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Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Monday, 19 July 1999, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. VALDIVIESO (Colombia)
(Vice-President)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

COORDINATION OF THE POLICIES AND ACTIVITIES OF THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND OTHER BODIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM RELATED TO THE FOLLOWING THEME: DEVELOPMENT OF AFRICA: IMPLEMENTATION AND COORDINATED FOLLOW-UP BY THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM OF INITIATIVES ON AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT (agenda item 4) (continued) (A/54/133-E/1999/79 and E/1999/104-S/1999/754)

The PRESIDENT invited the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mrs. Frechette, to address the Council via videoconferencing from New York.

Mrs. FRECHETTE (Deputy Secretary-General) said that the General Assembly had invited African countries and their partners to identify and rank development priorities, define their various responsibilities and agree on realistic and measurable goals. That task was not simple in view of the great number of initiatives, strategies and action plans adopted both within and outside the United Nations system. The objective, therefore, was not to elaborate a new initiative, but to ensure follow-up and implementation of the activities decided upon in particular fields such as peace, good governance, poverty eradication and sustainable development. For that purpose, it was essential to set measurable goals, since otherwise the considerable resources mobilized by the United Nations for the development of Africa would continue to have a limited impact.

The achievement of those priority goals obviously required sound coordination. At the first annual regional coordination meeting of the United Nations system in Africa, held at Nairobi in March 1999, the representatives of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), specialized agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations had agreed on the indispensable nature of coordination at national level. Within the United Nations, the principal instruments for coordination were the common country assessments and development assistance frameworks, which were not incompatible with the mechanisms of other development partners, including the comprehensive development framework of the World Bank. At regional level, it was preferable for coordination to be effected within the framework of the United Nations Special Initiative for Africa and that concrete, precise and measurable goals should be formulated, as was already the case in the field of education. Coordination mechanisms mattered less, however, than the will to

apply them. In that regard, it was encouraging to note the emergence of a genuine team spirit, both at Headquarters and in the field, which should enhance the effectiveness of United Nations activities.

Africa continued to be one of the major priorities of the United Nations, which devoted 50 per cent of its programmes of assistance to Africa. A large part of those resources went to humanitarian operations, however, to the detriment of crucial investment and development programmes. Furthermore, the need to accelerate economic growth in Africa through trade and investment, to increase flows of official development assistance (ODA) and to provide greater debt relief could not be overemphasized. The Secretary-General consistently pointed out that the downward trend in ODA had to be reversed, since that form of aid represented for many countries, particularly in Africa, an essential complement to national efforts. In conclusion, she hoped that the Council's current session would contribute to better guiding United Nations action in Africa.

The PRESIDENT invited the participants to put questions to Mrs. Frechette.

Mr. TOIVIAINEN (Observer for Finland), speaking on behalf of the European Union, asked what framework should be employed for the type of coordination which had been referred to by Mrs. Frechette and of which he recognized the primary importance: was it the consultative group or would a new mechanism have to be created?

Mr. MANGOELA (Lesotho) said he doubted whether all countries actually had the capacity to coordinate the vast range of interventions of the United Nations system and bilateral partners. What view had emerged from the Nairobi meeting mentioned by Mrs. Frechette concerning the role that the United Nations might play in strengthening the capacity of African countries in that regard?

Mr. KUMAMARU (Japan) said he was pleased to see that the United Nations was taking coordination seriously but felt that it was essential to extend such coordination to all bilateral and multilateral partners, including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). In that regard, was the United Nations planning to take the lead in such broadened coordination? Was it also intending to improve coordination of its

activities in the field with those of the World Bank, notably in the form of common country assessments and common development strategies in each African country?

Mr. COLLINS (Observer for Guyana), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that effective coordination was quite obviously necessary if the United Nations wished to provide effective assistance to developing countries. However, the essential point was how such coordination could help in addressing the structural problems of underdevelopment and ensuring that the man in the street reaped the benefits of growth.

