



Economic and Social Council

Provisional

3 October 2000

Original: English

Substantive session of 2000

Coordination segment

Provisional summary record of the 19th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 11 July 2000, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Pfanzelter (Vice-President) (Austria)

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Coordination of the policies and activities of the specialized agencies and other bodies of the United Nations system related to the following themes:

- (a) Assessment of the progress made within the United Nations system, through the conference reviews, in the promotion of an integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields (*continued*)

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In the absence of Mr. Wibisono (Indonesia), Mr. Pfanzerter (Austria), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Coordination of the policies and activities of the specialized agencies and other bodies of the United Nations system related to the following themes:

(a) Assessment of the progress made within the United Nations system, through the conference reviews, in the promotion of an integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields
(E/2000/57 and A/54/855-E/2000/44) *(continued)*

1. **Ms. Dempster** (New Zealand) said that successful review, whether at the 5- or 10-year point, depended very much on the timeliness and adequacy with which it had been prepared. Proper sequencing of reviews was common sense, and sufficient lead time was required to allow Governments to consult locally, and in regional groups to review their own progress and experiences.

2. National reports could be made more focused to avoid duplication between different follow-up processes and to reduce the burden of reporting on small States. Governments of developing countries should receive assistance with the reporting requirements.

3. A more focused approach overall was essential. The scope of reviews had often been too broad, and the time available too short, to thoroughly and consistently address all the issues. There should be more willingness to build on the outcomes of other Conferences to avoid duplication of effort. Also, clear objectives for the reviews should be agreed in advance to assist in sharpening the focus of all those involved.

4. A five-year review period might be too short to adequately assess progress and obstacles and too proximate to the World Conference concerned to avoid reopening commitments made there. On the other hand, the five-year point offered a good opportunity to share lessons learned so far and to maintain momentum for further efforts. Methods of addressing the goals of the Conference could be updated, taking into account challenges which had arisen, emerging issues, new directions in policy, new technology and significant

agreements which might have been reached in the intervening period. There should be no inconsistency in the regularity or depth of follow-up to different World Conferences.

5. On balance, the five-year mark could be used as a valuable opportunity for technical or expert reviews. However, the results of those review meetings had to have credence in the intergovernmental process, and their findings should be used dynamically to maintain high-level political commitment to the Conference agendas.

6. The Council had a key role to play in providing guidance on substantive cross-cutting themes. Contradictory outcomes from different United Nations processes weakened the overall impact and credibility of the United Nations standard-setting role; consequently the Council had to ensure coherence and consistency.

7. Finally, it was important for civil society to be actively involved in all World Conferences and follow-up processes at the national, regional and international levels. A key benefit of regular reviews lay in exchanging best practices and sharing lessons learned so far. Ignoring the lessons that civil society had to teach would seriously undermine the usefulness and importance of reviews.

8. **Mr. Weibgen** (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)) said that as a result of the World Food Summit, the world community had an internationally agreed target, approved at the highest political level by 185 countries and the European Community: to reduce by half, by no later than 2015, the number of undernourished people in the world. That target should be incorporated explicitly in any set of human poverty targets and global indicators such as those to be embodied in the report of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) entitled "A Better World for All".

9. The decline in the number of undernourished people in developing countries by 8 million per year had been steady, but was far from sufficient. The major objective of the World Food Summit follow-up effort was to accelerate progress towards achieving a reduction of at least 20 million per year.

10. The FAO Committee on Food Security acting as the preparatory body for the Summit, had made the

arrangements needed to effectively fulfil its task of monitoring implementation of its Plan of Action. There was a biennial schedule of reporting by countries, actively supported in that effort by FAO, and by international and civil society organizations, and the regional dimension was considered through reports by FAO's Regional Conferences every two years.

11. The Committee reported through the FAO Council to the FAO Conference, the organization's highest governing body. In addition, it submitted a report to the Economic and Social Council through the FAO Council every four years. The first report had been submitted to the Council in 1999 and the next report would be submitted in 2003. By 2006, 10 years after the World Food Summit, the CFS was to have a major broad-based progress assessment of the implementation and a mid-term review of the Plan of Action.

12. The FAO monitoring, evaluation and review process reflected the perceptions expressed in the current debate, in particular with respect to the role played by CFS, which was comparable to a functional commission and, as such, entrusted with both the periodic as well as the major 10-year review, and with regard to the Council's involvement in the process.

