



# Economic and Social Council

Provisional

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## Substantive session for 2000 Operational activities segment

### Provisional summary record of the 23rd meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 13 July 2000, at 10 a.m.

*President:* Mr. Niehaus (Vice-President) ..... (Costa Rica)

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Operational activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation

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*In the absence of Mr. Wibisono (Indonesia), Mr. Niehaus (Costa Rica), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

*The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.*

1. **The President** said that the Council was meeting at a crucial period for operational activities within the United Nations system. There was no doubt that the reform process promoted by the Secretary-General, the guidelines established by the General Assembly and the important resolutions adopted by the Economic and Social Council in recent years had provided the necessary political impetus for adapting those activities to the new requirements of developing countries. The Council had the task of reviewing the direction and relevance of those reforms and providing long-term guidelines for United Nations funds and programmes. It would also have to ensure that the limited resources available for operational activities for development truly benefited the people of developing countries. In that regard, he hoped that the Council would not only gain a better understanding of the current state of operational activities but that it would also have all the necessary material to incorporate those concepts into the resolutions that it was currently drafting.

### **Operational activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation**

#### *Dialogue with country teams*

2. **The President** invited **Mr. Fawundu** (United Nations Resident Coordinator and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Resident Representative in Ghana), **Mr. Ahwoi** (Ghana) and **Mr. Asaga** (Ghana) to take places at the Council table.

3. **Mr. Ahwoi** (Ghana) said that his Government had enjoyed excellent relations with both the United Nations agencies and the Bretton Woods institutions represented in Ghana. Ghana's long-term development objectives were presented in its 25-year development plan, known as "Ghana: Vision 2020". That document also contained Ghana's five-year medium-term development programme 1996-2000, referred to as the "First Step". Among the most important policy documents that guided Ghana's cooperation with its partners were: the Policy Focus for Poverty Reduction; The Child Cannot Wait, a national programme of action developed as a follow-up to the World Summit for

Children; the free Compulsory Universal Education Policy document; and the Medium-Term Agricultural Development Strategy.

4. Ghana's efforts to address its economic and social problems through the implementation of economic recovery and structural adjustment programmes had led to a renewal of the international community's interest in Ghana's development process. The Government had therefore decided to coordinate all external resources flowing into the country in such a way as to ensure the effective integration of such support into the development process. The Local Aid Group, which comprised representatives of bilateral and multilateral agencies supporting the Government's development programmes, as well as Government representatives, assisted the Government in targeting resources appropriately to achieve more holistic results. In order to ensure effective coordination, both sectoral and multisectoral groups had been formed. The Local Aid Group had evolved into a Mini Consultative Group, which met every four months with Government ministers and senior officials to discuss matters relating to Ghana's development programme.

5. In order to maximize the response of Ghana's external assistance partners, three major frameworks had been developed: the Common Country Assessment (CCA); the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF); and the Comprehensive Development Framework (CDF). Together with the Country Assistance Strategy, the three frameworks provided a holistic development strategy for poverty reduction. A poverty reduction strategy was also being developed.

6. His Government was seriously concerned about HIV/AIDS and had set up a National AIDS Control Programme with assistance from UNDP. The aim of the Programme was to address the clinical side of the pandemic. As the situation had worsened, however, a multisectoral team comprising Government representatives, development partners, the private sector and non-governmental organizations, had been established to develop national and district responses to HIV/AIDS. Their work had resulted in the establishment of a national Multisectoral Commission on HIV/AIDS and a District Response Initiative.

7. His Government was particularly pleased that most of its development partners had harmonized their programming cycles with the Government's own

programming cycle, including for the "Second Step" of Ghana: Vision 2020, which would cover the period 2001-2005. In order to encourage and consolidate coordination, and cooperation with the United Nations agencies and the Bretton Woods institutions, his Government was making available a 14-storey building that would house all the agencies of the United Nations system.

