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

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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 3.20 p.m.

Operational activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation *(continued)*

Follow-up to policy recommendations of the General Assembly and the Council *(continued)*
(E/2000/46, E/2000/46/Add.1, E/2000/46/Add.2 and Corr.1, E/2000/CRP.1)

1. **The President** recalled that, 50 years previously, the Economic and Social Council had set the foundations for the development cooperation activities of the United Nations system when it had established what had then been called the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance. The new programme had started out with pledges from 54 Governments, and the United Nations Development Programme and other United Nations funds and programmes traced their origins to that period. The Organization's development cooperation policies and programmes had evolved since then, keeping pace with changing requirements, but the underlying principles had remained the same: neutrality, universality, respect for sovereignty, long-term commitment and responsiveness to national priorities.

2. In the year 2000, among the major concerns were globalization, marginalization, tremendous wealth, extreme poverty, peaceful development and deadly conflicts. The Ministerial Declaration produced by the Council's high-level segment had emphasized the need for urgent action to cope with those concerns through the development cooperation efforts of the United Nations system. The fiftieth anniversary of the beginning of those efforts was a time for looking back and looking forward, drawing from past lessons to face the risks and opportunities ahead.

3. **Mr. Suh Dae-won** (Observer for the Republic of Korea) said that with the growing interdependence of national economies it became increasingly important to strengthen the Organization's operational activities for development. The triennial policy review to be held in 2001 would present an opportunity to extensively re-examine to what extent those activities were adopted to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing world.

4. The recent introduction of a multi-year funding framework (MYFF) by the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Children's Fund should contribute to more predictable and sustainable resource mobilization. United Nations funds and programmes should take into account the diverse development demands of various countries and should demonstrate tangible results in their specialized areas. Also, in the light of the changing balance between core and non-core resources for the United Nations Development Programme, programme and donor countries should find a more flexible mechanism for using non-core resources to benefit the least developed countries. Members of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) should strive to increase their own efficiency and rationalize their individual activities, thereby creating a surplus of human and financial resources essential to improving participation in common projects. His delegation would welcome an explanation of the major impediments in the process of joint programming among UNDG members. For its part, the Council should strengthen its role in coordinating the operational activities of United Nations development agencies to avoid duplication.

5. **Ms. Saint-Cyr** (Canada) welcomed the report of the Secretary-General (E/2000/46), which clearly showed that the funding of operational activities for development and the simplification and harmonization of procedures were a matter of real concern for Member States. Her delegation regretted the decline in contributions to core resources and hoped that current efforts to strengthen the strategic management of funds and programmes and to strengthen political will for the financing of the United Nations development system would translate into a substantial increase in funding.

6. Specific causes such as HIV/AIDS, malaria, girls' education and nutrition were currently attracting the bulk of additional development funds. While those issues deserved priority attention, that concentration of resources impacted negatively on the mobilization of core funding. For example, Canada had recently committed large amounts of money to combating the spread of HIV/AIDS, but most of it would be allocated to specific projects and programmes, not to core funding for institutions. Another well-known fact demonstrated in the report was the overdependence of all United Nations funds and programmes on a limited number of donors. Funds from the private sector would

in most cases not result in increased core contributions, since they were usually targeted to specific sectors or activities. Unless there was a reversal of that situation, the main sources of core funding would remain the OECD countries, and the limitations in that respect were obvious.

7. There were however some positive signs on the horizon. One was the adoption of multi-year funding frameworks (MYFF) linking resources more closely to results, and another was the repositioning taking place in the funds and programmes, with the support of their respective Executive Boards, to make them more responsive to a changing world. Her delegation believed that MYFF was the right approach for improving programming and securing resources. Although it understood the frustration felt by some that all elements of the MYFF compact were progressing at the same pace, they were going in the right direction. The dynamic and transparent dialogue on funding and results that had emerged in the Executive Boards over the past two years were also a remarkable achievement. Her delegation was confident that the continued implementation of the MYFF process would bring about an increase in core resources.

8. She noted the complexity of simplifying and harmonizing procedures, and the efforts made to address it. Paragraph 117 of the report (E/2000/46) implied that past decisions of governing bodies might be partly responsible for the existing diversity of procedures. Such an apparent lack of coherence should not be permitted in the future. Her delegation found the questions raised in paragraph 129 very important and relevant, and hoped that the next triennial policy review of operational activities would propose avenues to resolve them.

