



# Administrative Committee on Coordination

9 December 1999  
English only

---

## Summary of conclusions of the Organizational Committee at its second regular session (Parts I and II) Part I (New York, 1, 2 and 4 October 1999)

### I. Introduction

1. The Organizational Committee (OC) of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) met at United Nations Headquarters on 1, 2 and 4 October 1999. The annotated agenda for the meeting is contained in annex I, the list of participants in annex II. The outcome of a further meeting of OC, held immediately after the second regular session of 1999 of ACC, is reflected in part II (see paras. 62-92 below); the list of participants for that meeting (1 and 2 November) is contained in annex III.

### II. Preparations for the second regular session of ACC

#### A. Demand placed on national and international systems by the new global environment

##### **The institutional and programmatic capacity of the United Nations system to respond flexibly and effectively to the challenges of the next century**

2. The Director of the Office for Inter-Agency Affairs, in introducing the item, recalled that the overarching theme, selected to guide the work of ACC during 1999, was meant to initiate a process of critical assessment of the work of the United Nations system with a view to drawing some conclusions regarding the way forward in a rapidly changing global environment. The process had begun with the formal session in

spring 1999, at which the executive heads had dealt with the system's interaction with the private sector. The retreat, which had been designed as a brainstorming exercise, had focused, in the first instance, on identifying challenges facing the international community over the next decade and a set of core objectives to be pursued by the system as a whole. Second, the retreat had devoted attention to assessing the main strengths and weaknesses of the United Nations system in relation to those objectives, and had offered recommendations on how to build on the strengths and overcome the weaknesses. Sustainable human security and development had been highlighted as common agenda for the United Nations system. The executive heads had also identified a number of areas requiring the attention of the international community, ranging from the need to address the governance gap created by the changing context in which the system operated and its existing institutional structures to the widening gap between the rich and the poor and lack of corporate United Nations identity. The discussions had also emphasized the importance of setting clear and achievable goals on the basis of global conferences and working towards them collectively. Executive heads had added depth to the conclusions through letters to the Secretary-General.

3. The Director of the Office for Inter-Agency Affairs also brought to the attention of OC two studies being prepared on the basis of ongoing projects financed by the Better World Fund as a contribution to the Secretary-General's preparations for the Millennium Assembly. "Global imperatives of governance", a summary of a study prepared by Gordon Smith, took up three imperatives that isolated

global concerns in interconnected dimensions — peace/security, environment and the youth. “Global public policy”, a background paper prepared by Wolfgang H. Reinicke, dealt with “governance deficit” in the current global environment, an issue brought up several times by executive heads during the retreat. It called for building issue-based “global public policy networks”, flexible arrangements linking and engaging all relevant stakeholders with Governments, multilateral organizations, civil society and the business sector around shared norms to achieve global objectives.

4. OC members observed that as the global environment changed, so was the United Nations system changing and evolving, with major reforms in most organizations as well as ACC itself, aimed at enhancing the United Nations system’s flexibility and effectiveness in operating within a changed environment. A new “culture” of openness and cooperation within the United Nations system was emerging and allowing the system to use its diversity with greater coherence in achieving broader and more visible impact. Partnerships within the system were also being broadened to engage other actors and stakeholders in advancing key policy objectives. As part of this new culture, numerous new initiatives were currently being launched by various United Nations system organizations, all of which involved, in different ways, experimenting with new modalities of cooperation within and beyond the system. They were all signs of an evolving awareness within the system of the importance of strategic alliances, and pointed to the timeliness of a renewed effort at exploring further initiatives that would be needs-driven, draw on the experience with current initiatives, and serve to reinforce and complement them, as part of an evolving common action agenda. The importance of a common effort to address declining resource flows — a key constraint in advancing the global agenda — was generally recognized. It was noted that the success of a renewed effort in this direction would depend on the capacity of the system to develop concrete results-oriented programmes with clear benchmarks to measure their impact.

5. OC noted that the United Nations system’s contribution to the development of new frameworks for the implementation of global goals — a key objective identified at the retreat — required not only enhancing the system’s own coordination and coherence, but also

forging new strategic alliances and relationships with other stakeholders based on United Nations values, while strengthening and preserving the independence and uniqueness of the system and of its constituent parts. Given the diverse mandates and constituencies of the member organizations of the system, that called for a deepening of analyses of cross-sectoral linkages among issues with a view to clarifying how the strategies and objectives of the various entities were interrelated and interdependent, thus underlining the need for partnerships and cooperation among organizations on specific issues and providing the underpinnings of new alliances and networks.

6. OC members received at the session a brief description of ongoing work related to the “global public policy network” concept. The concept was conceived to maximize the capacity to bring out complementarities and to address and resolve potential conflicts with the aim of promoting the kind of broad-based coalition for advocacy, resource mobilization and joint action that were seen as increasingly essential to address many of the new challenges arising from globalization. An integral part of the concept was a leading role for the United Nations system in identifying public policy issues that required global commitment and providing a platform for the “convening” of those networks. OC and other ACC standing committees would need to discuss the concept in greater depth, with the studies currently under preparation in hand.

7. It was proposed that ACC consider launching, at the current fall session, one or two specific new initiatives, drawing on those approaches, that would serve to advance system-wide priorities. Their objective would be to mobilize the system’s institutional capacity, expertise, convening power and advocacy role, linking up with new constituencies, and if necessary developing new partnerships and alliances with Governments, civil society and the business sector, thus generating a new momentum towards concrete results. OC members, at the same time, pointed to many recent ongoing initiatives on which ACC’s attention should in the first instance be focused.

8. It was generally felt that any new initiatives of the kind being proposed should take into account and build upon relevant processes under way in various parts of the system, and should benefit from experience being gained by various organizations in experimenting with new modalities for cooperation. Some of the

major new initiatives of the World Health Organization (WHO), such as “Roll back malaria” and “Tobacco control” were pertinent in that context. The network approach and country focus on which the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) had based arrangements for the follow-up to the World Food Summit were also relevant. “Education of the girl child”, an area in which the Secretary-General had recently called for a major effort, and the “Elimination of urban slums” initiative of the World Bank, were two illustrations of specific ongoing initiatives that could be built on by the system in targeting specific groups, as part of a renewed effort advocated at the retreat to establish results-oriented and well targeted action plans.

9. The annotations to the ACC agenda submitted by OC included notes on some possible initiatives for consideration by ACC, as follows:

#### **Global conference goals**

The global conferences’ goals and programmes of action provide, together, a comprehensive, authoritative agenda for development agreed by the international community at the highest level. There is evidence that countries are making progress in implementing these goals in many areas, but many challenges remain. Overall, the five-year reviews of conferences’ follow-up raise serious concern over diminishing resources and limited results in many areas. The process seems to be at a turning point. There are renewed efforts at integrating and focusing follow-up exercises, but risks of dispersal effort and loss of momentum are also increasingly real. The United Nations system needs to work to refine and rally around a clear and compelling agenda, based on the key objectives and targets generated by these conferences, which would serve to renew the momentum for action and provide a platform for renewed partnerships with Governments, civil society and the private sector in support of conferences’ goals and targets. Building public policy networks around such an agenda should help to generate support and produce tangible results across the spectrum of the work of the system.

#### **Global environment**

All countries, developed and developing, are confronted with the challenge of attaining environmental sustainability. This is closely linked, for example, to social demands, demographic pressures and poverty in developing countries, counterpoised against excessive and often wasteful consumption in developed countries. The advent of environmental degradation of planetary proportions poses particular challenges. Climate change and sea level rise, the accelerating loss of biodiversity, toxic pollution, losses of freshwater resources, deforestation and desertification pose serious threats to the continued viability of the Earth’s life support system. Efforts to address these issues will face increasingly complex situations that include addressing economic, social and cultural demands. Solutions to these problems will require differentiated approaches that will place enormous demands on policy design and implementation at all levels and will require institutional joint responses well beyond what is available today. Existing arrangements and mechanisms for system-wide actions and coordination should be fully utilized as a platform to build enhanced public policy networks.

#### **Knowledge societies: information and communication technologies and sustainable development**

Advanced microelectronics-based information and communication technologies (ICTs) are at the heart of recent social and economic transformation in industrialized countries, as well as in some developing countries. The costs of ICTs are continuing to fall and, as their capacities increase they are being applied throughout all sectors of economies and societies in these countries. However, a significant number of developing countries, particularly the least developed among them, have not benefited from these advances, polarizing the world into the connected and the isolated. There are various areas where the application of these technologies would enhance sustainable development and significantly improve the quality of life for the citizens of poor countries as well as the poor within the connected countries. These include,

health, education, public administration, trade, finance and banking, urban and rural development, transportation, environment, agriculture and tourism and travel. Clearly, the ICTs area offers a role for every member of the United Nations system. ACC adopted a statement on this subject in 1997. Many important initiatives currently under way, such as the World Bank knowledge networks, and many organizations are strengthening programmes in this area. The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) is planning a world summit on the information society, and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is planning a world communication and information conference. The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) network and its digital agenda and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Netaid initiative are also highly relevant. The Economic and Social Council has decided to address this issue at the high-level segment of its substantive session of 2000. A new, expanded system-wide initiative in this area, engaging Governments, civil society and the private sectors, would be timely and of potentially great significance in advancing the system's development objectives.