8. **Mr. Fawundu** (United Nations Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative in Ghana) said that the United Nations system had developed its coordination mechanisms in order to avoid duplication, enhance complementarity and maximize impact. Coordination was conducted within the context of the resident coordinator system and the established partners coordination mechanism under the leadership of the Government of Ghana. He enumerated the United Nations resident agencies in the country, which included two regional offices, and said that coordination had been accomplished primarily through consensus-based leadership, synergy and team spirit, the use of thematic groups and the use of inter-agency task forces, including task forces on common services. Under cost-sharing arrangements, agencies contributed to activities of common interest, such as the strengthening of the resident coordinator system.

9. As far as harmonization was concerned, UNDP, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) had agreed to harmonize their programming cycles starting from 2001 to coincide with the next step of Vision 2020. The World Food Programme (WFP) was in the process of readjusting its programming cycle within UNDAF, coinciding with the period 2001-2005. The next UNDAF cycle, 2001-2005, was also synchronized with the five-year medium-term national development plan of Vision 2020. Moreover, the World Bank and the African Development Bank had also agreed to harmonize their programmes.

10. **Mr. Mokasa** (United Nations Population Fund) said that strengthened United Nations coordination in Ghana had resulted in the implementation by UNFPA, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) of a joint programme to promote gender equality, and in the development of sector-wide approaches. However, the country team in Ghana still faced difficulties in promoting further

coordination, and it was necessary to strengthen the team's capacity for mobilizing resources from all sources, including the private sector, and to maximize financial and accounting procedures for programme development and implementation.

11. Turning to the issue of HIV/AIDS, he noted that the first case of the disease had been identified in Ghana in 1986. By June 1999, nearly 31,000 cases of AIDS had been reported. The objectives of the national response included prevention and control of HIV/AIDS, improvement of care and support, and mitigation of the impact of the pandemic. The United Nations was supporting the Government's efforts by expanding the United Nations Theme Group on HIV/AIDS to include all United Nations agencies resident in Ghana, bilateral and multilateral donors, international non-governmental organizations and Government representatives; by promoting advocacy and capacity-building at all levels; building partnerships and increasing the participation of political, religious and traditional groups; and by supporting youth peer education and counselling. Over the past 12 months, those efforts had resulted in increased political commitment on the part of the Government, the integration of HIV/AIDS into all sectoral programmes, the recognition of HIV/AIDS as a threat to national development, and the implementation of the District Response Initiative.

12. Those accomplishments notwithstanding, the team still faced great challenges in its efforts to help Ghana to combat the epidemic by intensifying advocacy at all levels, mobilizing resources for a sustained national response and changing the behaviour of individuals. For the next UNDAF period, 2001-2005, the United Nations system in Ghana had selected AIDS as a focus area for stronger coordination.

13. **Ms. Hodel** (World Food Programme (WFP)) said that a unique example of cooperation by the United Nations system in Ghana was in the area of information, communications and advocacy. The primary goal of the United Nations Communications Team in Ghana was to educate Ghanaian stakeholders in the areas of core development, governance and human rights challenges as identified by the Government of Ghana and civil society, with the guiding philosophy of promoting awareness of the Organization's contribution to Ghana's socio-economic development. That approach had helped to strengthen a

local constituency for the United Nations at the field level.

14. The thematic priorities of the United Nations system in Ghana were identical to the key issues before the Ghanaian population, namely HIV/AIDS, education of girls, women's empowerment, health and population, the environment, peace-building and human rights.

15. For every major event that it organized, the Communications Team worked with local partners as an integral part of its planning committee which included the relevant Government ministry and/or commission and non-governmental organizations. By working directly with national partners in programme conception and planning, the Team was ensuring that the Government and the United Nations had the same agenda, thus furthering the United Nations goal of strengthening civil-society organizations. Moreover, working as a team with national partners made it easier to mobilize funds and support from the private sector. The Communications Team also had a proactive partnership with the media: not only did it provide the media with information materials but it also encouraged dialogue and personal interaction between the United Nations agencies and the press houses.

16. **Mr. Asaga** (Ghana) said that the interventions of the agencies of the United Nations system in Ghana were essentially based on Ghana: Vision 2020. The purpose of CCA was to serve as a standard reference for both Government and donor agencies operating in Ghana and to provide information on progress and problems in key areas of human and social development as measured by the indicators. The objective of UNDAF was to enhance the coordination of system-wide operations by improving the effectiveness of United Nations development assistance to Ghana, while CDF, which applied the same principles as UNDAF, articulated the Government's development strategy for poverty reduction.