9. Efforts should be made to build on the consensus that now existed, and her Government stood ready to consider what could be done in relation to the conditions it attached to its extrabudgetary contributions to United Nations funds and programmes and its efforts to harmonize its procedures for bilateral assistance with those of other donors and of its partner countries.

10. **Mr. Amaziane** (Morocco) said that his delegation supported the statement made by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the Group of 77 and China expressing concern at the reduction in core resources

for the operational activities of the United Nations system.

11. The development activities of the United Nations were the main weapon used in the battle for the eradication of poverty, one of the fundamental goals of the Organization. Operational activities at the country level were highly appreciated by the developing countries, especially since they were conducted in a spirit of partnership among equals, taking into account the needs and wishes of the countries concerned. The simplification and harmonization of procedures would lighten their burden and strengthen national execution. The welcome increase in non-core resources, should not work to the detriment of core resources; there was a serious danger that neutrality and multilateralism would be eroded and that bilateralism would be excessively extended within the United Nations system. He hoped that the reforms currently being undertaken under the MYFF system and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework would motivate the developed countries to increase their contributions.

12. **Ms. Corado-Cuevas** (Observer for Guatemala) said that there was a growing danger that the decline in core resources could conflict with the principles of universality under which the United Nations system had always worked. Although her delegation had always accepted that core resources should be used to support those States which had the greatest need, the current shortage of resources meant that States like Guatemala, which were not among the least developed countries were virtually excluded from development cooperation on the basis of core resources and were increasingly seeking to mobilize non-core resources. For example, non-core resources were the main reason why the United Nations Development Programme was still able to comply with the principle of universality in its activities in Guatemala.

13. Her delegation was also concerned at the suggestion made by the representative of France on behalf of the European Union, that non-core resources should be submitted to a greater degree to the parameters agreed by the Executive Board. She wished to emphasize that, at least in relation to priorities in the use of such resources, that was already the case within the framework of programming modalities adopted at the country level.

14. *The meeting was suspended at 3.50 p.m. and resumed at 4.05 p.m.*

Panel discussion: celebration of 50 years of United Nations development cooperation

15. **Mr. Desai** (Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs), having welcomed the members of the panel and reviewed the 50-year history of United Nations development cooperation activities, said that they had played a role of profound importance for the developing countries in building up their capacities in such areas as public administration, agricultural research and extension, health and education, family planning, programmes for women and children, and science and technology.

Introductory statement by Mr. Daniel R. Glickman, Secretary of Agriculture of the United States of America

16. **Mr. Glickman** (Secretary of Agriculture of the United States of America) said that as the first Secretary of Agriculture of the United States of America to address the Council, he welcomed the decision to establish a United Nations forum on forests. He also stressed that assistance with physical infrastructure, housing, telemedicine, the Internet and water and sewage systems was only the beginning; isolated, under-served communities needed state-of-the-art information tools in order to find their place in the global economy of the twenty-first century.

17. The conviction that international development must begin with the promotion of food security had been at the heart of American foreign policy for over 50 years. In 1999, his Government had shipped 9.6 million metric tons of food to almost 80 countries, over three times as much as in 1998. At the request of the United Nations, his Department would donate an additional 350,000 metric tons of farm commodities for distribution through the World Food Programme to drought-afflicted and war-torn nations, including Afghanistan, Kenya and nations in the Horn of Africa. Moreover, food aid could be converted into other forms of development assistance; in Yemen, for example, the sale of wheat and flour had provided support for schools, clinics and refugee infrastructures.

18. However, food security involved not only food aid, but the promotion of open markets and trade liberalization. For that reason, his Government had

been committed to China's accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) and had fought for new legislation that would strengthen its commercial ties with Sub-Saharan Africa, the Caribbean Basin and Viet Nam. The United States proposal for the next round of WTO negotiations was aimed at enabling the developing and least developed nations to import food and providing them with a level playing field without competition from subsidized European Union farm exports.