#### **Resources**

Shared concerns among executive heads about resource constraints are also increasingly being echoed in intergovernmental discussions. One executive head put it this way "... without resources, we simply have an abundance of empty promises and elegant rhetoric". The five-year reviews of United Nations conferences (held at Rio de Janeiro, Cairo, Beijing and Copenhagen) are providing strong confirmation of the need to redouble the effort to mobilize additional resources if the global goals resulting from these conferences are to be met. Executive heads may wish to consider as to how the United Nations system could build networks to generate governmental, public and private sector support for mobilization of resources around clearly defined goals and credible programmes for their realization.

10. With respect to the modalities for pursuing initiatives of this kind, OC considered that the lead agency approach, which had repeatedly proven its effectiveness, should be followed to the extent possible. It was thus suggested that ACC invite either one agency or a small group of agencies to act as "task manager" for a given initiative or leave it to individual members or groups of members to take the lead. OC and other relevant ACC standing committees would then be called upon to keep under review progress and report back to ACC.

#### **B. Follow-up to the Beijing Platform for Action and gender mainstreaming**

11. OC was briefed by the Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women on preparations for the third and final session of the Preparatory Committee for the special session of the General Assembly to review the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. The session was scheduled to take place in conjunction with the forty-fourth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, from 28 February to 17 March 2000. It was noted that preparations were well under way at the national, regional and international levels. In October 1998, Governments had been requested to complete a questionnaire to facilitate the review and appraisal on implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. To date, 103 member States and two observer States had provided information, which was being analysed by the Division on the Advancement of Women to provide a comprehensive review to the Preparatory Committee.

12. It was recalled that ACC, at its spring 1999 session, had agreed to hold a substantive discussion at its fall 1999 session on progress achieved in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and gender mainstreaming. ACC had also expressed its intention to adopt a statement as an input to the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace in the twenty-first century", to be held in June 2000. The representative of the Division, in her capacity as representative of the Chairperson of the ACC Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality (IACWGE), introduced two documents prepared for ACC: a draft ACC statement elaborated in consultation with IACWGE members, and a discussion paper entitled "Gender equality and globalization:

understanding complex dimensions of opportunity and challenge”.

13. With regard to the discussion paper, OC was informed that in view of the theme of the special session and the focus on the implications of globalization for development that characterized current debates in the international system, the gender implications of globalization had been selected as the most topical focus of ACC’s substantive discussions. The effects of globalization on gender were explored in the paper, with particular reference to labour markets, trade, governance, poverty, migration, the environment and technological change. The paper concluded by noting that in all of those areas the entities of the United Nations system could make positive interventions to advance the objective of gender equality and by inviting ACC members’ attention to a number of questions, pointing to ways in which the system’s efforts in the normative, analytical and operational areas could be strengthened to advance that objective.

14. Several OC members welcomed the focus in the paper on the impact of globalization — a subject central to the current concerns of the system. The importance was emphasized of being as specific as possible regarding the outcomes of the ACC discussions that could lead to concrete advances in the commitment of the executive heads to gender equality and mainstreaming. The need to further explore and make more explicit certain linkages, such as the relationship between the advancement of women and progress in furthering the poverty agenda, and to focus on such issues as women as managers of natural resources, was stressed. The view was also expressed that the benefits accruing in many cases to women as a result of globalization should be recognized and duly emphasized.

15. With regard to an ACC statement for submission to the special session, it was generally felt that its structure should reflect a clear distinction between the “external” messages — to be addressed by ACC to the international community — and “internal” commitments, and in relation to the latter, between those that the executive heads would promote in the programmes and operations of their respective organizations and those relating to the internal management of the various organizations. With regard to the “external” message, the statement should present a compelling vision, stressing the link between poverty

and gender and calling for bold action by policy makers. With regard to programmes, the statement should be selective and highlight priorities in such areas as education, health, and gender-based violence. Finally, with regard to gender balance and mainstreaming in the secretariats of the United Nations system, the statement should focus on key management issues relating to recruitment and career development of women, and include a frank appraisal of why certain goals had not yet been attained.

16. It was agreed to propose to ACC that the draft statement be finalized in light of the discussions at the forthcoming session of ACC, and that it be cleared by correspondence shortly thereafter.

## **C. Follow-up to recent ACC decisions**

### **1. World summit on the information society**

17. At the first regular session of ACC in 1999, the Secretary-General of ITU had drawn attention to a resolution of the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference in which he had been called on to undertake consultations with ACC members with a view to meeting the necessary conditions for holding a world summit on the information society and to report thereon to the ITU Council. He had expressed the hope that the summit would provide a unique opportunity to bring together the United Nations family of organizations and other actors around an issue that was central to development and involved important political, economic, social and cultural dimensions.

18. It was agreed that ACC members would contact ITU by correspondence directly or through their OC representative to confirm their interest in cooperating with ITU in the organization of the summit and to indicate the contribution that they intended to make.

19. The ITU representative briefed OC on the responses of a number of ACC members indicating the areas in which they wished to contribute to the summit. He recalled that the ITU Council held in June 1999 had requested the ITU Secretary-General to carry out a feasibility study and to report to the Council session to be held in July 2000. The feasibility study would be carried out with the collaboration of interested United Nations agencies, in particular UNESCO. A report would be presented to the Organizational Committee and ACC at its fall 2000 session following the conclusion of the study.

## **2. Universal access to basic communication and information services**

20. At its first regular session of 1997, ACC had issued a statement on universal access to basic communication and information services. The statement had identified seven indicative areas for possible projects and designated ITU as the focal point. OC, on behalf of ACC, had considered the issue at its first regular session in 1998. Given the magnitude of resources involved in implementing the identified pilot projects, OC had agreed, *inter alia*, to consider the feasibility of establishing a catalytic fund for this purpose. At the first regular session of OC in 1999, the representative of ITU had informed members that his organization was willing to continue to serve as a focal point on this issue and would provide more detailed information on the progress made at the fall 1999 session.

21. The ITU representative informed OC of the interest of various agencies in collaborating with ITU in promoting universal access to basic communication and information services. Members of OC noted the increasing importance of the subject, particularly in the context of globalization, and the role that information technology could play in facilitating the integration of developing countries in the global economy. Such a role was increasingly highlighted in the deliberations and decisions in various intergovernmental bodies, including the Economic and Social Council. UNESCO suggested that the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ) be invited to take into account the seven indicative areas identified in the ACC statement in the coordinated and integrated follow-up to United Nations conferences and summits. OC agreed that further consideration of universal access to basic communication and information services should be made an integral part of the proposed world summit on the information society, should the intention to hold the summit be confirmed.

## **3. Funding of the Non-Governmental Liaison Service (NGLS)**

22. The representative of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) informed OC members that the funding situation of NGLS had improved in response to the letter sent to executive heads by the Executive Director of UNICEF. OC noted with appreciation that a number of sponsors had pledged

increases in their contributions, and that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights had become new sponsors. Others had pledged to maintain their contributions at the current levels, while WHO was proposing a "pay-per-use" formula. OC also welcomed the decision of the United Nations Foundation to make a contribution.

## **4. Africa**

23. At the fall 1998 session of ACC, the Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/52/871-S/1998/318) was discussed and it was agreed that the issues involved should continue to receive priority attention by the United Nations system. At the spring 1999 Session of ACC, the follow-up given within the system to the Secretary-General's report was further discussed, alongside proposals emanating from the African regional inter-agency meeting chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General and the progress achieved by the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa. Subsequently, at the coordination segment of its substantive session of 1999, the Economic and Social Council had adopted agreed conclusions on the issue "Development of Africa: implementation and coordinated follow-up by the United Nations system of initiatives on African development", which contained a number of recommendations addressed to ACC and/or the United Nations system.

24. OC had before it a note on the follow-up to the decisions taken at the regional coordination meeting on Africa held at Nairobi on 5 March 1999, including a number of recommendations for consideration and adoption by ACC. In discussing the implications of those recommendations, members of OC fully shared the underlying concern to simplify coordination arrangements and avoid the creation of additional mechanisms. OC members recalled that at the October 1998 session of ACC, it had been recommended that Africa-related inter-agency mechanisms, including those established in connection with the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa, be reviewed with a view to facilitating the harmonization of Africa-related initiatives. At the ACC session in April 1999, it had been agreed that reporting in the context of the implementation of the Special Initiative should capture

all relevant information from individual organizations of the United Nations system regarding actions under way in Africa, and that that information should be used for other reporting requirements.

25. In discussing the recommendations before the current session of ACC, OC members expressed the hope that the proposed broadening of the mandate of the Special Initiative and its Steering Committee should not lead to a dilution of ongoing activities under the Special Initiative since its growing effectiveness was the result of increasing clarity in relation to both focus and distribution of responsibilities. Conversely, the lead agency arrangement, which had again proven its worth in the context of the Special Initiative, should be utilized as far as possible in the context of the broader coordination effort. The hope was also expressed that the new proposed arrangements would not duplicate but serve to reinforce, from a regional perspective, existing coordination arrangements at the country level, and would lead to enhanced support by the system for the significant efforts being made by the African Governments themselves.

