident coordinator system, the role of operational development activities in humanitarian assistance and reconstruction and in the follow-up to conferences and collaboration with the Bretton Woods institutions, could help the Council identify issues for priority attention in its 2000 progress evaluation.

Significant progress was being made in all those areas: strengthened inter-agency collaboration was yielding specific results, such as the new guidelines adopted for the UNDAF-Common Country Assessment (CCA) process; development of a "roll-out" plan for those tools, including an agreed programming-cycle harmonization plan; and the designation of more United Nations houses, currently 35 in number.

There had been two very significant improvements in the resident coordinator system: development of a new competence assessment approach, aided by a growing number of organizations of the United Nations system, which formed an integral part of the effort to improve the resident coordinator selection process and expand the pool of candidates; and additional system-wide guidelines, prepared by the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ), which had already been issued to resident coordinators, on issues such as the UNDAF and collaboration with civil society.

On the Council's role in policy guidance to the executive boards, he said that the recent dialogue with the heads of funds and programmes had confirmed the General Assembly's foresight in resolution 53/192 in selecting the Council's priority themes for the year 2000. New programming arrangements and the development of new frameworks for more predictable multi-year funding of activities were, clearly, the boards' main current concerns. Two basic issues that arose for the Council were the role it could play in reversing the decline in core funding, and the substantive policy guidance it should provide in cross-cutting areas to ensure that the entire system's country programming and work in general were cost-effective, geared to meet national priority needs and served to advance the overall policy objectives and targets set by the General Assembly and the global conference of the 1990s.

While the Council was uniquely equipped to perform that role, it could not do so alone; hence the importance of the joint meetings of the executive

boards and of the bureaux of the Council and the executive boards mentioned in section V of the Secretary-General's report (E/1999/55). Particularly important was the strengthening of links between the executive boards and the Council's functional commissions, not only because of the latter's part in conference follow-up, but also because of their unique, continuing role in bringing together national authorities to share experience and development plans in the areas covered by their mandates.

He drew the Council's attention to paragraphs 125-142 of the Secretary-General's report (E/1999/55) which focused on the Council's oversight role, to tables 1, 2 and 3, which provided a schematic review of the executive boards' work over the previous year; to paragraphs 143-150 which offered a set of recommendations for the Council's consideration; and to section XIII of appendix II of the annex to the Addendum to the Secretary-General's report (E/1999/55/Add.1), where some of the measures being contemplated at the global level for promoting South-South cooperation were spelled out. The Council also had before it the report of the recent High-level Committee on the Review of Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (DP/1999/L.12), which complemented the Secretary-General's report.

Mr. INSANALLY (Observer for Guyana), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that they renewed their commitment to implementing General Assembly resolution 53/192. The recent informal dialogue between the Council and the heads of the funds and programmes had provided some valuable insights, as had the presentations of the country teams for Indonesia and Mali.

The implementation of resolution 53/192 should be marked by greater commitment to resource provision, since it was obvious that the current level of support placed the credibility of both the reform process and United Nations operational activities in jeopardy. In keeping with the General Assembly agreement on the triennial policy review, he urged the developed countries, whose overall performance was not commensurate with their capacity, to increase their official development assistance (ODA) substantially. ODA had indeed risen to 0.23 per cent of their gross domestic product (GDP) in 1998, but still fell short of the 0.33 per cent of 1992. That being said, he commended the countries that had consistently met or

exceeded the target and urged others to emulate them. Praise was due to the programme countries, most of which, despite adverse circumstances, had gradually raised their contributions.

Another important concern was the new emphasis to be placed on the operational activities' responsiveness to national priorities. Some funds and programmes seemed to be confused about the relationship between national objectives and global-conference mandates. Development being essentially contextual - although international factors often impinged on local development potential, the various global priorities were cumulative. If operational activities were to be genuinely supportive of development, they must take national development needs and priorities into account, rather than adopt a purely mechanistic stance that sought to impose international priorities. That attitude should also be supported by the various instruments such as the UNDAF or CCA.

The Secretary-General's report (E/1999/55) and the consolidated list of issues prepared by the heads of funds and programmes, in consultation with the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) (E/1999/CRP.1), both covered a number of issues to which the Group of 77 and China attached importance. They supported the recommendation, contained in resolution 53/192, that simplification, harmonization and rationalization of programme procedures should be a focus area at the substantive session of the year 2000, with a view to the rapid integration of operational activities into national development strategies and programmes, and to closer cooperation within the United Nations system.