17. CCA analysed the national development situation with regard to the objectives of Ghana's development strategy and its progress towards fulfilling commitments made at the global conferences held in the 1990s. UNDAF served as the United Nations system's strategic contribution towards making Ghana a middle-income country by 2020. The sustainable human development theme chosen for CCA would facilitate the elaboration of the second step of Ghana:

Vision 2020, which articulated the medium-term development plan covering the period 2001-2005, as well as the preparation of Ghana's poverty reduction strategy. The CCA document should provide a common information base of reliable social indicators and present a broad overview on which individual agencies could build.

18. **Mr. Wedenig** (United Nations Children's Fund) said that the initial CCA for Ghana, which had proven useful in preparing the way for the subsequent UNDAF, had focused only on selected areas, and participation in it had been limited to the members of the Joint Consultative Group on Policy. In 1999, a decision had been taken to draft a substantive CCA in order to prepare for the new UNDAF, which would cover the period 2001-2005. Sustainable human development, the theme of the new CCA, was in keeping with the human-centred approach of the Ghanaian Government's basic policy document, Ghana: Vision 2020.

19. CCA had first undertaken an assessment of the status and trends of the major components of sustainable human development, which were defined as long and healthy life, education, a decent standard of living, and freedom, security and peace. CCA had then looked at the direct determinants affecting sustainable human development. Using a rights-based approach, the analysis had focused on the question of universal access to basic human entitlements and social services. An attempt had been made to desegregate all data by age, sex and geographical location. The analysis had covered the underlying and structural determinants touching on resource management and control and the impact of political, economic and cultural patterns. It was at those levels that the cross-cutting analysis had been undertaken and cross-cutting issues, such as environment and HIV/AIDS, had been considered.

20. The process had been jointly led by the Government and the United Nations system. A steering committee at the level of ministries and heads of agencies had provided policy guidelines, while the day-to-day management of the process had been ensured by a technical working group composed of the Government and the United Nations agency responsible for each of the six different theme groups. The broad-based participation of civil society, the private sector and donors had been ensured at the level of the theme groups. In addition, various workshops

had been held to which all stakeholders and the media had been invited.

21. The process had provided a platform for many stakeholders to reach a common understanding of the major challenges Ghana faced in terms of sustainable human development. The assessment had also revealed that Ghana had made improvements in that area: the human development index had risen from 0.233 in 1960 to 0.544 in 1997, and the *Human Development Report 1999* had, for the first time, classified Ghana as a medium human development country.

22. However, the quality of social services and the equity of the access to them and to basic human entitlements remained of concern. While CCA had highlighted important data gaps and the need for harmonization of various data formats, it had been a valuable input into various government planning processes and had been ready in time for the preparation of the second UNDAF.

23. **Mr. Harrold** (World Bank) said that, after making progress with CCA, the United Nations team had begun preparing its second UNDAF. The first step had been to determine what had been learned from the first UNDAF, which had been carried out in 1998. While the first UNDAF had essentially been limited to taking stock of existing programmes, it had demonstrated that joint preparation by the United Nations team could have a strong team-building effect. It had also shown that support for government programmes and priorities increased the scope for inter-agency cooperation and reduced inter-agency competition, that it was necessary to be realistic about how much could be achieved in any one UNDAF and that planning must be based on sound data. It had become clear that UNDAF should focus less on individual projects, programmes and financing plans and more on identifying the cost-cutting themes and issues around which the United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions, would organize their work.

24. The new UNDAF had three themes: access for all to basic human services, with special emphasis on education and health; increased opportunities for employment and the realization of individual potential; and improved capacity for programme implementation. Within those three broad areas, the team had identified five areas in which the United Nations would make a special effort to increase its cooperation: reduction of

gender and regionally based disparities, with a special emphasis on girls' education and maternal health; disease containment and prevention, especially of diseases that were endemic to Ghana; HIV/AIDS, an area in which programme implementation needed to be deepened; food security, which would be addressed through the Government's new sector-wide programme in agriculture; and district capacity-building.