19. Food security also involved responsible conservation, sustainable agricultural practices, agricultural research, nutrition education, strong rural infrastructures, urban and peri-urban agriculture and effective food safety regulation; many of those issues were incorporated into the United States Action Plan on Food Security, which was aimed at meeting the goal of reducing world hunger by half by the year 2015. In that context, he would travel to Nigeria, Kenya and South Africa at the end of the current month in order to meet with Government officials, voluntary organizations, citizens, business leaders and academics. He stressed the need for continued trade between America and Africa and the importance of African agricultural self-sufficiency.

20. The world's population was skyrocketing and over 800 million of its citizens were chronically hungry. The planet's arable land base was shrinking, and farmers were freed to squeeze higher yields out of fewer acres. Biotechnology and, in particular, genetic engineering could increase not only the quantity, but also the quality of food produced. It allowed farmers to reduce their input costs and use of water and pesticides and made it possible to incorporate needed vitamins into dietary staples. He pointed out that the transatlantic debate had focused on the safety, environmental impact and ethics of genetic engineering, ignoring its implications for food security in the developing world. While those were legitimate issues, he noted that his Government had an effective regulatory system and was working to strengthen its biotechnology approval process.

21. Both sides of the debate had lost sight of biotechnology's humanitarian potential. Its opponents had no need to worry about food security since they lived in prosperous societies, while the multinational corporations that developed food products had geared their marketing and research towards products that would lead to immediate profit rather than tailoring

them to the needs of the third world, not merely as a gesture of corporate citizenship but because such an investment would ultimately pay dividends as developing countries matured into reliable customers. He called for a partnership between governments, the private sector and the multilateral community aimed at harnessing the power of biotechnology for the benefit of the poorer regions of the world. The United Nations would have a key role to play in that regard.

22. The School Meals Program had been one of the greatest successes of twentieth-century United States Government activism. That strategy should be applied internationally; global school feeding would encourage children to stay in school, reduce dependence on child labour, raise academic performance, increase literacy rates, cultivate human capital, increase democratic participation and public accountability, spread information on acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) prevention and lead to more responsible family planning, sustainable population growth and improved environmental conditions. Such development ideas often met with resistance from isolationist forces which portrayed international development as a waste of public money or as “global welfare”. However, international development and food security were as pragmatic as they were humanitarian. International development was an investment that brought substantial return in the form of robust trading partners and a growing consumer class eager to shop in the global marketplace. It was also sound foreign policy since food shortages had historically been a major source of armed conflict. Thus, the promotion of food security advanced his own country’s security interests by promoting peace and security in the less stable regions of the world.

23. **Ms. Chinery-Hesse** (Former Assistant Director-General of the International Labour Organization (ILO)) said that the technical cooperation programmes of the United Nations system had always been guided by compassion and a spirit of equality and partnership. Her childhood in Ghana had been marked by raging fevers and other childhood diseases, the death of many of her schoolmates and the need for women to have many children in order to ensure that some would survive to care for their parents in the latter’s old age. Children had walked long distances barefoot to school, where they sat under trees that doubled as classrooms. Education was for the privileged few and a woman’s attendance at university truly news. Basic housing, safe

drinking water and health care were counted privileges and a meal of chicken was only for festive occasions.

24. More than 50 years later, the developing countries of the United Nations system had a good deal to celebrate. Those success stories, contrasting with the conditions of her childhood, should be publicized for the benefit of taxpayers in donor countries, who must naturally feel a sense of frustration at the negative images presented by the media.

25. On the other hand, the senseless wars, civil strife, corruption and lack of accountability and transparency which had plagued so many countries threatened to undermine or, indeed, completely wipe out the gains of development cooperation. The Council should consider issues such as programme sustainability, ownership and new partnerships with civil society, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector.

26. Development cooperation had made it possible for nationals to carry out most of the tasks once relegated to foreign experts. However, greater emphasis should be placed on capacity-building in order to achieve full national control of programmes in the interest of sustainability. A solution must also be found to the brain drain which often resulted from poor conditions of service and lack of adequate employment opportunities for local citizens which prevented the skills, knowledge and experience of native sons and daughters from benefiting their own people.

27. United Nations assistance programmes had stressed the sovereignty and independence of recipient countries and responsiveness to national priorities. Government leadership helped to ensure that those programmes were synchronized with national development programmes, that assistance was based on actual needs and national priorities and that programmes could be sustained beyond the limits of the assistance; it could also help eliminate “turf wars” between United Nations agencies and other external partners at the country level.