13. FAO was working in close collaboration with its partners in the system to assist member countries to implement the World Food Summit Plan of Action and the outcomes of other conferences and summits. The World Food Summit had identified a pressing need for more reliable information on areas and populations affected by or at risk of hunger and malnutrition. Work on Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Information and Mapping Systems (FIVIMS) was directly relevant to developing indicators in the context of conference follow-up to achieve that objective.

14. The FIVIMS programme had many of the aspects of the UNDAF and common country assessment and planning process in that both were controlled by key stakeholders at national level and involved the use of existing information systems where possible, were based on collaboration among development agencies and their national partners, employed broad conceptual frameworks for understanding the problem areas of food insecurity and poverty and focused on meeting basic needs and achieving sustainable poverty reduction.

15. FAO was facilitating a collaborative effort which brought together concerned United Nations system organizations, competent national and sub-regional institutions and non-governmental organizations. Close working relationships had been established with related work programmes of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC)/OECD, and the United Nations resident coordinator system for monitoring basic indicators at national and global levels.

16. Within the framework of that system, a series of country-level thematic groups under the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) Network on Rural Development and Food Security, were addressing issues related to rural development and food security. Participants included United Nations system organizations, donors, NGOs, and Governments. The Network formed part of the follow-up to the World Food Summit and its thematic groups fed into the processes of Common Country Assessments and United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks. The Network involved FAO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and WFP, in cooperation with the other concerned United Nations partners and with strong links to other organizations, particularly NGOs working on rural development and food security.

17. In the area of human rights, and in accordance with the outcome of the Vienna Conference in 1993, the World Food Summit sought a more precise definition of the concepts of the right to adequate food and of the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger.

18. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights was collaborating with relevant bodies and organizations in order to better define those rights and to propose ways to implement and realize them. Under the leadership of the High Commissioner, considerable progress had already been made. FAO noted with appreciation Council decision 2000/19 on the right to food, and would continue to cooperate fully in that effort.

19. Meeting the target of the World Food Summit would also help to meet the other goals established by the international community, and ensure a better, fairer and more humane world for all in the new Millennium. To ensure recognition of that fact, the framers of the Summit's Plan of Action specifically provided for periodic reports to the Council, within the overall framework of integrated follow-up to United Nations

conferences and summits. They also encouraged all United Nations system organizations to contribute to WFS follow-up within their spheres of competence.

20. **Mr. Le Luong Minh** (Viet Nam) emphasized that the Secretary-General's many useful recommendations for the review and follow-up process deserved careful consideration, especially those concerning the role of the functional and regional commissions, and the use of national and regional reports and technical assessments as the basis for the reviews. He associated himself with the views expressed by the Group of 77 and China reflected in the statement delivered on behalf of the Group by the representative of Nigeria. The complexity and difficulties encountered in the review process thus far proved that no single formula would be appropriate for all the reviews. Whether future reviews would be undertaken by the General Assembly in special sessions or by the functional commission themselves should be decided on a case-by-case basis. It was not possible to undertake two or more reviews in one year, not to mention in one month as in the previous month, and still ensure their effectiveness. It was particularly difficult for countries where the preparation for national participation in the review process was the responsibility of one or a few focal ministries or agencies.

21. Five years was too short a time span to make meaningful assessments of implementation policies, but the five-year reviews held thus far had been useful in determining that the progress recorded in the implementation process had been very limited and uneven and that many challenges remained in all spheres of activity under review.

22. There were challenges of the widening gap between the rich and the poor within and among nations, the poverty of 5.5 out of 6 billion people of the world, and wars and conflicts that consumed national resources which could otherwise have been invested in development efforts. Less than 50 per cent of children in many developing countries attended school, and HIV/AIDS infection continued to destroy a large part of the world's population.

23. Developing countries seriously lacked financial resources to implement the outcomes of the conferences in order to solve those problems. The result of almost all the reviews so far pointed to the seriousness of the declining trend in official development assistance (ODA), of the debt burden,

limited technology transfer and limited market access of developing countries. In that context, international solidarity and cooperation was essential. Beside the call for the donor countries to live up to their ODA commitments, a number of delegations had put forth specific and useful recommendations, such as support for building the national implementation capacity of developing countries, for their participation in the preparatory process and for the preparation of their national reports on implementation.

