United Nations

Administrative Committee on Coordination

Summary of conclusions of the Organizational Committee at its first regular session

Contents

Part I (WFP/IFAD headquarters, Rome, 8-10 March 2000)

I. Introduction

1.   The Organizational Committee (OC) of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) met at the headquarters of the World Food Programme/International Fund for Agricultural Development (WFP/IFAD), Rome, from 8 to 10 March 2000. OC adopted an annotated agenda for the meeting, which is contained in annex I. The list of participants is contained in annex II. The outcome of a further meeting of OC, held immediately after the first regular session of 2000 of ACC, is reflected in part II of the present summary of conclusions; the list of participants for that meeting (10 April) is contained in annex III.

II. Preparations for the first regular session of ACC

A. The demands placed on national and international systems by the new global environment: implications of globalization for international economic cooperation and development

2.   OC took note of the 22 February 2000 letter of the Secretary-General proposing that the theme selected last year — demands placed on national and international systems by the new global environment — continue to guide the work of ACC in 2000. Within that broad framework, the letter proposed four sets of issues: the international trading system and the trade/environment/labour/human rights nexus, in the aftermath of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial Conference held in Seattle and the tenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD X); the role of information technology in a knowledge-based economy; health and other social implications of globalization; and financing for development. It suggested that ACC pursue the first two sets of issues at its first regular session of 2000 and the latter two at its second regular session.

1. Globalization and the United Nations system: interrelationships between trade and economic, social and environmental dimensions

3.   The Director for the Economic and Social Council Support and Coordination, in introducing the item, observed that while ACC had discussed the broad theme of globalization and its impact on earlier occasions, the current meeting was the first time it would take up two closely related cross-cutting issues — namely the interrelationship between trade, economic, social and environmental dimensions, on the one hand, and information technology, on the other. The distinction between so-called "hard" and "soft" issues, or between trade, finance and technology vis-à-vis social and environmental issues in the global economy, had been blurred, as was evidenced in the outcome of the WTO Ministerial Conference. In today's global economy, the social and environmental dimensions could no longer be separated from economic considerations. The Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization had recognized that. Another key element in the consideration of the broad theme of globalization was the need to achieve inclusiveness in the process of globalization. That implied that decision-making processes should be participatory and open in a way that not only promoted inclusiveness in the world economy but ensured inclusiveness within the United Nations system as well. A major lesson of UNCTAD X is that the system could play a role in diffusing tensions and contradictions that might have arisen in the context of multilateral trade negotiations. A key element for consideration by ACC should thus be the interrelationships between trade, economic, social and environmental issues and the promotion of inclusiveness in the global economy.

4.   OC noted that the arrangement whereby the work programme of ACC is organized around a main theme has indeed led to continuity in ACC discussions and allowed a deepening of discussions of the issues involved. OC recalled that ACC has been engaged in a process of reflection on the various aspects of globalization since 1998, devoting its two regular sessions last year to a collective examination of the theme "demands placed on national and international systems by the new global environment".

5.   OC members observed that the consideration of key issues within the overall theme of globalization has assumed increased importance in the aftermath of the WTO Ministerial Conference in Seattle. The failure of the preparatory process for a new round of trade negotiations, while stemming from disagreements among the member States of WTO on substantive aspects of the trade agenda, has brought to the fore the close relationship of trade with wider globalization issues, particularly those involving human rights, labour standards and environmental protection. The disappointing outcome of the Seattle Conference was due in part to the attempts by some countries to utilize WTO, with its dispute-settlement mechanism and enforcement regime, to link trade and other globalization issues, including labour standards and environmental protection. At the same time, there was increased recognition that the process of globalization, while creating new opportunities for international economic cooperation and development, has produced unequal benefits. Many developing countries and, in particular, the least developed countries have gained little by way of benefits and face further marginalization in the globalized economy. As a result, support for the process of globalization is faltering.

6.   OC members agreed that ACC can make a significant contribution by enhancing the system's comprehension and appreciation of the different dimensions and implications of globalization and its outcomes in the context of a comprehensive and integrated framework. A coherent system-wide response to the interrelated issues of globalization should build on the many existing instruments and mechanisms that already exist within the United Nations system. Close collaboration among organizations of the system, based on their respective mandates and comparative advantages, should be the basis for advancing, in a mutually reinforcing way, the various elements of the system's common strategy. The principles of the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and subsequent human rights instruments and the various international conventions and agreements on the environment, together with the Global Compact as a means to advance those principles, and the Plan of Action adopted at UNCTAD X, are among the main instruments that can be utilized as part of a common strategy to promote a more participatory process and inclusive globalization process. The interface between those instruments and the mechanisms in the multilateral trading system deserves special attention by ACC. As organizations of the system pursue each element of a common and comprehensive strategy in the appropriate forum and in the context of the appropriate instrument and mechanism, the interrelationships between those elements should be kept in mind. In so doing, they can help advance multilateral cooperation in a mutually reinforcing way along a broad front.

