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PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 19th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 8 July 1999, at 3 p.m.

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| <u>President</u> : | Mr. MANGOELA (Vice-President) | (Lesotho) |
| later: | Mr. SYCHOV (Vice-President) | (Belarus) |
| later: | Mr. MANGOELA (Vice-President) | (Lesotho) |

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

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

- (a) ERADICATION OF POVERTY AND CAPACITY-BUILDING (continued)
(E/1999/55, Add.1 and Add.2; E/1999/CRP.1)

Mr. VANEEV (Belarus) said that the United Nations system must increase the effectiveness of its activities, particularly in the area of assistance to individual countries, in order to attain the objectives of the First United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty and to implement the recommendations of the World Summit for Social Development. In that connection the Economic and Social Council had a duty to ensure that the decisions taken were implemented in a coordinated manner.

Belarus supported the reform of the operational activities of the United Nations in the development field which sought to strengthen coordination between the different bodies while taking into account the peculiar characteristics of each country and each region. He supported the proposal to seek new sources of finance with a view to reducing poverty by the year 2015. The strengthening of coordination between the United Nations system and the Bretton Woods institutions in the economic and social fields was a very important precondition for the eradication of poverty. He emphasized the crucial nature of the role of the resident coordinators, but at the same time stressed the need to take into account the situation in each country and to strengthen national institutions with the participation of the Government and the other actors in society.

Social policy was a priority for the Belarus Government, which was taking concrete measures to ensure that the right to a dignified life was safeguarded, particularly for persons belonging to the most vulnerable groups. In that connection, the United Nations system should continue to provide coordinated assistance to the countries in transition, the peoples of which were being affected by the harmful consequences in the social field of economic change. In that context Belarus had decided to build a "United Nations House".

Mr. VURAL (Turkey) stated that the United Nations system had a major role to play in the eradication of poverty by supporting national policies through complementary activities which took into account the development priorities of the beneficiary countries. In that regard he was

concerned at the reduction of resources and the financial fragility of the development arms of the United Nations system. The Turkish delegation agreed with most of the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General.

In Turkey the United Nations system had established, through the Resident Coordinator, highly satisfactory cooperation with the national authorities and the non-governmental organizations. That cooperation was focusing on the formulation and implementation of programmes focused on poverty eradication, capacity-building, job creation, the advancement of women, etc. Turkey was increasingly being called upon by growing numbers of United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies to support the development efforts of countries in the region; that fact should be kept in mind when allocations of resources for the regional activities of those bodies were decided upon. The operational activities of the United Nations system needed to be decentralized by giving greater autonomy to field offices and strengthening them at regional and subregional levels.

Mr. HUANG Xueqi (China) considered that the primary role in the eradication of poverty rested with national authorities. Developing countries would only reach that goal through sustainable development based on economic growth and capacity-building. However, in view of their limited resources, they needed financial and technical aid from the international community, and particularly from the United Nations. Notwithstanding the remarkable progress achieved thanks to the development activities of the United Nations, poverty was continuing to increase, and the gulf between rich and poor countries was steadily widening to such a degree that the developing countries were threatened with marginalization. The irrational political and economic order which governed the world and the burden of debt were setting at nought the efforts of the developing countries to eradicate poverty. China appealed to all States Members of the United Nations, and particularly the developed countries, to establish a more equitable and fair international economic and political order and to maintain official development aid, the decline in which it considered regrettable.

The Government of China had always considered guaranteeing the right of the Chinese people to survival and development as a priority task. Although, with the assistance of a large number of countries and international organizations, the Government had succeeded in significantly reducing

poverty, 40 million Chinese were still living in absolute poverty and over 200 million were subsisting on less than one dollar per day. In that context, the Government of China was taking measures to develop the western and central regions of the country and was increasing social expenditure.

Mr. ORDZHONIKIDZE (Russian Federation) stated that progress had been achieved in the eradication of poverty through a more equitable distribution of incomes and the establishment of more favourable conditions for the poorest groups in society, particularly with regard to access to education and health. However, poverty was now reaching into the middle classes in the developing countries and the countries in transition. The crises which had occurred in south-east Asia, Latin America and Russia had deprived them of jobs and destroyed the value of their savings and, in the absence of effective social protection systems, had plunged them into poverty. External assistance, and in particular that of the United Nations, was insufficient to meet the needs of the affected peoples.