26. In the light of information provided in the background note and drawing on its discussions, OC prepared annotations for the consideration of ACC. As concerns other inter-agency meetings chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General in the European, Latin American and Western Asian regions, OC asked the Office for Inter-Agency Affairs to circulate the reports of these meetings to members of OC. There appeared to be no specific issues arising from those meetings requiring ACC's attention at the present stage.

#### **5. Human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS)**

27. At its spring 1999 session, the Executive Director of the Joint and Co-sponsored United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) briefed ACC members on the devastating impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The Director-General of WHO, in her capacity as Chairperson of UNAIDS, highlighted the issue of United Nations staff and dependants living with HIV/AIDS. ACC members proposed that the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions (Personnel Questions) (CCAQ(PER)) place the issue on its agenda and report to ACC on any policy-level consideration and joint actions required. In addition, the Economic and Social Council, at its substantive session of 1999, adopted resolution 1999/36, which

contains, *inter alia*, a number of recommendations that reiterate the importance of effective coordination of these activities and urge the United Nations system and the international community at large to enhance their efforts in combating HIV/AIDS.

28. The representative of WHO informed OC members that the outcome of the meeting of the CCAQ(PER) contact group on HIV/AIDS would be available before the ACC session, and proposed that ACC be informed accordingly. OC decided to recommend that a substantive discussion on HIV/AIDS be held at the spring 2000 session of ACC.

#### **6. International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR)**

29. The Director of the secretariat of IDNDR briefed OC members on the successor arrangements for the follow-up to IDNDR. He highlighted the key provisions of the Economic and Social Council resolution relating to the establishment, by the Secretary-General, as of January 2000, of an inter-agency task force, with representation from all relevant United Nations bodies and members of the scientific and technical community to serve as the main forum within the United Nations for continued and concerted emphasis on natural disaster reduction; the maintenance of the existing inter-agency secretariat and the placing of both the inter-agency task force and secretariat under the direct authority of the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs. He stressed the multisectoral and interdisciplinary character of disaster prevention and preparedness, and invited ACC members to participate in the work of the inter-agency task force.

30. The ITU representative regretted that no reference had been made in the Council resolution to the Tampere Convention of 1998 on emergency telecommunications, a legally binding instrument for which the United Nations Secretary-General was the depository. OC agreed on the importance of the Convention in the context of the follow-up to IDNDR. The FAO representative stressed the need to avoid establishing another bureaucratic mechanism in the light of budgetary constraints faced by organizations of the system. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) representative made the point that care should be taken to avoid creating an unwieldy, unmanageable mechanism, and stressed the importance of a coherent and coordinated approach to natural

disaster prevention and reduction. He welcomed the inter-agency consultations carried out by the IDNDR secretariat, and referred to the report of IACSD that stressed the need for a functional relationship between the inter-agency task force and IACSD. The representative of World Bank briefed OC on the disaster mitigation activities of the Bank.

31. Several members of OC requested the IDNDR secretariat to consult concerned agencies in good time on the institutional arrangements called for in the Council resolution. On the basis of its discussions, OC prepared annotations for the consideration of ACC.

### **7. Follow-up to the substantive session of 1999 of the Economic and Social Council**

32. OC members had before them a compendium of relevant major conclusions and decisions of the substantive session of 1999 of the Council, which *inter alia*, showed the Council's continued interest in monitoring progress in the follow-up by the United Nations system to major global conferences. OC was informed that the Council had selected the theme "Assessment of the progress made within the United Nations system, through conference reviews, in the promotion of an integrated and coordinated implementation of the follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields", for its coordination segment next year. In addition, "Development and international cooperation in the twenty-first century: the role of information technology in the context of a knowledge-based global economy" was chosen as the theme for the substantive session of 2000 high-level segment. OC brought the compendium of relevant conclusions and decisions of the Council to the attention of ACC.

33. The representative of WHO gave OC a short briefing on the first meeting of the ad hoc inter-agency task force on tobacco control, which took place in New York on 29 and 30 September 1999. The meeting reviewed the current situation and potential for inter-agency collaboration.

### **8. Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace**

34. The representative of UNESCO, in introducing the subject, stated that the adoption of the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace by the General Assembly in its resolution 53/243 of

13 September 1999 was a major achievement for the United Nations system. It provided, in a concise format, a framework — or a holistic vision — for the aims, strategies and actions not only of the United Nations system but also of Governments, civil society and individuals. The Programme also provided a basis for the International Year for the Culture of Peace, which was launched on 14 September 1999, and for the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World.

35. In accordance with the ACC conclusions of October 1998, the Organizational Committee was requested to ensure continuous exchange of information, on a system-wide basis, on activities to be undertaken in follow-up to the Declaration and Programme of Action.

36. The main purpose of the promotion of a culture of peace was the development of a universal ethic which would inform and guide all aspects of the work of the United Nations system, bringing to the fore the fundamental values and aims of the Charter.

37. In order to launch the implementation of the Programme of Action and bearing in mind the main areas for action identified at the April 1999 retreat, it is suggested that consideration be given to applying (experimentally or as a test case) to the process the principles of "results-based management". This would mean defining collectively for each objective and sub-objective, the main "expected results" of the system's actions within a time-frame of, for example, 10 years (the duration of the Decade mentioned above), together with the corresponding indicators and instruments for qualitative measurements. Each organization would define its specific objectives and expected results within this overall framework.

38. The UNESCO representative noted that while such an undertaking was certainly ambitious and highly complex — and would require considerable methodological work on the part of the system's strategic planners — it could well serve as a test case to see how the United Nations system would be able to articulate its programmes in relation to a set of "core objectives" (i.e., those mentioned in the Declaration and Programme of Action). It would also serve to verify whether it was indeed methodologically feasible to define a set of "core results" at the level of the system as a whole and to aggregate a series of partial results in order to arrive at a global result.



39. OC members agreed that the adoption of the Declaration and the Programme of Action was very significant. Given the comprehensive and all encompassing nature of the Programme of Action, it might appear that those activities were already being carried out by the system. The representative of UNESCO explained that because of the all-encompassing nature of the Programme of Action, she had called for the disaggregation of the main objectives for each agency's perspectives and the application of the principles of results-based management. It was proposed that CCPOQ and the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) discuss the operational aspects of the Declaration and Programme of Action and issue guidance notes for the national coordination system. OC finalized the annotations to ACC along those lines.

#### **9. Five-year review of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD)**

40. The representative of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) highlighted the successes and the difficulties encountered in the five-year review of ICPD. While the preparation for the special session had been difficult, the outcome was a consensus document. At the national level, progress was being made in the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action. The steps that contributed to its success included allocating sufficient time for the process; bringing people with intimate knowledge on technical issues from capitals; briefings at the national level; the transparency and participatory nature of the process; and emphasizing at the outset that the session was to undertake a review and not renegotiate the Programme of Action. She indicated that those lessons would be useful for the upcoming five-year reviews. UNFPA was very grateful to ACC members for their cooperation.

#### **10. Inter-agency meeting on the Third United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries (2001)**

41. The Executive-Secretary of the Conference briefed OC members on the progress made in the preparatory process of the Conference. The inter-agency meeting held at Geneva on 20 July 1999 had helped to launch the preparatory process. It was immediately followed by a consultative forum held at Geneva on 20 and 21 July, attended by least developed

countries, member countries of the European Union, United Nations agencies, the International Chamber of Commerce and NGOs. The main purpose of the Forum was to provide an opportunity for least developed countries, their development partners, civil society and the business community to exchange views on the conceptual framework of the Conference, its objectives and the organizational aspects. The Forum supported the emphasis placed on the country-based approach and agreed that the least developed countries Governments should have the central role in the preparatory process for the Conference. The involvement of civil society, including private sector and NGOs, was deemed essential. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), was working with the World Bank and the European Union (EU) network of NGOs as well as NGLS.

42. The Secretary-General of the Conference had officially informed all Governments about the Conference, and had offered to assist least developed countries Governments in the preparatory process. UNCTAD was cooperating with the EU, World Bank and UNDP to facilitate the formation of national preparatory committees. The Secretary-General of the Conference had also sent letters to all United Nations agencies, requesting them to appoint focal points for the Conference. The Executive Secretary of OC made an urgent appeal to OC members for a quick response to the request.

43. The Conference will be held at Brussels, but the exact dates have yet to be determined. The agenda will be determined on the basis of the national consultations. The focal points will shortly be informed about the date for the next inter-agency meeting, which is likely to be convened prior to the end of the current General Assembly session.

#### **11. Special session of the General Assembly on the five-year review of the outcome of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States**

44. OC recalled the ACC resolution on small island developing States and the twenty-second special session of the United Nations General Assembly, which was held in New York from 27 to 28 September 1999. The General Assembly had reviewed the implementation of the Programme of Action on the Sustainable Development of the Small Island

Developing States and had called for continued support for the Programme of Action.