Mr. BAHAMONDES (Canada) said he understood that the participants in the Nairobi meeting had raised the possibility of integrating the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and the comprehensive development framework of the World Bank into the United Nations Special Initiative for Africa. What would be the main implications of the harmonization or merger of those two programmes? With regard to systematic monitoring and evaluation of priorities, had sectors other than education been covered?

Mrs. FRECHETTE (Deputy Secretary-General) replied that the aim was not to create new coordination mechanisms but to make better use of the ones already in existence. Those arrangements met the need to implement, in cooperation with the beneficiary countries, a coherent plan taking account of the priorities and contributions of the various partners. The United Nations was ready to spearhead such coordination whenever the situation allowed, i.e. when there was a representative of the Secretary-General and a multinational presence in the field. Other formulas might, of course, prove useful, as had been demonstrated by the partnership between the United Nations and the World Bank in Mozambique, for example. The essential point was that there should be agreement on the goals to be attained.

In deciding to assign primary responsibility for coordination to the beneficiary countries themselves, the United Nations was aware that some of them did not have the capacity to take on such a role. In those countries, it could provide the necessary assistance, notably through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which had the appropriate resources. That said,

coordination was not an end in itself and, however important, it could not be a substitute for devising suitable strategies to improve the living conditions of the population concerned.

With regard to the Nairobi meeting, the purpose had been to ensure follow-up not only of United Nations initiatives in the region, but also of the many sectoral programmes adopted for the region, each of which had its own coordination mechanism. It therefore seemed necessary to rationalize those arrangements, but without modifying the content or objectives of the various programmes. The participants had also emphasized the need to set measurable goals that could be systematically monitored and evaluated. Efforts in that direction had been made in the field of education, but also in other sectors. By taking such an approach, the United Nations could be more effective in the field and better assume its responsibilities both towards the Member States and towards donors.

The PRESIDENT thanked Mrs. Frechette for her valuable contribution to the discussion.

Mr. SOARES DAMICO (Brazil) said that while hunger, poverty and conflict in Africa continued to dominate the headlines, the events in recent years nevertheless raised hope of an "African renaissance". The end of apartheid in South Africa, the return to civilian government in Nigeria and the recent signing of a ceasefire agreement in the Democratic Republic of the Congo were all developments that boded well and deserved support. The international community should in particular help African States to establish mechanisms for conflict prevention and resolution, while ensuring respect for arms embargoes. For its part, Brazil continued to provide political support to Africa, as attested by its participation in the United Nations peacekeeping operations in Angola and Mozambique and its contribution to the negotiation of a ceasefire in Guinea Bissau.

The report of the Secretary-General (E/1999/79) showed that the period of economic growth experienced by African countries in the mid-1990s appeared to be receding. Foreign direct investment in Africa was minimal and concentrated in a few areas, while ODA continued to decline. His delegation accepted the recommendations made by the Secretary-General for reversing those trends, but noted that the document seldom dealt with the contribution of South-South cooperation to the development of Africa. It would, however, be

wise to devote more resources to technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC). With a population of which half had African origins, Brazil remained determined to work for the economic development of Africa, to which it devoted a large part of its TCDC projects, particularly in the fields of education, agriculture and social development. The international community must also strengthen its assistance to the region and thereby contribute to the full realization of the fundamental rights of Africans.

Mr. LIU Xinsheng (China) said that, despite some encouraging signs of recovery, the economic and social situation in Africa remained a matter of concern. Those difficulties were exacerbated by the lack of access to markets and the continued fall in international commodity prices. Instead of gaining benefit from economic globalization, African countries were experiencing its adverse effects and faced a real danger of being further marginalized. In view of that situation, the international community had adopted a number of bilateral and multilateral initiatives, and their success depended on effective coordination under the responsibility of the African countries themselves.

