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OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR
DEVELOPMENT

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

Note by the Secretary-General

1. The 1988 annual report of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation on operational activities for development, in which he addresses selected policy and management issues, is presented herewith (see annex).
2. General Assembly resolution 42/196 of 11 December 1987 on operational activities for development contains a series of requests addressed to the governing bodies of the organizations of the United Nations system, to their secretariats, to the Secretary-General and the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation, as well as to Member States.
3. The actions and information requested are, for the most part, to be reported to the General Assembly, through the Economic and Social Council, in the context of the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities to be undertaken in 1989.
4. For certain items a report on action taken by governing bodies was specifically requested for 1988. The individual reports of concerned governing bodies should contain information in response to that request. Given the calendar of their meetings, several organizations will not, however, be in a position to provide their views in time for the second regular session of the Economic and Social Council in 1988. They will be communicated as available and incorporated in a consolidated report by the Director-General.

5. The present report of the Director-General responds to the request for information on certain other specific items contained in resolution 42/196. For the remaining items, the report outlines the measures that the Director-General, in consultation with relevant organizations of the United Nations system, intends to take to ensure that information on action taken and recommendations for further action will be available for inclusion in the triennial policy review in 1989.

6. Comprehensive statistical data on operational activities for development for the year 1986, the publication of which was delayed for technical reasons, is presented as addendum 1 to the present report. Data for 1987 will be presented to the General Assembly as soon as it is available.

ANNEX

Report of the Director-General for Development and International
Economic Co-operation on operational activities for development

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. On 11 December 1987, the General Assembly adopted resolution 42/196 on operational activities for development. The contents of the resolution and the richness and harmony of the debates that preceded its adoption confirmed the importance that Member States attach to the development efforts of the organisations of the United Nations system. The wealth of issues addressed was reflected in an impressive number of requests for action and information addressed to the governing bodies of the United Nations organisations, to the Secretary-General and to the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation, as well as to the various secretariats concerned.
2. General Assembly resolution 42/196 represents a benchmark against which it will be possible to measure progress in the coming years in such important areas as resource mobilisation, the enhancement of national capacity to determine co-operation needs and to plan and manage development programmes, the provision of sectoral, multisectoral and integrated advice to Governments at their request, the harmonisation and simplification of rules and procedures, the co-ordination of activities through joint and collaborative programming and the strengthening of the functions and resources of the resident co-ordinators, the decentralisation of operational activities to the field level, the integration of women in development programmes, and the rationalisation of field structures, as well as improvements in the implementation of projects with special reference to procurement of goods and services, government execution and the quality of expertise and technical backstopping.
3. These issues correspond in large part to those identified in the course of the review of the case-studies on the functioning of operational activities of the United Nations system (A/42/326-E/1987/82, annex, and A/42/326/Add.3-E/1987/82/Add.3, annex), which was undertaken in 1987, on behalf of the Director-General, under the leadership of Mr. Kurt Jansson, former Assistant Secretary-General for Emergency Operations in Ethiopia. The comments of the governing bodies of the organisations of the United Nations system on the report submitted by the co-ordinator of the case-studies, most of which are not yet available, will be communicated as available and incorporated in a consolidated report to be presented by the Director-General. This document will also reflect the informal discussions of the report's findings, organized in March 1988, with the participation of representatives of delegations, representatives of the relevant programmes and agencies of the United Nations system and the authors of the report.
4. As requested in the resolution, the Director-General will make every effort, in conformity with his mandate, to ensure that resolution 42/196 serves as the basis for improvements in the overall organization of operational activities, that the various items receive full consideration by all relevant organizations of the United Nations development system, individually and collectively, and that the resolution is duly reflected in the preparation of his annual reports.

5. This is indeed the case of the present report, which concentrates on the actions related to resolution 42/196 that the Director-General and relevant organizations intend to take either before or during the triennial comprehensive policy review in 1989.

II. ISSUES RELATING TO GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 42/196 ON OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

A. Mobilization of financial resources

6. In resolution 42/196 the General Assembly emphasized the need for a substantial and real increase in the flow of concessional resources, particularly grants, on a predictable, continuous and assured basis. Total disbursements of official development assistance (ODA) in 1986 - the last year for which comprehensive statistics are available - continued to show the 2 per cent growth in real terms experienced throughout the first half of the 1980s. This modest achievement required special efforts by all groups of countries involved during a period of budgetary austerity (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries), substantially lower income from oil sales (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) countries) and internal economic reform (Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) countries). If the stabilization of OPEC aid after a short period of decline and the steady increase in CMEA aid are maintained, there are prospects for a somewhat improved overall performance in the coming years. However, meeting the objectives set by resolution 42/196 would require further efforts, more particularly on the part of those OECD countries whose contributions remain far below agreed targets.

7. An increase in ODA is particularly important in view of the rapid deterioration in other components of the financial flows to developing countries. The table below reflects the rapid decline in financing both from the private banking sector and from export credits. As a result, despite its modest performance, official development finance increased from approximately 35 per cent of total net financial flows in 1980 to 65 per cent in 1986.

Main components of total net financial flows to developing countries
 (percentage)

	1980	1985	1986
Official development finance (ODF)			
A. Official development assistance (ODA) a/	29	46	52
B. Other ODF	6	14	13
C. Export credits	13	4	2
D. Private flows			
Direct investment	9	9	14
Banking sector	38	16	6
Bonds	1	5	4
Grants by non-governmental organisations	2	3	4
Other private b/	1	2	4

Source: Based on table IV-I, page 46, of the 1987 report of the Chairman of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Note: Figures may not be add up due to rounding.

a/ Includes DAC, OPEC, CMEA and other bilateral aid and multilateral aid.

b/ Including estimates of unreported bond lending and swaps of loans for direct investment.

8. The situation was even more pronounced in the case of the least developed countries. Multilateral and bilateral concessional aid flows showed a positive trend throughout the early 1980s and particularly in 1985/86. International Development Association (IDA) annual disbursements to least developed countries, for example, increased from \$524 million in 1980 to \$1,278 million in 1986 (representing 30 per cent and 40 per cent, respectively, of total IDA disbursements); bilateral concessional aid increased from \$5 billion per year in the period 1981-1984 to \$5.8 billion in 1985 and \$6.5 billion in 1986. Non-concessional flows, however, fell drastically from \$1.2 billion in 1980 to only \$100 million in 1986. Borrowing on commercial terms has become untenable in most least developed countries in the light of the increasing problem of indebtedness, as well as considerations of credit-worthiness. Resource transfers have been further reduced by more restrictive practices applied by export credit agencies.

9. It should also be noted that the reported increases in ODA represent in large part the continuation of emergency relief flow to certain parts of Africa and the appreciation of other major donor currencies against the United States dollar.

10. The main issues concerning aid flows in 1987 to the two major groups of countries for which special United Nations programmes had been adopted (the least developed countries under the Substantial New Programme of Action for the 1990s and the African continent under the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990 (resolution S-13/2)) have been related to the above-mentioned developments and to the need for quick disbursing of non-project assistance to provide support during periods of adjustment and policy reform undertaken, in most cases, in consultation with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) or the World Bank.

11. In the course of 1987 important efforts have been made to enhance aid flows to Africa and the least developed countries through the creation of structural adjustment facilities or special allocations for non-project aid through both bilateral programmes and the multilateral institutions. Least developed countries availed themselves of the Compensatory Financing Facility and the Structural Adjustment Facility of the IMF for a total of \$300 million in 1987. The agreement reached in late 1987 on an Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility (ESAF) should provide further support. As for the World Bank, in addition to the expansion of structural lending (to nine least developed countries in 1986/87 compared with two in the period 1980-1985), African least developed countries (together with other countries of the continent) benefited from the Special Facility for sub-Saharan Africa.

12. It is clear, however, that these efforts are far from matching the requirements of countries that have embarked upon major adjustment efforts on the understanding that enhanced external support would be available.

13. This reflects, on the one hand, the difficulty in turning commitments into disbursements and, equally important, the deterioration of other factors determining overall resource flows - in particular the decline of commodity prices and the continuing burden of external debt, including that with the IMF, the World Bank and other international or regional financial institutions.

14. In this general context the role of grant-funded technical co-operation programmes assumes even greater significance. It is particularly difficult for these programmes to contribute directly to enhanced aid flows through the speeding up of disbursements, especially when they are organized within negotiated multi-year resource frameworks. However, technical co-operation has a significant role to play in strengthening the capacities of Governments to absorb increased project and non-project aid and, when so requested, in providing advice in the preparation, negotiation, monitoring and evaluation of structural adjustment packages or policy reforms that have a direct impact on the mobilization of additional ODA.