## **D. Other matters**

### **1. Administrative questions**

#### **Introduction of a second-tier appellate mechanism to enhance the administration of justice in the United Nations system**

45. At its first regular session of 1999, ACC was informed that the Ad Hoc Meeting of Legal Advisers had decided to establish a drafting group to elaborate a final paper on the introduction of a second-tier appellate mechanism to enhance the administration of justice in the United Nations system. ACC requested the Meeting of Legal Advisers to submit a final report on the subject for its consideration and approval at the fall 1999 session.

46. OC noted that the issue was of a political or policy rather than legal nature, and OC decided to bring the matter to the attention of ACC along with the note by the Legal Adviser of UNESCO on the subject.

#### **United Nations staff security and safety**

47. OC was briefed by the representative of the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator (UNSECOORD) on the continuing deterioration regarding security and safety of United Nations system staff. In a review of the situation over the previous year, the UNSECOORD representative noted that in addition to addressing the numerous security incidents, the Office had also been called upon more recently to relocate staff and dependants because of natural disasters (volcanoes and hurricanes) and environmental crises related to forest fires. That new element had to be taken into account in future planning. Those organizations that dealt with early warning and environmental issues were invited to provide relevant information to UNSECOORD. OC was also informed that the revised version of the United Nations field security handbook, which was under preparation, would contain information for staff on environmental emergencies.

48. The representative pointed out that although threats and attacks against United Nations system personnel had increased, casualties had not. A forthcoming study undertaken by Johns Hopkins

University and WHO had documented the fact that while the number of deaths had decreased for United Nations programme staff and among United Nations peacekeepers since 1995, deaths among NGO staff had continued to increase. According to the study, that situation was in part attributable to the emphasis on security training for United Nations system staff, which had been facilitated by a trust fund established in 1998 for that purpose. In addition, the study noted that one third of fatalities among humanitarian workers occurred during the first three months of service. Greater emphasis on training and briefing prior to departure was therefore extremely important.

49. With the funds from two large and two small contributors, a mobile training team had to date trained 1,300 staff members in three duty stations in Asia (Tajikistan, Pakistan and Afghanistan). A similar team would soon conduct training in Africa. In addition, the first of four planned regional workshops for all Professional-level security officers would shortly be held at Nairobi. The UNSECOORD representative noted that during the training undertaken to date, the number of individual staff members who sought stress management counselling was surprisingly high. That element of the training programme clearly needed reinforcing. While training had proven extremely popular among staff in general, there had been cases in which heads of field offices had refused to participate in the programme. A strong message from ACC that such training was mandatory would be very useful. While security training had so far been successful, much more was called for. That would require additional contributions to the Trust Fund, for which it would be necessary to appeal to member States.

50. The UNSECOORD representative noted that the 1997 hostage incident management training had been particularly successful. Participants in that training programme had been instrumental in resolving seven hostage incidents involving staff in 1998, and had been called on by member States to resolve two incidents involving non-United Nations staff. To increase the coverage for managing such incidents, a second course was being organized in New York to train an additional 20 middle-level staff members. Once trained, those individuals would be at the disposal of UNSECOORD for rapid deployment to any duty station where a hostage situation occurred.

51. Continued problems with funding and the security implications of the year 2000 problem (Y2K) were the

two main issues brought to the attention of OC by the Ad Hoc Inter-Agency Meeting on Security, which had met at Washington, D.C., in May 1999. On the issue of funding, it was noted that notwithstanding the appeals made by the executive heads, UNSECOORD was still experiencing long delays in obtaining account codes for the hiring of security officers. It was noted that the possibility of resorting to lump sum payments for residential security would be tested at Nairobi and extended elsewhere if successful. Regarding the security implications of the Y2K problem, it was noted that although most people believed that Y2K was an information technology problem, if power and communications failed and resulted in fuel and/or food shortages and problems with air traffic control, a security issue would arise. Based on assessments from every duty station as well as from information made available by member States, it would appear that there were approximately 30 countries where disruptions were expected to be significant and another 40 where the disruptions were expected to be moderate. Management of those situations would require a significant degree of coordination and consultation within the system. It was important that the issue of staff coverage to manage the security situation at those duty stations be addressed in a coordinated manner.

52. OC members expressed their concern regarding the situation of staff at certain high crime duty stations, and enquired whether any special measures were being put in place. The UNSECOORD representative noted that that was a serious concern in certain places, and that the proliferation of weapons everywhere contributed to a situation in which the risks for United Nations system staff who were already the targets of threats were greatly increased.

53. Given the recent experience in East Timor in which national staff had been evacuated to Darwin, Australia, the issue of policy towards national staff was discussed. The UNSECOORD representative noted that the policy had not changed. The relocation had represented a strict interpretation of the provisions of the field security handbook which permitted the relocation/evacuation of local staff if they were at risk by virtue of the fact that they worked for the United Nations. In addition, Darwin had been considered within the mission area and the evacuation had been undertaken with the permission and assistance of the Australian Government.

54. Another issue discussed was the policy for dealing with Governments that requested that their nationals not be posted to certain countries for security reasons. The UNSECOORD representative noted that current policy was that there should be no discrimination among nationalities, but if a government had information regarding specific risks it was difficult to question their request.

55. OC was again of the view that given the continuing seriousness of the issues surrounding security and safety of staff, the matter should be brought to the attention of ACC. It was agreed that OC would, in the annotations to ACC, emphasize the need for continued security and stress management training for all staff in the field and the reaffirmation that such training was mandatory; express its appreciation to those countries that had contributed funds for security training and encouraged others to do so; reaffirm its commitment to ensure that all necessary steps were taken to ensure that funds were available to pay for security measures; and highlight the need for close and continuous inter-agency coordination with regard to the security implications of the Y2K problem. On the basis of the report of the Ad Hoc Inter-Agency Meeting on Security, held at Washington, D.C., from 11 to 13 May 1999, and the briefing and the discussions, OC prepared annotations on this item for the consideration of ACC.

#### **International Civil Service Commission (ICSC)**

56. The Chairman recalled that at the fall 1998 session of ACC, it had been proposed that a group be appointed by the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Secretary-General in his capacity as Chairman of ACC and after consultation with concerned ACC members, to undertake a review of ICSC, including its mandate, membership and functioning. It had also been suggested that the report of the review group be submitted to the General Assembly, together with the views of the concerned organizations of the system, including, as appropriate, of their governing bodies. The Chairman informed OC members that a draft note by the Secretary-General, including proposed list of members of the review group, was currently being circulated to executive heads and would be finalized and submitted to the General Assembly at its current session. It was agreed that the issue would be further discussed by ACC.

## 2. Structure and functioning of ACC and its subsidiary machinery

### ACC web site and the Executive Information Network

57. OC members expressed their appreciation for the ACC web site, which they found to be very functional and extremely helpful. They thanked the Office for Inter-Agency Affairs and the International Systems Coordination Committee (ISCC) for making it a reality. Some OC members stated that there was a need to define clearly what the Executive Information Network was expected to be, by whom would it be maintained (given that the ISCC role pertained to design, but not maintenance), and how it could be ensured that the information covered by the Network would be distinct from the ACC web site and the web sites of other United Nations system organizations.

## 3. Work of ACC consultative Committees and other inter-agency bodies

### Consultative committees

1. *Report of the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions (Personnel and General Administrative Questions) on its ninetieth session (Geneva, 6-9 April 1999) (ACC/1999/5)*
2. *Report of the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions (Personnel and General Administrative Questions) on its ninety-first session (New York, 14-16 July 1999) (ACC/1999/13)*
3. *Report of the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions (Financial and Budgetary Questions) on its ninetieth session (New York, 30 August-3 September 1999) (ACC/1999/14)*
4. *Report of the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development on its fourteenth session, (Vienna, 9 and 10 September 1999) (ACC/1999/12)*
5. *Report of the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions on its fifteenth session (New York, 20-24 September 1999) (ACC/1999/15)*

58. OC took note of the reports of the subsidiary bodies and brought to the attention of ACC:

(a) The following proposed appointments:

(i) The recommendation of the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions (Financial and Budgetary Questions) (CCAQ(FB)) to extend the appointment of its Secretary, Peter Leslie, for a two-year term, commencing on 1 January 2000;

(ii) The recommendation of CCPOQ to extend the appointment of its Secretary, Eckhard W. Hein, for a two-year term commencing on 1 February 2000;

(iii) The recommendation of the ACC Subcommittee on Nutrition that its current Chairman, Richard Jolly, be extended for a further year to 31 December 2000, to be succeeded by A. Namanga Ngongi, Deputy Executive Director of the World Food Programme (WFP), for the two-year period 2001-2002;

(iv) The nomination by the Joint United Nations Information Committee (JUNIC) of Tore Brevik, Director of Communications and Public Information of UNEP, as its Chairman for a two-year term (2000-2001);

(b) The following decisions adopted on its behalf by the subsidiary bodies:

(i) CCAQ(FB) had approved the revised United Nations Accounting Standards on ACC's behalf;

(ii) CCPOQ had approved, on ACC's behalf, an ACC guidance note on the United Nations system and the International Year of Volunteers, 2001;

(iii) CCPOQ had adopted, on ACC's behalf, further guidelines on the functioning of the resident coordinator system;

(iv) The Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development (IACSD) had reviewed the state of play with regard to the establishment of the Environmental Management Group. Members of IACSD had underscored the necessity of the United Nations system agreeing on a common view with respect to the mandate, terms of reference, criteria for membership as well as working methods of the Group through consultations. It had been further agreed that once

the results of inter-agency consultations on the Group had been approved by ACC, information on the above matters would be included in the report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly. Meanwhile, the General Assembly would be briefed on the consultative process launched in the United Nations system with respect to the establishment of the Group;

(c) Meetings of ACC subsidiary bodies:

(i) IACSD, New York, last week of January 2000;

(ii) IACWGE, New York, 23-25 February 2000;

(iii) CCPOQ, Geneva, 28 February to 2 March 2000.