He emphasized the need to develop a new and integrated strategy to support national efforts to avert new social catastrophes. In that connection it was essential to strengthen coordination between the United Nations funds, programmes and agencies and the Bretton Woods institutions and to provide assistance in the field which took national situations into account. It was important to improve coordination at national level with the participation of public authorities and non-governmental organizations. The primary role in that field rested with the Resident Coordinator; however, he could where desirable seek the assistance of broadly-based teams to study specific themes; they would include representatives of local authorities, business circles, etc. Coordination activities must be better defined, and Governments must be associated with them.

He deeply regretted that new armed conflicts had had the effect of increasing poverty. He referred in particular to the humanitarian catastrophe in the Balkans, which had been marked by flows of refugees and the destruction of the industrial and transport infrastructure of Yugoslavia, and which had given rise to an ecological, economic and social crisis in the region. He called for an evaluation of the damage caused by military action. In conclusion, he emphasized the need for United Nations agencies to be given

responsibility for coordinating humanitarian assistance to Yugoslavia and the Kosovo refugees with the direct participation of the Government of Yugoslavia.

Mr. MABILANGAN (Observer for the Philippines) stated that, although the eradication of poverty was primarily the responsibility of countries themselves, the support of the international community and the United Nations was nonetheless vital. Countries should be able to receive additional resources through bilateral or multilateral channels.

He emphasized the need for a clearer definition of the linkages at national level between activities conducted within the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and those conducted within the Country Development Framework of the World Bank. He was fully aware of the importance of national capacity-building and shared the view of the Secretary-General that the United Nations system should undertake a diversified series of activities in support of poverty eradication policies. The system should undertake advocacy and information activities in cooperation with national authorities and other development partners, and in particular the World Bank. It should also help countries, through technical support, to develop their own poverty eradication policies and continue to give direct support to capacity-building among the poor, particularly in the areas of basic education and health.

He emphasized, as had the General Assembly, that United Nations operational activities should respond to the requests of the beneficiary countries and that the latter should be in control of the assistance given to them. It would be desirable, with a view to making the best use of the resources available to the United Nations system, to develop indicators by which the effectiveness of operational activities could be judged.

Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan) asserted that the continuing decline in official development aid was incompatible with the eradication of poverty. He regretted that the reforms undertaken in the United Nations agencies, which had led to enhanced effectiveness, had not resulted in an increase in the resources allocated by donors. The role of the United Nations system was not only to assist Governments in translating global goals into national development policies and programmes, as stated by the Secretary-General, but also to monitor compliance with the commitments entered into at international conferences. The Pakistan delegation saw no objection to the possibility of

exploring new sources of funding provided that those sources did not affect the neutrality of operational activities. Any plan of action to eradicate poverty must assist developing countries to implement their national strategies, taking full account of their requests and without imposing conditions. The Pakistan delegation shared the view of the Secretary-General that the definition and implementation of national strategies for poverty eradication were the responsibility of the countries concerned and that operational activities must be adapted to national and local situations.

The operational activities of the United Nations must remain neutral and be directed towards national capacity-building, particularly by encouraging national execution. Activities undertaken within the United Nations Development Assistance Framework must be approved by the beneficiary country. Likewise, cooperation between the United Nations system and the Bretton Woods institutions should be effected in consultation with the beneficiary country. The activities of the United Nations system must not be made subject to conditions imposed by other institutions. The United Nations system should squarely address the structural obstacles which nullified the efforts being made by developing countries to eradicate poverty and achieve sustained growth. With a view to the achievement of greater transparency, the funding of non-governmental organizations invited to take part in development activities should be effected in consultation with the Government of the beneficiary country. In conclusion, he observed that United Nations funds and programmes needed resources to continue the struggle against poverty.