They also attached high priority to strengthening national execution and fully utilizing national capacities, expertise and technologies in United Nations-funded programmes, as well as increased use of the modality of technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC). In view of the forthcoming South Summit, they welcomed the report of the High-level Committee on the Review of Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (DP/1999/L.12) and called for renewed support for TCDC by the developed countries and for strengthening of the mechanisms for its promotion, particularly the Special Unit for TCDC.

The Group of 77 and China believed that United Nations operational activities had an important role to play in supporting Governments' follow-up

and implementation efforts in respect of the outcomes of the United Nations global conferences. They therefore welcomed the continued cooperation among the funds and programmes, the World Bank and the regional development banks, in the promotion of country development programmes. They would continue to monitor the progress in their relationship closely so as to optimize the benefits to the developing countries.

The Group of 77 and China proposed that the Secretary-General should review the relationship between the General Assembly and Council and the executive boards of the various funds and programmes. The former should provide the broad policy and coordination framework for operational activities, which should guide the latter in carrying out their responsibilities and deter them from placing greater constraints on the choices of the developing countries by establishing priorities that might be inconsistent, if not at cross-purposes, with those set by the Assembly and Council.

Ms. PAIVOKE (Observer for Finland), speaking on behalf of the European Union and the associated countries of Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia, and also of Iceland, said that the Union was pleased to learn that the Secretary-General's reports had been compiled in collaboration with CCPOQ, UNDG and the United Nations operational agencies and that it analysed not only the targets achieved, but also the difficulties encountered, thus serving as a lesson for the future.

The Union welcomed the revision of the UNDAF guidelines and the fact that the World Bank's Cooperation Development Framework (CDF) had been taken into account; the development of a positive relationship, at all levels, between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions, and the recommendation that the Council should direct its further strengthening; and the renewed links between the operational agencies and the regional commissions.

Given the need to strengthen the link between the UNDAF and the Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP), the Union commended the efforts at complementarity, at clarification of the respective roles, and to ensure the transition from one instrument to the other. The link was all the more important in that only 23 of the 51 countries found to be in special

development situations were covered by the CAP and, in all but four of them, the resident coordinator also coordinated humanitarian activities.

The commitment to a coherent and coordinated enactment of resolution 53/192, expressed by the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) reflected the entire system's determination to strive towards an integrated operational programme, with roles and responsibilities distributed among the operational agencies in accordance with their mandates and known comparative advantages. While welcoming the application to the CCA guidelines of the lessons learned from the UNDAF pilot phase and the progress made in harmonizing programme cycles, as indicated in Table 2 of the report, the Union considered that programme procedures also required simplification and rationalization. The Union admitted that donor countries should assume their responsibility and help the United Nations streamline its packaging and delivery of development cooperation.

Expressing the Union's support for UNDG efforts to rationalize the policies and practices of its member organizations in national execution and the use of local experts, in the interest of sustainability and national ownership of the development process, she endorsed the Secretary-General's recommendation that the Council should discuss national execution more thoroughly in the year 2000.

One serious concern was that the different degrees of decentralization and delegation of authority at the country level and the differing levels of headquarters commitment hindered the United Nations system's effective response to national needs and discouraged joint system-Government activities. Recognizing that, in most countries, it was the United Nations, only a minor ODA source, that made the major effort at simplification and harmonization, she endorsed the Secretary-General's proposal that the processes most burdensome to the programme countries should be the first to be simplified, and suggested that the partners should all join forces to harmonize procedures among all the donors to a country.

She agreed with the Secretary-General on the importance of the specialized agencies' full participation in the CCA process, through the resident coordinator system, and welcomed the emphasis that the renewed

process placed on the need for more involvement of the Governments and of civil society as a whole. She would like to know what means had been used and what obstacles encountered.

The efforts made to improve the competence of the resident coordinators were commendable, as was the increased number of women in the position. Since candidates were interviewed by impartial outside specialists and CCPOQ had endorsed continued outsourcing of skills assessments, she asked whether their role was merely advisory and how important their assessments were in the final selection by the Inter-Agency Advisory Panel (IAAP).

The Union agreed that teamwork by the United Nations country teams was a key factor in the success of the United Nations system at the country level. It therefore encouraged the training efforts to improve country team capacities. It also supported the CCPOQ efforts to improve the performance assessment systems. In its view, the assessment issue was so significant and important to the overall endeavour to make the implementation of United Nations operational activities more efficient and effective, both in the field and at the various administrative levels, that the Council might wish, at some point, to give specific guidance for system-wide assessment measures.