24. For future reviews and follow-up actions to be fruitful, broad participation was of critical importance at both national and international levels. At national level, the Vietnamese Government had been successfully facilitating the participation of the private sector and of mass and non-governmental organizations in both implementation and review processes. At the international level, cooperative relations between the United Nations and the specialized agencies should be strengthened, and a partnership between the United Nations system and the agencies, the private sector and other relevant stakeholders was essential in ensuring successful outcomes of both the review process and the follow-up actions.

25. **Mr. Vaher** (United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)) said that integrated follow-up to conferences was the basis of country-level thematic groups within the resident coordinator system. UNICEF had a common set of indicators for the measurement of achievements at both the country and global levels, with provisions for regular reviews and exchange of lessons learned.

26. UNICEF had already embarked on a series of five-year reviews of conference outcomes. In addition, they had held a 10-year review of the World Conference on Education for All and, in the context of the World Summit for Children scheduled for 2001, they were preparing a special session of the General Assembly in 2001 to review 10-year achievements. Modalities for the reviews already undertaken had varied widely at both the country and global levels, generating a major body of experience on which to draw.

27. UNICEF was pleased to have provided input for the Secretary-General's report (E/2000/57) and shared the general thrust of its recommendations. From his organization's experience, a significant amount of review in programme countries could be ongoing if

they were built into programming and evaluation frameworks. A major periodic review was necessary, but it should take place in a high-level General Assembly session as a 10-year event, thereby allowing enough time for significant accomplishment, understanding of developments and comprehensive preparations drawing on national experience. He therefore suggested 10-year reviews for individual conferences and integrated follow-up under the overarching goal of poverty eradication.

28. He expressed the hope that the experience gained so far, the instruments required for a close integration of activities and assessment and the commitment of stakeholders would provide the basis for the adoption of specific recommendations for an improved and revitalized process that would translate the hopes and dreams of the 1990s into effective action in the new millennium.

29. **Mr. Graisse** (World Food Programme) said that, whereas funds and programmes could regularly review progress without waiting 5 or 10 years, it had been useful when participating in the 10-year review of the Jomtien World Conference on Education for All or in the five-year review of the Fourth World Conference on Women to analyse what progress had been made towards meeting targets. Those set at the meetings for the 2000 review of progress in conference follow-up would assist in shaping priorities in WFP.

30. The Executive Board of WFP decided in 1999 that its follow-up should focus on the implementation of the plans of action that had emerged from the Conferences and Summits. Its sphere of action had been defined around principles aiming to break the inheritance of hunger, an essential prerequisite for poverty reduction and sustainable development.

31. Women were key players in ending the hunger-poverty trap, so that investing in girls' education was critical for reducing malnutrition, poverty and hunger. Moreover, good nutrition was essential for education and development. The challenge was to defeat a multifaceted enemy, namely, hunger, poverty, malnutrition and functional illiteracy.

32. All of WFP's policies and programmes were aimed at implementing the World Food Summit goal of reducing the number of undernourished people in the world. The key to meeting that goal was through development activities that allowed people to create and maintain assets.

33. In areas of conflict, WFP provided food aid for survival needs but also as a complementary resource to help people quickly re-establish their food security following a crisis. That often entailed strategies to empower people, especially women. Recipients of relief assistance accounted for nearly 80 per cent of all WFP beneficiaries in 1999; two out of three were women and girls. In response to the appeal of the International Conference on Population and Development, WFP was investing 50 per cent of its resources in education for women and girls. In related food-for-work projects, at least 25 per cent of resources were devoted to training women. Such uses of food aid were catalysts of development, improving nutrition and reducing fertility.

34. At the World Education Forum in Dakar, the Secretary-General had launched the 10-year global initiative on girls' education. WFP supported that initiative, and focused on educating girls because there was an important link between female education and reduced malnutrition. WFP encouraged parents to send their daughters to school by providing incentives of take-home rations (usually a can of oil) for girls attending school regularly. WFP's food-for-training activities focused on women's literacy, skill building and empowerment. There was also a school feeding programme, which currently reached 28 million children in over 70 countries.