15. Overall grant resources available for multilateral technical co-operation expanded from a total of \$US 2,829 million in 1985 to \$US 3,019 million in 1986

(see A/43/426/Add.1-E/1988/74/Add.1, table A-1). Decreases in contributions to the World Food Programme (WFP) in the second year of its biennium and in assessed contributions through regular budgets were more than offset by increases in contributions to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UNDP-administered funds (15 per cent), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) (19 per cent), and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) (19 per cent) and voluntary contributions through the specialized agencies (23 per cent).

16. Although comprehensive information for 1987 is not yet available, it is already clear that this favourable trend was maintained. A major part of the nominal increase resulted, however, from the decline in the rate of exchange of the United States dollar. The larger than expected increase in contributions in comparison to programme commitments is thus to a considerable extent offset by decreases in purchasing power. This in itself has raised a complex series of issues that are currently being addressed.

17. Firstly, decisions are required as to the distribution of the accidentally generated surplus of resources over nominal programmed commitments. The basic principles for handling shortfalls or surpluses appear to be well established either officially (as in the case of UNDP under Governing Council resolution 85/16) or in terms of general policy (as in the case of UNFPA). At the same time, new priorities have emerged in recent years, for example, the need to ensure that essential social programmes are maintained or strengthened during periods of structural adjustment and the urgency of enhancing capacities to manage scarce resources more effectively. These challenges and others could usefully be addressed through additional resources for technical co-operation.

18. Secondly, the strengthening of host country currencies and the consequent increase in the costs of operating in major European capitals have created problems for many specialized agencies whose financial and personnel resources for the provision of technical backstopping have declined dramatically in real terms after a period of steady expansion. This issue has been addressed by the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC) and requires urgent review and decisions, especially by the UNDP Governing Council, in the context of growing concern over the quality of the technical support provided to projects (see, inter alia, para. 32 of resolution 42/196).

B. Progress in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 42/196

1. General considerations

19. The implementation of General Assembly resolution 42/196 will require a major effort on the part of all the organizations of the United Nations development system. The Director-General has thus attached priority to ensuring the full and active participation of all relevant organizations in the process. This has involved a special effort to draw the attention of all organizations to the request that their governing bodies address certain specific items, comment on resolution 42/196 as a whole and review the conclusions and recommendations of the report on

case-studies. It is also reflected in the decision of the Director-General to strengthen co-operation with and make greater use of the existing inter-institutional mechanisms and, where appropriate, individual organisations in the collection and analysis of background data.

20. As progress is made on specific items, the Director-General should be in a position to formulate proposals for collective action in the knowledge that all organisations have been given the opportunity to participate in the process from the outset both at general policy and at technical levels. This is considered a key to effective implementation.

21. While many of the specific issues raised in the resolution are susceptible to individual treatment, several of the issues are interrelated and require an integrated response. To this end, the Director-General is also considering the possibility of undertaking a broader action-oriented study of certain key aspects of resolution 42/196, particularly as they relate to the overall situation of co-operation programmes in individual developing countries. Taking as a starting point the reminders in the resolution that the responsibility for co-ordination of multilateral and bilateral assistance rests with the host country and that within this context operational activities of the United Nations system are to be carried out for their benefit, at their request and in accordance with their policies and priorities, this study would examine the obstacles to the effective management by the developing countries of their total external co-operation programmes.

22. The main areas to be reviewed through a limited number of additional case-studies would be:

- (a) The Government's aid co-ordination capacity and mechanisms;
- (b) The rules and procedures of the United Nations system and other partners;
- (c) The field office structures of the United Nations system and their impact on the quality and method of providing assistance.

23. Special emphasis would be placed on proposals to facilitate the tasks of the countries concerned by the more systematic adoption of a programme approach and the simplification, or preferably the harmonization and adaptation, of procedures to local conditions and administrative traditions.

2. Issues addressed to governing bodies of organizations of the United Nations system

24. In paragraph 13 of resolution 42/196 the General Assembly urged the governing bodies of the organizations of the United Nations system for development to provide increased support to African countries in the implementation, follow-up and monitoring of the priority themes of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990. The comments of governing bodies on this item will be integrated into the report of the Secretary-General currently under preparation for presentation to the ad hoc committee of the whole

for the mid-term review of the Programme of Action scheduled for September this year. Any decisions and recommendations relating to the operational activities component of this Programme that are adopted on that occasion and duly endorsed by the General Assembly at its forty-third session will be integrated into the overall follow-up to resolution 42/196.

25. Similarly, in paragraph 14 of the resolution the General Assembly urged the governing bodies of the organizations of the United Nations development system to place priority emphasis on the full and expeditious implementation of the Substantial New Programme of Action for the 1980s for the Least Developed Countries and the recommendations of its mid-term review. The response of governing bodies of both a substantive and an operational nature will be made available by early 1989 to the secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) for inclusion in the documentation for the second Paris conference on the least developed countries, to be held in 1990. Specific issues related to operational activities that emerge from this process or from the regular country meetings organized with the support of the United Nations system through the UNDP round table and World Bank consultative group mechanisms will also be integrated into the overall follow-up to resolution 42/196.

26. Governing bodies are also invited (para. 2) to discuss in detail, at their next session, the conclusions and recommendations of the report on the findings of the case-studies, and to submit their views to the Economic and Social Council. It is clear that Member States expect the governing bodies to take a broad approach in their review, commenting on and contributing to greater understanding of the suggestions made in the report as well as on the main provisions of resolution 42/196. The Director-General has accordingly called the attention of each body concerned to the fact that it is potentially concerned by almost all aspects of the resolution and that its governing body could usefully comment on most of the issues raised. As indicated in the introduction to this report, the views of the governing bodies will be communicated to the Economic and Social Council as available, and a consolidated report reflecting their positions as well as comments by the secretariats of the organizations concerned will be made available to the General Assembly.

27. Governing bodies are also invited urgently to review and rationalize their field office structures to enhance co-operation, coherence and efficiency and to facilitate the provision of ongoing integrated and multisectoral advice at the field level (para. 24). It is hoped that the response of the governing bodies to this request will result in the participation of other institutions with field office structures in the review process launched by the organizations of the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP) and described in paragraphs 118 to 123 below.

28. The governing bodies of organizations that provide grant assistance for technical co-operation are also requested to report to the Economic and Social Council on the content and nature of their current and projected co-operation with the World Bank (para. 18). This issue will be covered in a separate consolidated report that might also include information on the results of ongoing work to define more clearly the operational relationships between the World Bank and the executing agencies of the United Nations system. Elements in this process will include a

Bank/agency seminar to be held in Washington, D.C., in September 1988, followed by discussions in the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions (Operational Activities) (CCSQ (OPS)).

3. Issues addressed to the Secretary-General as Chairman of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination, to the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation and to the secretariats of organizations of the United Nations development system

(a) Priorities, resources and guiding considerations for operational activities for development

(i) Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (Operational Activities)
(para. 9)

29. The Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC) is examining further measures to improve performance in inter-agency co-operation in the context of the overall work of the Special Commission of the Economic and Social Council on the In-depth Study of the United Nations Intergovernmental Structure and Functions in the Economic and Social Fields. Pending the outcome of this work, a preliminary review of the accomplishments of CCSQ (OPS) is included in paragraphs 51 to 67 below.

(ii) Central funding and co-ordinating role of the United Nations Development Programme in technical co-operation within the United Nations system
(para. 11)

30. Some of the issues related to the decline in the central funding role of UNDP were highlighted in the Director-General's report in 1987 (A/42/326-E/1987/82). In particular, it was noted that the broad mandate of UNDP as set out in the Consensus of 1970 and, to a considerable extent, its authority in the area of co-ordination at the country level are based on the assumption that the Programme would continue to handle a large proportion of the overall resources available for international technical co-operation.

31. This subject will be further reviewed with UNDP and with those specialized agencies which have significant extrabudgetary programmes financed under multilateral-bilateral ("multi-bi") agreements or trust funds (including those established to handle self-financing contributions from recipient countries from their own budgets or by utilization of credits from the World Bank or regional banks). It is also intended to obtain further information on the policies of Member States since it is primarily the actions of donor and recipient countries that determine the proportion of funds passing through the designated central funding mechanism.

32. On the basis of this information the Director-General will examine the constraints to enhancing the central funding role of UNDP and propose appropriate measures to promote respect of the requests contained in General Assembly

resolutions, adopted with a view to facilitating the task of developing countries in assuming their responsibility for determining and managing their overall technical co-operation needs and programmes.

