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PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 36th MEETING
(SECOND PART)*

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 22 July 1999, at 2.30 p.m.

<u>President</u> :	Mr. WIBISONO (Vice-President)	(Indonesia)
later :	Mr. VALDIVIESO (Vice-President)	(Colombia)
later :	Mr. WIBISONO (Vice-President)	(Indonesia)

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* The summary record of the first part of the meeting appears as document E/1999/SR.36.

The summary record of the third part of the meeting appears as document E/1999/SR.36/Add.2.

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The meeting was resumed at 5.10 p.m.

COORDINATION, PROGRAMME AND OTHER QUESTIONS: (agenda item 7) (continued)

- (a) REPORTS OF COORDINATION BODIES (continued) (A/154/16, E/1999/48
and E/1999/103)

Mr. SOARES DAMICO (Brazil) said that his country associated itself, as a participant in the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti, with the statements made by the Haitian Ambassador and by the representative of Guyana on behalf of the Group of 77 and of China. As one of the staunchest supporters of better coordination between the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council, Brazil considered that countries emerging from conflicts required support from the international community and that the Economic and Social Council had a major role to play in coordinating the assistance provided by the many donors. The mandate of the Advisory Group was very clearly defined in the Council's resolution 1999/4. As stated by the Prime Minister of Haiti, the Group's task was to strengthen the capacity of the Haitian State to take charge of its responsibilities in regard to development. Its recommendations must therefore be balanced and enjoy the full support of the Government. The group's report was in conformity with the mandate defined; his delegation hoped that the Council would support its recommendations and that a text could be adopted by consensus.

Mr. CHANDAVARKAR (United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)) said that UNDP, which had for many years been supporting Haiti's development efforts, was very encouraged by the measures taken with a view to shortly holding elections. The Haitian authorities were preparing, with UNDP's help together with that of the World Bank, the IMF, UNCTAD, WTO and the International Trade Centre (ITC), an international meeting on trade scheduled for September. Planned within the integrated framework for trade-related technical assistance, including assistance for the enhancement of human and institutional capacities, with a view to helping the least developed countries in their commercial and trade-related activities, the meeting was designed to assist Haiti in developing its exports, creating jobs and strengthening its public and private institutions.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ CELENO (Venezuela), in his capacity as coordinator of the "Friends of Haiti", congratulated the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on its report (E/1999/103) and its extremely important recommendations. He unreservedly endorsed the statement made by Guyana on behalf of the Group of 77 and of China and stressed the need for the international community to give resolute backing to the economic, social and political development process under way in Haiti by providing effective and coordinated assistance and taking concrete measures to enable that country, the poorest in the region, to extricate itself for good from the crisis. That assistance must centre upon the fight against poverty and AIDS and on strengthening of institutions and it must correspond to the Haitian Government's priorities, with extensive involvement of all the economic and social players, particularly those dealing with education and health.

Ms. KING (United States of America) said that the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) had not yet realized its full potential. As noted in the Committee's annual overview report (E/1999/48), it was important in particular to exchange information on the new policy directions, strategic plans and new programme priorities adopted by the various organizations. The United States noted with satisfaction that ACC intended to strengthen consultation and cooperation within the system through increased use of information and communication technologies. It would be desirable for future reports to contain specific examples of the results achieved through the coordination efforts of ACC, which should regularly inform the Council of its activities.

The Committee on Programme and Coordination (CPC) should endeavour to ensure that work plans were consistent with the basic mandates reflecting strategic goals and not try to renegotiate those goals and mandates. Self-evaluation by programme managers and establishment of clear criteria of performance were crucial in that regard.

Turning to the calendar of conferences, she remarked that the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice was scheduled to meet at the same time as the Commission on Human Rights. Again, the preparatory session of the Commission on the Status of Women was planned for the same period as the session of the Commission on Human Rights, though both required the presence of the same experts. The calendar of conferences should therefore be reviewed. Finally, conferences and meetings must be arranged to take place at least eight weeks

before the substantive session of the Council, as provided for in the relevant resolutions, so that reports could be circulated and studied before the opening of the session.