25. With respect to deepening the impact of the second UNDAF as compared to the first, there were four key issues. First, widespread use would be made of sector-wide approaches; second, UNDAF reflected the Government's priorities rather than agency preferences; third, CCA and UNDAF were designed to be supportive of the Government-led network of groups; and lastly, UNDAF was closely linked to CDF and the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, which should increase its impact and likelihood of success.

26. CCA had provided a major contribution to the analytical basis for the development of sectoral programmes, including an explicit macroeconomic framework, which had been the particular contribution of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to the CCA/UNDAF process. The Comprehensive Development Framework in Ghana had helped to develop the process and institutional framework for cooperation, especially through the network of partner groups under the Mini Consultative Group process that it had fostered. The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper was being developed as a part of the next phase of overall development planning.

27. UNDAF was the framework that brought together the United Nations system's contribution to the realization of the Government's poverty reduction strategy. The World Bank's Country Assistance Strategy and the IMF Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility were contributions of the Bretton Woods institutions to the Government's poverty reduction strategy. Although there were a bewildering number of acronyms, in the end they represented, for the Government of Ghana and for the United Nations system in Ghana, a consistent set of processes leading to coherent, coordinated products.

28. **Ms. Urie** (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)) said that UNHCR remained committed to the team approach taken by the United Nations agencies working in Ghana, and acknowledged the assistance that other

United Nations agencies had provided to UNHCR in its programme to support the Government in such areas as education, food, health and sanitation.

29. **Mr. Ahwoi** (Ghana) said that a wide range of analytical tools and a framework for development activities had been created. Ghana was currently moving forward to the next step, the implementation of Ghana: Vision 2020. A number of United Nations agencies had taken steps to harmonize their funding cycles with that framework and other agencies would soon follow their example.

30. **Mr. Asaga** (Ghana) said that while his Government appreciated the assistance provided by the United Nations system and the Bretton Woods institutions, Ghana would require additional assistance for the implementation of its development strategy.

31. **Mr. Tomasi** (France) said that the Economic and Social Council and the Governing Council of UNDP had recently devoted much attention to the relationship between good governance and the work of the United Nations system in Ghana and to the dialogue between the Bretton Woods institutions and the United Nations agencies, and requested information on the Ghanaian Government's position with regard to those two issues.

32. **Mr. Ahwoi** (Ghana) said that his Government recognized the importance of good governance for development. In the case of Ghana, there was a need for an accountable system of local government and for a strong judiciary and court system. The continued support of the United Nations system, particularly financial support, was needed in both areas.

33. **Mr. Amaziane** (Morocco) said that Morocco had also been selected as a pilot country for an initial CCA. In view of the fact that development funding had gone through a severe crisis in recent years, Morocco had directed its efforts to encouraging donors to increase their contributions. It remained to be seen what effect the current assessment process would have on that effort. He asked what effect the coordination efforts had had on Ghana in terms of the increased workload on local staff.

34. **Mr. Asaga** (Ghana) said that some difficulties had arisen owing to differences in the rules and regulations of the various United Nations agencies and to disparities in the salaries of agency staff and Government staff. Nevertheless, work was progressing and an extensive array of programmes and projects was

being implemented. However, there was a need for greater flexibility in the rules and regulations of the United Nations agencies. With regard to the dialogue between the United Nations system and the Bretton Woods institutions, his Government believed that it was important to have an agreed programme in order to promote development activities.

35. **Mr. Asaga** (Ghana) said that further capacity-building was needed in Ghana. One important area that should be supported by the United Nations agencies, particularly by UNESCO was parliamentary development. With regard to the dialogue between the United Nations system and the Bretton Woods institutions, he noted that the United Nations agencies were placing greater emphasis on poverty reduction, which was also a major concern of the Bretton Woods institutions.

36. **Mr. Asaga** (Ghana), said that, although the Government of Ghana received funding from the Bretton Woods institutions and some United Nations agencies, it had tried to improve resource mobilization by introducing a very efficient value-added tax (VAT) system. A certain percentage of VAT revenue went to the Education Trust Fund. The proportion of total government expenditure on social services was 18 per cent and that figure would be increased to 22 per cent by 2002.