- (iii) Strengthening the capability of developing countries to co-ordinate international co-operation and assistance in accordance with their priorities and needs (para. 12 (a))

33. In view of the particularly important role that UNDP plays in this area (see resolution 42/196, para. 8), it is intended to ask the Programme to review the impact of its activities, with particular regard to human resources development, institution building and transfer of technology. This review would cover existing mechanisms for enhancing recipient country capacity (the NatCAP process, project support in the fields of development planning and programming, development administration and related management issues) and further ways and means of meeting this objective. Comments by the various governing bodies on the Jansson report might also be relevant to the consideration of this issue.

(b) Programming

- (i) Programming of the operational activities of the United Nations development system (paras. 12 (b), 15 and 16)

34. In paragraph 15 of the resolution the General Assembly requested the Director-General to assess the constraints on the use of the UNDP country programme and programming process as a frame of reference for the operational activities of the United Nations development system. He was also invited to consider the nature, scope and feasibility of a more effective process in terms of improved coherence of action and effective integration of the various sectoral inputs of the United Nations system, as well as to identify the aid resources that such a process might take into account.

35. In consultation with the Director-General, UNDP has recruited an independent consultant with considerable experience of the UNDP country programming process from the perspective of a major specialized agency to undertake a review of current procedures and to make recommendations for their improvement. Another part of the process will be consideration of the issue at the 1988 autumn session of CCSQ (OPS).

36. These two inputs, together with information from the field offices and the views of the developing countries, to be collected through JCGP and by the Director-General's office (see paras. 68-95), should provide the basis for a consolidated report and recommendations to be presented to the Economic and Social Council in 1989 by the Director-General, in consultation with the Administrator of UNDP and the executive heads of other organizations of the United Nations development system.

- (ii) Measures that can be taken to ensure further flexibility, simplification and harmonisation of procedures for programme and project formulation, approval, implementation, monitoring and evaluation (paras. 12 (d) and (e), 16 and 19)

37. Prior to the adoption of General Assembly resolution 42/196 several initiatives had been taken in this area. The work of the JCGP Harmonisation Sub-Committee is reported on in paragraphs 68 to 95. In addition, UNDP, in response to concerns expressed in its Governing Council, launched in 1987 a survey of the procedures adopted by multilateral and bilateral sources of funding for technical co-operation. The aim of the ongoing work is to identify a core of procedures that the majority of institutions, both inside and outside the United Nations system, could agree upon. Finally, in paragraph 20 of the annex to resolution 41/171 of 5 December 1986, the Assembly requested the Director-General to study in a few donor and recipient countries the existing co-ordination practices related to operational activities. The purpose was to identify constraints on development country participation that resulted from varied procedures and to examine possibilities of simplifying or adapting them. The Jansson report addressed this issue in selected developing countries.

38. The Director-General will review the results of these various initiatives, including information from the field level expected to be gathered through JCGP, and will report to the Economic and Social Council in 1989. However, given the particular difficulties in making progress in this area and the need to avoid adopting common procedures that represent the lowest common denominator, thus stifling useful initiatives, it is clear that further work will be required after the Council's review both in inter-agency forums and at the level of recipient and donor countries.

- (iii) Nature and scope of the collaborative activities of the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (para. 16)

39. The organisations members of JCGP are currently considering the possibility of producing a booklet on its work to date. At the same time, they are taking new initiatives to promote collaboration at the country level. As far as exchanges at Headquarters level are concerned, the informal ad hoc nature of JCGP enables it to integrate new priority themes as and when they emerge. A report on past achievements and the current situation of JCGP is included in paragraphs 68 to 95 below.

- (iv) Integration of women in United Nations development programmes (para. 17)

40. This item is kept under permanent review as a specific agenda item by many governing bodies. It is also the subject of periodic examination by CCSQ (OPS). A summary of progress made to date in complying with the requirements of Economic and Social Council resolution 1987/86 is included.

(c) Organisation at the field level

(i) Measures taken with a view to the decentralisation of operational activities at the field level (para. 20)

41. In addition to the review that individual organizations are expected to undertake of this item, which was highlighted in the Hansson report, the Director-General is requesting the funding and executing agencies to participate in a comparative study of steps taken to achieve greater decentralisation. In view of the substantive objectives and administrative implications of the recommendations of General Assembly resolution 42/196 on this subject, it is suggested that this item also be reviewed by CCSQ (OPS) and the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions (CCAQ) possibly through a combined session in the spring of 1989.

(ii) Enhanced utilization of the services of resident co-ordinators; assessment of the resources required by the resident co-ordinators to carry out their increasing responsibilities in discharging their leadership role and functions; review of the inter-agency arrangements concerning resident co-ordinators (paras. 12 (c), 22, 23 and 25)

42. The recommendations related to this issue require a series of concerted actions. Information will be requested from individual organizations on their response to the invitation of the General Assembly in paragraph 22 of the resolution, to utilize the services of resident co-ordinators more fully, especially by soliciting their views in considering projects to be funded or implemented by the United Nations system. It is also intended to examine the scope of an integrated review process of project proposals both at the inter-institutional level (through JCGP and CCSQ (OPS)) and with the team of representatives in the field (through the annual reports of resident co-ordinators).

43. As for the resources required by resident co-ordinators to carry out their increasing responsibilities, UNDP, in consultation with the Director-General, is currently undertaking collection of data from the field. The responses to questionnaires to all resident co-ordinators, together with views collected within UNDP headquarters, will serve as an input to a paper on the role and effectiveness of the resident co-ordinators that the Director-General will present to the autumn 1988 session of CCSQ (OPS). Further inter-agency consultations will be held on the issue of resources with a view to presenting a consolidated proposal to the Economic and Social Council in 1989.

44. The work of CCSQ (OPS) on the broader aspects of the role and functions of the resident co-ordinators and further contacts with organizations should also enable the Director-General to formulate specific proposals on the inter-agency arrangements concerning resident co-ordinators for the consideration of ACC in spring 1989 and to report thereon to the Council in summer 1989.

(iii) Rationalization of field office structures (paras. 24 and 26)

45. A report on significant developments related to this aspect of country-level organization is presented in paragraphs 118 to 123 below.

(d) Procurement and project execution

(i) Additional measures to ensure that expertise for all aspects of the project cycle is of the highest standard of quality and that inputs are provided on a timely basis (para. 21)

46. Some aspects of this issue, particularly regarding field expertise, will be addressed by CCSQ (OPS) at its autumn 1988 session on the basis of information provided by the executing agencies and that being provided from the field in the annual reports of resident co-ordinators on country-level activities in 1987. The review will also take into account important ongoing work on the utilization of national project personnel.

47. It is noted that skills mobilized through technical co-operation among developing countries (TCDC) mechanisms, contracts with developing country institutions and non-governmental organizations, the United Nations Volunteers programme, the Transfer of Knowledge through Expatriate Nationals (TOKTEN) scheme, the STAS programme and other initiatives taken in recent years have also contributed to strengthening the supply side in technical co-operation. The continued participation of Member States in the process of identifying further untapped skills and competences will be an important part of the process of establishing additional mechanisms to maintain and enhance standards of expertise available to developing countries through the United Nations system.

(ii) Procurement of services in developing countries (paras. 27, 28, 29)

48. A report on developments with respect to the enhanced procurement of equipment in developing countries is included in paragraphs 124 to 135.

49. In addition to its well established work on equipment, the Inter-Agency Procurement Services Unit (IAPSU) has in recent years extended its coverage to include the monitoring of the origin of other inputs (experts, training and other services). Although a system-wide reporting process has yet to be established for these items (in addition to that already in operation for UNDP-funded activities), it is intended to produce base-line data by 1989.

50. From such information as is currently available, it would appear that for certain elements, e.g. expertise, the involvement of developing country resources is far greater than for the equipment component. However, considerable further work will be required to identify means of ensuring maximum appropriate use of national or regional institutions and firms.

C. Information on specific items

1. Review of the work of the Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (Operational Activities)

51. Among the key instruments available for the improvements of inter-agency co-operation and the enhancement of efficiency in the provision of support for the development efforts of Member States is CCSQ (OPS), established as a subsidiary body of ACC in response to the directives set forth by the General Assembly in resolution 32/197 of 20 December 1977. Ten years later, concern has been expressed, particularly by the Assembly in its resolution 42/196, over certain shortcomings of CCSQ (OPS) and over difficulties encountered in its fully discharging its responsibilities.

52. In the light of this and in view of the intention to utilize a strengthened, streamlined CCSQ (OPS) more fully, an outline of the origin of the Committee, its achievements to date, improvements introduced in recent years and outstanding issues is presented here.