35. In connection with the Beijing Conference, WFP assisted a total of 89 million people in 1999, almost two thirds of them women and girls. WFP was committed to making sure women had a role in food aid management and decision-making. In WFP programmes, women comprised up to 40 per cent of the members of food management committees in local communities.

36. As for WFP's own staff, rigorous efforts had been made to increase the proportion of female professional staff. Managers had achieved the full parity target of 50 per cent women in new recruitment in 1999. The proportion of professional women had increased by 40 per cent since the Beijing Conference.

37. In 1999, half of operational expenditure for development was directed to the least developed countries and 90 per cent to low income food deficit countries. US\$ 2,434 million (17 per cent of WFP's budget) had been devoted to helping the poor through food-for-work projects, school feeding and mother and

child health care. WFP was the largest provider of grant assistance to Africa within the United Nations system. It had spent 44 per cent of its 1999 expenditures on sub-Saharan Africa.

38. WFP had forged strong partnerships with national authorities and United Nations sister agencies under UNDAF, as well as with international and local non-governmental organizations. WFP provided the food and the partners provided the financial and technical contributions. Currently, there were Memoranda of Understanding with United Nations partners (UNHCR, UNICEF and FAO), between WFP and the largest international non-governmental organizations, and over 1,200 local partnership agreements with non-governmental organizations.

39. **Mr. Skrybant** (Poland) associated his delegation with the statement made on the previous day by the representative of France on behalf of the fifteen members of the European Union and the associated countries.

40. In a regional context, the review of the results of summits and conferences should take advantage of the institutional machinery of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE). Its annual meetings were an appropriate forum for conducting an analysis of that process.

41. While ECE did not have a mandate to address social issues, in a spirit of cooperation and pragmatism in the context of the follow-up to the world conferences and summits, it had successfully held a regional conference in the framework of the preparatory process for the five-year review of the Beijing Conference. His delegation welcomed that action especially because for some time Poland had been insisting that ECE include in its agenda an analysis of the social problems resulting from the systemic and economic transformations taking place in several countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

42. **Ms. De Lacy** (Observer for Australia) said that the current discussion was timely because it fit in with ongoing United Nations reform efforts. The wealth of combined experience derived from the completion of most of the five-year reviews of major conferences would better equip the international community to prepare for future reviews.

43. The objective was to ensure that reviews were carried out in a productive, goal-oriented manner,

building on the outcomes of conferences and summits. It was also important that they should be tailored to needs and conducted on a case-by-case basis.

44. However, conference reviews had proved to be highly time-consuming. Too frequently they ran the risk of duplicating efforts better dealt with in other forums. Five-year reviews had not always adopted a complementary approach to cross-cutting issues. With that in mind, further consideration needed to be given to the timing of review processes.

45. Functional commissions played a key role as the bodies with primary responsibility for monitoring progress and assisting in the implementation of conference goals. Consequently they should be the first point at which conference follow-up was considered. By the same token, special sessions and world conferences should be held more selectively. Ideally, reviews should be specific and technical, focusing clearly on core conference issues. Outcomes should assess progress, based on national reporting against objective and comparable statistics, exchange experiences on constraints encountered and identify the best practices for dealing with those constraints.

46. His delegation wondered whether the involvement of intergovernmental bodies of United Nations agencies in the review process, as suggested in paragraph 21 of the report (E/2000/57), was the most efficient and effective way of ensuring that desired outcomes were achieved. Her Government would continue to examine options for improving reviews, including their optimal frequency.

47. **Ms. Singh** (India) noted that in the 1990s, the international community had painstakingly negotiated a set of internationally agreed priorities under which far-reaching commitments had been undertaken and a productive base had been prepared for focusing on the development and welfare of the global community. Regrettably, not only was the flow of resources inadequate to achieve shared objectives, but there was also a general lack of vigour in international cooperation, protectionist tendencies had emerged and there had been renewed attempts to divert attention away from important issues such as an international enabling environment for development and concessional financial resources. Paragraph 55 of the Secretary-General's report had justly observed that the slackening of international support and continuing

decline in ODA jeopardized the priorities identified by the conferences.

48. India believed that the entire United Nations system should be involved in the follow-up process and the Council should ensure efficient coordination between the various actors, including the specialized agencies, the Bretton Woods institutions and international funds and programmes.