The Union welcomed the efforts that had been made to implement the concept of a United Nations House and to explore the possibilities for common services and the sharing of administrative functions. Even without joint occupancy of premises, such synergies would offer an opportunity to cut down overlapping services and the cost of operations.

The Union attached great importance to the lessons that had been learnt. Since that issue had already been touched upon in its statement to the high-level segment, she would confine herself to expressing support for the Secretary-General's recommendation. The difficulties experienced in carrying out joint evaluations, as identified in the report, supported the Union's view that consideration should be given to a system-wide independent evaluation function.

Mr. VALDIVIESO (Colombia) said that the fight against poverty demanded a combination of the technical, financial, material and human resources needed to strengthen the national capacity of the developing



countries in the various sectors of production. The aim of the UNDAF was to enhance the coordination of programme activities with a view to the attainment of specific goals, coherent programming and mutual support.

As a pilot programme, the UNDAF had demonstrated the viability of coordination in the United Nations system and it could serve as a tool for the appropriate follow-up of United Nations conferences and for national capacity-building to that end. The Council should continue to press for an increased harmonization of programming cycles.

In the pilot countries, the process was guided by a resident coordinator, who was generally the UNDP director. There was an internal phase, in which the agents of the system in each country harmonized their objectives and fields of activity, and an external phase, which was presented for the consideration of the Government to enable the State to participate in formulating the UNDAF.

In Colombia, the process was currently being reviewed by the Government. The United Nations system had engaged in a dialogue with the National Planning Department with a view to incorporating into the UNDAF the policy guidelines needed to achieve the goals of the National Development Plan. In his delegation's view, the UNDAF should have no conditionalities; in other words, cooperation should not be dependent on any specific action by the State.

The efforts to enhance the role of the resident coordinator were welcome. Operational activities should be decentralized to the national level and show a flexible response to the needs of the recipient country, as determined jointly with the Government, civil society, national non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector.

His delegation agreed that procedures needed to be simplified and harmonized with a view to enabling programming activities to be more closely linked to Governments and external donors, with due regard for existing national capacity and the particular conditions of the individual countries.

The stress laid by the General Assembly on the wide-ranging triennial review of operational activities for development had highlighted the need for a coordinated and integrated follow-up of the main international conferences. To that end, indicators providing more effective measurement were needed. His delegation endorsed the recommendation in the Secretary-General's report (E/1999/55) that cooperation between the Bretton Woods institutions and the

rest of the United Nations system regarding operational activities for development should be strengthened. The presence of the representative of the World Bank offered an opportunity to obtain information on that institution's cooperation with the various countries.

As far as the need to link relief and rehabilitation activities in cases of natural disaster or of countries in crisis with development activities was concerned, there were different criteria to be used in the two cases. They should always be based, however, on definitions formulated by the national authorities in cooperation with intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. In that connection, the question of resources for the transition from relief to development activities continued to be of great importance. The organizations of the United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions, should continue their efforts to adopt a global approach tailored to the particular situation in each country. The development system itself was a factor for development in the recipient countries by making use of local expertise and technology, procuring goods and services from the developing countries and establishing common guidelines for the training and remuneration of national project personnel.

In the recent tragic earthquake in Colombia that had destroyed a large part of the coffee-growing area, the humanitarian assistance received from the entire international community, for which he again expressed his Government's deepest gratitude, had provided the necessary help when it was needed. The reconstruction, rehabilitation and development activities had been formulated and executed in accordance with local development plans.

In conclusion, he drew attention to the importance of joint evaluation at the country level for enhancing programme coordination. The oversight and evaluation of operational activities should take place under the general direction of the recipient Governments and should be the object of increased cooperation, with the capacity of the recipient countries to exercise effective supervision of such activities being strengthened.

Mr. WINNICK (United States of America) said that although the consolidated list of issues related to the coordination of operational activities, 1999 (E/1999/CRP.1) was useful, his delegation would not be in favour of eliminating the individual reports to the Council of the heads of

the funds and programmes, since a variety of views promoted healthy debate. At some point, however, the possibility might be considered of converting the consolidated list into a brief UNDG report to the Council.

His delegation expressed its appreciation of the report of the Secretary-General (E/1999/55/Add.1), particularly the management process matrix. The Secretariat and the Secretary-General were clearly taking seriously the task of following up the triennial policy review. The matrix brought out the Secretary-General's intention to develop a new pledging process in 2000. The Secretary-General's report on poverty eradication and capacity-building (E/1999/55) also invited the Council to make a recommendation on the future of the pledging conference. His delegation believed that the Council should take a decision at the current session to recommend that the pledging conference be ended. It had not promoted resource mobilization and could, in fact, be a net drain on resources. The executive boards had made considerable progress in linking resources, objectives, budgets and outcomes more closely, and that was the best way of addressing the mobilization of resources for the development agencies.