He hoped that the international community would have the necessary political will to help African countries in regard to access to markets, the mobilization of financial resources, external debt, the development of technological and managerial capacity, as well as human resources, and support for the reform process. For its part, China had made the strengthening of cooperation with African countries an important part of its foreign policy. On the basis of equality and mutual benefit, it would continue to contribute to the economic and social development of Africa with concrete actions.

Ms. MUÑOZ PRIETO (Cuba) welcomed the United Nations Special Initiative for Africa and the progress achieved in the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. She considered, however, that the United Nations system had not yet met all of its commitments to Africa and that the international community should display a more determined and enduring political will. The traditional donors and international financial institutions should increase financial resources targeted to African countries and expand the range of development assistance

programmes. The United Nations and other competent organizations should promote a climate conducive to foreign direct investment and increase ODA flows.

Her delegation supported the proposal made by the Group of 77 that the welcome initiative taken by the G-8 at the Cologne Summit should lead to the complete cancellation of the bilateral official debt of the poorest countries, particularly those affected by conflict or natural disasters. It felt that action by the United Nations system to support Africa could not be based on performance indicators, which were not only at variance with the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of States, but also introduced an element of subjectivity and conditionality.

Lastly, her delegation drew attention to the proposal it had made at the fifty-second session of the World Health Assembly to send very specialized medical and paramedical personnel to the remotest regions of the most deprived African countries, particularly those in sub-Saharan Africa. It hoped that such an initiative, from a poor country that was the victim of an unfair blockade and was experiencing great economic difficulties, would serve as an example to countries with more resources.

Mr. NENE (Observer for South Africa) associated himself with the statement made by the representative of Guyana on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. He welcomed the initiative taken by the G-8 at the Cologne Summit to alleviate the debt of poor countries. Nevertheless, he was concerned about the proposal that the IMF should finance that initiative by selling its gold reserves, as that would be bound to have an adverse impact on gold-producing developing countries.

South Africa was pursuing its economic integration efforts within the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Southern Africa was, however, confronted with the calamity of HIV/AIDS, which was threatening to drown developmental efforts. More effective strategies at national, regional and international levels should be mounted and it was deplorable that some multinationals, under the guise of protection of intellectual property rights, objected to parallel importation of affordable drugs which could help save the lives of millions of HIV-infected people.

His delegation wished to point out that the coordination and harmonization of international programmes for Africa should not be an end in

itself, but a process contributing to the development of the continent. The African continent was unfortunately grappling with new problems such as organized crime, drug trafficking and terrorism that it could not resolve without the support and partnership of the international community. He called on it to show the same resolve in addressing the humanitarian catastrophes in the Great Lakes and West African regions as it was currently demonstrating in Kosovo.

Mr. KHAN (Pakistan) associated himself with the statement made by Guyana on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. In order to meet the many challenges facing Africa, there was a need to institute a holistic strategy in which national efforts would be supported by the international community and by the United Nations system. It was essential to coordinate the assistance provided by the latter and from bilateral sources. The international community must have the political will to help Africa, especially the least developed African countries.

The international community had to set itself four priority goals in order to reverse the marginalization of Africa. Firstly, it must expand the debt initiative taken by the G-8 at the Cologne Summit by cancelling the bilateral official debt of the poorest countries and proposing special debt relief for countries emerging from conflict or affected by natural disasters. Secondly, it was important to facilitate the access of African products to developed countries' markets and to improve regional cooperation. Thirdly, the African countries should be encouraged to process their raw materials and should be given the requisite technologies and resources for that purpose. Fourthly, it was necessary to increase investment in human resources, as Pakistan had been doing for 10 years through its assistance programme for Africa.

Mr. ZAFERA (Observer for Madagascar) said that in Africa, and especially in LDCs, agriculture was still the principal sector of the economy and its development was the best way of accelerating growth and ensuring the diversification of exports. There were, however, still many obstacles to greater agricultural productivity, including the external debt problem, which limited both private and public investment, the decline in ODA flows, natural

disasters and difficulties in gaining access to markets. Efforts at both national and international level to overcome those obstacles remained insufficient.