Mr. SUH (Republic of Korea) welcomed the efforts made by the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ) to develop a common definition of capacity-building which would permit effective integration of the specific goals of technical cooperation. To help developing countries in capacity-building the agencies in the United Nations system should make the most of the comparative advantage resulting from their long presence in the field. It was also important to ensure that the more globalizing trend in capacity-building, which was currently gaining a dominant position, did not lead to the disappearance of earlier methods of intervention, which had lost none of their validity.

In the Republic of Korea capacity-building and the struggle against poverty had since the beginning of the 1960s formed integral components of

five-year economic development plans, which laid stress on industrialization and education. Later, with the achievement of economic expansion and democratization, attention was turned to improvement of the social protection system. At the present time, as it emerged from the financial crisis, the country was endeavouring to promote the parallel and harmonious development of a market economy and participative democracy, while at the same time opening up widely to the rest of the world. Mr. Suh hoped that that very brief outline of Korean experience would contribute to the discussion on capacity-building.

Mr. Sychov (Belarus) took the Chair.

Mr. ZAFERA (Observer for Madagascar) associated himself with the statement made by Guyana on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and supported the recommendations contained in paragraphs 78 and 101 to 104 of the report of the Secretary-General (E/1999/55). It was true that combating poverty was primarily the responsibility of States; but the scale of poverty was now such that clearly Governments would be unable to eradicate poverty without the aid and the combined efforts of the international community. The burden of debt still constituted an enormous strain on the resources of the poor countries, preventing them from making essential investments. That was particularly true in sub-Saharan Africa, where the majority of the least developed countries were situated. The drain on resources attributable to debt-servicing was being aggravated by the drying up of inflows of private capital and by the downward trend in ODA, which now only represented 0.22 per cent of the GDP of the OECD donor countries.

In that situation the measures taken hitherto by the international community, although important, did not seem to respond to all expectations. According to the World Bank, the target of reducing by half the numbers of persons living in extreme poverty by the year 2015 might well not be reached. It was therefore necessary to undertake an in-depth exploration of possible new methods of implementing strategies set at national and international levels and to take steps to ensure that the least developed countries could derive greater benefit from trade liberalization. Concrete and effective international cooperation was a prerequisite for poverty eradication.

Mr. ROHNER (Observer for Switzerland) recalled that national capacity-building and the fight against poverty had for many years been

priority fields of action within the operational activities of the United Nations system. However, with globalization the interventions made had acquired a new dimension, which also called for greater synergy among the various United Nations bodies. The evaluation of the contribution of the system to capacity-building - in the conduct of which Switzerland had participated - had in fact highlighted the need for greater convergence among the different efforts being made. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the CCPOQ were currently drawing lessons from that evaluation with a view to establishing guidelines applicable to the system as a whole.

It was important to continue with the evaluation of the incidence of operational activities in order to strengthen their overall coherence. In particular, Switzerland supported the proposal of the Department to undertake a series of evaluations of development assistance frameworks between the present time and the year 2001. On the other hand, it seemed unnecessary to analyse the causes of the decline in ODA, since a great deal had already been written on the subject. It would be preferable to seek to reverse the trend and, above all, to show inventiveness in providing the poor countries and the countries in transition with the support they needed, even if that support could not be financed from the core resources of the United Nations agencies.

Mr. CHIRILA (Observer for Romania) agreed that poverty eradication was in fact the principal challenge confronting the international community at the dawn of the twenty-first century. In view of the doubts recently expressed regarding the possibility of attaining that objective in the current context, there was a need to examine more closely the role of the operational activities of the United Nations system in the development field.

The Romanian delegation considered that the conclusions adopted by consensus by the Council in 1996 and the ACC Statement of Commitment for Action to Eradicate Poverty offered a sound basis for the rationalization and coordination of strategies being implemented at national and local levels. The principle that programmes should be country-driven had in fact proved its effectiveness and should be maintained.

In Romania, since the beginning of the transition period, the United Nations system, working in close coordination with the Government and civil society, had targeted its assistance on the promotion of sustainable development and the improvement of living conditions. The framework plan

introduced in 1997 was designed to facilitate the establishment of a market economy and a democratic society. The examination of the framework of cooperation with UNDP currently under way should help to rectify the orientation and methods of implementation of programmes and with the formulation of the new framework for the period 2000-2004.