#### **Bodies reporting to OC:**

*Report of the Joint United Nations Information Committee on its twenty-fifth session (Vienna, 6-8 July 1999) (ACC/1999/11)*

59. The Secretary of JUNIC briefed OC members on the work of the twenty-fifth session of JUNIC, and drew attention to those aspects of its work and recommendations requiring ACC attention. She emphasized the need to develop a good communication policy for the United Nations system and to establish ways and means of promoting better public understanding of its role and achievements, especially the dissemination of information on the United Nations system's work on development, noting that it is much easier to get the public tuned into political and human rights issues. The JUNIC Secretary proposed that ACC consider placing on its agenda in the future an item on how to improve the public image of the United Nations system.

60. The JUNIC Secretary also drew the attention of OC members to the action taken in support of NGLS, in particular the ongoing consultation process led by UNICEF, as the lead agency for NGLS, to secure adequate and stable funding from within the system for NGLS. OC members were also informed about the recommendation to extend the term of UNICEF as the lead agency for NGLS, and of Sadig Rasheed as Chairman of the Sponsor's Group for one more year. OC endorsed the recommendation. The JUNIC Secretary also pointed out that the consolidation and revision of the 1992 ACC guidelines for joint

participation of the United Nations system in international expositions had been completed.

61. OC took note of the JUNIC report and the recommendations therein, including that Tore Brevik, Director of Communications and Public Information of UNEP, be appointed as its Chairperson for a two-year term, 2000-2001.

## **Part II (New York, 1 and 2 November 1999)**

### **I. Introduction**

62. The Organizational Committee of the Administrative Committee on Coordination met on 1 and 2 November 1999 at United Nations Headquarters, New York, to consider the follow-up to the decisions taken and conclusions reached by ACC at its second regular session, on 29 and 30 October 1999 (see ACC/1999/20), and to conclude the consideration of a number of issues included in the agenda of the first part of its session (paras. 1-61 above). The list of participants at part II of the second regular session of OC is contained in annex III.

### **II. Finalization of and follow-up to the agreed conclusions of ACC at its second regular session of 1999**

63. The Chairman provided a brief summary of the discussions at the "private" meeting of ACC, which had included a wide-ranging exchange on recent political developments focusing on Kosovo and East Timor; and an extensive briefing by the President of the World Bank and the Managing Director of IMF on the global economic situation, focusing extensively on the heavily indebted poor countries initiative. There was also a brief exchange on the draft terms of reference for the review of ACC.

### **III. Structure and functioning of ACC and its subsidiary machinery**

#### **A. Working methods of OC**

64. At the spring 1999 session of OC, it was proposed that in keeping with the ongoing reforms in the United Nations system, OC take an in-depth look at its working methods. The Chairman thanked OC members and the representative of UNESCO in particular for providing the Office for Inter-Agency Affairs (OIAA) with suggestions on the issues that OC should take up under this item. The note prepared by OIAA for discussion at OC drew extensively on those suggestions.

65. Some OC members expressed the view that further OC discussions on its working methods might not be appropriate in view of the review of the role and functioning of ACC and its subsidiary machinery which ACC had just launched. OC should await the completion of the ACC review since the operational framework in which OC operates could change.

66. Other OC members maintained that notwithstanding the review, OC had the responsibility to keep under review and enhance the efficiency of its working methods. They considered that the note before OC provided a useful basis for discussing a number of issues related to its working methods which had remained outstanding since the reform exercise of 1993. It was further suggested that some of these issues would need to be pursued irrespective of any changes in structures that may be decided upon. In addressing them, OC would make a positive contribution to the review.

67. One such issue was reporting by organizations of the system on the follow-up to ACC agreed conclusions. The Chairman pointed out that the reports received from organizations under a previous reporting system were often merely a compilation of follow-up activities undertaken by them within the ACC machinery. There were few references, if any, to how the ACC conclusions were contributing to programme policies and programme development in the organizations themselves.

68. The issue of the role of OC was considered, in the light of the trend to extend the amount of time devoted by ACC to the private meetings, which focused on an informal exchange of views and experiences among

executive heads. A related issue was how to avoid a repetition of discussions between the private and the open meetings of ACC. The Chairman noted that OC could recommend themes on which ACC at private meetings could focus, thereby contributing a certain structure to the informal discussions.

69. It was suggested that OC members continue to exchange views on working methods and other issues in-between OC's formal sessions. Such exchanges could be carried out by groups of organizations located in the same duty stations (New York, Geneva, Vienna, Rome etc.) and among all OC member organizations through video-conferencing. It was further suggested that the language used in ACC reports be simplified to make them more readable and accessible to member States, organizations of the system and the general public.

70. The Chairman shared the views expressed concerning the need to simplify the language used in ACC reports. He also found merit in the suggestion that groups of organizations located in the same duty station should get together and exchange views on matters of common concern. Depending on the issue, however, common location might not be the most important factor. Information technology made it possible for an individual agency to take the lead in creating informal networks for the exchange of views with other agencies most directly concerned with a given issue. As those networks generate information of wider inter-agency interest, the services of the Office for Inter-Agency Affairs should be drawn upon to share such information with the system as a whole. Those approaches were particularly suitable for the task of monitoring the follow-up actions taken by ACC member organizations to ACC decisions and conclusions. Reporting on such follow-up should be given priority attention in inter-agency exchanges through the new ACC web site. OC members agreed to keep this issue under review, bearing in mind the ongoing review of ACC.

#### **B. Annual overview report of ACC**

71. In discussing this item, OC had before it a note prepared by the Office for Inter-Agency Affairs containing proposals on how to improve the timeliness of reporting on the sessions of ACC, most importantly on how to convey to member States a more

comprehensive picture of major developments within the system of broad inter-agency interest.

72. The note thus proposes that a brief report be issued immediately after each ACC session highlighting the outcomes of the session. The note also proposes that the regular annual overview report of ACC be modified to present an overview of “the state of the system” and on the “state of coordination within the system”. The objective would be to better inform Member States on significant ways in which ACC members — individually, in focused sub-groups and collectively — are endeavouring to advance certain broad objectives of system-wide concern and are seeking innovative ways to work together in pursuit of specific objectives. The report would highlight, *inter alia*, follow-up actions taken within organizations on past ACC decisions, and trends and levels of resources, especially as regards areas that ACC had indicated were of priority. The report would also provide information concerning the form and substance of communication and dialogue between ACC and the Economic and Social Council, and on how inter-agency mandates from the Council are being implemented by the system, and the difficulties encountered.

73. Members of OC generally supported the new proposed approach to ACC reporting, although some expressed the wish to consult their colleagues at headquarters. In particular, they cautioned that the new proposed reporting should not lead to additional reporting from member organizations. In reply, it was explained that the proposed approaches would certainly add to the work load of the Office for Inter-Agency Affairs but not necessarily to that of member organizations. What would be required from organizations would be greater selectivity and more judgement, not more extensive reports. The idea of reporting on inter-agency activities broadly defined, beyond those carried out within ACC itself, was generally welcomed. The view was expressed that completeness might be difficult to achieve, unless the report was to become merely a listing of activities, and it would be preferable to select a theme each year, for example on what the United Nations system was doing at the country level to integrate humanitarian with development activities. Without excluding the selection of specific themes, many felt that the report should be comprehensive and cover the main priority concerns of the system. What was important was that the report should be strategic and forward-looking and not just a

detailed description of activities. Care should also be taken not to give the misleading impression that all the issues covered were actually addressed by ACC. With regard to the reference in the note on trends and level of resources, the question was raised whether such information would not duplicate Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) reports on official development assistance (ODA) flows. In reply, it was explained that the intention was simply to ensure that resource requirements of policies and programmes would be highlighted, whenever appropriate. OC agreed that the primary audience of reports would be the intergovernmental bodies, although a wider audience might eventually emerge, if they were of a certain quality and of broad policy interest, and OC agreed to work towards that goal.

#### **IV. Work of ACC consultative committees and other inter-agency bodies**

##### **Bodies reporting to OC**

###### **Report of the Information Systems Coordination Committee on its seventh session**

74. The Secretary of ISCC introduced the report of the seventh annual meeting of ISCC, which had taken place in New York from 15-17 September 1999 and had continued via video conferences in October 1999. He referred to the statements of Joseph Connor and Patrizio Civili to ISCC, which had both highlighted the importance of producing practical results that would give evidence that there were concrete advances in policy coordination within the system as regards information technology (IT). He stressed that the success of the projects planned for the biennium depended not only on the approval of the United Nations portion of the ISCC budget but also on the active participation by all member organizations.