Mr. PANKIN (Russian Federation) said that the Council's resolution 1999 was a very important contribution to settling Haiti's problems and his delegation was ready to take part in preparing a draft resolution on the question. ACC's report for 1998 represented a step forward in so far as the approach adopted was more analytical, but it still contained no specific recommendations on strengthening interaction with Member States nor any strategic vision for the future. No time must be lost in putting into effect a concerted United Nations strategy for the reconstruction of Yugoslavia and the other Balkan countries and ACC must pay all due attention to the development of Africa. With regard to cooperation between the United Nations system and the non-governmental sector, he pointed out that there already existed a mechanism, defined by the General Assembly and the Council, for that purpose. The strengthening of that cooperation must proceed without undue haste and in agreement with the Member States. Supporting the idea of a strategic framework that would enable the system to respond in a more unified way to emergencies, the Russian delegation was awaiting with keen interest the results of the studies to develop general guidelines applicable to intervention in crisis situations. ACC must also step up its efforts, currently limited to convening a group of experts, in the matter of assistance to countries invoking article 50 of the United Nations Charter. While recognizing the usefulness of information meetings, his delegation thought it would be more to the purpose to append to ACC's reports a description of the activities conducted by it during the first half of the current year. Regretting the late submission of the 1998 report, which precluded the Council from examining in depth the questions before it, he suggested either shortening the time allowed for submission of reports, even if that meant submitting them in non-final form, or changing the dates for ACC's spring session. Finally, his delegation was ready to take part in drafting a resolution on the 39th session of ACC, the results of whose deliberations it globally approved even though it had serious misgivings about several paragraphs of the report.

Mr. KÄÄRIÄINEN (Observer for Finland), taking the floor on behalf of the countries of the European Union and the countries associated with it,

together with Cyprus, Malta and Liechtenstein, said that the European Union would have liked to see in the report on the work of ACC an account of the Committee's activities up to the end of the first half of the current year and would appreciate it if that could be arranged in future. Welcoming the steps taken to streamline and strengthen the work of ACC, the European Union considered that the Committee had an important part to play in ensuring that the many interlinked issues dealt with by the various agencies were tackled in a holistic and mutually reinforcing manner. ACC and the Council must cooperate effectively to make the reform process within the United Nations system mutually supportive and promote cross-fertilization of ideas, information and experience. The briefings given by the secretariat about the work of ACC were conducive to transparency and interaction and should be held promptly after the Committee's sessions. Publication of briefing notes on the outcome of ACC's discussions would be useful; a balance must be found between the demand for transparency and the suggestion in the report that the secretariat heads should have informal exchanges of views about current issues and global problems.

The three main topics considered in the report " poverty, globalization and Africa " were of special importance. The problems of Africa and of fighting poverty were multidimensional and called for holistic strategies. To meet the challenges of globalization, the United Nations system must act in concert with other international organizations, with due regard to the specific competence of each player.

Regarding evaluation of the follow-up to major conferences, ACC and in particular its Subcommittee on Statistical Activities, which was collaborating very constructively with the Statistical Commission, could contribute to developing common indicators for evaluation. The European Union, noting with satisfaction that reforms remained high on the agenda and that the report gave all due attention to the broadening of partnerships within the system as well as with other international organizations and civil society, would like fuller study to be given to the idea of closer cooperation with the private sector. Concerning the outline of ACC's programme of work for 1999, the European Union particularly welcomed the focus on identifying the challenges ahead for the United Nations system and on the preparation of the millennium assembly.

The PRESIDENT, recalling the amendment proposed by Canada to the report of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti (E/1999/103), said that in the

absence of objections he would take it that the Council approved that amendment as indicated at the morning meeting (E/1999/SR.35).

It was so decided.

(b) PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 2000-2001

Mr. PANKIN (Russian Federation) noted with satisfaction that the draft programme budget was in line with the medium-term planning priorities, that the proposed appropriations for peace-keeping operations were sufficient, and that the level of expenditure was lower than the amount approved by the General Assembly. He noted, however, with concern a trend towards increasing the number of top-level posts, in contradiction with the current reform process.

He hoped that the manner of presentation of the budget would be improved and that the search for economies would continue without jeopardizing the programmes of the United Nations.