The previous triennial policy review had provided a clear mandate for further development of the UNDAF. Though challenges remained, the benefits of increased coordination between the funds and programmes, both at Headquarters and in the field were becoming increasingly apparent. Such coordination was critical if the United Nations was to continue to play a major role in poverty alleviation and capacity-building. Capacity-building must, however, be balanced by an emphasis on operational effectiveness. As noted in the consolidated list of issues, the UNDAF and the CCAs ought also to contribute to disaster preparedness and mitigation, post-crisis recovery and the transition to development.

The question had been asked at the previous meeting whether an UNDAF was necessary in a country (like Indonesia) where a high level of coordination already existed among United Nations agencies. His delegation thought that the recently revised UNDAF guidelines were flexible enough not to impose higher coordination costs than already existed in such countries. If they were not sufficiently flexible, they should be amended. The point of

gradually expanding the UNDAF to all countries and country teams was precisely that, in far too many countries, the culture of cooperation was not sufficiently developed.

The resident coordinator system was another advance in the triennial policy review. There had also been some progress in promoting common premises and services. The new system of assessing the competence of resident coordinators was deemed to be a success, but even good resident coordinators needed willing United Nations partners.

Welcome progress had already been made in developing guidelines for the support of NGOs and civil society in general. The relationship of the resident coordinators with the private sector, on the lines of the compact recommended by the ACC, could be developed further. At its fifty-second session, the General Assembly had encouraged the funds and programmes to promote entrepreneurship and to work increasingly with the private sector. His delegation looked forward to learning more about the implementation of that mandate. The resident coordinators could help to answer the call in the consolidated list of issues for further efforts to strengthen the adoption of a rights-based approach to gender mainstreaming.

Mr. KUMAMARU (Japan) said his delegation commended the important steps taken by the United Nations development system to enhance coordination. Although the process was still at a very early stage, reports were encouraging and his delegation believed that the efforts in that direction should be pursued. The UNDG, the UNDAF, the CCA and the resident coordinator system were all important and promising tools for bringing about improved coordination and collaboration among all the funds, programmes and agencies. At the same time, the process must be flexible enough to take into account the different situations of the recipient countries and the varying circumstances of the participating agencies. Coordination was not an end in itself: its aim was to enhance the efficiency, effectiveness and cost-benefits of United Nations projects and programmes for the maximum benefit of the recipient countries and their peoples.

The difficulty encountered by United Nations funds and programmes in mobilizing resources was undoubtedly a cause for concern and his delegation would like to see the level of resources maintained and strengthened in order to allow them to meet their responsibilities. At the same time, however, it

was equally important that efficient and effective use should be made of the resources available. The recipient countries, the donor countries and the funds and programmes should work together to ensure the optimum use of resources.

In recent years, the impact of development projects and programmes had been substantially enhanced by efficient and effective implementation. His delegation hoped that the benefits thus gained would compensate for the stagnating and sometimes declining trend of resources. With that in mind, his delegation would like to see an analysis made of the impact of resource trends of recent years. At the same time, it stressed the need to look at the resource level in terms not of United States dollars but of the actual value of the currency spent on implementing projects. For several years, the United States dollar had been very strong vis-à-vis all other currencies. As the United Nations development system went in more and more for national execution, the expenditure incurred was increasingly in currencies other than the dollar. That aspect should be addressed in any analysis of the impact of resource levels.

Lastly, his delegation was not completely convinced that the argument that "funding for multilateral grant-based operational activities for development should be channelled principally through the funds and programmes of the United Nations" (E/1999/CRP.1, para.5) was a valid one. There was a competitive market for ODA. United Nations funds and programmes needed to compete with others on grounds of merit and comparative advantage in order to convince the market that they offered the best value for money. They must continue to improve their efficiency, effectiveness and cost-benefits and, having improved those areas, they also needed to improve their public relations in order to market their activities.

Mr. SUH Dae-won (Republic of Korea), having commented that his delegation had found the dialogue with the country teams from Indonesia and Mali very useful, said that considerable progress had clearly been made in the effective coordination of United Nations operational activities through the establishment of the UNDG, the introduction of the resident coordinator system and the UNDAF. United Nations development agencies should in future be able to respond more rapidly and appropriately to the needs of the developing

countries and could be expected to play a more active role in helping them to cope with the various issues facing them as a result of globalization.