7.   OC considered that a common strategy for organizations of the system to address the interrelated issues of globalization and promote an inclusive process of globalization should contain the following elements:

(a)   Rebuild confidence among member States;

(b)   Help harmonize potential inconsistencies among various objectives;

(c)   Pursue a broad and development-oriented trade agenda reflecting a balance of interests among countries;

(d)   Provide free market access to the least developed countries to counter their marginalization and enable them to benefit fully from an open and fair multilateral trading system;

(e)   Place renewed emphasis on building the capacities of developing countries, and in particular of the least developed countries, to participate fully in the global economy and benefit from trade liberalization;

(f)   Engage parliamentarians and civil society, including the business community and trade unions, to build broad-based support for the goals of multilateral cooperation in a globalized environment.

8.   OC proposed that ACC consider adopting an "issue management" approach to the follow-up to its present discussion, by encouraging networking arrangements which would ensure a continuous process of consultation and close collaboration among participating organizations on different sets of interrelated issues, and which would serve, together, to further a coherent response by the system to the challenges of globalization.

2.   Information technology

9.   The Director for the Economic and Social Council Support and Coordination, in introducing the

item, recalled the statement of ACC at its first regular session of 1997 highlighting the transforming character of the information revolution and its far-reaching implications for development cooperation and the functioning of the system itself. ACC expressed profound concern that access to resources for and opportunities to use information and communication services was extremely uneven. It highlighted the obstacles leading to "information poverty" and the growing information gap, while noting that the new technology offered great new opportunities to accelerate development. ACC embraced the objective of achieving universal access to basic communication and information services for all, and stressed the need for a strategic and systematic approach, based on strengthened collaboration among the organizations of the United Nations system. It also recognized that there were important ethical and cultural issues as well as issues of freedom of access and expression, of protection of privacy, and of intellectual property rights that needed to be addressed.

10. The Director for the Economic and Social Council Support and Coordination noted that since then, while the system had moved forward, the pace of the information revolution had accelerated even more, lending further urgency to the need to pursue the goals identified in the ACC statement. The range of issues requiring attention and being pursued by different parts of the system continued to expand. It included issues of connectivity, access and content; the need for continuing education and training, and related questions of knowledge-sharing; intellectual property rights; e-commerce; and privacy, security and taxation issues. In relation to development, he observed that the twin challenge was to fully exploit information and communications technologies, both as a means to further the integration of developing countries in the global knowledge society and as instruments to enhance efficiency and growth in key sectors of the economy and advance the socio-economic and cultural goals of society. He pointed out that member States increasingly viewed the twin challenge as critical. Thus, the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council (5-7 July 2000) would focus on the theme "Development and international cooperation in the twenty-first century: the role of information technology in the context of a knowledge-based global economy". The Council's initiative provided an excellent opportunity to harness the capabilities of the United Nations system and to further strengthen the necessary dialogue among all stakeholders around the theme. Also, the General Assembly during its next session, as part of its consideration of the theme of globalization and interdependence, would consider a report of the Secretary-General on further promoting the role of the United Nations system in the transfer of information and communications technologies to developing countries. The report would take account of the outcomes of panels being convened in March, April and May to consider different aspects of information technology and development.

11. OC agreed that a main purpose of the ACC discussion should be to examine how best the relevant United Nations system's efforts can be renewed and the extent to which they need to be readjusted to meet effectively the challenges ahead. The questions that those challenges raise — and the issues that need to be pursued within ACC, and in the system's dialogue with Governments and other key actors — include:

(a) The characteristics and structural features of the new knowledge-based society and economy and their implications and the possibilities they open for developing countries;

(b) The elements necessary, in terms of skills, organization and infrastructure, for developing countries and societies to utilize and benefit from modern information and communication technology (ICT) and how the United Nations system could best contribute to the efforts of developing countries to foster such an environment;

(c) How the goal of access and connectivity as well as education and training for all could be achieved, especially in developing countries;

(d) How cultural and linguistic diversity could be pursued in cyberspace and how the knowledge and perspective, especially of women and of marginalized groups of society such as indigenous groups, could be included in the substantive content of the information highway;

(e) How the experience and know-how of those developing countries that have made considerable strides in the area of information and communication technology could be harnessed for other developing countries, and how beneficial linkages to other sectors of the economy within those countries could be ensured;

(f) How explicit linkages could be elaborated between an ICT development strategy and poverty eradication efforts;

(g) How the potential of ICTs for accelerating development and averting marginalization of developing countries could be tapped, given the existing distribution of knowledge power;

(h) How ICTs could help integrate the poor into the globalization process;

(i) How trends in reduced resource and energy intensity associated with the new technologies could be maximized for environmental benefits;

(j) How ICTs could best be used for the prevention and mitigation of natural and man-made disasters or emergencies;

(k) What innovative approaches to resource mobilization could be devised and what incentives could be provided to attract private sector investment in the ICT sector, including infrastructure, in the developing countries;

(l) How the United Nations system could further develop well-coordinated responses to the compelling new challenge of bridging the "digital divide".