28. The percentage of total external assistance provided by the United Nations system was small and growing smaller. However, it was not tied to any one source of expertise or equipment; it did not reflect vested interests; and, at its best, it was neutral and altruistic and targeted the poorest of the poor. For maximum impact, United Nations programmes must be flexible so that adjustments could be made in a timely manner in response to changing national imperatives

and they must reflect the diversity of their clientele. It was confusing and unacceptable for hard-pressed national officials to be forced to interact with a multitude of United Nations agencies on the same or related issues and with different frameworks, formats and deadlines. Policies and procedures must be simplified and harmonized; coordination of programmes and operational activities, especially at the country level, was a matter of survival for the United Nations system.

29. The country teams, led by the Resident Coordinators, had successfully evolved from a group of representatives of different agencies, each concentrating on its own programmes and projects. The global conferences had led to many national commitments, which the resident coordinator system should help governments to fulfil. Over the years, she had witnessed a change from largely downstream, input-oriented and relatively small projects to cooperation with national authorities in strategic planning and advocacy.

30. Lastly, she called for a substantial increase in funding for development cooperation, which should be seen as an investment in the future of peoples with a dividend for all humankind.

31. **Mr. Wang Qiming** (Ministry of Science and Technology of China) said that China had begun to benefit from United Nations development cooperation only 20 years ago, when the World Bank had given China its first overseas loan. Since then, many technical assistance projects funded by UNDP and other United Nations entities had provided pragmatic support for China's priorities and modernization efforts in areas such as education, agriculture, poverty, women, energy, environment, economic reform and governance.

32. Sustainable development was a high priority for China, especially since its rapid economic growth over the last 20 years, which had quadrupled its gross domestic product (GDP), had been achieved at the cost of environmental pollution. Although the country had adopted regulatory legislation in recent years, achievement of sustainable development was complicated by the fact that for many years, China had taken a quantitative, rather than qualitative, approach to the development of its economy and of science and technology. However, it had learned by experience that

economic growth could not be sustained unless the environment and natural resources were protected.

33. Accordingly, sustainable development had been identified as a component of China's two fundamental transitions: from a planned economy to a market economy and from quantitative to qualitative growth. China sought to revamp its economic structure, increase economic efficiency, develop industries with high value-added production, use new technologies to make traditional industries cleaner and more energy-efficient and improve the natural environment. It was also trying to eliminate extreme poverty, which currently affected some 38 million of its people, and to narrow the disparity between the eastern and western parts of the country. Its new approach to medium- and long-term development would focus on sustainability and the advancement of science and technology.

34. UNDP had supported the development of China's national strategy for implementing Agenda 21, which addressed the issues of population, environment and development, and China had been the first country to integrate Agenda 21 into its national policy. UNDP had also cooperated in projects to implement that strategy and to integrate the concept of sustainability into China's five-year plan for socioeconomic development. While the efforts of UNDP and other United Nations agencies had had positive effects in areas such as poverty, gender equality, environment and employment, the root causes of China's problems must be addressed. China was convinced that, within the diversified approach it was taking to its environmental problems, the development aspect should be given priority consideration.

35. The rapid development of modern technologies offered developing countries an opportunity to catch up with the developed world without repeating the latter's mistakes. However, the developing countries' ability to do so depended on the implementation of measures to localize the development of such technologies in developing countries themselves. While information and communication technologies (ICT) had thus far originated primarily in developed countries, especially the United States of America, they had spread to developing countries, which must adopt them if they were to avoid being further marginalized. Until recently, China had not developed ICT, but had only bought and sold ICT products and assembled computers using imported parts. Such minimal capability must be enhanced if China's Internet

industry was to enter the global market. Language was another problem in that area, since the Internet and related software were mainly in English, which was understood by less than 5 per cent of China's population. While it had been possible to transmit Chinese characters through the Internet since 1996, many software applications, particularly new ones, were still available only in English.

36. The cost of Internet connectivity had declined dramatically, but Internet use was still very expensive because both hardware and software were updated constantly. For example, China had been forced to stop using the Pentium III personal computer because of problems with insecure information transfer, and had had to develop Chinese versions of applications based on a different system. Such difficulties raised the questions whether development of the Internet should be free or controlled and how to strike a balance between Internet safety and the cost of safety measures. Nonetheless, China was making rapid progress in using ICT to promote development.