Mr. REYES (Cuba) expressed reservations concerning section 22 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001 as reviewed by the Committee for Programme and Coordination in its report on the work of its thirty-ninth session (A/54/16). The programmes planned were not in keeping with the evaluation conducted by the Committee and, above all, the mandates and activities relating to economic, social and cultural rights and to realization of the right to development were treated as of secondary importance. Furthermore, the funds allocated to preparing for the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, planned for 2001, were quite insufficient. Again, the programme of work proposed in that chapter comprised activities concerning which the intergovernmental organizations had not yet taken any decision, while the issues of very special concern to the developing countries, such as the status of women and social questions, were treated like poor relations. In some areas the number of posts had been increased while in others all recruitment was frozen. Cuba reserved the right to raise all those matters again at the next session of the General Assembly.

Tobacco-free Initiative

Dr. YACH (World Health Organization (WHO)) said that the annual number of deaths caused by tobacco were set to rise from a current 4 million to about 10 million by 2030, with 70 per cent occurring in the developing countries. Despite overwhelming scientific evidence, the tobacco industry continued to deny the harmful health effects of tobacco. The deforestation due to tobacco production methods had serious environmental implications, especially in developing countries. It was the gravity of that situation which had prompted WHO's Director-General to make the "Tobacco-Free Initiative" one of the first projects of her term of office.

Those responsible for the initiative realized that tobacco control required the creation of partnerships to apply global and national strategies for tackling the economic and social aspects of tobacco production and consumption. Thus, in the bilateral sphere, WHO had been cooperating with UNICEF in tobacco control activities among children and young people, with IMF and the World Bank on tobacco taxation, and with FAO in seeking alternative means of livelihood for tobacco producers. In the private sector, WHO had restricted its alliances to the pharmaceutical industry alone, believing that partnership with the tobacco industry would not be ethically justified. At the country level, aware of their crucial role, WHO was closely associating non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and local communities in its tobacco control efforts among young people and women and in exploring new strategies in the area of recourse to litigation.

At the international level, WHO's Member States had unanimously adopted resolution WHA52.18, paving the way for the negotiation of a framework convention on tobacco control. By confronting the cross-border problems of tobacco control, such a framework convention would provide useful back-up to the measures taken at the national level. For its part, the United Nations system must urgently put into place a strengthened coordination mechanism. The Director-General of WHO had accordingly proposed, in consultation with the Secretary-General of UNCTAD, the creation of a special inter-agency group, under WHO's leadership, to replace the focal point previously set up within UNCTAD. The United Nations Secretary General had approved that proposal and asked for the matter to be brought to the attention of the Economic and Social Council.

Mr. KANBAUWA (Observer for Malawi) recalled that in its resolution 1993/79 the Council had requested the Secretary General to establish a focal point for the coordination of multisectoral collaboration on the economic and social aspects of tobacco production and consumption. The focal point had thereupon been set up within UNCTAD. In several of its resolutions the World Health Assembly had instructed WHO's Director General to cooperate with the United Nations bodies through the intermediary of the focal point on "tobacco or health". In the resolution adopted in the current year, however, the World Health Assembly made no mention of that focal point or of multisectoral cooperation. In view of the many initiatives taken on the subject of tobacco control, Malawi hoped that the Council would request the Secretary General to submit to it at its next substantive session a progress report on the activities of the focal point. He added that the Zimbabwean delegation associated itself with his statement.

Mr. ÖZÜRGERGIN (Turkey) welcomed the Tobacco-Free Initiative, thanks to which he hoped it would be possible to address the public health risks posed by tobacco consumption, especially among women and young people. The need to give wider scope to that initiative was a good reason for negotiating and rapidly adopting a framework convention on tobacco control. In that connection, the Turkish delegation wished to stress that the cornerstone of such negotiations must be the widest possible participation of Member States and of all levels of public opinion in those countries. Further, the framework convention must have a clear, precise and unchallengeable objective and its provisions must be centred upon the issues involved in tobacco control, which were the concern and province of WHO. The adoption of a general text accompanied by additional protocols would constitute a flexible and realistic approach.

Ms. VOGEL (United States of America) said that her country, though a major producer of tobacco, unreservedly supported the initiative. The scientific evidence accumulated on the dangers of tobacco consumption was eloquent enough to convince anyone of the need to protect consumers against the dishonest practices of tobacco manufacturers, who specially targeted vulnerable groups such as children and young people. Tobacco addiction was unquestionably a public health issue, and the United States delegation welcomed the leadership role assigned to WHO in tobacco control. The focal point set up in UNCTAD had

indeed done valuable work, but many United Nations bodies were not sufficiently associated in its activities. There was therefore every justification for transferring from UNCTAD to WHO the responsibility for coordinating multisectoral cooperation in the realm of tobacco control.