12. OC agreed to recommend that, taking into account relevant activities under way in the system and the conclusions that ACC may reach on the future directions of the system's work and on arrangements to follow up at the inter-agency level its discussions on the above issues, executive heads may wish to authorize that an ACC statement be prepared and finalized through correspondence for submission to the Council.

3. Review of ACC

13. In accordance with the decision reached at the private meeting of ACC on 29 October 1999, following a proposal by the Secretary-General in his communication to executive heads of 5 October 1999, a team composed of Rafeeuddin Ahmed, Hans Blix and Franklin Thomas was entrusted with a review of the role and functioning of ACC and its machinery and the preparation of a blueprint of desirable reforms, for consideration by ACC at its spring 2000 session.

14. OC noted that the report of the review team will be available to executive heads in advance of the session.

B. HIV/AIDS

15. The UNAIDS secretariat, in introducing the item, gave an overview of the global HIV/AIDS situation, highlighting the interlinkages with economic, social and security factors, which called for a multisectoral response requiring the engagement of a broad range of partners in the United Nations system. A multimedia presentation concluded with actions suggested for the ACC to mobilize its members for action, especially at the country level. They were drawn upon by OC in preparing recommendations for action by ACC.

16. OC was informed by UNDP, as Chair of the UNAIDS Committee of Co-sponsoring Organizations (CCO), that the papers before the OC had been discussed and revised following the meeting of the preparatory CCO the week before. OC members expressed appreciation for the UNAIDS presentation and proposed that adequate time be devoted to that important item for discussion at the ACC session. OC discussed the development implications of HIV/AIDS, including the effects on national economies, health budgets, the need for research and development, human rights concerns, linkages to both poverty and to development, patent-related issues and links between macroeconomic and social issues. The spread of HIV infection at times of emergency and crisis was highlighted, as was the need for coordinated action with other partners in the United Nations system. The need to work with a diversity of groups, including parliamentarians, religious leaders, elders and high-level policy makers, for purposes of advocacy, awareness-raising and prevention was also emphasized. OC members agreed on the importance of action at the country level, especially in the context of the resident coordinator system, as a means to bring about coordinated action. A number of successful examples were cited of United Nations organizations' interventions that served to increase awareness and strengthen preventive measures, for example, in Uganda. UNAIDS was encouraged to build on those efforts.

17. OC members stressed the need for organizations in the United Nations system to support and complement the efforts of the co-sponsor organizations

of UNAIDS, particularly by considering the most effective way of integrating AIDS-related issues into their activities, in accordance with their mandates; bringing those issues to the attention of their respective governing bodies and seeking budgetary allocations, as appropriate, for action in this area; and giving guidance to their country-based representatives (or headquarters and regional staff, as appropriate), to take part in joint planning and programming on AIDS in the context of the country-based United Nations system thematic groups on HIV/AIDS. OC invited the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ) to give attention to the question of appropriate guidance for the Resident Coordinator System on a coordinated country-level approach to fighting HIV/AIDS, on the understanding that this should not add to the number of existing guidelines but should help focus and consolidate them and would be consistent with the role and functions of the HIV/AIDS thematic groups. It agreed to recommend that the Office for Inter-Agency Affairs should, in collaboration with UNAIDS, ensure that work initiated by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) to develop strategies for the prevention and control of HIV/AIDS in conflict situations is coordinated with related ongoing work in the United Nations system as a whole, so as to strengthen national responses to HIV/AIDS. OC also decided to recommend encouraging organizations of the United Nations system to participate actively in the development of a global strategy on HIV/AIDS, in cooperation with the UNAIDS secretariat and UNAIDS co-sponsoring organizations.

Issues relating to United Nations staff and dependants

18. The UNAIDS secretariat briefed OC on the contents of two papers dealing with the subject of HIV/AIDS in the United Nations workplace. The first, prepared by the UNAIDS secretariat, provided an update of activities undertaken by various United Nations organizations since the last ACC meeting and presented two recommendations regarding equity in staff health insurance and the issuance of guidelines for action at the country level. The second paper was the report of a Task Force set up by the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions (Personnel and General Administrative Questions) CCAQ (PER) to study the many interrelated elements of the issue and highlight those requiring policy decisions by ACC.

19. OC members suggested that a combined version of the two papers be submitted to ACC for its background information. It was noted that while calculating the number of staff and their dependants living with HIV/AIDS is a complex matter, an extrapolation of current statistical data estimates the number to be around 3,000. Proposals were regrouped into four areas of intervention: creating an environment free from fear of discrimination; training and development directed to managers, country representatives, administrative and medical staff responsible for advising staff members; disseminating up-to-date information and briefing to staff in general; and providing access to medical treatment and insurance coverage.