37. The Internet was an important instrument for the Chinese Government as the country moved from a centrally planned economy to a socialist market economy. In less than three years, the number of computers connected to the Internet in China had jumped from 300,000 to 4 million. At the same time, telecommunications development in China was currently the fastest in the world; most of the country's 165 million telephones, 55 million of which were mobile telephones, had become available in the last five years. Fees for Internet use had fallen to one eighth of what they had been before 1997 and were currently lower than in many developed countries. The transfer of information within China was free of charge for users in the academic community.

38. However, it was not balanced development. Twenty-four per cent of the country's Internet users were located in Beijing and another 71 per cent in the 10 coastal provinces, while only 5 per cent were located in the seven westernmost provinces, where some 20 per cent of the population lived. Thus, there was a digital divide within China, which must be addressed through efforts to increase connectivity for rural and remote population groups.

39. Thus far, the United Nations system had not provided much assistance to China or to other developing countries in the use of ICT to promote

development. The introduction of ICT should not be postponed pending progress in areas such as poverty, gender equity, education, environment and governance; instead, it should be used to expedite such progress. In addition, the developing countries should pay attention not only to the reduction of physical barriers to communication, but also to the development of content and of the capacity needed to manage both content and connectivity. Modes of access to information systems should be improved, as should the process of turning data into accessible information and, in turn, into effective knowledge for decision-making and operational uses. In providing technical assistance to developing countries, the United Nations should address ICT as an essential issue, adopt a coherent strategy for the use of ICT and other new technologies and integrate them into current programmes. It should also take the lead in promoting more equitable information-sharing, ensuring coordination, assisting in Internet management and governance and protecting intellectual property rights through regulatory frameworks.

40. **Mr. Malloch Brown** (Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)) said that the Organization's 50 years of development cooperation had been, by any rational measure, a huge success. Leaving aside the modern scourge of acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), the quality of life in the developing world had improved dramatically, with great strides made in areas such as life expectancy, literacy, maternal and child health, family planning and food security. The advocacy and leadership of agencies such as UNDP, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) had been crucial. Ironically, however, public opinion and Governments in the developed world gave the Organization very little credit for those achievements, and official development assistance (ODA) had fallen out of favour in donor countries.

41. During the cold war, the growth in the level of ODA had not only reflected altruistic motives, but also tracked increases in defence spending. After the cold war, the expected peace dividend had not materialized; defence spending by donor countries had remained flat, while ODA had fallen dramatically. In developing countries, less credit was being given to United

Nations development efforts than in the past. That was attributable not to the failure of those efforts, but to their very success, which had made United Nations development cooperation less important for economic and social development in large parts of the developing world. For example, the dramatic growth achieved in Latin America and East Asia had made ODA much less important to those regions. Only in sub-Saharan Africa did ODA continue to account for a very significant percentage of gross national product (GNP); elsewhere, that percentage had decreased, and the amount contributed by the United Nations had declined disproportionately.

42. Another factor which had affected the image of United Nations development cooperation since the end of the cold war had been the conflict which had emerged in the late 1980s and early 1990s between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions owing to the former's opposition to the structural adjustment programmes imposed by the latter as a condition for the provision of loans. That "civil war" in the international development community had shaken the confidence of donor countries and slowed down the momentum of ODA flows.

43. Currently, there was a new relationship between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions. While the amount of ODA had declined, greater emphasis was being placed on maximizing the impact of the limited funds available. The United Nations system had a critical comparative advantage in that regard, owing to its comprehensive view of development. For example, UNDP had helped to settle the debate as to which development models should be used by launching the *Human Development Report*. The *Report* had represented a major step towards bringing social considerations into the development equation. Thus, the Organization had a crucial role to play in championing new and progressive ideas about development even in the face of initial opposition by donor and recipient countries, particularly in relation to poverty reduction, which was at the heart of United Nations development efforts.

44. The Organization was both an alternative voice and a leader in building partnerships. For example, at the end of the "civil war", the Bretton Woods institutions had accepted much of what the United Nations had said about the social agenda, while the United Nations had acknowledged the importance of macroeconomic factors for development. That

intellectual convergence had laid the foundations for cooperation at the country level as a means of increasing the impact of ODA. The Organisation's role was both to challenge and to cooperate with the Bretton Woods institutions. Such cooperation was currently being manifested in 30 countries in relation to the development of poverty reduction strategy papers.