(a) Origin and terms of reference

53. The United Nations development system is administratively decentralized. Operational activities are largely implemented by institutions whose primary original functions were normative or substantive. Since the mid 1960s, the share of operational activities in the overall programmes of these institutions has tended to increase significantly. Indeed, extrabudgetary resources for operational activities now represent well over a third of total resources managed by most specialized agencies and in the case of some institutions well over 50 per cent. When regular budget resources specifically devoted to operational activities are added, the proportion becomes even higher.

54. There is therefore a clear need for an efficient consultative mechanism within the system to provide a forum for a continuing exchange of information on policies and procedural issues of common concern and thereby to contribute to the co-ordination as well as to the impact of operational activities at the field level. Greater harmonisation and simplification of procedures whenever this is feasible, enhanced participation of host Governments in the organization and management of programmes and projects and a more generalized search for and introduction of innovative approaches by individual institutions are important objectives in this consultative approach.

55. The tasks assigned by ACC to CCSQ (OPS) in 1978 (see E/1978/144, para. 24) include: (a) consideration of questions concerned with enhancing the responsiveness of operational activities to national objectives and priorities; (b) consideration of matters relating to improved coherence of action and the effective integration of activities at the country level; (c) development of arrangements and measures to ensure the responsiveness of the operational activities of the system; (d) preparation in this context of intergovernmental discussions and implementation of intergovernmental policies concerning specific approaches or areas of concentration for operational activities; and

(e) consideration of matters relating to the achievement of greater uniformity of administrative, financial, budgetary and personnel procedures.

56. The Committee is open to all organisations participating in ACC. At present some 33 United Nations system organisations, and the World Tourism Organisation (WTO), are regularly invited. The chairmanship, normally for periods of one to two years, is rotated among participating organisations. Since its establishment the Committee has been chaired by senior officials (mainly at the Assistant Secretary-General level or higher) of the World Health Organisation (WHO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development of the United Nations Secretariat, the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and at present UNICEF. The substantive secretariat of the Committee consists of a full-time Co-ordinator and a Core Group composed of officials designated by various organisations and bodies (at present, the Office of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation and the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development of the Secretariat, FAO, ILO, UNDP, UNESCO, the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) and WHO). The budget of the Committee (some \$295,000 for the period from May 1986 to April 1988) is shared between 13 of the participating institutions. Compared with the volume of the resources devoted to operational activities and in relation to regular budgets, the cost of this inter-agency mechanism is modest. While this reflects a common concern to maintain a cost-effective instrument, it does mean that the Committee is ill-equipped to undertake independent in-depth studies as a contribution to the review of selected issues.

(b) Results achieved

57. The topics examined by the Committee over the past decade can be grouped around the following seven major themes, reflecting specific concerns expressed both in intergovernmental bodies and in the secretariats of the member organisations:

(a) Co-ordination within the United Nations development system (including participation in policy reviews of operational activities in the context of the preparation of the Director-General's triennial reports; arrangements for resident co-ordinators, resulting in proposals to ACC on the role and functions of resident co-ordinators; and simplification and harmonisation of aid modalities and procedures);

(b) Aid co-ordination with a special accent on arrangements at field level, on the system's involvement in the round-table process, and on sectoral issues and broad policy themes such as women in development and the environment;

(c) Country programming and alternative joint collaborative approaches to programme development and implementation, including technical backstopping, training and fellowships;

(d) Issues related to participation of host Governments and other indigenous groups in programme implementation (subjects considered in 1987-1988 were local and recurrent costs, government execution, national professional project personnel, involvement of the entrepreneurial sector and co-operation with non-governmental organisations);

(e) Linkages between pre-investment, technical co-operation and investment;

(f) Linkages between emergency relief, rehabilitation and longer-term development activities;

(g) Evaluation.

58. It is important to note that while all matters reviewed by CCSQ (OPS) are relevant to the overall co-ordination of operational activities, there has been an attempt in recent years to focus on a limited number of major items of immediate practical concern, with emphasis on those that would enhance co-ordination at the field level. This is in line with both the requirements of ACC and the wishes of Governments and participating organisations. It would appear that this approach, coupled with the direct involvement of the Co-ordinator in the preparation of material for the Committee, has led to increased interest in the work of CCSQ (OPS) and a better utilisation of the results of its work within the system, particularly at the field level.

(c) Functioning of the Committee

59. A review of the work of CCSQ (OPS) has been launched in the context of the overall review of the functioning of the ACC machinery, linked to the work of the Special Commission of the Economic and Social Council on the In-depth Study of the United Nations Intergovernmental Structure and Functions in the Economic and Social Fields. This initial examination, undertaken by the participating organisations themselves, has highlighted a certain number of organisational issues on which action could be taken pending the outcome of the broader debate on restructuring. For example, while the current arrangements for the substantive secretariat are considered to be working satisfactorily, it was agreed that there would be considerable advantages in relocating the secretariat in New York and possibly integrating it with the Office of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation. Similarly, while the volume of issues of common concern justifies two sessions of the Committee per year, consideration is being given to reorganising the meetings, examining major issues or themes at an enlarged spring session with perhaps a shorter second session being devoted to progress reports and urgent unforeseeable matters. One of the possible gains from such an arrangement would be the increased participation of senior officials directly responsible for the management of operational activities. This has long been considered important if the work of CCSQ (OPS) is to have a significant impact within the individual participating organizations.

60. It is, in effect, the impact of the decisions or recommendations of the Committee that determines its usefulness. Several aspects influencing impact can be identified. Firstly, the choice of topics of interest to all participating

institutions is essential. Secondly, the broad participation of the operational personnel of the headquarters of the lead institutions selected for the preparation of discussion papers is a key to their active involvement both in the decision-making process and in the implementation phase.

61. Perhaps more important, however, than this impact at the headquarters level of individual institutions is the effect of CCSQ (OPS) work on the operations in the field. It is interesting to note in this respect that many reports produced for the Committee in recent years contain specific recommendations for action by the resident co-ordinators and other members of the United Nations country teams and that some CCSQ (OPS) reports have recently been distributed as background documentation for the periodic co-ordination meetings within the United Nations system at the country level.

62. Among further measures that might be taken to enhance the impact of work that is considered to be useful, important and highly relevant to operational activities are:

(a) The establishment of a dialogue with the resident co-ordinators through their annual reports in order to ensure that field and headquarters structures address similar issues at appropriate times, with the possibility of an exchange of views and experience through written contributions to CCSQ (OPS) from the field network and group analysis of Committee documents in the field;

(b) The organization of policy-oriented briefings on key issues for field representatives of the system; this could be tested on an experimental basis by arranging for key members of the field teams from a limited number of countries to participate in debates on specific items in the main Committee session;

(c) The systematic circulation of Committee documents to field teams whenever there are implications for country-level activities requiring examination and adaptation to different situations;

(d) Integration of major proposals and detailed results of Committee work in the policy and procedure manuals that are made available to field staff and project personnel of all organisations and to the government officials responsible for the overall management of inputs from the United Nations system.

63. Ad hoc measures along these lines are being taken by the Committee Chairman and secretariat. The response to date, for example, to the circulation of the report on local and recurrent costs is most encouraging. Given the focus both of the work of the Committee and of the information on major issues with operational implications requested of the resident co-ordinators in their annual reports, there is every reason to expect these efforts to be successful in establishing a more systematic dialogue on vital operational matters and in facilitating greater participation in policy-making by the broad network of managers of the United Nations development co-operation process.

64. The work of CCSQ (OPS) has also served as an input to the Director-General's triennial review of operational activities. General Assembly resolution 42/196

will help to make this input even more systematic since the Committee will certainly wish to focus on some of the key issues raised therein in the coming 12 months, either to develop a substantive system-wide response or to report on progress being made on the many items already under review.

65. The 1988 work programme ^{1/} illustrates the extent to which common issues have been identified. In April 1988, the Committee held discussions on the provision of substantive advice to governments on development issues at the field level, modalities of integrating food aid and emergency assistance into other development aid, mitigating the negative social effects of adjustment policies and programmes, the impact of currency fluctuations and related factors on project quality and performance, and experience with government-executed projects.

66. Items selected for special attention for the next session scheduled for September 1988 include: (a) flexibility, simplification and harmonization of procedures; (b) programming at the country level of technical co-operation activities in the United Nations system; (c) collaboration with the World Bank; (d) role and effectiveness of the resident co-ordinator; and (e) quality of project staff in the light of prevailing conditions of service and the changing requirements in recipient countries.