49. On the question of cross-cutting issues, quantified goals and benchmarks and the functional commissions, she said that in securing coherence and coordination between conference outcomes, thematic goals and integrity of outcomes should be maintained.

50. Additionally, any review exercise on indicators must be consultative and broad-based, taking into account the work carried out at the national level. She wished to know what types of indicators were to be developed under the common country assessment (CCA) Indicator Framework mentioned in paragraph 68. In that regard, she reiterated the view that the indicators used should be only those which had been agreed to in intergovernmental bodies, with the full participation of all countries. Moreover, the indicators should not impose additional burdens on developing countries in terms of data collection or analysis.

51. Although she commended the role of the functional commissions in conference follow-up, she believed there was no need for them to be involved in identifying goals and scope for review conferences as those issues were best addressed by the reviews themselves. She further indicated that India supported the principle of involvement of civil society, but wished to have clarification on the formation of "global policy networks", as proposed in paragraph 72 of the report, as a new way of mobilizing the support for common goals. With its universal membership, the United Nations system was uniquely suited to work harmoniously to implement the mandates agreed upon by the international community.

52. **Mr. Amaziane** (Morocco) endorsed the views expressed by the Group of 77 and China and briefly described the context and trends in which development issues had evolved in Morocco over the previous two decades. Persistent social inequities and human suffering, environmental degradation and drastically low levels of ODA were indications that the climate of hope and expectation that prevailed in the early 1990s had degenerated into one of disappointment in recent

years. The Council should seek ways of dealing with the financial crisis which inhibited the successful implementation of conference goals.

53. With regard to the recommendations outlined in document E/2000/57, he said the Council should urge donor countries to honour the financial commitments they had undertaken during the 1990s, and called for firm proposals on the mobilization of financial resources. He supported the need for strengthened dialogue with the Bretton Woods institutions to evaluate their contribution to conference objectives, particularly in terms of debt reduction.

54. Turning to the question of periodic reviews, he said that the proliferation of review sessions undermined the quality of the exercise and discouraged the participation of developing countries. Five-year intervals would be an optimal period to ensure that the political will to carry out agreed policies would not weaken. Furthermore, while acknowledging the specific and valuable contribution of civil society to the entire review process, he considered that the logistical capacity of the United Nations to accommodate a massive turnout of non-governmental organizations should be reviewed.

55. **Mr. Franco** (Colombia) said that his delegation aligned itself with the statement by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

56. The major conferences and summits convened during the past decade had marked a high point in the history of the United Nations and had created expectations of a better world. However, with the five-year reviews, it had become apparent that the results achieved still fell far short of the goals and targets originally set. It appeared that some themes had not been ripe for review, while in others, failure to establish priorities had resulted in mere repetition of the outcome document of the original conference. The rigid format of the reviews, especially during the high-level policy dialogue, had slowed the proceedings.

57. Although it was true that primary responsibility for implementing conference outcomes rested with Governments, where national capacity was lacking implementation was difficult. Hence the need for international cooperation as an indispensable complementary mechanism.

58. The Council's actions were the key to better coordination and integrated follow-up of conferences;

its recommendations to the General Assembly and instructions to the functional commissions in that regard should be very precise. With coordination as a permanent item, they should prioritize their agendas around core themes and treat cross-cutting issues with an eye to avoiding duplication of efforts. If five-year reviews were to continue, the idea of clustering reviews should be considered by the functional commissions.

59. Bearing in mind the essentially intergovernmental nature of the Organization, the participation of civil society in the reviews should be of a nature to add value to the discussions without restricting intergovernmental debate.

60. The Council should continue its useful dialogue with the Bretton Woods institutions and should do more to address trade issues by strengthening its relations with the World Trade Organization.

61. **Mr. Hidayat** (Indonesia) said that his delegation also aligned itself with the statement by Nigeria on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

62. The Council, in its coordination role, could give new vigour to the combined conference outcomes in the service of the overarching goals of development and poverty eradication. By promoting integrated and well-coordinated follow-up, the Council would revitalize Governments' commitment and, at the same time, help mount a major multilateral response as a corrective to the uncertainties of globalization.