Although the UNDAF was still being tested, the positive results achieved so far in the pilot countries indicated a great potential. In future, all recipient countries and United Nations agencies should participate in the UNDAF process in a cooperative and coordinated manner. His delegation welcomed the recent statement by the ACC, urging all its members to take part in the CCA and UNDAF processes. The members of the UNDG should work first of all to raise their efficiency and rationalize their individual activities. In that way, the human and financial resources needed for improved participation in common projects would be created. Such increased cooperation should not, however, place an additional burden on the execution of the traditional mandates of individual organizations and recipient Governments.

The most important elements in the process of cooperation and coordination among development agencies were the simplification, harmonization and rationalization of programme procedures (E/1999/55/Add.1, paras. 38-48). Further efforts should be made to unify document formats and reporting systems. The focus on common premises and the sharing of administrative services would help to make the whole United Nations system more cost-effective, enhance the spirit of cooperation, have a synergistic effect among the development agencies and improve access by the people of the recipient countries to United Nations services. Although the project for a United Nations House would produce overall cost savings and other benefits, the need to maintain the unique and independent character of the individual agencies should be borne in mind. His delegation therefore suggested that UNDG should develop guidelines to provide individual agencies with a basis for equitable joint management.

Turning to economic and technical cooperation among developing countries, he said that his delegation firmly believed that the integration of the modalities for technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC) and economic cooperation among developing countries (ECDC) was a prerequisite for the full and effective implementation of South-South cooperation. In that regard, the outcomes of the South-South Conference on Trade, Finance and Investment, held at San José in January 1997, and the High-Level Conference on South-South Economic Cooperation Among Economic Groupings, held in Bali in

December 1998, should be fully implemented. On the basis of its accumulated experience in the process of economic growth, his country was ready to play a pivotal role. As part of its efforts to promote technical cooperation among developing countries in the fields of science and technology, his Government planned to host a South-South Forum at Seoul in November 1999, to which representatives of major research and development institutions from developing countries would be invited.

Mr. HUANG Xueqi (China) said he attached great importance to the Council's role in providing guidance for development activities. The format of the triennial review might have been changed, but the aim of development activities must not: developing countries should continue to be assisted in their capacity-building and their poverty eradication, in conformity with their own real needs and their development strategies. To ensure that, several factors should be addressed. First, given that financing affected the entire development system, he commended programmes and funds that had tried to broaden their financing base. He hoped that the donor countries would demonstrate their political will - and moral responsibility - and guarantee finance. Secondly, the UNDAF would make it possible to maximize the advantages of development activities and strengthen international cooperation. It must, however, reflect the needs and priority sectors of the recipient countries. He hoped that UNDG would act flexibly on the basis of the experience in pilot countries and engage in dialogue and consultation in joint programming with Governments. Thirdly, the resident coordinator system should be strengthened, with full respect for the principles enunciated in General Assembly resolution 53/192. The identity of recipient countries should be taken into account and activities and expenditure not benefiting them should be avoided. Fourthly, the way that programme activities were examined should be reviewed in order to avoid wasting United Nations resources. Programmes should also eschew all political interference. Fifthly, United Nations programmes formed an integral part of State capacities and he therefore hoped that all international organizations would help with capacity-building and good governance in developing countries, in conformity with the programmes of the States concerned. Partnership should be established with the World Bank and the regional development banks, but such

cooperation should be of mutual benefit. Lastly, development activities should not lose their essential character; the current mechanisms had functioned successfully for many years.

Mr. HEIN (Secretary of the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ)) said, with regard to General Assembly resolution 53/192, that the Department for Economic and Social Affairs had, at a briefing in 1998, outlined the outcomes of six field evaluations carried out in that year. In July 1999, a seminar attended by some 20 specialists from within and outside the United Nations system and organized by his Committee and the Department, with support from the Swiss Government, had reviewed the results of those evaluations. The participants had also identified some guiding principles for the explicit mainstreaming of capacity-building into the design and implementation of programmes in the United Nations system. Their recommendations should help towards a better understanding of the complex issues involved. While most of them were not new, they were worth bringing to the Council's attention.

Capacity-building had become of critical importance in all countries. The collective, and even the individual, ability of people to collaborate, make choices, manage conflict or learn new skills depended critically on the quality, performance and legitimacy of their institutions at every level. In that sense, capacity-building was an end in itself and not simply a means for development cooperation.

Capacity-building was not an inevitable by-product of the implementation of development projects. It required dedicated attention and resources, commitment, a supportive environment, strategic thinking, technical skills and political sensitivity and patience on the part of all the participants. Country commitment, in the form of ownership, skills, resources, participation and energy, remained the single most important determinant of the effectiveness of United Nations capacity-building programmes, which must consequently be carried out with the objective of strengthening those qualities.