45. United Nations development cooperation faced several new challenges. First, in view of the significant proportion of private-sector financing for development, national and global governance must be improved to safeguard the rule of law at both levels as a means of encouraging investment and enhancing the quality of life. Second, the further integration of capital, resources and ideas must not be discouraged by the backlash response to globalization. Although that backlash was based on the legitimate concern that globalization might result in the further marginalization of disadvantaged groups, there was no substitute for integration as an engine of economic growth. The Organization should therefore focus on ensuring that integration was an inclusive process. Third, greater efforts should be made to address the scourge of internal conflict and post-conflict situations which hindered development in too many countries. Fourth, information technology, which had the potential to transform the delivery of development programmes, should be used to offer the poor new opportunities for improving their lives.

46. The Organization's modest development cooperation resources could not, by themselves, meet the world's development needs. The United Nations contribution was small in relation to the resources of the Bretton Woods institutions, and minute in relation to the total amount required. Rather, the United Nations should play a catalytic role as a leader in piloting new approaches and forming partnerships to support its inclusive agenda. To do so, it must have an adequate level of core financial and human resources.

47. **Mr. Desai** (Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs), speaking as moderator of the panel, invited questions from the floor.

48. **Mr. Skrybant** (Poland) described as terrifying the figure of 800 million hungry people in the world. He agreed with the view of the Secretary-General, in the Millennium Report, that the issue of food and agriculture should be high on the global agenda. Pondering what should be done to combat hunger and

eradicate poverty, he pointed out that some leading countries were over-producing food. That phenomenon was known in macroeconomic terms as “inequitable global geographical distribution of production”. Some countries tended to favour a policy of scaling down production in order to keep prices high and maintain profitability — a wasteful policy as long as global hunger persisted. In Poland, the number of farms was being reduced by about half. Since the dismantling of the Warsaw Pact and the end of the arms race, significant resources had been released, but fresh problems were being caused by the migration of short-term capital in quest of higher returns. The problem of monetary flows should be examined separately and in depth. What was needed at the present juncture was the political will to tackle the problems, along with properly structured global governance.

49. **Mr. Levitte** (France), speaking on behalf of the European Union and of the central and eastern European countries in association with it, reiterated the deep attachment of the European Union to operational activities for development. The establishment in 1950 of the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance reflected the determination to equip the United Nations with an essential tool for promoting social progress and better living standards, one of the goals of the Charter. Much progress had since been achieved in providing access to education, safe drinking water and vaccination, and in reducing infant mortality. However, in spite of unprecedented global wealth, half the world’s population still had to survive on less than two dollars a day, and 800 million people were still hungry. The new information technologies had a role to play in development, and offered freer and broader access to knowledge; but because of the “digital divide” only one African in a thousand, by comparison with one American in four, was connected to the Internet. In a global world where economies were interdependent, there was a universally perceived need for regulating mechanisms and for more democratic global governance in order to meet the challenges of deepening inequality, the spread of AIDS, environmental protection, achieving gender equality and finding lasting solutions to conflicts. To that end, the world needed the United Nations as never before.

50. The European Union had fully supported the Secretary-General’s reforms to improve the coordination of development activities. Enhanced coordination would improve the capacity of the

beneficiary countries to organize international assistance and assume ownership of programmes. Member States of the European Union, as members of the executive boards of development funds and programmes, had consistently supported reforms intended to improve management, focus on areas of excellence, and establish budgeting systems geared to results. The European Union had also argued for increased dialogue with the Bretton Woods institutions, in order to strengthen partnerships between the various international cooperation institutions. It was strongly committed to human rights, and had supported a rights-based approach in development funds and programmes. Europeans believed in a comprehensive approach to development, which must be aimed at developing fundamental rights and widening access to health care, knowledge, employment and culture, while protecting the rights of future generations through sustainable development processes.

51. Development and human rights were interlinked, but so too were poverty and conflict. Promoting economic and social development also meant working to prevent conflict and to achieve lasting peace. The United Nations was well placed to ensure that action for development and for peace and security advanced on parallel tracks. It was vital to remove the arbitrary distinction between emergency action and long-term development.