He supported all the initiatives for Africa launched by the United Nations system. He also welcomed the initiative to alleviate the debt of heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC) launched by the World Bank and the IMF, as well as other initiatives taken by the donor community. His delegation particularly appreciated the new initiative of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) concerning integrated technical cooperation programmes and the convening, in October 1999, of the Dakar conference on industrial partnership and investment in Africa. In order to avoid any dispersion of efforts, it was vital to optimize collaboration between the various United Nations mechanisms, potential donors and interested governments. Unfortunately, the means available to intergovernmental organizations to carry through their international technical assistance programmes were insufficient.

His delegation wished to emphasize that the economic development of Africa was the primary responsibility of Africans and that Africans had shown their willingness to undertake political and economic reforms to ensure sustainable growth and development. Several governments, including his own, had made numerous efforts to combat poverty. Nevertheless, they needed the help of the international community to resolve various internal problems caused by factors for which they could not be entirely blamed. The international community had a duty to support African development efforts.

Mr. NGOUBEYOU (Observer for Cameroon) said that United Nations activities were producing concrete results, especially in such key areas as social development, the elimination of discrimination against women, the development of trade and good governance. For the African countries to achieve economic growth of 7 per cent annually, the rate recommended by the World Summit for Social Development to combat poverty effectively, it was necessary to enhance and systematize the coordination of development initiatives and increase the volume of resources allocated to finance development. His delegation was in favour of harmonization of the activities of the United Nations system and those of other bilateral and multilateral donors in the field, provided that the recipient country remained in charge of

its economic policy, which in particular meant that a special effort was needed to develop local capacities. It also welcomed the Secretary-General's approach to the coordination at regional level of action by agencies working for African development. While the international community obviously had to commit itself to making further resources available to Africa, a fundamental solution to the issue of indebtedness would enable African economies to release more resources for public investment. In that context, his delegation welcomed the HIPC initiative taken by the G-8 at the Cologne Summit and hoped that the greatest possible number of countries would benefit from an equitable relaxation of the criteria.

Mr. LAHIRI (India) said that his country had always attached the greatest importance to the development of economic cooperation with Africa. Under its economic and technical cooperation programme, for example, many foreign nationals, nearly 60 per cent of whom were from African countries, received training in India in various sectors. Technical assistance projects were also conducted in Africa, where India was associated with regional cooperation efforts undertaken by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Although the economic situation had improved in Africa, growth would be insufficient to reduce poverty significantly. As the African countries were mainly producers of commodities, which had suffered from deteriorating terms of trade, their integration into world markets would not serve any useful purpose until the terms of integration were beneficial to them. In that regard, it was impossible for African farmers to compete with their heavily subsidized western counterparts.

His delegation welcomed the HIPC debt alleviation initiative taken at the Cologne Summit. That initiative must not, however, be financed by selling gold reserves, since a drop in the price of gold would have adverse consequences for African producer countries, nor should it lead to a corresponding reduction in ODA. The WHO "roll back malaria" initiative was to be welcomed since that disease was jeopardizing Africa's social and economic development. It was deplorable, however, that victims of the AIDS epidemic could not be helped by generic drugs, which would reduce treatment costs by half. At the same time, his delegation welcomed the programme on job creation in Africa. While noting the progress made in coordination of the activities

of the United Nations system, it was against any collaboration with the comprehensive development framework of the World Bank. Lastly, it wished to emphasize that coordination was pointless when donors increasingly took unilateral measures and failed to respect priority areas identified by the African countries, which needed help from the international community within the framework of a real partnership.