75. He highlighted one achievement of ISCC during the current biennium, namely the “United Nations Consortium”, which had been established in 1998 for joint purchasing of licences for access to electronic information sources. It had generated real savings and had made unprecedented amounts of information available to staff throughout the system without budget increases. The Secretary noted the suggestion for the development of a coordinated information system on

IT projects for development, and observed that ISCC had already recommended in 1995 that the International Development Information Exchange (INDIX) of the International Development Research Council be the clearing house for all information on IT development projects in the United Nations system. ISCC was of the opinion that there was no need for a new subject-specific clearing house but rather that United Nations system organizations should be encouraged to use the INDIX service.

76. Turning to the ISCC work plan for the coming biennium, he stated that there were three main themes — harmonization of IT systems, wider availability of information and collaboration with other ACC subsidiary machinery. Concerning IT harmonization, ISCC would be developing strategies, architectures, standards and guidelines, but would rarely be recommending specific software or hardware systems. The goal was to further the ability of organizations to communicate with each other and exchange information and work with high-quality tools.

77. Regarding the wider availability of information, ISCC had developed several prototype systems that help make information easier to access via the Internet. He noted that the intention was to establish the viability of those systems and then to turn them over to appropriate groups within the system for continued production and use by the end of the next biennium. Concerning collaboration, he stated that ISCC had already started closer contacts with other ACC subsidiary bodies, and had budgeted for continued support of these bodies to facilitate their effective use of IT.

78. He informed OC members that ISCC planned to report, as appropriate, on relevant items to the high-level CCAQ and semi-annually to OC.

79. He briefed OC on the difficulties that the ISCC budget proposals were facing in the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) and the Fifth Committee. He also informed OC members that ISCC had recommended Mauricio Milchberg of UNESCO as ISCC Chairman for a two-year term, starting in September 2000. The next meeting of ISCC was planned for mid-October 2000 at Geneva.

80. OC members complimented ISCC for the emphasis being placed on achieving practical results

that carried real benefit as well as demonstrable savings. It was noted that ISCC support for the development of the ACC web site, by not only facilitating communication among ACC members but also helping make information on the activities of ACC more widely available to member States and civil society, should be seen as an integral and important part of the ISCC mandate, which emphasized information dissemination. OC expressed general support for the work plans of ISCC for the biennium.

81. The representative of FAO asked whether all members of ISCC contributed to its budget and how the Secretary of ISCC saw the main purpose of the Executive Information Network (EIN), as distinct from the Intranet. In response, the Secretary of ISCC stated that all members of ISCC contributed to its budget. While the Intranet was for the use of all staff members of the United Nations system, EIN was meant for the executive heads themselves and their cabinet. It would focus on the exchange of information on policy or operational initiatives foreseen at the cabinet level of any organization that might be deemed of interest to other ACC members. In response to another question, the Secretary of ISCC indicated that the Committee intended to assist United Nations system organizations that so desired, in assessing the potential for software development in a holistic manner, concentrating on the exchanges of information between different units and the interactions between processes. He indicated that WFP already had such a system and ICAO was looking into it.

82. OC endorsed, on behalf of ACC, the recommendation of Mauricio Milchberg as ISCC Chairman for a two-year term, starting in September 2000.

## **V. Other matters**

### **A. Millennium Assembly**

83. OC members were briefed on the preparatory process by a representative of the Office for the Millennium Assembly. Regional hearings involving Member States, NGOs and civil society had already taken place at Beirut for Western Asia, Addis Ababa for Africa, Geneva for Europe, Santiago for Latin America and the Caribbean, and Tokyo for Asia and



the Pacific. The regional hearing for North America is planned for January 2000.

84. The themes of the hearings generally followed the Secretary-General's proposed thematic contents for the Millennium Summit as contained in his report to the General Assembly (A/53/948) on the over-arching theme "The United Nations in the twenty-first century", with the following sub-topics:

- (a) Peace and security, including disarmament;
- (b) Development, including poverty eradication;
- (c) Human rights;
- (d) Strengthening the United Nations.

85. Regarding the thematic framework of the Summit, the representative stated that intergovernmental consultations were ongoing and that the President of the General Assembly was to start consultations on 8 November 1999.

86. He informed OC members that the Millennium Assembly would open on 5 September 2000 and the Millennium Summit would begin on 6 September and would presumably last three or four days. While no decision on the Summit's format had been taken, interactive sessions, in addition to formal plenary statements by heads of State or Government, seemed to have wide support.

87. Several OC members wanted to know what the expected outcome of the Summit would be and what role the United Nations system would play in setting the agenda for the session. In response, the representative of the Office for the Millennium Assembly stated that no decision had been taken by the General Assembly on the possible participation of executive heads. Regarding the expected outcome, he said that a political declaration and a programme of action were being contemplated as possible outcomes. He underlined that the agenda would be set by the General Assembly, and recalled that the Secretary-General had requested ACC members to submit their views. He opined that thematic inputs could be further sought according to the themes to be decided upon by the General Assembly.

88. It was observed that to make the event global it would be helpful to link the activities of the Assembly and Summit to planned national events. The representative indicated that on the public information side, the Department of Public Information would seek

the cooperation of JUNIC to achieve synergies and promote the United Nations system. He observed that few responses had been received to the letter dated 26 May 1999 from the Secretary of ACC regarding millennium-related activities planned by funds, programmes and specialized agencies, and urged OC members to cooperate

on that matter. Information would also be made available on the Millennium Assembly web site.

## **B. JIU programme of work for the year 2000**

89. The Chairman of JIU, in a letter dated 4 October 1999 to executive heads, had requested suggestions for the 2000 JIU programme of work. He had also requested that OC give consideration to that matter. OC members noted that there was a need to establish clear channels of communication between JIU and the members of ACC, and that parallel communications with individual organizations and the ACC machinery might lead to some confusion. OC thus decided to revert to the matter, following the finalization of agency inputs

## **C. Media guidelines**

90. OC was informed that in response to a letter from the Secretary-General to executive heads on media guidelines, the Director-General of UNIDO had proposed that ACC discuss a system-wide approach to media liaison. The representative of UNIDO explained that his Director-General's proposal should be viewed as a positive reaction to the United Nations media guidelines attached to the letter of the Secretary-General. It was his Director-General's view that the United Nations system should have a more aggressive approach to project the work of the system and that he found the guidelines useful in that regard. Some OC members considered that common guidelines for media liaison for a system of organizations with widely varying mandates and missions would be difficult to achieve, and/or would have to be kept at a high level of generality. OC members agreed that JUNIC, in the first instance, should place the issue on its agenda, and suggested that it begin with a review of the existing media guidelines of the organizations of the system as a basis for examining the scope for a common

approach and the feasibility of a common set of guidelines, for subsequent consideration by OC and eventual submission to ACC.

#### **D. Hannover Exposition**

91. The Chairman recalled a letter he had sent to executive heads dated 25 October 1999 on behalf of the Secretary-General, informing them of the Secretary-General's intention to nominate Nadine B. Hack, President of N.B.H. Executive Consulting of New York, as Commissioner-General of the United Nations pavilion at the Hannover Exposition 2000. The Exposition, for which the United Nations was to act as lead agency, would be held from 1 June to 31 October 2000 on the theme "Humankind, nature, technology". The nomination was endorsed on behalf of ACC.

#### **E. Future sessions of OC and ACC**

92. Taking into account the dates for the next session of ACC (6 and 7 April 2000), OC scheduled part I of its next session for 8-10 March 2000 and part II for 10 and 11 April 2000, to be co-hosted by IFAD and WFP in Rome.

## Annex I

### **Annotated agenda (Part I) 1, 2 and 4 October 1999**

1. **Adoption of the agenda**
2. **Preparations for the second regular session of ACC**
- (a) **The demand placed on national and international systems by the new global environment: the institutional and programmatic capacity of the United Nations system to respond flexibly and effectively to the challenges of the next century**

On the basis of consultations on the work programme of ACC, undertaken through OC/ACC, the Secretary-General, in his letter of 5 March 1999 to members of ACC, had proposed that the Committee utilize its meetings in 1999:

“... to undertake a comprehensive assessment of the demands placed on national and international systems by the global environment which is emerging on the eve of the twenty-first century”.

Consequently, the Committee, at its first regular session in April 1999, focused on interactions with the private sector, building on the previous discussions and reviewing the experience with new initiatives being taken by the United Nations system. At the “retreat”, ACC members focused, in the first part, on identifying challenges facing the international community over the next decade and a set of core objectives to be pursued in the system as a whole. The second part of the retreat was devoted to assessing the main strengths and weaknesses of the United Nations system in relation to those objectives and offering recommendations on how, the system working collectively, could build on the strengths and overcome the weaknesses.