Romania was in favour of a broader concept of capacity-building as offering a means of taking better account of all the parameters influencing the development of a country.

Finally, as regards funding, the continuing decline in the total volume of resources for operational activities channelled through the United Nations system was disquieting, and its implications would have to be carefully examined by the Council in the year 2000. In view of the need to be able to count on predictable resources to programme those activities, the establishment of a new strategy based on pluriennial funding appeared highly desirable.

Mr. Manqoaela (Lesotho) resumed the Chair.

Mr. RANA (Observer for Kenya) supported the statement made by Guyana on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The structural adjustment measures implemented in Kenya at the beginning of the 1990s had eroded the gains which had been achieved through growth- and employment-oriented strategies and had led to increased levels of poverty. Kenya had undertaken a package of short- and long-term programmes, but their implementation had been hampered, primarily by a lack of resources. Recognizing that sustainable economic and social development depended on the effectiveness of the fight against poverty, the Government had drawn up a national poverty eradication plan. That plan comprised three principal elements: the framing of a charter for social integration defining the rights and responsibilities of citizens, communities, business, civil society, NGOs and policy makers; the creation of conditions facilitating measures to combat poverty; and the establishment of a broadly-based economic growth strategy directed particularly towards the rural areas, where over 80 per cent of the poor lived. A commission had been established to implement that plan, the initial phase of which would last six years (1999-2004).

One of the primary objectives of the first phase was the enhancement of the capacity of the public authorities in the field of participatory planning,

with particular regard to training designed to help local populations to formulate community action plans matching their particular needs. During the second phase (2005-2010) the principles and modalities of the plan would be extended to cover a further 30 per cent of poor households. At the end of that phase the different components of the plan would be consolidated in the light of the lessons drawn from experience. The final phase (2011-2015) would be devoted to the monitoring and evaluation of the initiatives taken and the refinement of the plan. The principles and operational targets of the plan would be mainstreamed throughout the country.

Mr. NGUYEN QUY BINH (Viet Nam) stated that if operational programmes were to reach the root causes of poverty they must be based on a rigorous evaluation of national development priorities and strategies and must be coordinated among the different United Nations agencies. The recent mid-term reviews of the UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF programmes for Viet Nam had shown that the areas selected in the field of cooperation and the operational programmes were in conformity with national strategies and priorities. In July 1998 the Government of Viet Nam had officially launched a National Target Programme for Poverty Eradication during 1998-2000 and a Programme on Socio-economic Development for Particularly Poor Communes in Mountainous and Remote Areas. One of the contributory factors in the success of the operational programmes had been the emphasis placed on national capacity-building and on enhancing monitoring and evaluation. The trend towards giving empowerment precedence over service delivery should be encouraged together with technical assistance and financial support.

Experience with the national execution modality had been less convincing; the process of project formulation did not always go side by side with a realistic evaluation of local capacity to identify constraints. However, progress was being made and positive results should be observed during the coming years. He expressed satisfaction at the selection of Viet Nam as one of the 18 countries included in the pilot stage of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and reaffirmed his country's support for the principle that national priorities and plans constituted the only viable framework of reference for country-by-country programming of operational activities for development. In conclusion he expressed concern at the sharp decline in the core resources of the United Nations funds and

programmes and considered it necessary to encourage the international community, and in particular the developed countries, to mobilize additional resources.

Mr. SOARES DAMICO (Brazil) began by stating that the views of his delegation on the recommendations contained in the three reports submitted were duly reflected in the draft resolution presented by the Group of 77. Brazil attached great value to the support which the United Nations agencies were continuing to provide in a wide range of fields to help it fight poverty and improve the living standards of the country's population. The accumulated experience of those agencies was extremely useful in the area of capacity-building and in particular that of training. National execution was effective provided that it was applied with flexibility and that due attention was paid to the particularities of the country concerned. In that connection Brazil approved of the rules and procedures established in 1998 for the division of roles between agencies and Governments. He drew attention to the role of social indicators in the refining of development policies and pointed out the usefulness in that context of national human development reports and national databases on economically disadvantaged regions.