Mr. URANGA (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)) said that the focal point of which he was the responsible officer in UNCTAD had been keen to cooperate with all United Nations bodies, especially WHO. He was proud to see at the date of speaking that that cooperation was giving concrete results through the opening of negotiations with a view to the adoption of a framework convention on tobacco control. With regard to multisectoral coordination and cooperation, while ACC had approved the setting up of a special inter-agency group under the authority of WHO, it had in no way decided to abolish the focal point. What was more, the World Health Assembly had requested WHO to seek the cooperation of the United Nations system, subject to coordination by the focal point. The situation might thus appear confused, making it necessary, as the observer for Malawi had requested, to include the matter in the agenda for the next substantive session of the Council.

Dr. YACH (WHO) said that his organization fully intended to associate all member States and all parties competent in the public health field in the negotiations for a framework convention on tobacco control. He agreed with the representative of Turkey that the most suitable approach would be to adopt the general text of the convention and then some additional protocols. As to the coordination of multisectoral cooperation with the United Nations, it was clear that the Secretary-General of UNCTAD approved the creation of a special inter-agency group under the direction of WHO. The focal point set up in UNCTAD had proved very useful in the past, but in current circumstances, with tobacco addiction causing such grave concern, a new strategy was imperative. In conclusion, he agreed as to the need to include the matter again in the agenda of the next substantive session of the Council.

WHO's "Rollback malaria" initiative

Mr. NABARRO (WHO) said that every year 1.5 million people died from malaria and 500 million new cases occurred. The "Rollback malaria" initiative launched in 1998 by WHO's Director-General aimed at instituting a partnership

between Governments and development agencies. The success of the initiative would depend upon the full involvement therein of countries and local communities. The global partnership to roll-back malaria established between the President of the World Bank, the Executive Director of UNICEF, the Administrator of UNDP and the Director-General of WHO brought together not only development agencies and Governments, but also NGOs, private firms and research institutes. Its objective was to halve the prevalence of malaria by the year 2010. It was neither a project nor a programme, but a social movement operating within the wider framework of health and human development and emphasizing concrete activities. Countries and local populations, especially the poorest and, among them, women and children, were the prime target of that movement, which was backed by various partners carrying out independent and concerted actions aimed at strengthening health-service capacities. Governments were currently working out with their partners their own plans of action, with help not only from WHO but also from many other international organizations which would provide technical support. During the coming months WHO would be preparing a global work plan.

The initiative also aimed at sponsoring partnerships between the public and private sectors with a view to developing new medicines and diagnostic tools. The efforts made to reduce countries' dependence on DDT for mosquito control would increase the cost of the project. A database accessible through the Internet would be set up and would enable the progress achieved to be monitored by country and by indicator. For the initiative to succeed, it was essential that WHO should reorganize its activities, that Governments should give it their full support, that the methods used should continue to be as effective as possible, and that sufficient resources should be made available as and when needed.

Mr. Valdivieso (Colombia) took the Chair.

Ms. VOGEL (United States of America), referring to paragraph 575 of the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination on the work of its thirty-ninth session (A/54/16), expressed satisfaction that, thanks to WHO's initiative, malaria was at last receiving the attention that the problem deserved. If all countries and all United Nations bodies put their shoulders to the wheel in the global partnership, it would, she thought, be possible to reach the target set for the year 2010. The United Nations development bodies would,

she was sure, join in the initiative, which must also, if it was to succeed, mobilize the local communities in all the countries concerned.

(c) JOINT AND CO-SPONSORED UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMME ON HUMAN IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS/ACQUIRED IMMUNODEFICIENCY SYNDROME (HIV/AIDS) (E/1999/64 and E/1999/NGO/5)

(d) INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF INFORMATICS (E/1999/74)

Ms. COLL-SECK (Director, UNAIDS) introduced the Secretary-General's note on the Joint and Co-sponsored United Nations Programme on Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) (E/1999/64), set up in pursuance of resolution 1999/52 of the Council. The report analysed the current status of the HIV/AIDS epidemic and reviewed the efforts undertaken by the Programme's secretariat, the co-sponsoring organizations or agencies, and other partners to promote more effective and better-coordinated action at the country level in the context of United Nations reform. She hoped the Council would support the recommendations set out in the conclusions to the report.