Mr. FEDOTOV (Russian Federation) said that the Secretary-General's report (A/54/133-E/1999/79) constituted a sound basis for cooperation. It was important not to relax efforts to provide assistance to Africa and to endeavour, in areas such as the strengthening of the rule of law and democracy, to strike a balance between international experience and the traditions and particularities of each country, bearing in mind that the African countries themselves ultimately had to choose the methods of reform which best suited them. The Russian Federation was contributing to multilateral assistance and establishing ad hoc cooperation projects with African countries in precisely that spirit. It was encouraged by the progress in regional and subregional integration and believed that social development deserved priority attention. It also considered that African countries must continue to be helped to find better ways of adapting to the conditions of globalization and it welcomed the debt relief measures taken by the G-8. Action by the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity and governments in the search for peace should be intensified and the Russian Federation welcomed the specific measures taken by African countries to mobilize their own conflict prevention and resolution capabilities. Every effort should be made to elaborate concerted strategies for conflict resolution in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations.

United Nations assistance in the humanitarian field was of great importance for African countries, enabling them not only to deal with emergency situations but also to strengthen their capacity for intervention. The Russian Federation had, for its part, taken specific bilateral and multilateral measures to train African humanitarian officials. It wished to underline the need to strengthen cooperation between donor countries and the international institutions, as well as the coordinating role of the

United Nations to prevent the still too numerous cases of overlapping, and felt that it would be desirable to associate the World Bank more actively in the implementation of the United Nations Special Initiative for Africa.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ-CEDEÑO (Venezuela) associated himself with the statement made by the representative of Guyana on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The development of Africa, based on the priorities defined by the African countries themselves having regard to their specific circumstances, involved the elimination of internal conflicts and the establishment of lasting peace throughout the continent.

The development effort was, of course, above all the responsibility of African countries, but the duty of solidarity – and the properly conceived interest of all nations – required the international community to support that effort by every possible means. Developed countries must facilitate growth in the African economies by adopting debt relief and trade liberalization measures. There was also a need to increase the flow of financial resources, including not only private and public investment, but also ODA, which made an essential contribution to the implementation of policies concerning education, health, the improvement of infrastructures and the reintegration of refugees and displaced persons.

The international institutions should play an even more active and effective role in that process, which meant strengthening coordination both among the various entities of the United Nations system and between those entities and the governments of recipient countries. Good coordination was necessary for follow-up and evaluation of the measures undertaken.

Lastly, his delegation believed that it was essential to apply the recommendations made by the Secretary-General in his report concerning measures to promote good governance, social development and the advancement of women.

Mr. RACHIDI (Morocco) associated himself with the statement made by the representative of Guyana on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Despite the progress achieved by several African countries – as revealed in the mid-term review of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s – Africa's economic and social problems remained disturbing and the commitments made by the international community had not been fully realized. African countries remained heavily handicapped by the

debt burden; the fall in commodity prices, the difficulties of market access and the high cost of transport on the continent were all factors that sapped the recovery effort of African countries having to depend on ODA that continued to decline in spite of the objectives set by the General Assembly.

The United Nations Special Initiative for Africa, the operational component of the New Agenda, had certainly made it possible to strengthen collective action at regional level but the absence of a coordinating mechanism at subregional level limited the effectiveness of such action. In general terms, the proliferation of programmes and initiatives over the past 15 years raised the question of arrangements for coordination. The Special Initiative's role in that regard had not been defined clearly enough. Since the approach of the United Nations system as a whole must be guided by Africa's own priorities, which were rapidly changing, moreover, it was essential to incorporate the various interventions in an integrated economic and social framework involving all the entities concerned, including the Bretton Woods institutions. Consideration should also be given to the creation of an African development fund to ensure the implementation of concerted initiatives.

Mr. LEPATAN (Observer for the Philippines), referring to the magnitude of the problems besetting the African continent, said that despite some progress the economic picture was still rather grim. The fight against poverty remained a priority for most African countries. It was encouraging that many of them had already begun to take the initiative in that regard. However, the enormous debt burden continued to jeopardise the recovery effort. In that context, the HIPC initiative was particularly timely. It was up to the developed countries to release the necessary resources for its funding. ODA must also return to levels in proportion to the needs of the African continent.