As proposed in the Secretary-General’s letter of 5 March 1999, the second regular session of ACC is expected, in the light of discussions at the first regular session and the retreat, to “endeavour to reach some overall conclusions on the institutional and programmatic capacity of our system to respond flexibly and effectively to the challenges before us in the next century”. The Secretary-General further indicated that these conclusions would, *inter alia*, be valuable to him in formulating his report to the Millennium Assembly. As indicated by the Secretary-General in his subsequent letter of 27 April 1999, reflections of the executive heads on the discussions at the retreat will be drawn upon to prepare for the fall session. Relevant material is being collected and will be made available to OC in advance of the session.

At the private meeting of ACC on 9 April 1999, the Secretary-General called on the Director-General of WIPO to expand on his proposals for the “transformation” of ACC as outlined in his letter to executive heads dated 8 March 1999. Following a first round of discussions at the private meeting, the Secretary-General indicated that he would “arrange, in the light of the exchange of views, and in close collaboration with ACC members, for the preparation of some action proposals that would provide the basis for further consideration of the matter by ACC at its fall session”. Relevant arrangements will be the subject of further communication from the Secretary-General to executive heads.

**(b) Follow-up to the Beijing Platform for Action and gender mainstreaming**

At its first regular session of 1998, ACC adopted a statement on gender equality and mainstreaming and indicated its intention to adopt another statement as an input into the special session of the General Assembly in the year 2000 entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace in the twenty-first century”, on the basis of a draft to be submitted by IACWGE at its second regular session, in fall 1999. In the light of the commitment of executive heads to give their strong and visible support to the advancement and empowerment of women and gender equality, ACC also agreed, at its spring session in 1999, to hold a discussion at the fall session on progress achieved in the implementation of the Platform for Action and gender mainstreaming.

A draft ACC statement as well as a note on this issue are currently under preparation and will be circulated in advance of the session.

**(c) Follow-up to recent ACC decisions**

A number of the items in this section of the agenda have been included at the request of individual members of OC. All the items need not necessarily be brought to the attention of ACC. Some are for the purposes of exchange of information only, which may be considered on a continuous basis by correspondence in the future. OC members will need to decide, at the beginning of the session, which of these items it will discuss in depth and which of those should be brought to the attention of ACC.

**(i) Regional meetings**

Pursuant to a recommendation of the Economic and Social Council in 1998, the Deputy Secretary-General has convened a series of regional inter-agency meetings in order to improve coordination and promote collaborative action between the regional commission and the relevant entities of the United Nations system engaged in regional and inter-country activities. A preliminary report on these meetings was submitted to the Council in July 1999. In accordance with paragraph 82 of the summary of conclusions of the Organizational Committee of ACC at its first regular session of 1999, ACC is to be apprised of the outcome of the regional meetings as well as Council discussions. A note on the subject will be available in advance of the OC session.

**(ii) World Summit on the Information Society**

At the first regular session of ACC in 1999, the Secretary-General of ITU recalled resolution PLEN/13 of the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference, in which he was called on to undertake consultations with ACC members with a view to meeting the necessary conditions for holding a world summit on the information society and to report to the ITU governing body. He expressed the hope that the summit would provide a unique opportunity to bring together the United Nations family of organizations and other actors around an issue that is now central to development and involves important political, economic, social and cultural dimensions.

It was agreed that ACC members would contact ITU by correspondence directly or through their OC representative to confirm their interest in cooperating with ITU in the organization of the summit and to indicate the contribution they intend to make

in this regard, and that the matter would then be reviewed at the fall session of OC/ACC.

**(iii) Universal access to basic communication and information services**

At its first regular session of 1997, ACC had issued a statement on universal access to basic communication and information services. The statement identified seven indicative areas for possible projects and designated ITU as the focal point. OC, on behalf of ACC, considered the issue at its first regular session in 1998. Given the magnitude of resources involved in implementing the identified pilot projects, OC agreed, *inter alia*, to consider the feasibility of establishing a catalytic fund for this purpose. At the first regular session of OC in 1999, the representative of ITU informed members that his organization was willing to continue to serve as the focal point on this issue and would provide more detailed information on the progress made at the 1999 fall session. ITU was requested to consult interested OC members by electronic mail and to report to OC on progress made and modalities for follow up.

**(iv) Funding of the Non-Governmental Liaison Service**

In recent years NGLS has managed to reduce its expenditures considerably, yet the contributions of the United Nations system are still inadequate to meet the core budget. Since UNICEF is the current Chair of the sponsors group, Carol Bellamy addressed a communication to the executive heads of ACC appealing for contributions, even at modest levels, from those ACC members who are currently not providing financial support and for modest increases from those who are current contributors. OC will be briefed on the responses to the communication of the Executive Director of UNICEF.

**(v) Africa**

At the 1998 fall session of ACC, the Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/52/871-S/1998/318) was discussed and it was agreed that the issues involved should continue to receive priority attention by the United Nations system. Consequently, at the 1999 spring session of ACC, the follow-up given within the system to the Secretary-General's report was further discussed in conjunction with proposals emanating from the African regional inter-agency meeting chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General as well as the progress achieved by the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa. Furthermore, at the coordination segment of its substantive session of 1999, the Council adopted agreed conclusions on the "Development of Africa: implementation and coordinated follow-up by the United Nations system of initiatives on African development", which contain a number of recommendations addressed to ACC and/or the United Nations system.

OC will need to determine whether there are any issues or developments that would have to be brought to the attention of ACC.

**(vi) HIV/AIDS**

At its 1999 spring session, the Executive Director of the Joint and Co-sponsored Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) briefed ACC members on the devastating impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The Director-General of WHO, in her capacity

as Chairperson of UNAIDS, highlighted the issue of United Nations staff and dependants living with HIV/AIDS. ACC members proposed that CCAQ(PER) consider putting the issue on its agenda and reporting to ACC on any policy-level consideration and joint actions required. In addition, at its substantive session of 1999, the Council adopted resolution 1999/36, which contained, *inter alia*, a number of recommendations re-emphasizing the importance of coordination of activities and urging the United Nations system and the international community at large to enhance their efforts in combating HIV/AIDS.

OC will need to determine whether there are any issues or developments that should be brought to the attention of ACC.

**(vii) International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction**

At its 1999 spring session, ACC discussed the future arrangements for natural disaster reduction and noted the importance of an inter-agency approach to the follow-up to IDNDR. On the basis of reports prepared by the United Nations for the General Assembly through ECOSOC concerning IDNDR, (A/54/132-E/1999/80 and Add.1; and A/54/136-E/1999/89), the Council adopted resolution 1999/63. It requested the Secretary-General to establish, as of January 2000, an inter-agency task force, with representation from all relevant United Nations bodies and members of the scientific and technical community to serve as the main forum within the United Nations for continued and concerted emphasis on natural disaster reduction, in particular for defining strategies for international cooperation at all levels in this field, while ensuring complementarity of action with other agencies.

It also requested the Secretary-General to maintain the existing inter-agency secretariat function for natural disaster reduction as a distinct focal point for the coordination of the work of the task force, to place the inter-agency task force and inter-agency secretariat under the direct authority of the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and to finance it from extrabudgetary resources through a specific trust fund.

IACSD, at its fourteenth meeting, held at Vienna on 9 and 10 September 1999, welcomed the Council resolution (see annotations below to agenda item 4 (a) (v); and ACC/1999/12).

**(viii) Follow-up to the substantive session of 1999 of the Council**

At its substantive session of 1999, the Council discussed and took decisions on several issues of importance to ACC and the system as a whole. Africa, regional meetings, IDNDR and HIV/AIDS are being dealt with under separate agenda items covered above. There were, however, other issues that were addressed by the Council, including Haiti, tobacco and health, malaria and illicit drugs. OC will be briefed on the outcomes of the session requiring the attention of the system.

**(ix) International Year for the Culture of Peace**

At its fall 1998 session, ACC requested OC to ensure continuous exchange of information, on a system-wide basis, on activities to be undertaken in follow-up to the decision of the General Assembly on a draft declaration and programme of action on the culture of peace. The General Assembly, on 13 September 1999, adopted resolution 53/243, entitled "Declaration and Programme of Action on a

Culture of Peace”, with implications for Governments, United Nations system and civil society. OC may wish to discuss how to proceed with the implementation of relevant parts of the resolution.

**(x) Five-year review of ICPD**

The special session of the General Assembly on the five-year review of ICPD was held from 30 June to 2 July 1999 at United Nations Headquarters. The outcome was very positive despite some difficulties encountered in the process. In view of the importance that Member States and the United Nations system attach to integrated and coordinated follow-up to global conferences and given that there are lessons to be learned from the ICPD review which may be relevant to the reviews of the Beijing and Copenhagen conferences, OC may wish to reflect on the implications for these upcoming five-year reviews.

**(xi) Inter-agency meeting on the Third United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries**

The inter-agency meeting on the preparatory process for the Third United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries was held at Geneva on 20 July 1999. The representative of UNCTAD will brief OC on the outcome.