63. As the report of the Secretary-General (E/2000/57) had detailed, the results of the five-year reviews to date had served chiefly to highlight how little had been accomplished. The task at hand was to determine the real obstacles to implementation, strengthen international cooperation and find ways of increasing flows of financial resources to developing countries. In order to foster a sense of ownership of efforts among participants, country and regional reports should be given top priority in document preparation and the capacity of developing countries to provide accurate information should be strengthened.

64. The Council should encourage partnerships between the United Nations system, the Bretton Woods institutions, the private sector and other stakeholders. It should also promote the design of integrated strategies to translate conference outcomes into development progress. Above all it should emphasize the building of

administrative and statistical capacity, particularly in the least developed countries.

65. The Government of Indonesia had recently organized a national seminar to explore ways of stimulating a greater national effort in implementing the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences of the past decade. One of the outcomes of the seminar had been the establishment of a national committee on coordinated conference follow-up, which would cooperate closely with the relevant United Nations agencies in the field.

66. **Mr. Adam** (Observer for Israel) suggested that no more five-year review conferences should be held, since that period was too short. Instead, task forces could be set up within the relevant departments of the Secretariat to review individual commitments made at specific conferences. General debates by Heads of State or ministers in plenary should be eliminated, since few Heads of State or ministers remained to listen to the ensuing dialogue. Instead, a three-hour opening session should be held, attended by the heads of delegations, representatives of relevant non-governmental organizations, heads of United Nations programmes and specialized agencies and members of the private sector and international financial organizations. The opening session could be followed by high-level round table discussions on either operational or regional themes aimed at specific outcomes.

67. There was no need for months of lengthy discussions focusing on an outcome document with hundreds of ideas that were difficult to implement. Representatives should rather prepare short documents with specific programmes. The number of government and non-governmental delegations participating in the meetings should be limited in order to save resources and time.

68. **Mr. Fedotov** (Russian Federation) said that the comments concerning mid-term reviews, however justified, should not serve as grounds for discontinuing them. He endorsed the Secretary-General's recommendations regarding the need to improve the quality and increase the effectiveness of preparations for the reviews, including by clearly defining their goals and scope, taking into account new realities. He was also encouraged both by the idea of rationalizing the data requested from Governments and the format of national reporting. Since the regional aspect of the

review process was a key element in preparing for a review, the role of the regional commissions should be strengthened to reflect the regional and subregional dimensions of the review outcome.

69. His delegation agreed with other delegations on the need to develop indicators on the implementation of outcomes of global conferences. The work of the United Nations in that regard should be supported. A balanced approach should be adopted with regard to the participation of representatives of non-governmental organizations and of civil society in strict compliance with agreed procedure. In order to solve the most important problems at the national and international levels expeditiously, only 10-year reviews of United Nations conferences and events should be held. Clustering several conference reviews into a single event should also depend on the similarity of the problems covered by each conference. Furthermore, review events of major United Nations conferences should be integrated with the future reviews of the new international development strategy currently being prepared.

70. **Mr. Suh Dae-won** (Republic of Korea) said that his delegation shared the view set forth in the Secretary-General's report (E/2000/57) that the five-year review process had serious shortcomings in terms of modalities, scope and timing.

71. Automatic and frequent global review meetings were not desirable; the appropriate functional commissions should undertake regular reviews and explore innovative ways of making the process more concrete and fruitful, if necessary, by organizing technical and expert group meetings on specific aspects. If, after review by the functional commissions, it was still thought necessary to hold special global review events, consideration should be given to clustering the review of implementation of several related conferences. In a review event on a single conference, the review process should focus on emerging issues and common themes.

72. The closer involvement of international organizations and civil society, in particular United Nations funds and programmes and the Bretton Woods institutions should be fostered. Moreover, national and regional components of the review process merited more attention. The national preparatory process should be strengthened by devising useful tools, such as improved national reporting systems and indicators,

to identify more clearly achievements and shortcomings as measured against conference goals.

73. **Mr. Sychoy** (Belarus) said that the idea of clustering closely related problems within a single review event, either a conference or a special session, was worthy of consideration. In his view, special attention needed to be paid to measures designed to provide for a timely preparation by the Council of review events, including through more active involvement by national Governments. Reviews by themselves, were a strong mobilizing factor for Governments, leading to a more detailed analysis of conference outcomes, the evaluation of progress achieved, the identification of constraints encountered as well as directions for further action.