In the long run, the opening of markets and the stabilization of commodity prices were essential to give Africa the means to gain its economic autonomy. The next round of multilateral trade negotiations should permit the better integration of African countries, and especially LDCs, in world trade flows. UNCTAD and UNDP were helping them to prepare for those negotiations.

The developed countries had to give meaning to the promise made in the WTO framework to grant preferential treatment to African countries in sectors crucial for their economies.

Assistance from the United Nations system was increasingly taking over from ODA. Many of the programmes instituted by various entities were thus playing a key role in the development of Africa's economic capacities. The mid-term review of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s had identified priority areas requiring attention. The challenge now was to harmonize the various initiatives - both bilateral and multilateral - and to establish mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation of local implementation of the New Agenda, which should constitute a unifying framework. Greater synergy and closer coordination among the various components of the United Nations system would certainly help African countries acquire full control of their development.

Mr. REYES RODRIGUEZ (Colombia) said that the development of Africa above all required a firm commitment by African leaders to their peoples, the role of the international community being to promote and support national and regional initiatives. That was the guideline defined in the New Agenda.

In his delegation's view, peace was a prerequisite for development. It was also necessary to create an enabling environment, both at national level, by seeking to promote democracy, rural development and the participation of civil society, and at the international level, through a greater openness of markets and debt relief, among other measures. South-South cooperation could play a greater role in that regard.

National capacity-building was likewise necessary, in particular to draw greater benefit from external cooperation. Lastly, in the context of declining ODA, available financial resources had to be used more effectively through better coordination and rigorous evaluation of the initiatives undertaken by Africa's partners as a whole.

Mr. MANGOANELA (Lesotho) said that while the Secretary-General noted in his report (A/54/133-E/1999/79) numerous actions undertaken in Africa by entities of the United Nations system and bilateral partners, he did not indicate clearly what their impact had been on the economic situation of the

continent. His delegation particularly commended the ILO initiatives on exploiting the potential of the informal sector as a means of reducing poverty, including among the female population.

His Government had made great efforts in the field of education: the annual budget for education had been increased by 4 per cent in real terms, making it possible to attain an adult literacy rate of 70.5 per cent. Furthermore, the Government had decided to introduce free primary education beginning in the year 2000; that initiative had not, however, received the support that Lesotho had been expecting from its partners.

There was an urgent need to stop the reduction of resource flows to Africa. It was essential for the Council to set realistic and measurable goals in that regard.

Lesotho was supporting the various measures aimed at relieving the debt burden on African countries, including as part of the HIPC initiative, but warned against the adverse effects of some financing arrangements that paradoxically would weaken the economies of other countries: for example, the drop in the price of gold caused by the United Kingdom's sale of gold reserves to finance debt alleviation measures had already brought about the closure of several mines in South Africa, causing unemployment among the many inhabitants of Lesotho working at those mines.

Mr. FASEHUN (World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)) referred to some of the actions pursued by WIPO to strengthen the capacity of African countries in the field of the protection of intellectual property. Under the WIPOnet programme, two regional organizations – the African Intellectual Property Organization and the African Regional Industrial Property Organization – had been identified to implement two pilot projects for the establishment of local area networks. It was furthermore planned to link all African States members of WIPO to WIPO Headquarters and thereby facilitate their access to information on schemes for the protection of intellectual property.

WIPO was also helping African countries to assume their obligations under the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS Agreement). The assistance provided covered four main areas: legislation, human resources development, institution building and modernization, and enforcement. In that latter field, 48 training courses had

been organized between 1996 and 1999. Lastly, in 1998 WIPO had established a least-developed countries unit in the Cooperation for Development Sector. That unit was currently supervising 44 ongoing projects in 38 LDCs.