37. **Mr. Verbeek** (Observer for the Netherlands) requested that the text of the presentation should be made available to delegations. More information should be provided on how cooperation with bilateral donors worked, and to what extent representatives of bilateral donors were kept informed or were consulted by the Government.

38. Ghana seemed to be very interested in sector-wide approaches, which were being developed in a number of areas. His Government supported that process in Ghana as much as it could and he wondered to what extent it was possible for United Nations agencies to become involved in such sector-wide approaches, and what difficulties might arise in that connection.

39. Finally, the issue of Multi-Year Funding Frameworks had been heavily debated by the United Nations funds and programmes in New York. He wondered whether such frameworks were already being implemented in programmes in Ghana and whether they were effective.

40. **Mr. Fawundu** (United Nations Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative in Ghana) said that the team would consider the feasibility of producing a document from the presentation in order to share Ghana's experiences with other United Nations agencies.

41. The Multi-Year Funding Frameworks had been begun two years previously. Two relevant instruments were the resource-based programming tool, the Strategic Results Framework, and the results-oriented annual report. The Frameworks described the plans at ground level and how the programme was implemented and reported the results achieved. Impact at the policy and institutional levels was distinguished from the impact on the lives of individuals.

42. With regard to the question of resources, the answer would depend on how successful UNDP was in increasing its resource base, from voluntary contributions, and other sources, through the use of the Multi-Year Funding Framework.

43. **Mr. Harrold** (World Bank) said that there were already sector-wide programmes for health, roads, natural resources and agriculture. Similar programmes were being developed in several other sectors. Various United Nations agencies had played a crucial role in developing and implementing those programmes. WHO had assisted the Government in preparing the medium-term strategy for the health sector programme. UNICEF was a key agency supporting the implementation of the health-sector programme. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) had been the primary source of technical advice to the Government in preparing the sector-wide agricultural programme. That programme had been funded through the World Bank's cooperative programme with FAO and the United Nations University (UNU).

44. When the Comprehensive Development Framework for Ghana had been introduced by the United Nations team, it had become clear that bilaterals must be involved. There was a large number of sector groups in roads, agriculture and education, and various United Nations agencies supplied the core expertise. Those groups were all chaired by the Government and focal support was provided by United Nations agencies. In several groups, bilateral agencies were providing the focal support.

45. **Mr. Wedenig** (UNICEF) said that UNICEF and WHO had been involved from the beginning in the development of the health sector reform in Ghana, which was a Government-led process. The medium-term health strategy was the main document providing guidance for the sector-wide approach. UNICEF could contribute in a number of key areas, including cross-sector linkages and horizontal integration. For example, the issue of early childhood care and development could be only cross-sectoral. Vertical integration, linking field-level experience to policy development, was another factor. Since UNICEF was active at the national, district and community levels in the policy dialogue, it could provide valuable information about the impact of policy decisions.

46. In the area of gender equity, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women were pillars of the Fund's programmes. UNICEF paid close attention to gender equity in relation to the impact and benefits of sector-wide approaches, particularly on vulnerable groups, such as disadvantaged children and women. Lastly, he said that the United Nations agencies could and did make a genuine contribution in the area of advocacy.

47. **Ms. Barrington** (Observer for Ireland) commended the progress that had been made by the Ghana team. She asked whether, in the context of UNDAF in Ghana, UNDAF would actually become the Ghana programme. She had heard from a number of United Nations country teams that they could not participate in sector-wide approaches because their organizations' rules and regulations did not allow them to become involved in common-basket funding. While it was up to the boards of those funds and programmes to deal with that issue, it was very important for the United Nations system to be involved at the advocacy stage.

48. **Mr. Fawundu** (United Nations Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative in Ghana) said that the aim of UNDAF was to establish the basic framework from which the cooperation frameworks of individual agencies would be derived. UNDAF would constitute the core programme for all United Nations agencies, including the Bretton Woods institutions. The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper was based on UNDAF, and it might only take a process of formalization to make it a Government programme. The Government had been involved in the preparation

of the Paper, which was considered an official document for use by the United Nations agencies for programming purposes.