**(d) Other matters: administrative questions**

**(i) Introduction of a second-tier appellate mechanism to enhance the administration of justice in the United Nations system**

At its first regular session of 1999, ACC was informed that the Ad Hoc Meeting of Legal Advisers had decided to establish a drafting group to elaborate a final paper on the subject under reference. ACC requested the Meeting to submit a final report on the subject for its consideration and approval at the 1999 fall session. OC will have before it a report by the Meeting.

**(ii) United Nations staff security and safety**

An Ad Hoc Inter-agency Meeting on Security was held at Washington, D.C., hosted by IMF, from 11 to 13 May 1999 (see ACC/1999/10). The agenda included, *inter alia*, communications, training, updating of the field security handbook, field security officers and the security implications of the Y2K problem. OC will have before it the report of the meeting.

**(iii) ICSC**

At the 1998 fall session of ACC, it was proposed that a group of experts be appointed by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chairman of ACC, after consultations with concerned ACC members, to undertake the review of ICSC, including its mandate, membership and functioning. It was also suggested that the report of the review group be submitted to the General Assembly, together with the views of the concerned organizations of the system, including, as appropriate, of their governing bodies. OC will be briefed on the action taken on this issue to date.

Under this item, it has been the practice for ACC to hear from and have an exchange of views with the Chairman of ICSC and representatives of FICSA and CCISUA.

Under this item, the attention of ACC will also be drawn to any issues arising out of the reports of CCAQ(PER) and CCAQ(FB).

**3. Structure and functioning of ACC and its subsidiary machinery**

**(a) ACC web site and the Executive Information Network**

At 1999 spring session of OC, a demonstration of a prototype ACC web site was given by the Secretary of ISCC and OC was also briefed on the Executive Information Network. OC members made several suggestions for improvement on the ACC web site. OC will be briefed on the progress made in the development of the ACC web site and the Executive Information Network since the spring session.

**(b) Annual overview report of ACC**

At the spring 1999 session of OC, the Director of the Office for Inter-Agency Affairs (OIAA) informed OC that he would be presenting a proposal on a new format for the annual overview report of ACC, which would be more in the nature of a "state of the system" report and truly reflect the extent and breadth of coordination efforts of the United Nations system. OC will have before it a report by OIAA for discussion.

**(c) Working methods of OC**

At its spring 1999 session, it was proposed that in keeping with the ongoing reforms in the United Nations system, OC take an in-depth look at its working methods. OC will have before it an issues note for discussion.

**4. Work of ACC consultative committees and other inter-agency bodies**

**(a) Consultative committees**

- (i) Report of the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions (Personnel and General Administrative Questions) on its ninetieth session (Geneva, 6-9 April 1999) (ACC/1999/5)**
- (ii) Report of the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions (Personnel and General Administrative Questions) on its ninety-first session (New York, 14-16 July 1999) (ACC/1999/13)**
- (iii) Report of the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions (Financial and Budgetary Questions) on its ninetieth session (New York, 30 August-3 September 1999) (ACC/1999/14)**
- (iv) Report of the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions on its fifteenth session (New York, 20-24 September 1999) (ACC/1999/15)**
- (v) Report of the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development on its fourteenth session (Vienna, 9-10 September 1999) (ACC/1999/12)**



- (b) **Bodies reporting to OC**
  - (i) **Report of the Joint United Nations Information Committee on its twenty-fifth session (Vienna, 6-8 July 1999) (ACC/1999/11)**
  - (ii) **Report of the Information Systems Coordination Committee on its seventh session (New York, 13-17 September 1999) (ACC/1999/19)**
- 5. **Other matters**
  - (a) **Future sessions of OC and ACC**

## **Annotated Agenda (Part II)**

### **1-2 November 1999**

1. **Finalization of and follow-up to the agreed conclusions of ACC at its second regular session of 1999**
2. **Structure and functioning of ACC and its subsidiary machinery: working methods of OC**

At its spring 1999 session, it was proposed that in keeping with the ongoing reforms in the United Nations system, OC take an in-depth look at its working methods. OC will have before it an issues note for discussion.

3. **Work of ACC consultative committees and other inter-agency bodies: bodies reporting to OC**

Report of the Information Systems Coordination Committee on its seventh session (New York, 13-17 September 1999) (ACC/1999/19)

4. **Other matters**

- (a) **Annual overview report of ACC**

At the spring 1999 session of OC, the Director of the Office for Inter-Agency Affairs informed OC that he would be presenting a proposal on a new format for the annual overview report of ACC, which would be more in the nature of a "state of the system" report and truly reflect the extent and breadth of coordination efforts of the United Nations system. OC will have before it an issues note for discussion.

- (b) **JIU programme of work for the year 2000**

The Chairman of JIU sent a letter dated 4 October 1999 to the executive heads requesting suggestions for the 2000 JIU programme of work. JIU also requested that OC give consideration to this matter.

- (c) **Media guidelines**

In response to the Secretary-General's letter dated 31 August 1999 to ACC members on media guidelines, the Director-General of UNIDO proposed that the ACC session discuss a system-wide approach to media liaison. In an e-mail message to OC

members dated 25 October 1999 from the Chairman of OC, he suggested, for the consideration of executive heads, that OC take up the matter at the post-ACC session to determine how best this issue could be pursued in the context of the preparations for the April 2000 ACC session.

**(d) Hannover Exposition 2000**

In a letter dated 25 October 1999 to the executive heads, the Chairman of OC informed them of the intention of the Secretary-General to nominate Nadine B. Hack, President of N.B.H. Consulting of New York, as Commissioner-General of the United Nations Pavilion at the Hannover Exposition 2000. In an e-mail from the Chairman of OC dated 25 October, it was proposed that OC act on this issue on behalf of ACC at the post-ACC OC session.

## Annex II

### List of participants (Part I, New York, 1, 2 and 4 October 1999)

Chairman: P. **Civili** (United Nations)

Secretary: K. **Aning** (United Nations)

#### United Nations entities and programmes

##### United Nations

Office for Inter-Agency Affairs	S. Fareed G. Gabriel A. O. Lakanla le K. Gerlach
Department of Economic and Social Affairs	S. Khan C. Hackett L. Costa-Esnard
Regional Commissions New York Office	S. Al-Bassam M. McCaffery
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development	A. Tibaijuka S. Brandwayn
United Nations Children's Fund	A. Vaher
United Nations Development Programme	N. Chandavarkar L. Franzoni
United Nations Environment Fund	A. Z. Amin M. Jansen
United Nations Population Fund	M. Simonen
United Nations International Drug Control Programme	V. McClean H-M. Plut
World Food Programme	V. Sequeira
United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East	W. Lee
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner For Refugees	P. Mateu

#### Specialized agencies, IAEA and WTO

International Labour Organization	M. A. Ducci F. Lisk
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	W. Mann
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	L. Schaudinn

International Civil Aviation Organization	G. Griffiths
World Health Organization	B. Kean L. Tillfors
World Bank	A. Sfeir-Younis C. Fleming
International Monetary Fund	R. Munzberg A. F. Rubin
International Telecommunication Union	M. Harbi
World Meteorological Organization	S. Chacowry D. D. C. Don Nanjira
International Maritime Organization	O. Bosquez
World Intellectual Property Organization	O. Fasehun S. Rama Rao
International Fund for Agricultural Development	U. Abhyankar
United Nations Industrial Development Organization	R. C. Sersale di Cerisano D. Perron
	* * *
International Atomic Energy Agency	B. Andemicael T. Brown
	* * *
World Trade Organization	A. Frank
	* * *
United Nations University	J. Fomerand

**Annex III****List of participants (part II, New York, 1 and 2 November 1999)**

Chairman: P. Civili (United Nations)

Secretary: K. Aning (United Nations)

**United Nations entities and programmes**

## United Nations

Office for Inter-Agency Affairs

S. Fareed  
G. Gabriel  
A. O. Lacanlale  
K. Gerlach

Department of Economic and Social Affairs

S. Khan  
L. Costa-Esnard

United Nations Children's Fund

A. Vaher

United Nations Development Programme

N. Chandavarkar  
L. Franzoni

United Nations Environment Programme

A. Amin  
M. Jansen

United Nations Population Fund

M. Simonen

United Nations International Drug Control Programme

A. S. Noyan

World Food Programme

V. Sequeira

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner  
For Refugees

P. Kourula

**Specialized agencies, IAEA and WTO**

International Labour Organization

F. Lisk  
G. HowellFood and Agriculture Organization of  
the United Nations

W. Mann

United Nations Educational, Scientific and  
and Cultural Organization

L. Schaudinn

International Civil Aviation Organization

G. Griffiths

World Health Organization

B. Kean

World Bank

A. Sfeir-Younis  
C. Fleming

International Monetary Fund

R. Munzberg  
A. F. Rubin

Universal Postal Union

G. Kalicki

International Telecommunication Union	M. Harbi
World Meteorological Organization	S. Chacowry D. D. C. Don Nanjira
International Maritime Organization	O. Bosquez
World Intellectual Property Organization	O. Fasehun
International Fund for Agricultural Development	U. Abhyankar
United Nations Industrial Development Organization	R. C. Sersale di Cerisano
* * *	
International Atomic Energy Agency	B. Andemicael
* * *	
United Nations University	J. Fomerand

---