Mr. KONANDREAS (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)) said that FAO was responding to the development needs of Africa through a wide range of technical assistance projects and programmes. In addition to implementing the Special Programme for Food Security in 25 African countries, it had contributed to the preparation of draft strategies for national agricultural development to the year 2010 and was cooperating with the secretariats of several regional and subregional subgroupings for the preparation of draft regional strategies for agriculture development and food security. The ACC Network on Rural Development and Food Security was a useful coordination mechanism and 31 national thematic groups established in Africa within that network were serving as very effective forums. FAO was furthermore contributing to agriculture policy analysis and planning in several African countries. In the trade area, it would shortly be carrying out a substantial programme aimed at training a core of some three to four trade officials from each African country with a view to enhancing national capacities and preparing them for the next round of multilateral trade negotiations. It was also endeavouring to strengthen national and local capacities for emergency and disaster prevention, in close collaboration with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. In 1999, 11 FAO emergency interventions had been approved in African countries with a budget of more than US\$ 22 million.

In the fisheries sector, FAO was collaborating with other partners in the development of appropriate policy and institutional environments to foster sustainable fisheries management and improve food security in Africa. Lastly, it had launched a forestry outlook study for Africa to provide a framework for African countries to shape their own national programmes and form a basis for the review of forestry portfolios of lending institutions, investors, development partners and the private sector.

Mr. ROBERFROID (United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)) said that even though broad agreements existed on priorities and strategies to create an enabling environment in and with Africa, it was regrettable that Council members had not expressed more resolutely their concern for the deteriorating

situation of women and children, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. Programmes to reduce infant mortality, combat disease and malnutrition and promote universal primary education had helped to improve health coverage and increase school enrolment, but the progress achieved was fragile. Those priority activities were suffering from a demobilization of the international community and an absence of strategic follow-up that would have lasting effects on African societies. The international community had a particular responsibility towards each child.

The United Nations system had the necessary coordination instruments to increase the synergy between its various elements. Through its presence in the field, UNICEF was pursuing its collaboration with other entities of the system, with Africa remaining a priority for it. In eastern and southern Africa, many country programmes were designed to increase the capacity of communities to meet the challenge of controlling HIV/AIDS. That action, together with control of malaria, would contribute to the reduction of maternal death.

The international community had to support the development efforts of the African continent, for which the latter remained primarily responsible. It should increase ODA and target it better, adhere to the 20/20 commitment, reduce the debt burden to allow for increased allocations to basic services and contribute to the diversification of African economies. UNICEF could be a catalyst with children and young people to move towards more accountability and wider participation in decision-making.

Mr. HUSSEIN (Observer for Kenya) said that the measures taken by the Secretary-General to enhance the coordination of development activities would enable assistance to be more focused and funding priorities harmonized with national objectives. His delegation wished to thank the United Nations system for the substantial assistance it provided to Kenya through the UNDP country programme. Kenya's integration into the world economy entailed a strategic diversification and his country needed the skills and technology to promote sustainable development, including through South-South cooperation. Coordination of the activities of various institutions in the TCDC context had unfortunately been inadequate, at the international as well as at the country level, and must be strengthened.

African countries hoped that the current negotiations between the European Union and the countries of Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP) with a view to the conclusion of a new trade and development agreement would be successful and his delegation urged the United Nations system to support such arrangements, which would enable the countries concerned to improve their competitiveness and address the challenges of globalization. Kenya continued to facilitate closer regional integration as a means of promoting peace and development. It had been seeking peaceful solutions to the conflicts in the Horn of Africa and would like the United Nations system to intensify its support for regional peace initiatives. African countries had, moreover, taken bold initiatives to promote intraregional trade and cross-border investments. The Heads of State and Government of COMESA (Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa) at their fourth Summit, held in May 1999 at Nairobi, had announced the establishment of a free-trade area by October 2000. Other regional groupings in Africa were taking similar measures and his delegation commended ECA for its support to those groupings.