49. **Mr. Asaga** (Ghana) said that UNDAF used all CCA indicators to assess social development in Ghana. CDF and UNDAF were thus complementary. CDF included the poverty reduction programme, which had been prepared by the Bretton Woods institutions and the Government. Since it had not been decided whether UNDAF was taking ownership or if it would be a shared system, CDF, CCA and UNDAF were all complementary, and CCA was a tool for defining common ground among the United Nations agencies.

50. **Mr. Ahwoi** (Ghana) said that, owing to a very aggressive decentralization policy, the manner of delivering development in Ghana had changed fundamentally. All the instruments referred to would have to be part of a framework for implementation at specific localities and communities. Even if UNDAF was not officially adopted, it would in practice become a government programme. The agencies dealt with the districts for implementation papers rather than with the sector ministries, as had been the practice in the past.

51. Ghana was working in partnership with the bilateral agencies rather than merely keeping them informed. All the documents referred to had been the result of very active cooperation between Ghana and its partners, including the bilateral agencies. For every document, the evaluation process had involved the establishment of thematic groups. Each group had a lead national agency and a focal support agency, which was usually made up of external partners. The latter could be either a multilateral agency, a bilateral agency or sometimes even a bilateral credit organization. Under the current Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, there were eight thematic groups, which had similar arrangements.

52. **Ms. Bollmann** (United States of America) said that Ghana's excellent presentation had almost been textbook example of what the Council had been trying to initiate for some years. She welcomed the South-South talks initiated by Ghana on various issues. Contact should be made with the other permanent representatives attending the current session of the Council, with Governments and with non-governmental organizations interested in supporting such efforts. Ghana should explain how it had incorporated those management approaches and tools and what had been

achieved through them in order to inspire other countries to follow its example.

53. **Mr. Andersson** (Observer for Sweden) said that many of Ghana's experiences could benefit other countries. It had been very interesting to hear about the activities relating to HIV/AIDS, and he wondered how the activities of United Nations funds and programmes fit in with the Ghanaian Government's activities in that area. He would be interested to hear how Ghana viewed the International Partnership against AIDS in Africa. His country had followed that initiative closely in the past and had taken an active part in it. The Partnership should result in the integration of HIV/AIDS into a wide range of programmes that were not specifically related to health. He wondered to what extent that had occurred in the case of Ghana, and what were the concrete results in the programmes of the relevant organizations.

54. **Mr. Asaga** (Ghana) said that the International Partnership had made a very valuable contribution, and its visit to Ghana in October 1999 had been a significant turning point. According to available data, Ghana had an AIDS/HIV prevalence rate of 4.5 to 5 per cent. While that might seem a low figure, Ghana had decided not to allow it to rise. As a result of the International Partnership's work, the United Nations system and the bilateral and multilateral agencies were currently working in one theme group. The President of Ghana was the head of the recently established Multilateral Commission on HIV/AIDS. Ultimately, the work being carried out by the Ministry of Health would be transferred to the Commission, which would consider all the multisectoral aspects of the pandemic; the Ministry of Health would continue to focus on the health-related aspects. Through the Commission, a fund was being set up for contributions from the partners in order to support the work of the relevant public and private organizations, including non-governmental organizations and local communities.

55. UNDAF had identified HIV/AIDS as one of the five priority areas in which the United Nations system would make a concerted effort in terms of coordination, collaboration and participation. All sectors would integrate HIV/AIDS in their activities. Funding from multilateral, bilateral and United Nations agencies should take into account the need for HIV/AIDS prevention activities in each sector.



56. **Mr. Ahwoi** (Ghana) said that the distinction between what the Government was doing and what the United Nations system was doing was vanishing, as the programmes were planned jointly by both sides. The only remaining distinction was in the area of funding. The first AIDS group, established in 1992, had been funded by the UNDP. In 1997, all the United Nations system agencies and bilateral agencies interested in the subject had been involved. The programme that had evolved was a joint effort of all partners. UNFPA had played a commendable role in raising political awareness in Ghana about the problem of HIV/AIDS.

*The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.*