20. OC observed that just as the global HIV/AIDS situation required a broad-based response engaging the full range of partners in the United Nations system, so did the issue of HIV/AIDS in the workplace. The issue of equity in terms of access to medical insurance and medical treatment among the United Nations system staff had been a recurring one and it was now urgent that decisions be made in that regard. Improvements in those areas were not restricted to staff and their dependants living with HIV/AIDS but were equally relevant to those with other chronic, life threatening diseases and serious medical conditions.

21. OC recommended that ACC endorse the thrust of the conclusions and recommendations contained in the UNAIDS/CCAQ Task Force paper. It also recommended for adoption the CCAQ (PER) request to present to the fall 2000 session of ACC proposals for improving and harmonizing medical insurance coverage for national staff within the United Nations system on the basis of a comparative study on medical insurance schemes for national staff within the United Nations system and current data on the number of HIV-positive staff and their dependants. OC underscored the need for special intensified training for peacekeeping troops and recommended that such training be given a high priority in 2000. It endorsed the request of CCPOQ to ensure distribution to all resident coordinators and members of country teams of the guidance note on HIV/AIDS in the United Nations workplace, urging that as many measures as possible be put in place by the end of the year and requesting that CCPOQ report on the status of their implementation to ACC at its spring 2001 session.

C. Staff security and safety

22.   OC reviewed a paper providing an update on the security situation of United Nations system personnel and ongoing actions to enhance staff security and safety as a follow-up to the ACC conclusions at its fall 1999 session. OC members expressed satisfaction at the actions under way in the system to safeguard the security and safety of system personnel and called for further measures, including the extension of security arrangements to non-governmental organizations. OC recommended that ACC express appreciation for the renewed attention being given to the security and safety of United Nations system personnel by the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Council and reiterate the commitment of its members to continue their advocacy of staff security and safety in the intergovernmental bodies of the system and in their dialogue with member States. OC also proposed that ACC keep the matter under review and consider further measures to enhance staff security and safety at its fall 2000 session.

D. Follow-up to ACC decisions

1. World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance

23.   The representative of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) recalled that at the fall 1999 session of ACC, the High Commissioner had requested that the holding of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance be placed on the agenda of the spring 2000 session of ACC. He briefed OC on the preparatory process under way for the holding of the World Conference and invited the early involvement of organizations of the system. The Conference presents a unique opportunity for the United Nations system to develop and adopt a new approach to fighting racism and intolerance in the new millennium. He requested contributions in the form of background documents and studies to regional seminars of experts, regional preparatory meetings, the two sessions of the Preparatory Committee of the Conference, to be held from 1 to 5 May 2000 and in May 2001 in Geneva, and the World Conference itself, which will take place in South Africa from 31 August to 7 September 2001. In addition, organizations are invited to use their respective networks and experience at the country level for informing their constituencies and sensitizing and mobilizing non-governmental organizations and civil society about the aims of the World Conference. They may also wish to introduce Internet links to the World Conference web site of OHCHR in their official web sites. Coordination with the OHCHR secretariat of the World Conference would also be significantly improved by the establishment of focal points in the concerned agencies.

24.   The need to involve other parts of the ACC machinery, especially CCPOQ and the United Nations Director-General, in preparations for the Conference was emphasized. In addition, the focal points in the concerned agencies needed to be linked for purposes of coordination. The importance of education in eliminating racism, xenophobia and intolerance, the promotion of non-discrimination in education and the protection of the cultural identity and the cultural and linguistic rights of minorities were also stressed.

2. Forthcoming General Assembly special sessions on follow-up to global conferences and the Tenth Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders

25.   OC was briefed on the preparations for the General Assembly special sessions entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century" (Beijing + 5) (New York, 5-9 June 2000) and entitled "World Summit for Social Development and beyond: achieving social development in a globalizing world" (Social Summit + 5) (Geneva, 26-30 June 2000). The Council, at the coordination segment of its substantive session in July 2000, will undertake an assessment of the progress made in the United Nations system, through the conference reviews, in the integrated and coordinated implementation and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits. The need for careful preparation and clear objectives was emphasized. The Council should draw lessons from the five-year review processes in its overall assessment of the follow-up to global conferences and the extent to which the system has succeeded in developing a coordinated approach. It is important that organizations of the system contribute to this overall assessment and participate fully in the preparations for the special sessions and the Council review processes.

26. It was suggested that conference follow-up be reviewed in terms of national implementation, secretariat follow-up and governmental implementation of conference decisions. The need to focus on cross-cutting themes and the linkages between the follow-up of the global conferences and summits was also highlighted. OC members stressed the importance of the various review processes building and drawing on each other.