Mr. HYNES (Canada), recalling his country's enduring commitment to Africa, said that the international community could not do more, but must not do less, to help African countries in shaping their own development. Although seldom making the headlines, the initiatives taken by African countries in recent years had produced significant developments in the political, economic and social fields, and such progress should be supported. Considering the enormous human and economic costs of civil conflict, however, the United Nations needed to continue to strengthen its conflict prevention and resolution capabilities. At the same time, while the United Nations could not shrink from its responsibilities in Africa, there was no substitute for home-grown political will. Recently demonstrated African leadership in developing Africa's own conflict prevention, management and resolution capacities was to be applauded.

His delegation endorsed the Secretary-General's assessment of obstacles to Africa's integration into the world market and of the measures to be taken to remedy the situation. Canada, for its part, allocated over 40 per cent of its bilateral aid to Africa. There was significant direct investment by Canadian companies in numerous African countries where an open and transparent domestic system was being put in place. Canada had also set up a fund to help

African countries participate fully in the next round of multilateral trade negotiations. Lastly, it hoped that the debt alleviation measures taken recently by the G-8 would enable the poorest African countries to dedicate more resources to social priorities.

Since a central preoccupation of the Council must be that of effective coordination among institutions and donor countries at both headquarters and field levels, Canada encouraged the Deputy Secretary-General to make maximum use of the machinery of the Administrative Committee on Coordination and the annual regional coordination meetings and emphasized the importance of collaboration between the United Nations system and the international financial institutions. If the Council could adopt some practical recommendations to encourage and facilitate further progress in such directions, it would have made a modest, but real, contribution to the cause of development in Africa.

Mr. TIDJANI-SERPOS (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)) said that Africa must cease to be the topic of discussion by others and become the subject of its own deliberations. It was with a view to leaving to Africans themselves the task of defining the priorities for their continent that UNESCO had as early as 1995 convened the "Audience Africa" meeting in Paris. It had been emphasized on that occasion that Africa must take control of its own destiny and, in order to exploit all of its capacities, must have confidence in itself; and that for its development it needed both democracy - democracy being understood not as a model to be copied but as an objective to be attained - and peace, the goal being to replace the culture of war with the culture of peace. In the search for peace, the concept of a "right to intervene" must give way to that of a "refusal to remain indifferent", the latter being more consistent with the African cultural vision of the duty of solidarity. It was by taking account of all those points raised by Africans themselves that consideration should be given to the problems associated with the implementation and coordinated follow-up by the United Nations system of the initiatives for African development. Such coordination had to respect the fields of competence of each institution in order to avoid duplication and confusion in the field.

Mr. BOUAH-KAMON (Observer for Côte d'Ivoire) remarked that Africa was being given less and less priority now that new States requiring aid from

the international community had emerged on the world scene. The efforts made to enhance coordination to compensate for the decline in available resources should improve the quality of development programmes but they did not exclude the need to find additional resources. In order to be effective, the coordination provided for by the Council should be aimed at the establishment of an appropriate framework for collaboration, the evaluation of action programmes undertaken and progress achieved, the definition of future guidelines and the identification of obstacles in Africa to the realization of the goals of the major conferences.

The Council should encourage the United Nations bodies concerned with development to devise an effective strategy for the mobilization of resources, to reduce the administrative costs of programmes by a regrouping of services, to train and use national capacities in order to reduce salary and wage costs, to support regional and subregional initiatives to contribute to the building of the African economic community, to work in close cooperation with the competent African institutions to accelerate the process of economic integration in Africa, to associate the beneficiaries in the design and execution of programmes, to consult and involve competent African NGOs and to collaborate with ECA. The Council should, in addition, make sure that country notes and operational activities reflected coordination efforts in the fields of poverty reduction, the autonomy and advancement of women, access to basic social services and access to employment and means of earning a living.

The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.