67. In view of the importance of these issues and the fact that CCSQ (OPS) provides an effective forum for mobilizing input from a wide range of institutions on an equal footing, generating new ideas and examining their operational implications, the participation of senior operational personnel in the preparation and review of documentation and in key sessions examining important aspects directly related to resolution 42/196 would enhance the impact of the work of the Committee at this critical juncture.

2. Nature and scope of the activities of the Joint Consultative Group on Policy

68. In paragraph 16 of its resolution 42/196 the General Assembly welcomed "as a potentially significant contribution towards improved coherence and co-ordination the joint and collaborative programming of activities undertaken by the Joint Consultative Group on Policy" and requested information on the scope of its activities and comments on the possibility of more systematic exchanges at the headquarters level among its member organizations on a broader agenda.

69. The Director-General presents the following basic information on the achievements of JCGP, its current goals, objectives and organization, particularly as they relate to the implementation of resolution 42/196. Since it is anticipated that the approach adopted by the JCGP organizations will generate further practical innovative approaches to common challenges, the Director-General will continue to provide information on the achievements of JCGP in his future reports.

(a) Approach of the Group

70. JCGP was initially launched in 1981 as a forum for exchange of information at headquarters level between the principal New York-based funding agencies of grant-financed operational activities: UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF. WFP joined the group in 1983, in line with the concern of the Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes (CFA) and the Executive Director to integrate food aid into broader development efforts. At the suggestion of its President, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) joined the group in 1988. From the outset it was decided that the primary focus would be on selected substantive themes with the aim of identifying areas where collaborative ventures could enhance the impact of the work of individual organizations. It rapidly became apparent that if such joint policy reviews of issues of common interest were to have a direct effect on operational activities the initiative would have to be reflected at the country level.

71. By its very structure, JCGP has several comparative advantages that have helped to mould its substantive focus and organization. First of all, the members are all funding organizations, i.e., they provide the resources for (and in some cases execute) co-operation programmes. Second and most important, they share common interests at the country level - they all focus on the human factor in development - and several give priority to the health/nutrition nexus. Drawing on these elements is a source of strength for the group; its members share some important common goals; there are few inherent sources of institutional tension.

72. By the same token, these structural factors also imply that JCGP cannot serve as a substitute for the collaborative mechanisms dealing with other institutions, such as the overall relationship of UNDP or UNFPA with executing agencies; or the relationship of UNICEF with WHO and UNESCO. In some cases common sectoral interests are limited. For example, the health/nutrition nexus represents only a fraction of UNDP programmes or of projects financed by IFAD. The role of JCGP in inter-agency collaboration is, therefore, considerably different from that of more formal and comprehensive mechanisms, such as CCSQ (OPS) of ACC or UNDP Inter-Agency Consultative Meetings.

(b) Joint and collaborative programming (para. 16)

(i) Past experience

73. Concern to enable Governments to assume more fully their primary responsibility for the organization of co-operation programmes has been at the centre of the work of JCGP for several years and, despite differences in mandates and procedures, it remains the key area in which the Group is expected to make a meaningful contribution in the terms of General Assembly resolution 42/196.

74. A letter on strengthening practical collaborative and co-ordinated programming was jointly issued in March 1984 to all field officers by the Administrator of UNDP and the Executive Directors of UNFPA, WFP and UNICEF. The letter suggested that "in most countries, there is scope for further collaboration, including the refinement of mechanisms for co-ordinating programming more closely and more

effectively. There is also scope for relieving the administrative burden on Governments, many of whom are plagued by a succession of meetings and negotiations with a multitude of donor agencies and organisations".

75. It was agreed that the then four members of JCGP would work together from the earliest steps of programme and project cycles to determine possible areas of complementarity and support to each others' programmes and to avoid wasteful duplication. It was also suggested that, after an initial exchange of information on ongoing and planned programmes and projects, a common strategy for co-ordinated programming should be discussed and agreed upon and the Governments concerned consulted on their interest in such a concerted approach.

76. At the outset it was suggested that collaborative programming would be possible and more effective if it built on the strengths and different programming approaches of the various organisations involved, including the adoption of timetables related to their own particular needs.

77. From a review undertaken in 1988 by one JCGP organisation of the impact of the initiative at the country level in Africa, it was apparent that much remained to be done if the Group were to adopt a systematic co-ordinated approach to programming, whether of a joint or collaborative nature. For example, in one country in the region where a successful pilot activity had given rise to an impressive series of interrelated projects with common logistic facilities in support of the integrated development of a selected province, the Resident Co-ordinator expressed the view that this achievement could still be improved upon and broadened to cover many other aspects of the work of JCGP organisations in that country.

78. However, the experience gained through this exercise and through numerous initiatives taken at the field level involving either members of JCGP or, in many cases, other partners of the United Nations system, bilateral programmes and non-governmental organisations has contributed to a better understanding of the issues involved. To ensure that the wealth of approaches developed in various countries serve as a basis for future work, the Director-General intends to request more specific information on the efforts made by field teams and to make this available to Member States.

(ii) Scope for further action

79. In the light of the experience of the past three years and the recommendations of the General Assembly in resolution 42/196, it would seem appropriate to consider updating the initial policy statement and launching a new initiative through the field office network, and the Director-General is exploring such a possibility with the executive heads of JCGP. It appears, for example, that resource planning, policy and programming cycles may in themselves constitute an obstacle to co-ordinated programming. Efforts could thus be made to ensure closer linkages with the Governments' own planning cycles in the formulation of programmes or multi-year projects. At the international level the Director-General suggests that the possibility of harmonising resource planning periods and policy frameworks should be explored, adopting where appropriate a rolling cycle concept to facilitate the process. As a contribution to proposals to strengthen linkages

between operational activities at the country level and the objectives of the fourth International Development Decade it would be most useful if this goal could be achieved by the early 1990s.

80. It is recognized that this will require a major effort on the part of all institutions in view not only of current differences in planning cycles but also of the lack of a systematic programme approach to activities at the country level in three out of the five institutions. However, the fact that UNFPA has moved from its informal multi-year work plan towards a more structured strategic approach for the African region, that WFP has in recent years taken the initiative to assist Governments in the formulation of country food-aid strategies and the policy considerations around which all IFAD activities are built provide a sound basis for further changes in procedure.

81. Among the other actions that might be taken through JCGP and in the light of the specific recommendations of the Assembly in resolution 42/196 is the organisation of a new round of country-oriented pilot activities based on an assessment by field representatives of the degree of host Government interest in a co-ordinated approach to programming and an indication of themes best suited to collaborative action.

82. As far as the substantive focus of a new initiative is concerned, it is anticipated that this would emerge from subregional meetings of JCGP field staff and headquarters officials with selected resource persons, including host-country partners. In conjunction with the mid-term review of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development it is suggested that one such meeting could be held in Africa, possibly in 1988, to review the implications for operational activities of the broad objectives of the Programme of Action and the Khartoum Declaration: Towards a Human-focused Approach to Socio-economic Recovery and Development (see A/43/430, annex I).

83. Such subregional meetings could provide the basis for concerted in-country dialogue with government policy makers as a contribution to the preparation of a general statement of objectives for the development co-operation activities of the United Nations system in individual countries, which could, *inter alia*, serve as the basis for the formulation of the country programmes or project proposals of individual JCGP organisations. This advisory note highlighting interrelationships between the Government's development plans and longer-term strategies and issues of regional and global concern, identified in intergovernmental forums, would also reflect the sectoral advice of specialized agencies that the Government might wish to associate with the operation, thereby ensuring the involvement of the whole United Nations development system at this crucial preparatory stage.

84. Another avenue that might be explored at the same time in two or three countries of other regions, preferably of different income levels, is a review of the possibility of harmonising programme and project procedures through a more systematic search for complementarities. Here again the initiative would eventually be left to field representatives to determine the nature of their collaborative efforts. However, it is suggested that this might include joint participation in the mid-term review of programmes, in the monitoring and evaluation of relevant projects and in the formulation of new proposals.

(c) Substantive themes

85. The key of the success of JCGP in its exchange of information at the headquarters level and the basis for its collaborative ventures at the country level has been its identification of substantive themes that represent high priority issues for the Governments and organisations concerned.

(i) Social implications of adjustment policies

86. Of particular import has been consideration of the social implications of adjustment policies. The work undertaken in 1987 both by individual member organisations and by JCGP culminated in the organisation of a high-level meeting in January 1988 with the participation of the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Senior Vice-President for Operations of the World Bank and other senior staff from these organisations.