As achievements in the field of South-South cooperation left much to be desired, Brazil, which was a major contributor to TCDC programmes, renewed its request for the strengthening of that segment. With regard to coordination, Brazil hoped that the Council would continue to give guidance to the governing bodies of the United Nations funds and programmes and in particular to recommend that themes and goals deriving from global conferences should be integrated into their priority programmes to a greater extent.

The declining trend in voluntary funding was prejudicial to cooperation activities; it threatened the universal character of the system and compromised its effectiveness. The reversal of that trend by a search for new forms of fundraising machinery was a matter of urgency. The conclusion of triangular agreements seemed to offer a satisfactory solution to the problem. At the same time, other types of resources might be sought, and cooperation with the World Bank, the regional development banks, integration mechanisms, the private sector and civil society might be strengthened.

Ms. WALLSTAM (World Health Organization (WHO)) stated that the fact that health was a major contributor to the economic and social dimensions of human development was becoming increasingly recognized, but that countries were still having difficulty in following up all the implications of that fact in the practical sphere, since for many years expenditure on health had been considered as unproductive and was currently threatened by privatization of the sector. WHO had therefore devised a new strategy consisting of the promotion of health, both in its own right and as one of the best means of assisting the poor to lift themselves out of poverty. As a result of the major reforms undertaken in 1998, over 50 separate programmes had been brought together in nine new clusters, one of which was devoted to strengthening the contribution of health to the eradication of poverty and the promotion of sustainable development. To secure the benefit of the potential offered by health, ministers of health must be more actively associated in the framing of national development strategies, and ministers of finance should be better informed of that potential. Thus the role of WHO would be to provide countries, and the agencies assisting them, with the necessary information and guidance.

The work programme of WHO was built around four interdependent strategic themes. It was seeking to make its work for and with countries more effective; to focus its work in order to obtain better and more equitable results; to support health sector development and capacity-building; and to build influential partnerships. WHO, which was participating in particular in the common country assessment and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, was continuing to cooperate with the competent United Nations agencies and with the Bretton Woods institutions.

To ensure consistency and quality in its work, WHO would shortly establish a high-level advisory committee representing the different development stakeholders (countries, civil society organizations, researchers, bilateral donors and United Nations partners). Its task would be to give technical opinions, not on health as such, but on the broader question of the elimination of poverty and on human development. WHO was making preparations for participation in the special session of the General Assembly on the results of the World Summit for Social Development. That session would offer an opportunity for advocacy not only among health ministers but also among

presidents, prime ministers and finance ministers and to seek their contribution to a better integration of the social and economic aspects of human development strategies.

Mr. DUVIEUSART (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)) stated that it was becoming increasingly clear that poverty was above all the consequence of a lack of education, a lack of access to information and rights and hence a lack of choice which prevented any human community from taking initiatives that might help it to break out of poverty. The experiments in which UNESCO had been successful were those based on the poor themselves and which endeavoured not only to reinforce their capacities but also to strengthen the cohesion of the community to create a democratic momentum progressively leading to reintegration.

Under its programme of education against exclusion, UNESCO was directly supporting projects in some 25 countries offering opportunities for education to different categories of target groups living in difficult conditions. Many of those projects were supporting local initiatives through which young people were acquiring the qualifications they needed to enter the informal economy. Through that programme UNESCO was helping to develop a new and different dynamic of education for the excluded. The Sciences, Environment and Socio-economic Development programme was helping to encourage local communities to practise the sustainable use and management of natural resources, while the World Solar Programme was envisaging activities designed to make new sources of renewable energy available to the poorest. The Management of Social Transformations programme was applying new approaches designed to revitalize impoverished city centres and implant a methodology of endogenous development. The Cultural Heritage and Development programme, which was concerned with the restoration of historic sites, was developing income-generating activities for local communities and laying emphasis on the revitalization of traditional technologies and know-how.

In the field of communication the rural community radio projects were laying emphasis on training with a view to production and also on tolerance, human rights and the culture of peace, thus enabling the population groups concerned better to integrate into the democratic process. Recognizing that no single organization could deal with poverty, UNESCO was cooperating with a number of United Nations agencies and several regional development banks and

was, together with UNDP, developing new partnerships with the specialized agencies within the framework of which the fight against poverty was and would remain a priority.