52. The countries of the European Union accounted for less than one third of gross domestic production worldwide, but provided 54 per cent of all official development assistance. The European Community supplied some of that assistance, and each year the European Commission administered an overseas aid budget of EUR 8.55 billion, or US\$ 9 billion, much of it through United Nations agencies. The budget for the current project being implemented jointly by the Commission and UNDP was estimated at EUR 122 million, or US\$ 128 million. He hoped that the United Nations and the European Community would forge new links in future for the benefit of the peoples of the South.

53. **Mr. Kolby** (Norway) said that in order to improve upon the present official development assistance figure of 0.7 per cent, pressure must be exerted on Governments and decision makers, and the media should be used to report on the good as well as the bad aspects of the development picture. It was important to support the role of the public sector,

because private initiatives would never be enough. Speaking of the link between migratory flows and poverty, he recalled that when Norway was poor, many of its citizens who lacked economic opportunities had emigrated to the United States. Many developed countries now felt they were experiencing too much immigration. However, the best way to stem the flow of immigrants was to promote development in the countries of emigration. That called for a sustained campaign, to which his country was committed.

54. **Mr. Cavalcante** (Brazil) said the United Nations development system had made a valuable contribution over the past 50 years to improving the quality of life in beneficiary countries and to promoting human rights, capacity-building and strengthening the institutional capacity of developing countries. There was now a move away from the assistance-based approach towards development cooperation, partnership and national ownership of development initiatives. South-South cooperation, both in the development system itself and at the intergovernmental level and between non-governmental partners, was an important and growing element of development cooperation and there should be a renewed commitment to strengthen it. However, it was disappointing that in spite of a development agenda which had never been so ambitious, concrete results fell far short of the goals set at the cycle of conferences held in the 1990s.

55. **Mr. Desai** (Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs) asked the members of the panel to address four issues: how to rebuild support for development assistance in donor countries; what vision of development should be projected in the donor and the programme countries in order to mobilize support; what role should be played by the funds and programmes of the United Nations and agencies; and what new initiatives should be taken in terms of partnerships, in South-South cooperation, with the private sector, with philanthropic agencies and with non-governmental organizations.

56. **Mr. Malloch Brown** (Administrator, UNDP) said that the excellent record of Norway, Sweden and the Netherlands in increasing official development assistance was related to increases in their own GDP. Other countries should be persuaded to emulate them, although the prospects for economic growth elsewhere seemed modest. In building public support, it was best to concentrate on specific issues, such as debt relief

and AIDS campaigns, which were readily understandable and around which individuals could organize and lobby. In connection with the role of the United Nations, there was now a great opportunity to use the new information technologies (ICT). However, developing countries might well fear being trapped by dependency on Northern suppliers of the technologies. The United Nations could therefore act a brokering role, through technical assistance, in ensuring that the introduction of the new technologies protected the political, social and cultural interests of the South. It should also champion the global advocacy agenda. The question of agricultural subsidies in Western countries was a serious problem, and it was important for the United Nations to say so and to advocate better global governance. He also agreed with the representative of Brazil that renewed commitment was needed to South-South cooperation.

57. **Ms. Chinery-Hesse** (Former Assistant Director-General of ILO) agreed with the representative of Norway that success stories about development should be brought to the attention of decision makers, who should also be encouraged to visit the countries concerned. On the question of financing, it was important to forge modalities for tapping into the private sector. ILO had been successful in raising pledges from the private sector in combating child labour. Innovative methods could certainly be developed with non-governmental actors. The world had changed a great deal since 1950, when the technical assistance programme was devised as an intergovernmental arrangement. As far as the United Nations and agencies were concerned, it must be decided what was the minimum critical mass of resources needed in order to make a difference in terms of development.

58. **Mr. Wang Qiming** (China) said that although external relief aid was certainly needed when disaster struck, in the longer term, development must enable countries to rely on their own resources. In China, where millions had once perished from hunger, the food security problem had now been resolved through advances in science and technology: for instance, hybrid rice now accounted for one third of the total rice yield, and harvests had been much improved by the use of fertilizer and pesticides.

59. **Mr. Desai** (Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs) expressed the hope that having completed its first 50 years, the technical

assistance programme would continue well into the future. The discussion had created a sense that the whole system of development assistance, especially the assistance channelled through the United Nations, should be redesigned in response to the possibilities which were now opening up.

60. **The President** thanked the experts who had participated in the panel discussion.

The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.