Mr. Wibisono (Indonesia) resumed the Chair.

Mr. MANGOELA (Chairman, Ad Hoc Open-Ended Working Group on Informatics) introduced the report of the Secretary-General on international cooperation in the field of informatics (E/1999/74), submitted in compliance with the Council's resolution 1998/29. He summarized the progress made in the information services offered to member States. Among the most recent achievements, he mentioned the creation of the Economic and Social Council Web site and the broadcasting on the Internet of the proceedings of the high-level debate recently held in Geneva. Finally, he indicated that the governing body of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) had approved the creation of a network linking together all the diplomatic missions in Geneva (Network for the Geneva Diplomatic Community, or GDCnet), which would facilitate exchange of information between the United Nations system and the Member States.

Ms. KING (United States of America) said that the decision to entrust to UNAIDS the functions of secretariat of the cosponsoring agencies was beginning to bear fruit. The adoption of the first unified budget/work plan was

an important milestone, but there was still some way to go. Noting with gratification that the Group of 77 stressed the role and responsibility of Governments in controlling the epidemic, the United States wished to point out that, while political will and programmes of education and prevention were essential, adequate financial means must also be available. Her country therefore urged all Members to respond generously to the coordinated appeal for funds.

With regard to informatics, the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Informatics had done much to alert Member States to the problem of the Millennium bug and get the United Nations system itself ready for the transition to the year 2000. The United States was eager to work with Mr. Mangoela, the new Chairman of the Group, towards creating the "electronic United Nations" desired by the Secretary-General.

Mr. KHAN (Pakistan), speaking on item 7 (d), said that his country attached great importance to the activities of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Informatics, which had done much to create awareness of the information revolution throughout the United Nations system, to facilitate access to United Nations databases, and to focus attention on the problem of the passage to the year 2000. His delegation approved the actions taken by the Secretary General to solve that problem. It considered that the Ad Hoc Working Group would be better able to promote its objectives if it was provided with an expanded resource base. He would like to see an ad hoc United Nations/private sector task force set up to identify possible areas of cooperation. It was in his delegations' view, imperative to formulate regional programmes aimed at helping developing countries to gain a foothold in the electronic trade sector.

It looked forward to intensification of efforts on the part of UNDP to promote utilization at the country level of information technologies that would facilitate exchange of expertise on sustainable development. Finally, the Information Users' Group at Geneva was urged to continue working to get all the missions connected to the Internet, and the specialized agencies were invited to put computers at the disposal of the missions of developing countries.

Ms. CASSAM (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)), taking the floor on item 7 (d), reviewed UNESCO's activities in the areas of communications, information and informatics, conducted through the International Programme for the Development of

Communication, the General Information Programme and the Intergovernmental Informatics Programme. An in-depth study on national informatics policies was in progress. A symposium on informatics (SimpLAC-99) was to be held in Mexico in October 1999 in cooperation with various national and international partners. In March 1999 UNESCO had organized in Malta a workshop for small States and island States on the development of national information and communication technology strategies. Two UNESCO chairs of informatics had been created, one in Russia and one in the Philippines. Another chair, on informatics as a tool in teacher training, had been set up in Brazil.

With funding from UNDP, UNESCO was helping Central Asian countries to develop their informatics capacities through the creation of training centres. In Latin America it had cosponsored the Fourth Ibero-American Congress on Informatics in Education, held at Brasilia in October 1998 and attended by over a thousand participants. In 1997, at Bamako, it had organized in cooperation with several partners a training course on the application of telematics to development. At the subregional level, courses on network development had been organized in central, southern and western Africa. Finally, multipurpose community telecentres had been set up in several African countries.

Ms. BENDOW (United National Children's Fund (UNICEF)) described the main thrusts of UNICEF's action within the scope of the UNAIDS programme, of which it was one of the co-sponsors. The first need was to break down the wall of silence too often surrounding the epidemic. A major awareness-promotion and social mobilization effort was under way, and preventive campaigns were increasingly targeted towards the young. In Zambia, for example, more and more young people were being enrolled as educators and counsellors to work with people of their age group.