74. In view of the key role of national information in preparing review events, he hoped that United Nations country teams would provide more assistance to national Governments in analysing their ranking in the follow-up to the major United Nations conferences and summits. The extensive involvement of a variety of stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations, the private sector and local authorities, was another important factor in providing the comprehensive data needed for efficient preparation of conference reviews. His delegation welcomed the key role played by the Bretton Woods institutions in the implementation of the outcomes of major conferences and summits and encouraged the Council to continue its partnership with those institutions.

75. **Mr. Hynes** (Canada) said that his delegation strongly endorsed the view that decisions on when and how to conduct reviews should be taken on a case-by-case basis to avoid the risk of getting locked into an automatic pattern of conference reviews thus squandering valuable resources needed to address new and emerging issues. In the same vein, he agreed with those delegations that felt that it was important to stagger reviews and limit them to one a year. Similar thematic matters should not be clustered into a single review, despite the cross-cutting nature of themes and goals and the importance of continuing to press for the mainstreaming of those goals. Value added could only be achieved from the periodic high-level reviews by focusing attention on a given theme such as gender equality and women's human rights. Finally, instead of organizing special events to better integrate ongoing follow-up and monitoring of conferences into the work of the United Nations system, the conference-review

role of the functional commissions, the Council and the General Assembly should be strengthened.

76. The habit of addressing and managing important questions such as world conferences and their reviews through special high-level events had taken much of the vital work of the United Nations out of the agenda of the existing intergovernmental machinery, making it increasingly redundant and irrelevant. If that machinery was to play a more prominent and effective role in the ongoing reviews of conference commitments, then it needed to be revitalized. His delegation strongly urged the functional commissions, the Council and the General Assembly to continue to seek innovative ways of enhancing the participation of non-governmental organizations in their work, including through the use of new information and communication technologies.

77. **Mr. Hanif** (Pakistan) said that the Council should address the review problems in a holistic manner, focusing on the real issue, namely that, despite the commitments made at major United Nations conferences and summits, conditions in developing countries had worsened considerably over the last decade concurrently with a sharp decline in official development assistance. The optimism of Rio, Cairo and Copenhagen and Beijing had evaporated, yielding to scepticism about the benefits of entering into processes that had led to selective implementation of targets and goals. If the international community was sincere in its efforts to revive the confidence and euphoria of the early years of the post-cold war era, then it had to reach consensus on issues such as deadlines for the cancellation of the external debt, providing market access to developing countries and the participation of such countries in international economic decision-making. Only that balanced approach to development issues could generate the confidence required to have genuine international commitment to the review processes.

78. In his delegation's view, reviews should not be automatic, nor should they be held at arbitrarily selected periods. The mechanism for triggering reviews could be based on criteria used for evaluating progress in implementing the goals of summits and conferences. As soon as it was established that the ongoing trends were either contributing to the agreed goals or failing to do so, the review process should be launched. Reviews should be held at the highest political level in order to generate the necessary momentum.

79. While the Secretary-General's recommendation regarding the scope of reviews deserved serious consideration, new challenges in any review process should not be addressed at the expense of previously agreed goals. In that regard, he questioned whether the clustering of core issues might not adversely affect the treatment of issues such as ODA and the gender perspective.

80. Turning to paragraph 35 of the Secretary-General's report (E/2000/57), he asked for more information on the functioning of the single intergovernmental forum on a set of critical elements of the enabling environment. He wondered, for instance, whether it was a parent functional commission to oversee the work of all the functional commissions. In that context, the high-level international intergovernmental event on financing for development provided a unique opportunity for discussing the real cross-cutting issue which, in his view, remained development. His delegation shared the observations made by the Secretary-General in paragraphs 55 and 56 of his report and also believed that his proposals regarding partnerships with relevant actors should be appropriately implemented.

81. **Mr. Browne** (United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)) said that the large number of conferences dealing with development concerns held in the past decade had necessarily resulted in overlapping conclusions and commitments, as the development process had increasingly come to be viewed holistically rather than sectorally. Each successive conference had exposed the complexities of the development process to greater scrutiny and had reaffirmed a cumulative number of key commitments by countries of both North and South.

82. However, debate at the last two five-year reviews, which concerned the outcomes of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the World Summit for Social Development, had overlapped considerably, if understandably. The time had clearly come to rationalize the conference process, and the Council was best placed to propose measures to that end.