Ms. WEILL-HALLÉ (International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)) stated that she intended to confine her remarks to the linkages between women's empowerment, work and poverty eradication. For over 20 years IFAD had been concentrating on the empowerment of rural women in the conviction that they had a vital role to play in eradicating poverty and consequently in ensuring food security. Women made up the majority of the rural poor and, in some regions, of the population as a whole on account of extensive male migrations. However, poverty among women generally remained invisible because national statistics and household surveys tended to leave it out of account. Notwithstanding their importance as the principal support of the family, women were often marginalized, and consequently were deprived of all access to the vital resources of credit, land and information.

From the projects it had conducted to combat poverty and hunger in rural areas IFAD had learnt an important lesson, namely that rural poverty could not be eradicated without the participation of women, not just as project beneficiaries but also as recognized and respected actors in development. The marginalization of that important group formed part of a vicious circle which was perpetuating poverty and malnutrition. The breaking of that circle required the promotion and empowerment of women in the economic, social and political fields. In that connection IFAD had realized that projects targeting women alone, although they might be justified in an environment where tradition made interaction between men and women difficult, very frequently left the women at the margin. Consequently it had adopted a strategy which laid emphasis on the equality of the sexes.

In one project conducted in a rural community in Guatemala, IFAD had enabled women to obtain access to credit and purchase tools, and even to set up microenterprises. Those women had now seen an improvement in their social status and had recovered self-confidence. The success of the project had encouraged IFAD to extend it to other regions, and in particular eastern and southern Africa, the Middle East and north Africa. It had identified three essential preconditions for strategies of that type: a better understanding of the gender-based division of labour in rural areas; understanding of the

importance of self-employment among rural women; and continuance of building on the complementarities between the different United Nations agencies. The international community had set itself an important goal, namely, that of halving the proportion of people living in poverty by the year 2015. To reach that goal it was necessary to ensure that all the poor - women and men alike - could take up their roles as actors in development on a footing of equality.

Mr. SFEIR-YOUNIS (World Bank) said that a certain number of conditions had to be met for the eradication of poverty to be attained. First, a basis for the development process had to be established in which it was the country, and not the development agencies, which determined the goals to be attained and the timetable of the operations necessary to attain those goals. Next, solid and all-encompassing partnerships must be established including the government, civil society, the private sector and assistance agencies; following that, a long-term vision of needs and solutions must be defined. Finally, economic and financial objectives and the social concerns of the poor must be reconciled with one another and a synergy effect developed between them.

With that approach in mind, the Bank had designed a Comprehensive Development Framework in which the specific needs and problems of the countries concerned were taken into account. It aimed to give poor households and other participants in the development process a genuine opportunity to reflect on the nature, scope and sequencing of policies, programmes and institutional reforms. It was for countries themselves to decide on the suitable level of engagement. The Bank was aware of the importance of coordination in such a context and had undertaken a series of consultations with nearly all the agencies and programmes in the United Nations system.

Poverty eradication and capacity-building went hand-in-hand. The creation of wealth was an essential element in the process of poverty eradication. It was not "others" that should create wealth for the poor, but the poor themselves. However, the creation of wealth required the accumulation of capital in various forms; but the poor were unable to do this. Consequently, capacity-building must remedy that inability.

In that connection, Mr. Sfeir-Younis wished to draw the attention of the participants to a number of important points. First of all, capacity-building programmes must be designed in such a way as to protect the assets in the

hands of the poor and improve their management. Those assets tended to be different between men and women; it was therefore necessary to take gender specificity into account. Another important factor was that globalization and development in general were giving rise to such developments as destruction of the environment - which was one of the main sources of poverty creation. Finally, capacity-building was a marginal factor in development programmes, whereas it should be a central element.

Mr. RAO (World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)) said that WIPO, believing that all countries could share in the benefits of an economy based on knowledge and information, had set itself the task of helping developing countries and countries in transition to build up their capacities to participate more effectively in the global intellectual property regime and thus accelerate their economic and social development. The assistance given took a variety of forms and covered a wide range of fields, including biodiversity, traditional knowledge, licensing and transfers of technology. WIPO had been assisting developing countries to introduce modern management techniques in the departments responsible for the protection of intellectual property; 98 countries had requested and received advisory missions, 90 had received computer equipment and 34 had developed, with the assistance of WIPO experts, the necessary software for the automation of their intellectual property protection services.