87. A number of recommendations for collective and individual action aimed at improving adjustment programmes were adopted at the meeting. Specific areas of focus included increased support for small-scale producers, more integrated use of food aid, more effective protection for vulnerable groups, greater attention to long-term development objectives, improving the statistical monitoring of adjustment processes, a broader and more effective co-ordination process and better mobilisation of international resource flows.

88. Subsequent to the meeting, JCGP has set up a subgroup to help translate these recommendations into country-level action. After consultations with the Governments concerned, countries will be selected for pilot activities to be organised in collaboration with the World Bank and IMF.

(ii) Women in development

89. Similarly, two years ago, specialists from the JCGP organisations in the field of women in development decided to form a subgroup focusing both on policy development and on practical action through country-level projects. In 1987, the subgroup organised the first JCGP high-level meeting with the participation of the executive heads of the JCGP organisations, ministerial-level participants from donor and recipient countries and eminent experts in the field. The meeting resulted in recognition of the need to support the productive capacity of women in developing countries and to place greater focus in social programmes on women as beneficiaries of development. Further information on the more recent work of the JCGP sub-committee covering this theme is included in paragraphs 96 to 117.

(iii) Africa

90. In February 1988, JCGP formed a subgroup on Africa in order to promote collaborative efforts with particular attention to the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action. The group is exploring the possibilities for expanding concerted efforts on common priority themes through the holding of subregional meetings to help develop methodologies for operations relevant to such issues as better adjustment processes, the improved use of food aid, and support to vulnerable groups, as well as collaborative programmes and processes.

91. It is anticipated that other issues identified through the field office network and related to the overall concept of human resources development, which merits both clarification and a more action-oriented approach, will be tackled through a similar combination of headquarters policy work, management seminars, regional training and pilot activities at the country-level.

(d) Structure and functioning of the Group

92. JCGP was conceived as an informal issue-oriented mechanism, and the executive heads of the organisations in the Group and other participants consider these characteristics to have been a key to its success. As the number and the complexity of the subjects reviewed by JCGP have increased and broadened to include both geographically-focused work and joint approaches to major administrative issues, it has proved useful to establish subgroups to ensure continuity and action on selected themes. The ad hoc committees that have been established since 1986 now cover the following themes: women in development; adjustment; Africa; harmonisation of programming procedures; common premises and services; personnel issues; and training.

93. The mix of twice-yearly policy discussions between the executive heads of the JCGP organisations and the Director-General, quarterly meetings of other senior officials, including the chairmen or representatives of the subgroups, ad hoc working groups on specific subjects, occasional high-level policy meetings and regional or subregional gatherings of field staff with headquarters participation, reflects a varied and innovative initiative from which most interesting results are starting to emerge.

94. The effectiveness of JCGP depends on its impact at the country level. It is in this context that the joint work on training will assume its full significance. The creation of opportunities for exchange of experience and discussion of common substantive issues by the field staff of the organisations, with the participation of headquarters colleagues and, where appropriate, selected government officials, is a central part of the process of exploring new areas for joint and collaborative ventures and examining their operational implications.

95. The Director-General intends to give the development of such collaborative training ventures his fullest support and is convinced that they, together with the proposed work of JCGP at headquarters and country levels, will play a major part in the implementation of the recommendations and decisions of General Assembly resolution 42/196.

3. Integrating women in development programmes

96. The adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 42/196 followed closely on the adoption of resolution 42/178 entitled "Effective mobilization and integration of women in development". Paragraph 17 of the resolution reiterates the importance attached to the involvement of women in United Nations development programmes, both as agents and beneficiaries, and calls upon the funding and executing agencies to intensify efforts to increase the participation of women, especially those from

developing countries. The Assembly also requested the Director-General to report on such efforts and on the establishment of mechanisms for generating baseline information and measuring results.

97. At an inter-agency meeting on the advancement of women held at Vienna in March 1988, it was agreed that all participating institutions would provide an input to the preparation of a progress report of the Director-General on this subject, through the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations Office at Vienna. To the extent that contributions from several major organisations are still awaited, the present document should be considered as an interim report to be completed, if required, by a fuller consolidated version as and when additional material is made available.

(a) Formulation and implementation of the system-wide medium-term plan for women and development for the period 1990-1995

98. The adoption in 1985 of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women to the year 2000 ^{2/} set an ambitious agenda for the international community to achieve fundamental social and economic change in a short period. As far as the United Nations system is concerned, in 1987, the Economic and Social Council approved a system-wide medium-term plan for women and development, which would translate the relevant injunctions of the Nairobi Strategy into concrete plans and programmes. One of its sub-programmes deals specifically with technical co-operation; however, the whole plan presupposes that operational activities will be a major focus of all substantive work.

99. Organizations have begun the process of implementing the system-wide plan, individually and collectively. The inter-agency meeting of March 1988 considered steps for such implementation and made specific recommendations on joint action related to the sub-programme on technical co-operation. The system-wide plan was further discussed at the spring 1988 session of CCSQ (OPb). In addition, resident co-ordinators had been requested to cover issues regarding women in development in their annual reports on operational activities at the country level for 1986.

100. From the above it is evident that more systematic attention is being given to the issue of women in development by organizations of the United Nations system. It is, however, difficult to document the impact of this process since no system-wide figures have hitherto been maintained that specifically identify operational activities related to women. The cross-organizational programme analysis on activities related to the advancement of women, being prepared for the 1989 session of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination, will provide the first such system-wide baseline data against which future patterns can be compared.

(b) Policies and approaches

101. The primary objective in designing operational activities in which women are actively involved is to strengthen the overall development process by ensuring that women, who play a central role in national economies, are able to achieve their full potential as agents and beneficiaries of development. This implies, on the one hand, that specific barriers to women's participation are identified and

reduced. More importantly, it means that women should be involved whenever feasible in all development activities. In operational terms, this means that in some cases women constitute specific target groups, while in other cases the focus is on ensuring that women are included in an appropriate manner in mainstream projects.

102. The approach of the organisations of the United Nations system has been to seek a balance between activities directed specifically towards women and mainstreaming. This is reflected both in the types of activities that have been undertaken, and in organisational arrangements. There is full recognition that the two approaches are interdependent and mutually reinforcing and organizations are developing new responses to reflect this.

103. The general aim of activities specifically designed to provide assistance to women is to assist them in overcoming obstacles to their full participation in development efforts. The annual reports by resident co-ordinators for 1986 refer to a wide range of such projects:

(a) Projects for income generation, such as the training of rural women in basic skills, including entrepreneurship, and the provision of appropriate technology and credit in such fields as food production and small-scale processing industries;

(b) Education-related projects, such as literacy training for women and informal adult education programmes, and the organization of leadership and management training;

(c) Health-related projects, including maternal and child health, family planning, and safe water projects;

(d) Projects related to consciousness-raising, including seminars or round tables on issues of women and development.

104. Most organizations of the system fund or execute projects of this type in their specific areas of responsibility. While they provide a direct contribution to overcoming specific cultural, economic, social or political obstacles, it is recognized that for these activities to have a long-term impact they must address high priority themes (energy, environment) or at least be directly linked to broader development activities.

105. In this context there has been a rapidly growing emphasis on what is termed "mainstreaming", that is, ensuring that women are fully involved as participants in broader projects. This requires a systematic examination of the probable impact of development projects on women as a group, both as actors and as beneficiaries. For example, agricultural extension projects can mainstream women through an analysis of the needs of female agriculturalists and the degree to which proposed actions will meet them. Similarly, education projects can be examined in terms of the extent to which girls have access to education or by their effect on encouraging girls to enter and stay in schools and, for example, take non-traditional subjects.

106. Mainstreaming involves identifying those activities in which women in development should be a major concern, incorporating elements to meet the specific requirements of women into project design and maintaining their visibility throughout the activity. The development of guidelines and checklists in operational organizations is one technique for achieving this objective.

(c) Institutional arrangements

107. During the United Nations Decade for Women, organizations of the United Nations system created focal points to ensure that appropriate attention to the advancement of women characterized both their substantive programme work and their operational activities. The work of the focal points has been co-ordinated by the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs in the United Nations Office at Vienna, also designated as the lead institution for the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies.

108. More recently, several operational organizations with a broad technical co-operation or development finance mandate have created special units for women in development, the primary function of which is to encourage mainstreaming. UNDP, for example, established in April 1987 the Division for Women in Development within its Bureau for Programme Policy and Evaluation, with an emphasis on application of appropriate perspectives in the earliest stages of programme and project design and their systematic inclusion in follow-up activities. The World Bank set up, in the summer of 1987, a Women in Development Division within its Population and Human Resources Department. The Division's strategy is to integrate women into mainstream development through a combination of operational support and policy development, with operational responsibility for women and development resting with regional departments, as is the case on all operational matters.