UNICEF was also working to prevent mother-to-child HIV transmission. In cooperation with WHO, UNFPA and the UNAIDS secretariat, it was conducting a pilot initiative aimed at preventing transmission from mothers to children in 11 high-risk countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America. The problem of caring for AIDS orphans was another of UNICEF's priorities, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. Programmes were under way to provide increased support for foster families. In Malawi, UNICEF had helped the Government to develop a national strategy emphasizing family-based care.

UNICEF was also conducting preventive and care activities targeted to its own personnel. At Lusaka, a pilot project had been launched to make the necessary support and care available to UNICEF officers who had become infected.

Ms. SOSA•MARQUEZ (Mexico) observed that since its launching the UNAIDS programme had greatly contributed to promoting the principle of system-wide joint action. Its objectives would thenceforth be geared to collaborative planning and execution, especially at the country level, which was why the 132 theme groups on AIDS were important. It must be hoped that the guidelines which the Council would be drawing up regarding the United Nations framework plans for development aid would enable those groups to complete the preparation of their common strategy for the 2000•2001 biennium.

While happy that the United Nations International Drug Control Programme had joined the other co-sponsors of UNAIDS, she hoped that the mandate and specific contribution of the brand•new sponsor would be clearly defined.

Mexico was collaborating closely with the UNAIDS programme. The Mexican Secretary for Health had been elected Chairman of the UNAIDS Coordinating Board in June. The establishment of a horizontal technical cooperation group comprising the directors of the national AIDS control programmes for Latin America and the Caribbean had helped to improve national strategies and the implementation of joint activities. The Mexican Institute of Public Health was cooperating with UNAIDS, for example in studying the correlation between migration and spread of AIDS. The Mexican Health Foundation was conducting a campaign of prevention in pursuance of an initiative financed by the World Bank and covering Latin America and the Caribbean.

Ms. RUSTAM (Indonesia), speaking on item 7 (c), stressed the scale of the havoc wreaked by AIDS, particularly in Africa and, increasingly, in Asia. The pilot initiative currently under way in several low•income African countries must be strengthened and expanded to all affected countries. It was well that other bodies in the United Nations system were joining in the UNAIDS effort, but closer coordination was needed between the co-sponsors and the Programme's secretariat. An endeavour should perhaps be made to involve the media, the business community and the entertainment industry more actively in the campaigns against AIDS.

Strategic planning at the national level was imperative. Her delegation was pleased to note that seven of the worst affected African countries had

developed national strategic plans. Dissemination of information material and awareness promotion must remain a major aspect of UNAIDS activities. For the programme to be able to play its part effectively, it must succeed in mobilizing more extrabudgetary resources. Finally, it was for the Council to help the Programme work out a global AIDS control strategy.

Ms. DJATMIKO-SINGGIH (Indonesia), speaking on item 7 (d), welcomed the activities conducted by UNDP to promote, at the national, regional and global levels, the utilization of informatics in the service of development. She hoped that UNDP would establish Web sites everywhere in the developing countries and continue strengthening the programme of information on development for Asia and the Pacific.

Her delegation was glad to know that the United Nations Web site would in future be managed by the Department of Public Information, the technical aspects being the responsibility of the Information Technology Services Division. Noting that the secretariat planned to expand the share allotted to audiovisual content, she expressed the view that for the time being efforts should be concentrated on the site's textual content, as indeed the Information Committee had recommended.

The optical disk system, very useful as it was for accessing United Nations documentation, was currently approaching saturation point. Priority must therefore be given to expanding its capacity.

Mr. ZHAO Jian (China), speaking on item 7 (c), observed that since its creation in 1996 UNAIDS had played a major role in control of the epidemic.

The widespread creation of theme groups had enabled the initiatives of Member States to be better coordinated. The co-sponsors had worked in close liaison with the Programme's secretariat but they must strive for closer coordination with national programmes, while also exploiting their comparative advantages in their respective areas of competence. Dissemination of information remained an essential activity for fostering and facilitating action at the national level.

Turning to item 7 (d), he commended the effectiveness of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Informatics, which had done much to promote the unitization of information technology by Member States and their missions. His delegation considered that the Council should extend the duration of the mandate of that body, which was rendering valuable services to Member States.