The WIPO World Wide Academy organized training courses and had also designed a distance learning programme accessible through the Web. WIPO had also created a global information network (Wiponet) to help developing countries to participate effectively in electronic commerce and, more generally, to gain access to information technologies.

Under an agreement concluded with WTO in 1995, WIPO was providing assistance to developing countries to enable them to meet their obligations under the Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights Agreement (TRIPS) when that agreement came into force on 1 January 2000. WIPO had helped about 124 developing countries to bring their legislation into line with the provisions of that agreement and to train the necessary staff.

Ms. LUBIN (International Federation of Settlements and Neighbourhood Centres) stated that in the struggle against poverty the principal task of settlement houses and many other non-governmental

organizations was to alleviate social precarity. The provision of services at local level was an essential tool for the provision of social protection; consequently the United Nations should broaden its definition of social services so as to include vital social services other than health and basic education. She was referring in particular to the strengthening of community organizations, the provision of services for vulnerable population groups such as battered women, the fight against drug abuse, programmes for the care of people with AIDS, day-care services for lone-parent families, services for the aged and specialized services for immigrants and refugees. Vocational training, too, should not be neglected, since it was an essential means of increasing the numbers of productive jobs.

Another important question was that of access to subsidies and low-interest loans for the poor. For many years settlement houses had been setting up savings funds and other forms of microcredit to assist in the creation of microenterprises. They generally had the mechanisms required by banks to verify the use made of loans and to ensure their repayment. The Federation therefore urged banks and financing agencies to use the services of competent NGOs in the dispensing of credits designed for the creation of small enterprises in local communities in developing countries.

As regards the follow-up of the major United Nations conferences, and in particular the World Summit for Social Development, NGOs were in a position to play a more constructive role than in the past. With their experience in evaluating their own programmes, they had developed highly sophisticated tools which satisfied the expectations of donors. The Federation hoped that those techniques of follow-up and evaluation would be included in the agenda, currently being prepared, of the special session of the General Assembly on the implementation of the results of the World Summit for Social Development and of the other follow-up conferences. She also hoped that greater attention would be given to the role of young people, not only in the area of poverty alleviation, but also in the principal follow-up activities of United Nations conferences.

Mr. CIVILI (Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs) expressed his appreciation of the quality of the discussions and said that he had taken note of the major points raised by the different speakers, and in particular those concerning the primary

responsibility of Governments in the coordination of operational activities of concern to them and the interest of the independent impact evaluations conducted by the secretariat. He assured the members of the Council that their recommendations and proposals would be duly taken into account in the programme of operational activities.

Replying to specific questions put by delegations, Mr. Civili explained that the expression "new victims" used in the Secretary-General's report referred to the many inhabitants of countries affected by the financial crisis who, after succeeding in escaping from poverty as a result of the high growth rates achieved during the previous decade, had now fallen back into poverty on account of factors beyond their control. As for the overlapping of the terms of reference of development agencies and humanitarian agencies respectively, he recalled that useful guidelines had been laid down in General Assembly resolution 53/192, which pointed out that relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development, far from being consecutive, were often conducted simultaneously. In the same resolution the General Assembly had recommended a global approach in which national authorities would be associated and reaffirmed that humanitarian aid must not be granted at the expense of development assistance.

On the subject of unresolved issues in the reform process, Mr. Civili explained that the addendum to the report of the Secretary-General (E/1999/55/Add.1) described the measures planned for the harmonization and simplification of programming procedures following the introduction of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework. The same document also pointed out the need to strengthen the network of resident coordinators and to develop relations between the World Bank and the other United Nations agencies. Finally, as regards the decentralization and delegation of authority within the United Nations system, appropriate measures were proposed in General Assembly resolutions 47/199 and 50/120. It had, however, to be recognized that further progress must be made in that field. The question would form the subject of continuing dialogue between the Economic and Social Council and other United Nations bodies.

The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.