109. A significant proportion of the activities of other funding organizations are by definition focused on women's issues. UNICEF, for example, established in the early 1980s a co-ordination unit for women in development activities with a view to promoting action on the integration of women's concerns in UNICEF programmes and strengthening the linkages between children's and maternal issues. In UNFPA, a Special Centre for Women, Population and Development was established after the Nairobi Conference in line with the Fund's policy that all UNFPA-supported activities reflect the concerns of women and provide them with the opportunity to participate in all aspects of population programmes.

110. Specialized institutions have also been created to focus on the role of women in the development process. The United Nations Development Fund for Women, for example, has as its main functions a catalytic role within the United Nations system in stimulating the incorporation of women in mainstream activities as well as direct responsibility for sponsoring innovative and experimental activities benefiting women, established in line with national and regional priorities. In recent years, it has been particularly active in the area of development planning and has contributed to the establishment of methodologies to assess the impact of proposed programmes.

(d) Mechanisms for facilitating the integration of women in development programmes

111. In all of these efforts, especially in mainstreaming, there is a concern with improving the mechanisms for involving women at all stages of development work. Within the executing agencies, attention to women in development issues is becoming a normal part of programme and project formulation. This is being achieved by focusing on key areas where women are already active or could contribute effectively to national development in the formulation of country strategies or programmes and by using guidelines and checklists to assess the impact on women in the appraisal of project proposals. It also involves training staff to provide them with the techniques required to analyse country situations, briefing personnel who undertake project formulation and review missions and developing information banks.

112. Training of staff is an important mechanism, especially at the subregional level. The Joint Training Seminar on Women in Development, organised under the auspices of JCGP and held at Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania, from 7 to 11 February 1988, was the first of a series of joint training efforts organised by UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and WFP and involved over 30 field staff of these organisations, 10 senior resource persons from headquarters as well as government counterparts from the 13 Eastern and Southern African countries involved. More such seminars are being planned, the next to take place in Latin America, or alternatively in the Caribbean area in conjunction with the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) before the end of 1988.

113. The training strategies of the Institute itself have focused on improving statistics and indicators on women and development and their place in the development planning process. Training packages have been prepared on these themes for trainers of development officials, academic institutions, women's organisations and United Nations staff together with multi-media sectoral training material on women, water supply and sanitation. Through its association on a sub-contract basis with the work of several specialized agencies INSTRAW has been able to ensure linkages between its core programmes and operational activities at the country level.

114. At the country level, the accent is on incorporating women in development concerns in project formulation and implementation. Again, the use of checklists is a preferred mechanism. Following discussion at the ad hoc inter-agency meeting on advancement of women in March 1988, it was recommended that in order to facilitate their use an effort should be undertaken, under the leadership of UNDP, to review existing guidelines on the incorporation of women in development projects with a view to preparing a simple, practical and consolidated set of guidelines for use by field staff.

(e) Monitoring and evaluation

115. The problems encountered in monitoring and evaluating the impact of operational projects on women reflect those facing monitoring and evaluation

activities in general. Only rarely are projects established with built-in systems to generate the empirical data necessary to assess project impact. There is a general lack of project specific baseline data. This results less from a lack of tools, since evaluation methodologies have been under development for some time, than from the time and costs involved in adding "non-operational" components to project proposals.

116. Some progress is, however, being made. The United Nations Development Fund for Women, for example, has established a mechanism, known as the "Knowledge Bank", for generating baseline information and measuring results. This was initiated to generate cumulative and measurable information and to provide an analytical base from which the most up-to-date information on its technical co-operation concerning women and development is readily available to the Fund, to the women's groups it reaches and to international agencies and Governments. The Knowledge Bank represents an information resource based on impact analysis and it will enable development planners and project participants to share and compare their experiences in the field.

117. The preferred method of review and appraisal at the national level has been existing statistics and indicators. Although some general progress has been made in this respect, the development of such indicators is still at an early stage, and gender-specific statistics are still relatively uncommon in developing countries. Moreover, the process of collecting statistics means that they are usually available too late to be of use as baseline data for project formulation. More importantly, national aggregate statistics have proved of limited use in measuring the impact of operational activities. Most organisations of the system report that this continues to be a difficult aspect of operational work, although efforts continue to overcome the present obstacles.

4. Rationalisation of field offices structures

118. In paragraph 26 of resolution 42/196 the General Assembly requested information on the progress made by member organisations of JCGP and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in their review of the structure of their field offices. It also invited other organisations of the United Nations system to participate in the review process.

119. The first part of the review, a survey by the JCGP members with field offices (UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and WFP), showed that common services and premises were being shared in many locations. However, it was concluded that considerably more progress could be made.

120. In the light of this, the JCGP executive heads issued a memorandum on "Sharing common premises and services in the United Nations system". This memorandum to all field representatives reiterated the long-standing policy of JCGP organizations in support of the sharing of premises and other services at the country level. It requested that at the next inter-agency meeting in each country there should be a thorough review of all possibilities for sharing facilities with a view to identifying savings in administrative costs. In addition, whenever leases of field

offices were due for renewal, possibilities of sharing would be systematically studied; similarly, any organisation wishing to leave common premises would have to submit a written explanation and obtain specific authorisation from its headquarters before action was taken.

121. JCGP will monitor the application of the terms of the memorandum. The Director-General will report on progress in 1989 and 1990 since implementation is linked to expiry dates of current leases and adaptation of work space and may in addition require changes in administrative, budgetary and personnel management. The full impact of the joint efforts to rationalise field office structures will thus only be apparent over time.

122. The Assembly invited organisations to undertake this review not only with the aim of identifying cost savings but, equally significantly, to facilitate the provision at the field level of ongoing, integrated and multisectoral technical advice in accordance with the needs identified by developing countries. This latter objective, in particular, would benefit from inclusion in the review process of the field representations or technical offices of the specialised agencies.

123. It should be noted that UNHCR, the one non-JCGP organisation that was expected to participate in the joint review, felt that in view of its special mandate and the sensitive nature of much of its work and contacts at field level, it would not be in the best interests of the other partners, in the majority of cases, for it to join common premises.

5. Procurement of equipment

124. In paragraphs 27 to 30 of resolution 42/196 the Assembly requested recommendations for innovative, practical and effective measures to increase substantially the procurement from developing countries in the operational activities of the United Nations system.

125. Special reference is made in these paragraphs to the role of the Inter-Agency Procurement Service Unit (IAPSU), the co-ordinating unit established and financed by UNDP, which serves as a focal point for the United Nations system of organisations in the collection, analysis and distribution of procurement data on common-user items with a view to identifying opportunities for economies, improving required delivery terms and the development of new procurement sources.

126. Pending the outcome of further extensive consultations that the Director-General intends to conduct with recipient countries and the relevant funding and executing agencies, it can at this stage be reported that the series of measures adopted in recent years with a view to facilitating access of developing countries to business opportunities in the United Nations system appears to be having an effect. It is estimated that procurement of equipment from developing countries went up from 17.5 per cent of the total in 1986 to 19.5 per cent in 1987, which represents an encouraging 11.5 per cent increase.

127. Confirmation that this represents a significant new trend will depend on the success of the system in maintaining adequate focus on the issue, on the implementation of a series of further measures agreed upon in recent months and on the improvement of the statistical monitoring and reporting systems.

128. Action to date has included the adoption in 1987 at the Ottawa meeting of the Inter-Agency Procurement Working Group in 1987 of Common Principles and Practices, which were positively received by the UNDP Governing Council in June of that year and have been incorporated as an annex to the General Business Guide published by IAPSU. This agreement on the question of harmonization, representing the outcome of several years of common effort devoted to the analysis of data on widely varying practices, the identification of areas of common interest and the negotiation of a consolidated text, has made the procurement process both more accessible and more transparent. The Working Group intends to continue its work in 1988 through IAPSU and an inter-institutional subgroup to identify those aspects of the procurement process where differences continue to exist, to assess their impact and, where possible and useful, to reach agreement on standard approaches.

129. In addition, efforts are being made to increase the availability of information to potential suppliers in developing countries through the extension of the advance notices published in "Development Business" to include both a greater proportion of UNDP-funded activities (current coverage is around 10 per cent - a low figure resulting partly from the minimum value requirement of \$100,000 to warrant the effort and the cost involved in advertisements) and to projects financed by other institutions. Another channel that is being used, at least for equipment financed by UNDP, is the expanding Technological Information Pilot System (TIPS) network, which has the advantage of reaching suppliers in developing countries directly and in a timely manner.