27. The representative of UNDCP briefed OC on the upcoming Tenth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (Vienna, 10-17 April). She pointed out that the globalization of most contemporary problems had made international cooperation against crime, especially transnational organized crime, an urgent priority. The Crime Congress would provide a timely opportunity to strengthen international consensus on a common framework to combat crime. It would bring together different high-level participants from all criminal justice systems for developing norms and expanding collaboration among practitioners. A number of workshops would be organized at the Congress covering such issues as combating corruption; crimes related to the computer network; women in the criminal justice system; and community involvement in crime prevention. The Congress was expected to adopt a declaration on crime and justice: meeting the challenges of the twenty-first century. Preparatory work was also under way for a convention against transnational organized crime and its protocols which would be submitted to the General Assembly and would be open thereafter for Member States' signatures. OC members agreed on the importance of raising awareness in the international community of the importance of the Crime Congress and the system's contributions to ensuring its success.

3. Natural disaster reduction

28. The representative of WMO drew the attention of OC to recent and continuing natural disasters — e.g., floods in Mozambique and Madagascar and forest fires in Indonesia — and highlighted the importance of an expeditious implementation of General Assembly resolution 54/219 on the successor arrangements to the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction. In that context, it was important to establish the inter-agency task force for disaster reduction as quickly as possible. The arrangements were to be reviewed by the General Assembly after one year of operations. He also recalled the discussions at the fall 1999 session of ACC which emphasized the importance of monitoring, prediction, early warning and preparedness in relation to natural disasters and the prominent role of science and technology in any successor mechanism for the Decade. OC agreed to request ACC to urge that the arrangements approved by the General Assembly be implemented as soon as possible.

E. Issues arising from the subsidiary machinery

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

(a) The recommendation of CCPOQ for ACC to adopt a statement on the United Nations 10-Year Programme of Girls' Education, for presentation at the forthcoming World Education Forum, in Dakar in April 2000;

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

(i) Environmental Management Group. The Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development (IACSD) at its fifteenth meeting on 24-25 January 2000 endorsed the terms of reference of the Environmental Management Group;

(ii) ACC statement on gender. Following inter-agency consultations, an ACC statement on gender was adopted as an input to the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000 ... ", to be held from 5 to 9 June 2000 in New York;

(iii) Guidelines on human rights and guidance note on capacity-building. CCPOQ adopted guidelines entitled "The United Nations and human rights: guidelines and information for the resident coordinator system" and a note entitled, "ACC guidance note on capacity-building".

30. In addition, OC had before it other recommendations of the consultative committees, as follows:

(a) The Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality (IACWGE) has invited ACC, in framing its future work programmes, to select gender-

specific topics for its consideration on a regular basis. In the same context, the Committee indicated that it would welcome an opportunity to present to ACC the findings of a study on the role of gender focal points in mainstreaming the gender perspective into organizations of the system; and to obtain ACC guidance on a future framework for the funding of the Committee's joint activities;

(b) The Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development stressed the need to ensure coordination between the Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction and the Agenda 21 task managers, and the importance of early system-wide preparations for the 10-year review of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development;

(c) The Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions supported work under way in the United Nations Development Group for the elaboration of a concept paper to be entitled "Halving extreme poverty: an action strategy for the United Nations" and encouraged agencies to submit written comments with a view to finalizing the paper during March 2000.

31. OC also took note of the scheduled meetings of the subsidiary bodies, as follows:

CCAQ (PER)
Ninety-third session

IACSD   Geneva   21-22 September 2000
16th meeting

IACWGE   New York   26 February-March 2000
Sixth session

CCPOQ   New York   Week of 18 September 2000
Seventeenth session

OC raised the question of the scheduling of meetings of IACSD and CCPOQ which should preferably be adjusted so as to facilitate the preparatory work of OC.

F. Other matters

1. Follow-up to General Assembly resolutions

32. The Chairman briefed the Committee on the follow-up to a number of General Assembly resolutions of concern to ACC. They included resolution 54/238V by which the General Assembly decided to revert, at its next session, to the consideration of modalities of the review of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) on the basis of a further, detailed report from the Secretary-General; resolution 54/249 which, *inter alia*, provided for a review to be carried out of the functioning of ICSC; and resolution 54/228 in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to consult with ACC and to submit a report to the Assembly on the future status of the Staff College, based on an independent evaluation of its activities and corporate plan for the future.

33. With regard to the report on the review of ICSC, he noted that the issue would be taken up at the next meeting of the high-level CCAQ, to be held in early July 2000. Consultations were under way, within the framework of CCAQ, on how the report might best be approached. The detailed list of questions to be addressed contained in the resolution provided an opportunity for a comprehensive statement on issues and problems affecting the common system, the exercise by the General Assembly of its functions with regard to the system, and the role of ICSC. Members of the Committee regretted, on behalf of their organizations, that the General Assembly had again postponed action on the proposed review and stressed the need to clearly convey to the Assembly the strong support of executive heads for the review.