Few capacity "problems" had predetermined "solutions". Most effective approaches emerged incrementally, on the basis of accumulated experience and adaptation. All interventions had to be crafted with flexibility, imagination and openness to learning. Sustainable capacity needed a long time to take



root. That had real implications for programme design and management, including a long-term commitment for the United Nations to provide resources. Good intentions and awareness were not enough. If there was to be greater support for capacity-building, it would require changes in attitudes, incentives, organizational and personal behaviour, agency procedures and staff skills. As with issues such as gender and the environment, the mainstreaming of capacity work into the operations of the broader United Nations system would depend on consistent direction.

Despite the decline in their resource flows, the objectivity, neutrality, expertise and responsiveness of United Nations agencies still gave the system a comparative advantage in capacity-building. Technical advice and support were, of course, still important; but more attention should be paid to process and conflict management, facilitation and even mediation, which were traditional strengths of the United Nations system.

Many capacity programmes needed a comprehensive approach and creative partnerships, networks and joint ventures would be required both internally and externally.

All those principles would be submitted for consideration by his Committee in September 1999, with the aim of recommending to the ACC appropriate action by the organizations of the United Nations system. Those recommendations, together with examples of good practice, should then be included in the CCPOQ Operational Activities Reference Manual as another step in accelerating United Nations capacity-building activities. If the United Nations system remained alert, strengthening its partnership with member countries and enhancing its own capacity to play a supportive role, progress would be made.

Mr. CIVILI (Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs) said he appreciated the positive assessment of United Nations capacity-building activities by nearly all speakers on the subject. The suggestions regarding specific action to implement General Assembly resolution 53/192 would be taken fully into account by the Secretariat.

Mr. HAEMMERLI (Chief, Development Cooperation Policy Branch, Department for Economic and Social Affairs) emphasized his Department's commitment to the implementation of General Assembly resolution 53/192, which

had not been adopted in a vacuum: several previous resolutions had laid the groundwork and the CCA process had been in operation for some years. His response to the remarks by the European Union on the participation of civil society and the private sector was that the recently issued guidelines on the CCA provided for the full and active participation of all parties at the country level. That was, indeed, essential, since the CCA was meant to provide an analytic basis for programmes.

Mr. DE BARROS (Secretary of the Council) said that there was a correction to be made to document DP/1999/29: in Decision 99/11, paragraph 2, the word "Director" should be replaced by the words "Executive Board".

Mr. FEDOTOV (Russian Federation) said that his delegation noted the greater degree of analysis and objectiveness in assessing operational activities and funds in relation to such reforms as the enhancement of the resident coordinator system and improving inter-agency coordination mechanisms, especially at the country level, through the introduction of the UNDAF, wider national execution and improved monitoring and evaluation.

Of particular importance were the recommendations on the involvement of country teams in the work of UNDG in collaboration with the Bretton Woods institutions and the specialized agencies at the country level, the coordinating role of Governments in the operational activities of all partners in the development process and the strengthening of relations between the funds and programmes and the regional commissions. The role of each partner in national development strategies should, however, be more clearly defined, timescales for programme cycles should be regularized and the programming procedures of the various agencies should be harmonized. In addition, the UNDAF should be harmonized with the CDF of the World Bank, the Bank should be more closely involved with the work of the thematic groups and the Bretton Woods institutions should be more involved in the CCA. All that would require further consultations with the Bretton Woods institutions.

Partnership in the field with the private sector was taking on ever-growing importance. The United Nations system should take care to reconcile commercial interests with the aims of sustainable development. The success of such a process would depend on the implementation of the initiative announced by the Secretary-General at the World Economic Forum in Davos in January 1999.

Improving the resident coordinator system would depend on establishing effective, representative and active country teams working closely with the Governments of the programme countries. Improved monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, meanwhile, were crucial to greater efficiency for United Nations operational activities and increased donor confidence.

His delegation was highly appreciative of the work of the funds and programmes to assist the eastern European countries and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). They comprised a large number of countries, most of which were at various stages of the transition to a market economy and therefore required special attention from the United Nations. Real international support for those countries' own efforts to resolve their serious social and economic problems would enable them to graduate speedily to a new category, that of emerging donors.