130. Similarly, agencies are responding positively to requests to ensure that invitations for bids for procurement of equipment and contracts include firms in developing countries on a systematic basis. Another subgroup is to develop a common approach in this area in the coming months.

131. In addition to these efforts to provide more information on procurement requirements, IAPSU has, with the Office for Project Services and the International Trade Centre, launched a series of activities aimed at enhancing awareness of the availability of supplies of specific items in individual developing countries. A binder on a number of items manufactured in Brazil was produced in 1987. Another on India with over 2,800 items from 150 suppliers will be ready by the end of 1988. Project activities aimed at identifying supply sources have also been approved for Indonesia, Turkey and Algeria. Another 13 developing countries have expressed their interest in a similar exercise.

132. Agencies are now applying the 15 per cent price preferential or, in a couple of cases, should do so as soon as their financial rules are revised accordingly. They have suggested, however, that this measure may not have the full effect anticipated in view of reluctance of countries to condone the use of limited project resources for this purpose and that it might be necessary to envisage special compensatory measures to overcome a financial hurdle that adds to the often

cited psychological barriers in obtaining supplies from other than traditional sources.

133. Among the other obstacles to increased use of equipment from developing countries noted by specialists of the United Nations system are the lack of know-how in the presentation of bids and the lack of interest of business communities even in countries where national export promotion organisations are active. These issues could usefully be addressed in technical co-operation programmes, particularly those designed to enhance the capacities of the entrepreneurial sector.

134. It should also be noted that to date only 14 of the 25 participants in IAPSU have been able to respond to requests for information on country of origin in addition to country of supply. Since the remaining 11 account for 80 per cent of the total volume of procurement a special effort will be required if significant statistics are to be produced in this area. The additional burden on procurement services, coming at a time of staff reductions and reduced overheads, can only be met if information is specifically requested at the time of procurement and processed by computer. IAPSU is expected to assist other institutions in identifying or clarifying appropriate software for this purpose, while at the same time studying the possibility of simplifying reporting formats and formulating proposals for the co-ordinated development of procurement information systems with a view to facilitating interaction among agencies.

135. That encouraging progress provides a sound basis for innovative approaches, since it reflects a willingness to co-operate for the purposes of achieving a breakthrough in an area in which the obstacles to significant change have proved particularly difficult to overcome. However, if the objectives of Assembly resolution 42/196 are to be achieved, major efforts are still required on the part of all concerned (individual procurement services, IAPSU, and institutions in developing countries themselves both as purchasers and as suppliers).

III. CONCLUSIONS

136. The present report takes General Assembly resolution 42/196 as its frame of reference. It outlines some of the initiatives taken in recent months by the Director-General and many bodies of the United Nations system to ensure that the policy orientations provided by Member States receive full and urgent attention.

137. It is indeed generally agreed that what is now required is concerted action taken by organisations individually or collectively and designed to overcome the obstacles that have hampered efforts to date. To the extent that additional data collection and analysis are required, the Director-General will ensure that all such work is specifically geared to the search for practical and realistic solutions to longstanding problems.

138. Experience over the past few months has revealed both the variety and the limitations of the instruments available for the expeditious implementation of the resolution. It has confirmed the value of existing, complementary

interorganisational structures. Issues addressed by the Assembly in the resolution are thus being tackled together by the principal institutions responsible for grant-funded operational activities and IFAD through the informal mechanism of JCGP. They are being reviewed by a broader spectrum of organisations of the United Nations system in the context of CCSQ (OPS) and, on procurement issues, through IAPSU. In selected cases they are being analysed by individual institutions, whenever appropriate in co-operation with or on behalf of the Director-General; and at the same time they are being closely examined by the network of field offices in consultation with host Governments, ensuring that full account is taken at all stages of the diversity of country situations.

139. At the same time, given the informal and consultative role of the interorganisational bodies, the degree of participation of the various organisations and thus the prospects for effective implementation depend on the endorsement of common objectives by individual governing bodies and their secretariats. In this respect, it is increasingly important for the representatives of Member States to convey coherent messages in the many forums that address the complex issues involved and for these messages to be duly reflected in their financial decisions.

140. Other difficulties face the Director-General himself in carrying out the tasks entrusted to him in providing effective leadership, exercising overall co-ordination and in ensuring a multidisciplinary approach on a system-wide basis in the implementation of Assembly resolution 42/196. The means currently at his disposal do not permit his Office to undertake independent analysis, to sponsor meetings to address specific aspects of the resolution and to monitor action taken by well over 30 organisations and bodies, at least for those aspects of resolution 42/196 that are selected for implementation on a priority basis.

141. As a first step in the direction of strengthening the capacity of the Office with regard to carrying out its responsibilities for operational activities, a unit for operational activities has been established within the existing manning table. Proposals for enhancing the overall capacity of the Office will be considered as part of the review of the economic and social sectors in the United Nations, which will also take into consideration views expressed during the work of the Special Commission of the Economic and Social Council on the In-depth Study of the Intergovernmental Structure and Functions. In addition, a careful review is being made of the requirements related to the implementation of specific aspects of General Assembly resolution 42/196, which, in view of their urgency, may require extrabudgetary support.

142. Setting in motion the process of implementing the provisions of Assembly resolution 42/196 has also confirmed the need to strengthen linkages between the substantive work undertaken by the United Nations and the specialized agencies and their operational activities.

143. In the resolution the Assembly has underlined the relationship between objectives adopted in intergovernmental forums and development work at regional, subregional and national levels. This is reflected in its call on governing bodies to ensure that priority programmes, such as the United Nations Programme of Action

for African Economic Recovery and Development and the Substantial New Programme of Action for the least developed countries, as well as selected thematic goals, such as the integration of women in development programmes, are fully taken into account in the organisation of operational activities.

144. In the same spirit, UNICEF, in collaboration with WHO, has maintained its impressive progress in the achievement of specific targets for child immunisation and the reduction of infant mortality rates. Similarly, in the course of the past year, WHO and UNDP have joined forces in the global initiative to combat the spread of AIDS, as have the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control and UNDP in the control of drug abuse. In each case, country-specific activities are being developed on the basis of a consensus reached in successful intergovernmental gatherings.

145. Similarly, following the pioneering work undertaken by UNICEF, ILO and others, a system-wide response involving grant-funded operational activities has been developed on the basis of substantive inputs from the specialised agencies and the regional commissions and organised by the JCGP members, in close consultation and collaboration with the international financial institutions, to ensure the consideration of social implications at all stages of the economic adjustment process.

146. Many other examples could be quoted; many other cases identified where a concerted operational approach is required to achieve commonly agreed objectives.

147. In order to build on these encouraging developments and as the process of preparing the fourth international development strategy is launched, two actions appear to the Director-General to be particularly important.

148. Firstly, the occasion could be utilized to explore more systematically the scope for linkages between global objectives and targets set for the 1990s and the potential contribution of the operational activities of the United Nations system to their achievement in some fields. This would entail a more thorough review of the regional and subregional specificities of the strategy and, where appropriate, the design of programmes and projects at the country level, thus reflecting its overall targets and orientations. It would also imply increased attention to ongoing national and subregional development activities in the preparation of the strategy itself and ensuring adequate feedback for these programmes in its monitoring and review.

149. Secondly, it seems necessary to ensure that a forward-looking approach is taken to the adaptation of the activities and the structures of the United Nations organisations to match a rapidly changing and an increasingly complex and diversified environment. The Director-General is encouraged to note that several of the principal organizations responsible for the management of operational activities intend to undertake reviews of their role in the 1990s. At the same time, as the response of individual institutions to the challenges of an integrated approach to development lead them towards areas of greater potential for collaboration or duplication, it is the intention of the Director-General to launch a broader study of the emerging trends in operational activities. Such a study,

using the prospective approach to determine alternative scenarios, would provide a basis for developing appropriate responses to the problems that the United Nations system will be expected to address in the 1990s and that will certainly involve far-reaching modifications in the content and organization of development co-operation.

150. It is the Director-General's opinion that several of the issues covered by General Assembly resolution 42/196, for example those related to the role and functions of the resident co-ordinator and the rationalization of field office structures, would also benefit from examination in the course of such a long-term review since the solution to some of the more complex problems identified might be more readily found when they are placed in a dynamic context.

Notes

1/ An overview report of the work undertaken by the Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (Operational Activities) is provided in the annual report submitted by the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination to the Economic and Social Council. For the most recent report, see document E/1988/42.

2/ Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Nairobi, 15-26 July 1985 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.85.IV.10), chap. I, sect. A.