34. With regard to the Information Systems Coordination Committee (ISCC), the Committee noted that the issue of United Nations system information technology strategies would be a second main item on the agenda of the high-level CCAQ. The discussion would be organized so as to also incorporate the review of ISCC, requested by the General Assembly. It was intended that a small group of senior officials from the agencies most directly concerned, including officials with a strategic planning perspective as well as officials familiar with the work of ISCC, would be entrusted with preparing the CCAQ discussions. The group would be established and would start its work after the ACC session, so that it would be in a position

to take into account relevant aspects of the outcome of the review of the functioning of the ACC machinery, in the light of the report of the review team. Members of OC noted these arrangements. One member, in particular, stressed that information systems should not be dealt with purely as an administrative issue but that policy and programmatic aspects should also be fully considered. She, thus, welcomed the indication provided concerning the composition of the inter-agency group that would prepare the CCAQ discussion.

35. With regard to the review of the Staff College, the Chairman asked whether there was any observation with regard to the draft terms of reference that had been circulated to the Committee. The representative of the World Health Organization (WHO), speaking on behalf of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Food Programme, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNHCR, the United Nations Population Fund and WHO, noted that the draft terms of reference seemed to be mainly geared to projecting what could be achieved and did not place sufficient emphasis on reviewing the experience of the Staff College. He suggested that the review focus on the lessons learned, including who has benefited from its courses, what skills- and knowledge-transfer has taken place as a result of its programmes, whom its competitors are, and what changes have occurred in the United Nations system as a result of its activities. The results of the review should include options for ensuring stable funding for the Staff College, forms of governance for the College which would allow involvement of the clients in decision-making, priority-setting and performance evaluation, and clear direction for the future role of the College. The terms of reference should also recognize the role of the staff development and learning sections in organizations of the system and should include reference to the need for consultations with them in the review process. The review team should have the necessary skills mix, including skills in distance learning, new learning technologies and practical experience in field training. It should have a maximum of four persons and be gender and geographically balanced. The Chairman asked the representative of WHO to convey these comments to the Director of the Staff College and to consult with him, on behalf of the Committee, so that the terms of reference could be finalized as soon as possible and the review initiated. He assured the Committee that one of the main tasks of the review

team would be to consult closely with all of the organizations of the system. He considered it essential that any new arrangements that might be agreed upon for the future status of the Staff College would be such as to ensure true ownership of the College by the system as a whole.

2. Media guidelines

36. The Chairman recalled that the Joint United Nations Information Committee (JUNIC) was apprised, at its 1999 session, by the United Nations of the issuance of "media guidelines" applicable to United Nations secretariat officials and of other measures being introduced to promote a communication culture in the Organization. JUNIC expressed strong interest in and support for those initiatives and recommended that interactions and exchanges within the system on those matters be enhanced. The importance of appropriate training and guidance in those areas was stressed. Therefore, on 31 August 1999, the Secretary-General wrote to all members of ACC bringing to their attention the text of the United Nations media guidelines. He highlighted the effort to strike a balance between an open media policy and due regard for the confidential nature of much United Nations work, and sought comments and information on comparable documents in United Nations agencies.

37. The Chairman suggested — and OC agreed to recommend — that ACC express appreciation for the Secretary-General's initiative and encourage similar measures, where relevant, within the system, request JUNIC to promote appropriate follow-up action and facilitate an active exchange of practices and experiences system-wide.

3. Dates for the fall session of ACC

38. The Organizational Committee will finalize the dates for the ACC fall session in New York at its meeting immediately following the first ACC regular session of 2000.

Part II (WFP/IFAD headquarters, Rome, 10 April 2000)

I. Introduction

39. The Organizational Committee of the Administrative Committee on Coordination met on 10 April 2000 at the headquarters of the World Food Programme, in Rome, to consider the follow-up to the decisions taken and conclusions reached by ACC at its first regular session of 2000 (6-7 April 2000) (see ACC/2000/4) and the work of ACC consultative committees and other inter-agency bodies. The list of participants at part II of the first regular session of OC is contained in annex III.

II. Summary of conclusions of the Organizational Committee (part I)

40. The Chairman introduced the draft summary of conclusions of OC at its first regular session for 2000 (part I, above). It was adopted by OC, subject to any written comments its members might wish to submit by 14 April 2000.

III. Finalization of and follow-up to the agreed conclusions of ACC at its first regular session of 2000

41. The Chairman introduced the draft ACC summary of conclusions and suggested that additions be made in the introductory part of the report with reference to the ACC private audience with his Holiness the Pope, along with a brief summary of his remarks; the mission of the Executive Director of WFP as the Secretary-General's Special Envoy on the Drought in the Horn of Africa and the launching at the ACC session of the Inter-Agency Task Force on the United Nations Response to Long-term Food Security, Agricultural Development and Related Aspects in the Horn of Africa, chaired by the Director-General of FAO; the statement of the Director-General of WHO on the occasion of World Health Day; and the presentations of IFAD, the World Bank and UNDP on their poverty-reduction strategies.