On the whole, the work of the various funds and programmes in his country was most satisfactory. The work of UNDP in upholding the reform process in various spheres and assisting comprehensive regional development, particularly in the social field, should be continued. His delegation noted the active efforts of the UNDP representative in the Russian Federation to acquire supplementary extrabudgetary resources for the cooperation programme. The work of UNICEF in developing cooperation to resolve the serious problems of infant mortality, micronutritional deficiencies, childhood trauma and the situation of orphans was bearing fruit. As for UNFPA, its programme activity in his country should take greater account of Russia's specific demographic situation and national priorities in such areas as the high mortality rate, low birth rate and the growing numbers of forced migrants. Altogether, it would be useful if the funds and programmes were to cooperate more closely with the Government in elaborating projects.

Mr. LAHIRI (India) said his delegation was surprised at the recommendation contained in paragraph 7 (b) of the annual report of the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (E/1999/47) since it believed that UNDG was an internal Secretariat body with a limited substantive role. Similarly, it did not believe that the UNDAF was a UNDG initiative or was located within the Group. The UNDAF was a national level framework, the components thereof being annexed to the country cooperation frameworks or programmes. On the other hand, his delegation strongly supported paragraph 8

of the report regarding the importance of the multi-year funding framework (MYFF) and hoped that the Member States would keep their part of the compact by providing the required resources. His Government was committed to increasing its core contribution in rupee terms, at least to the extent of ensuring a stable level in terms of United States dollars, and to making payments as early as possible.

While agreeing with the comments contained in paragraph 22, his delegation believed that, since both the UNDAF and individual country programmes would be formulated with the full involvement, ownership and agreement of the recipient Government concerned, national Governments would be best placed to ensure that individual programmes reinforced each other within the framework of the UNDAF. Paragraph 25 was therefore perplexing. It seemed clear that the UNDAF was not an operational programme document but a framework and the question of its separate monitoring and evaluation thus did not arise.

While there was a need for complementarity between UNDP and the World Bank, complementarity did not imply congruence. His delegation was therefore unable to support the recommendation contained in paragraph 33 (d).

His delegation had always fully supported national execution, the guidelines for which were obviously issued by the Government concerned. Consequently, he would like more clarification on the common national execution guidelines recommended in paragraph 46 (a). It was not clear what purpose they would serve and, since they had not been adopted in an intergovernmental process, it would be difficult for his delegation to endorse them in any case. His delegation strongly supported, however, the ideas expressed in paragraph 53. Results-based management should be used as a source of information, not as a tool for accountability.

With regard to the follow-up to conferences, the latest triennial policy review had noted that the UNDAF's role should be to facilitate the United Nations contribution to such follow-up, which was somewhat different from the idea outlined in paragraph 59 (c).

Section III of the report focused entirely on complex humanitarian emergencies but gave very little information about the role played by UNDP in disaster prevention, mitigation and preparedness: activities transferred to it under the reform proposals. It was not clear either which early warning indicators would be used for preventive action at the national and

international levels (para. 64 (d)), in the event of such natural disasters as earthquakes. The use of ill-defined terms on which intergovernmental consensus did not yet exist, such as "human security" or "sustainable governance" should be avoided.

More discussion on the possible use of the UNDAF in crisis or post-crisis situations was required. His delegation could not accept the proposals relating to the post-conflict recovery period (para. 67). Existing structures would probably be such that formulation of an UNDAF and its acceptance by a Government might not be possible. The formulation of the UNDAF might, in fact, devolve entirely to the United Nations system, which was contrary to both the letter and the spirit of General Assembly resolution 53/192.

With regard to the UNICEF report (DP/1999/L.20), his delegation agreed that it was important for the UNDAF process to show a net benefit to programming, either through increased efficiency, reduced costs or both. It was matter of concern that the UNDAF could compromise the effectiveness of a country programme in an activity implemented by another agency. His delegation looked forward to regular reporting in the matter.

The fact that he had commented only on issues where there was a divergence of views should not detract from the fact that his delegation substantially agreed with the reports. He commended the positive work being carried out by the funds and programmes and urged the international community to provide adequate support.

Mr. SYCHOV (Belarus) said that technical assistance provided by the United Nations on a country-driven basis served to further economic growth and sustainable development and to enhance the effectiveness of national reform programmes. The work of the Joint Consultative Group deserved positive mention, as did the reform efforts of the executive boards. The activities of the funds and programmes in countries with transitional economies were particularly welcome, as were measures recently adopted by UNDP and UNFPA to put country programmes on a more secure financial footing and make them more country-driven, inter alia by decentralizing UNDP operational activities and promoting the joint funding of programmes.

Cooperation between his Government and UNDP had been furthered in full accordance with the basic principles for the reform of operational activities.