83. UNDP, as the manager of the United Nations field development network, could play a stronger role in ensuring that individual countries derived the most benefit from a rationalized conference process through support in three practical areas: the preparation of

country reports, the use of indicators and statistical capacity-building.

84. The representative of Nigeria had rightly urged United Nations country teams to increase their support for the preparation of national reports. In most developing countries, UNDP and other United Nations organizations were already assisting in the preparation of national human development reports. Those reports could be designed to serve the dual purpose of aids to policy-making and key documents to present to global conferences.

85. With regard to indicators, a balance needed to be struck between a core set of standardized indicators allowing for international comparisons, usable for conference reviews, and other indicators countries chose to use for their own monitoring purposes. Countries should also be encouraged to set their own targets, in addition to those set at global conferences. The halving of poverty rates, for example, would not occur in every country simultaneously by the year 2015.

86. The conference process increasingly depended on reliable indicators for statistical monitoring, but statistical sophistication varied widely from country to country. UNDP had been in the forefront of statistical capacity-building, and there was renewed interest on the part of donor countries to support more technical assistance in that field. But statistics could be a sensitive subject and must primarily be utilized in the service of the countries themselves.

87. UNDP joined with other speakers in emphasizing the need for sufficient domestic and international resources, and particularly official development assistance, in line with the commitments made by Member States at the conferences.

88. **The President** invited the representative of the International Movement ATD Fourth World to address the Council.

89. **Ms. Skelton** (International Movement ATD Fourth World) said that, as it debated the process of coordinating the follow-up of the major United Nations conferences and summits, the Council should consider ways to mainstream human rights into the review process.

90. From a human rights perspective, it was imperative that the United Nations should avoid polarization between conflicting points of view of the

developing and developed countries and should stress mutual responsibility and respect for human rights. If, as suggested by the European Union and others, conference follow-up was separated into a technical and a political level, both levels must be informed by that spirit. An atmosphere should be created in which each country, rich or poor, was held to its commitments and respected for its contributions.

91. The human rights framework also required that no human right should be restricted. If conference review targets were expressed in terms of minimal needs or mid-term objectives, it must be clear that those were only temporary objectives on the path towards full human rights for all people in all countries. Time limits should be set and the next set of objectives identified from the beginning.

92. With regard to the involvement of civil society, some delegations had urged increased use of expert groups. The definition of "expert" needed to be broadened, so that it included not just those from academic circles but those who knew first-hand the grass-roots impact of social and economic policies, who fought for social justice in their daily lives. The language of global conferences increasingly called for heeding the voices of the poor, but those voices were rarely heard in the present forum. Among the poorest were those with expertise in making life liveable for themselves and their families in the face of extreme difficulties. Their wisdom should help inform the deliberations.

93. **Mr. Lisk** (International Labour Organization (ILO)) said that the current ILO work programme was predicated on the principles of social justice and respect for human rights embodied in the concept of a human-centred, integrated approach to development. ILO therefore attached great importance to follow-up of the outcomes of major United Nations conferences on social and economic issues. It was particularly concerned with implementation of the goals and commitments that had emerged from the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen, especially those aimed at ensuring productive, remunerative and safe jobs, what ILO referred to as "decent" work, and at protecting the basic rights of workers and fair labour standards.

94. ILO had also been actively involved in promoting some of the goals set forth at the Fourth Conference on Women in Beijing. Since the Conference, the

International Labour Conference had adopted the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and conventions on home work, the worst forms of child labour and, just recently, maternity benefits.

95. ILO believed that a holistic approach, integrating economic and social policies, was the best way to deal with the pressing development problems of unemployment, social exclusion and poverty, particularly in the face of the formidable challenges posed by rapid globalization. In the interests of cost-effectiveness, ILO was committed to working with its partners in the United Nations system and the international community. It believed that collectively they should be aiming at promoting simultaneous consideration of economic and social objectives; developing concepts and indicators that would facilitate a shift towards a more integrated approach; strengthening institutions and processes that allowed for greater participation and transparency; promoting awareness of the continuing role of the State, as well as the responsibility of the private sector, in providing public goods and correcting market failures; and implementing programmes and policies that promoted gender equality.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.