42. The representative of ITU informed OC that World Space, a Geneva-based private company that recently launched two satellites — one of which is covering Africa — has offered free access to the satellites for the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General and the Inter-Agency Task Force on the Horn of Africa. World Space has offered to make 50 receivers available to United Nations system staff in the field. The Chairman thanked the representative of ITU for the information and requested the representatives of WFP and FAO to convey the offer of World Space to their respective executive heads.

43. In the context of the report to the Millennium Assembly, some OC members commented on the value of close inter-agency collaboration and expressed the hope that consultations would be strengthened in the follow-up phase.

44. OC considered the modality of implementation and follow-up action in regard to the suggestion to organize a system-wide community of ICT experts and users through innovative networking arrangements, resource facility/service for the system. In that regard, OC stressed that care should be taken not to duplicate the work already being done within the system by, *inter alia*, the Information Systems Coordination Committee (ISCC), and to bear in mind the potential costs involved. The importance of involving relevant subsidiary bodies of ACC, including CCPOQ and ISCC, in pursuing the suggestion was also stressed.

45. With regard to HIV/AIDS, a number of OC members reiterated that issuing additional guidelines to the resident coordinators as distinct from reinforcing existing ones should be avoided and that CCPOQ should be encouraged to support and strengthen the work of the thematic groups on HIV/AIDS.

46. OC members noted with satisfaction the participation of staff representatives at the ACC deliberation on such an important issue as staff security and safety. It was suggested that ways should continue to be explored to ensure that meetings between executive heads and staff representatives resulted in a real dialogue on major issues of concern to the staff.

47. With regard to the Secretary-General's call for ACC members to support the work of the Staff College and to provide financial contributions, it was suggested that the ongoing review of the Staff College would be instrumental in pursuing those matters.

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

Appointment of the secretary of the Information Systems Coordination Committee

48. On behalf of ACC, OC confirmed the appointment of Mr. Jerry Barton as Secretary of ISCC, for an additional period of two years, commencing on 4 January 2001, subject to the agreement of IAEA to his continued secondment.

V. Other matters

A. Date for the fall 2000 session of ACC

49. OC agreed to set Friday, 27 October, and Saturday, 28 October 2000, as the dates for the fall 2000 session of ACC, to be held at United Nations headquarters. It also agreed to meet from 2 to 4 October 2000 in New York to finalize preparations for the session.

B. Expression of appreciation to WFP, IFAD and the representative of IAEA

50. OC expressed its appreciation to WFP and IFAD for hosting the spring 2000 ACC and OC sessions and for the excellent arrangements they provided.

51. OC members also expressed appreciation to the representative of IAEA, Ms. Merle Opelz, who was attending OC for the last time, for her long and valuable contributions to the work of the Committee, and wished her well in her future endeavours.

Annex I

Annotated agenda

1. Preparations for the first regular session of ACC

(a) The demands placed on national and international systems by the new global environment: implications of globalization for international economic cooperation and development.

1.   In the light of consultations carried out by the Office for Inter-Agency Affairs, the Secretary-General will be writing shortly to executive heads proposing that ACC continue its discussion of the above theme during 2000. He will be proposing certain topics for in-depth discussions under the theme, at both the spring and at the fall sessions. Issues notes on the topics selected will thereafter be prepared and will be made available prior to the OC session. It is envisaged that issues relating to the Millennium Assembly will also be taken up in this context.

(b) Review of ACC

2.   The report of the ACC review team will be presented directly to the executive heads at the spring session.

(c) HIV/AIDS

3.   ACC considered different aspects of the issue of HIV/AIDS at both its spring and fall sessions in 1999. It requested CCAQ(PER) to report to ACC on action required in the context of the needs of the United Nations staff and dependants living with HIV/AIDS. In addition, it agreed to have an overall policy discussion on the issue at its spring 2000 session.

4.   The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1999/36, re-emphasized the importance of coordination of activities among organizations of the system on HIV/AIDS and put forward a number of specific recommendations to combat the epidemic. Last January, the Security Council discussed the devastating impact of HIV/AIDS on the countries in the African region. It underscored the need to accord high priority to fighting the disease as part of the international community's efforts to achieve peace and security in the continent.

5.   OC will have before it two background papers from UNAIDS: one on substantive issues in regard to HIV/AIDS and the United Nations system; and a second on HIV/AIDS in the United Nations workplace. In addition, CCAQ(PER) will provide a report on the implementation of the current ACC policy on HIV/AIDS and present concrete proposals for consideration by ACC.

(d) Follow-up to recent ACC decisions

(i) World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance

6.   OC will have before it a note by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the preparatory process for the World Conference, which will also highlight the role the organizations of the system can play in ensuring the success of the Conference.

(ii)   Forthcoming General Assembly special sessions on follow-up to global conferences

7.   OC will be briefed on the preparatory process for the General Assembly special sessions "Women 2000 ..." and "World Summit for Social Development ...", held in New York (5-9 June 2000) and Geneva (26-30 June 2000), respectively.