Joint operations in 1997 and 1998 had met with particular success in the context of a three-year UNDP umbrella programme for international technical cooperation in Belarus. Not only would the country be contributing resources from its national budget to UNDP, but a UNDP House was to be established in Minsk. With UNDP assistance, an appraisal of the effectiveness of a number of multilateral and bilateral technical cooperation and assistance programmes had also been conducted.

His Government looked forward to constructive cooperation on agreed priorities with the new resident coordinator in Belarus, in the context of UNDP's Year 2001 programme. Also in view were a host of other international projects and technical cooperation programmes with the participation of the various organizations and agencies of the United Nations system and other partners. His delegation wished, in particular, to stress the importance of effective cooperation with the regional office of UNICEF, which played a crucial role in Eastern Europe and the CIS. The contribution of the UNICEF country office to the work of governmental and non-governmental organizations on children and maternity issues deserved particular mention.

His delegation also wished to underscore the importance of furthering inter-agency assistance to Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine in dealing with the long-term consequences of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant accident.

Mr. LAHIRI (India), welcoming the report of the High-level Committee on the Review of Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (DP/1999/L.12), stressed the need for developing countries to work together to overcome common vulnerabilities and disadvantages and maximize the potential benefits of globalization. India had, over the years, extended substantial technical, economic and scientific assistance to other developing countries, with US\$ 130 million in 1998 alone.

Over the past two decades, complementarity between countries of the South had been significantly advanced thanks to improved competence in the scientific and technical fields. What was currently required was political will and investment. Apart from cooperation in traditional sectors, India would be prepared to provide assistance to other developing countries, inter alia in information technology, remote sensing, radio astronomy, solar and wind energy, herbal medicine and biotechnology.

With a view to promoting the small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) sector in partner countries in Asia and Africa, India had been active in establishing a number of vocational training projects. The country's technical assistance was also increasingly being sought in the agricultural sector, particularly dairying. The country also intended to promote the concept of multiple beneficiaries by imparting broader regional focus to its ever-expanding technical cooperation programmes.

Efforts to operationalize technical cooperation among developing countries within the United Nations system should be furthered. To that end, a number of measures might be considered, including more frequent meetings on TCDC at expert or high level and improved use and connectivity of UNDP's Information Referral Service (INRES). Multilateral financial institutions should be urged to use TCDC modalities in implementing infrastructural projects and providing consultancy services to developing countries. Moreover, developed countries should be persuaded to adopt the TCDC route for disbursement of aid. A concerted effort must be made by all concerned to further enlarge the channels for technical cooperation.

Mr. HUANG Xueqi (China) said that UNDP should allocate at least 1 per cent of its core resources to TCDC and provide the impetus for incorporating such cooperation into all United Nations activities.

Mr. ÖZÜGERGIN (Turkey) said that Turkey had been implementing TCDC programmes since the 1920s. It had been a Pivotal Country for TCDC since 1997, and currently boasted a TCDC umbrella project, a functioning focal point mechanism and a database on national capacities. Since the benefits of technical cooperation were self-evident, he proposed to concentrate on the factors currently impeding TCDC programmes. They included: inadequate legislation on technical cooperation, poorly designed TCDC agreements, duplication of institutional responsibilities, long bureaucratic procedures for the utilization of limited national funds, a shortage of skilled staff and weak national TCDC focal points.

If the TCDC modality was to be better integrated into the United Nations system, there was a need for cooperation between the national focal points and UNDP offices through the resident coordinator system. The identification by

the Special Unit of centres of excellence and of projects worth replicating was to be welcomed. Enhanced inter-agency cooperation was essential for TCDC implementation to be improved at all levels.

Mr. KASRI (Indonesia) said he welcomed the expansion of South-North-South triangular cooperation arrangements, while noting that developing countries were increasingly managing to fund their own technical cooperation activities. The high quality assistance provided to Indonesia by UNDP was much appreciated. With a view to promoting future TCDC expansion, it was essential to provide appropriate platforms for South-South policy dialogue on issues such as sustainable development and global economic integration. Efforts to implement existing plans of action should also be redoubled. The United Nations system had made considerable progress in operationalizing TCDC; those efforts must be furthered with a view to developing more effective, results-oriented programmes. The US\$ 100 million devoted annually to TCDC by the United Nations development system (DP/1999/L.12, para. 26) was most welcome but funding levels should be further increased.

#### ORGANIZATION OF WORK

After a discussion in which Mr. SEARBY (United States) and Mr. BAHAMONDES (Canada) took part, the PRESIDENT announced modified deadlines for the submission of draft proposals.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.