8.   The Economic and Social Council, at the coordination segment of its substantive session for 2000, will undertake an assessment of the progress made in the United Nations system, through the conference reviews, in the integrated and coordinated implementation and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits. OC will be updated on the preparations for the coordination segment of the Council.

(e)   Administrative questions

(i)   Staff security and safety

9.   A note on the current situation regarding staff security and safety and on steps being taken to follow up on the implementation of the statement adopted by ACC at its 1999 fall session will be made available to OC.

(f)   Other matters

(i)   Follow-up to General Assembly resolutions

10.   By its resolution 54/238 V, the General Assembly decided to revert to the consideration of the modalities of the review of the ICSC on the basis of a detailed report from the Secretary-General.

11.   In the light of General Assembly resolution 54/249, a review is also to be carried out on the functioning and effectiveness of ICSC.

12.   By its resolution 54/228, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to consult with ACC and relevant United Nations organizations and to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session a report on the Staff College, based on a full and independent evaluation of the implementation and completion of the activities undertaken by the College (incorporating the College's corporate plan and programme of action) and including recommendations on the future status, funding and operations of the College after the conclusion of its pilot phase in December 2000.

13.   OC will consider the follow-up to these resolutions of the General Assembly.

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

(a)   Work of ACC consultative committees

(i)   *Report of the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions (Personnel and General Administrative Questions at its ninety-second session, Vienna, 29-31 March 2000 (ACC/2000/5)*;

(ii)   *Report of the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions, at its sixteenth session, Geneva, 28 February-2 March 2000 (ACC/2000/7)*;

(iii)   *Report of the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development at its fifteenth session, New York, 24-25 January 2000 (ACC/2000/1)*;

(iv)   *Report of the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality at its fifth session, New York, 23-25 February 2000 (ACC/2000/3)*.

Annex II

List of participants at the meeting held in Rome, 8-10 March 2000 (part I)

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

Secretary: A. **Lacanlale** (United Nations)

United Nations entities and programmes

United Nations

Office for Inter-Agency Affairs	Q. S. Fareed
Department of Economic and Social Affairs	S. Khan

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights	J. Gomez del Prado
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development	M. Plehn-Mejia
United Nations Children's Fund	A. Vaher
United Nations Development Programme	N. Chandavakar
United Nations Environment Programme	A. Z. Amin
United Nations Population Fund	M. Simonen
United Nations International Drug Control Programme	A. S. Noyan
World Food Programme	V. Sequeira
	I. Riza
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	P. Kourula

Specialized agencies, IAEA and WTO

International Labour Organization	M. A. Ducci
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	R. De Lapuerta
United Nations Educational, Scientific and and Cultural Organization	L. Schaudinn M. Landry
International Civil Aviation Organization	G. Griffiths
World Health Organization	B. Kean
World Bank	C. Fleming
International Monetary Fund	R. Munzberg
Universal Postal Union	G. Kalicki
International Telecommunication Union	M. Harbi

World Meteorological Organization   S. Chacowry
                                                  D. D. C. Don Nanjira

International Maritime Organization   O. Bósquez P.

World Intellectual Property Organization   O. Fasehun
                                                  J. Neale
                                                  K. Lee

International Fund for Agricultural Development   U. Abhyankar

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International Atomic Energy Agency   M. Opelz

<div align="center">* * *</div>

World Trade Organization   A. Frank

<div align="center">* * *</div>

Joint and Co-sponsored United Nations Programme   K. Cravero
on HIV/AIDS   R. Chahil-Graf

Annex III

List of participants at the meeting held in Rome, 10 April 2000 (part II)

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

Secretary: E. **Lacanlale** (United Nations)

United Nations entities and programmes

United Nations	
Office for Inter-Agency Affairs	S. Fareed
Department of Economic and Social Affairs	S. Khan
United Nations Conference on Trade and and Development	M. Plehn-Mejia
United Nations Children's Fund	A. Vaher
United Nations Development Programme	N. Chandavakar
United Nations Environment Programme	A. Z. Amin
United Nations Population Fund	M. Simonon
United Nations International Drug Control Programme	A. S. Noyan
World Food Programme	I. Riza
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	P. Kourula

Specialized agencies, IAEA and WTO

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	W. Mann R. De Lapuerta
United Nations Educational, Scientific and and Cultural Organization	L. Schaudinn
International Civil Aviation Organization	G. Griffiths
World Health Organization	S. Lyagoubi-Ouahchi
World Bank	M. P. Garrity
Universal Postal Union	G. Kalicki
International Telecommunication Union	M. Harbi
World Meteorological Organization	D. D. C. Don Nanjira
International Maritime Organization	O. Bósquez P.
World Intellectual Property Organization	J. Neale

International Fund for Agricultural Development   U. Abhyankar

* * *

International Atomic Energy Agency   M. Opelz

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