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OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR
DEVELOPMENT

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

Note by the Secretary-General

Addendum

1. In his 1988 annual report on operational activities for development (A/43/426-E/1988/74), which contains a progress report and addresses some of the policy and management issues relating to the implementation of General Assembly resolution 42/196 of 11 December 1987, the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation indicated that he would provide to the Assembly, as an addendum to that report, consolidated information on the responses of the governing bodies of the organs and organizations of the United Nations system on the conclusions and recommendations of the report on the findings of the case studies on the functioning of operational activities of the United Nations development system undertaken in 1987 at the request of the Director-General (see A/42/326/Add.1-E/1987/82/Add.1). The review undertaken by the governing bodies also dealt with the main issues addressed by the Assembly in resolution 42/196. Reference is therefore made to the relevant provisions of the resolution in the presentation of their responses.

2. Consequently, the Director-General is making available to the General Assembly a consolidated report on the responses he has received so far from the governing bodies of the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) as well as the views of the governing bodies of the World Food Programme, the International Labour Organisation, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the World Health Organization, the Universal Postal Union and the International Fund for Agricultural Development. These

responses are reproduced either in the reports of individual governing bodies to the Economic and Social Council at its second regular session of 1988 or in the note by the Secretary-General (E/1988/76) also made available to the General Assembly.

3. The UNESCO Executive Board decided to consider several of the more complex issues raised in the conclusions and recommendations of the case studies, including those on programming and on the role of the resident co-ordinators, in its session in late October 1988. The Trade and Development Board of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the Executive Council of the World Meteorological Organization, and the Administrative Council of the International Telecommunication Union as well as the Industrial Development Board of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization had indicated that they would be considering the conclusions and recommendations at their next sessions. Their views were thus not available at the time of preparation this report.

4. Information received from these and other organizations that have yet to review the conclusions and recommendations will be issued as a further addendum to the present report towards the end of 1988.

ANNEX

Responses of the governing bodies concerning the conclusions and recommendations of the report on the findings of the case studies on the functioning of the operational activities for development of the United Nations system

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. In resolution 42/196 on operational activities for development the General Assembly addressed, inter alia, some of the issues raised in the conclusions and recommendations of the report on the findings of the case studies on the functioning of the operational activities for development of the United Nations system (A/42/326/Add.1-E/1987/82/Add.1, annex). In paragraph 2, it also invited the governing bodies of the organizations of the United Nations development system to discuss in detail the conclusions and recommendations contained in the report (ibid., sect. VIII).
2. In the present report an attempt is made to examine the responses of the governing bodies of organizations of the system in light of the relevant provisions of resolution 42/196. To facilitate analysis and in view of the request contained in resolution 42/196 for specific information relating to the Joint Consultative Group of Policy (JCGP), the responses of the governing bodies of its member organizations - the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) - are examined separately from those of the specialized agencies and other bodies.
3. The governing bodies welcomed the report of the Director-General on the findings of the case studies. They considered that the identification of issues and solutions proposed should facilitate the efforts of the United Nations system in making its operations at the country level more effective. The case studies added a useful field perspective to the deliberations of the intergovernmental bodies.
4. Most of the governing bodies agreed with the general thrust of the conclusions and recommendations. Some suggested that such studies should be part of a continuous process to ensure that the United Nations development system is responding to the changing needs of the developing countries. The governing bodies of some of the specialized agencies, however, cautioned against attempts to generalize the applicability of the conclusions and recommendations of the "Jansson report" since they were based on findings in only 7 out of 130 countries benefiting from operational activities of the United Nations system.
5. The UNDP Governing Council and the UNICEF Executive Board specifically concurred with conclusion (a) of the report (ibid., para. 82) that the importance of assistance from the United Nations system went much beyond its value in terms of its contribution to total financial flows. This was attributed to its multilateral and non-political character, the position of United Nations agencies as impartial co-operation partners, the world-wide development experience accumulated by the system, and the fact that assistance was provided on a grant basis.
6. The governing bodies of the specialized agencies emphasized that the findings and recommendations underlined the need to find better methods of harnessing available sectoral and technical knowledge and experience in the collective efforts of the United Nations system.

7. The governing body of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), in particular, felt that follow-up measures should address the financial implications of better ensuring the sectoral and analytical contribution of United Nations technical agencies, especially in light of current financial difficulties faced by the system. In addressing this issue the ILO governing body emphasized that the same Governments that expect the technical agencies to enhance their capacities and activities in this area are reluctant to authorize the utilization of regular budget resources to support extrabudgetary technical co-operation activities. In its view, continued failure to take cognizance of this or to find an alternative solution could jeopardize the investments already being made by extrabudgetary funding sources in the operational programmes themselves. The ILO governing body was also of the view that since the mandates and circumstances of each organization of the United Nations development system were different, issues relating to their management should be addressed through their respective governing bodies.

8. The responses of the governing bodies to the findings of the case studies covered the major specific items addressed in the report, including co-ordination at the country level in the context of the related issues of programming of operational activities, simplification and harmonization of rules and procedures, the central funding role of UNDP, the role of the resident co-ordinator, field representation of the United Nations system and the availability of technical advice at the country level. These issues are presented in sections II, III, IV and V. Other issues, including relations with the World Bank and non-governmental organizations, as well as the access of developing countries to development information, are addressed in section VI. That section also includes a presentation on the allocation of the resources of the United Nations system between sectors and among countries.

II. PROGRAMMING

9. In four related recommendations on the following topics the Jansson report addressed the issue of programming: joint programming, the frame of reference concept as applied to the UNDP country programmes, greater focus through sectoral/thematic programming, and assistance in strengthening recipient Government capacity to manage and co-ordinate external assistance. The General Assembly addressed those issues in paragraphs 12, 15 and 16 of resolution 42/196.

A. Joint programming

10. Recommendation (b) of the report (*ibid.*) states the following:

"In order to achieve maximum impact with limited resources, the importance of the United Nations agencies acting as a coherent system at the country level was consistently emphasized by Governments and aid agencies. Efforts should continue in the direction of greater integration of United Nations system operational activities through joint programming and other methods that take advantage of the complementarities that exist in the

system. The programming approach advocated by JCGP, although still in an experimental stage, seems to have potential and should be pursued not only because of its intrinsic value in the pooling of substantive and financial resources but also as a method of fostering genuine inter-agency co-ordination from below."

11. Among the governing bodies of the JCGP organizations, the UNDP Governing Council and the UNICEF and IFAD Executive Boards acknowledged the importance of joint programming as a means by which the United Nations system could identify complementarities and areas in which individual organizations could achieve greater impact by acting as a coherent system at the country level. The UNDP Governing Council stressed that joint programming is related to the issue of enabling the resident co-ordinator to fulfil the role as defined in General Assembly resolutions 32/197 of 20 December 1977 and 41/171 of 5 December 1986, as well as to the rationalization of the field representation of the United Nations system. In addition, the UNDP Governing Council underlined that for United Nations system assistance to be more effective it should be better co-ordinated, programmed and implemented with greater cohesion, particularly at the country level, in accordance with the development needs and priorities of developing countries. The IFAD Executive Board identified the need for periodic and systematic consultation between agencies with compatible mandates to harmonize their policies and procedures as a necessary basis for joint programming. The UNICEF Executive Board, however, was of the view that such programming should take into account the specific programming and implementation procedures of UNICEF.

12. Both the UNDP Governing Council and the IFAD Executive Board emphasized that JCGP has the potential for providing a basis for greater collaboration among the programmes of the funding organizations. The Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes (CFA) of WFP emphasized that to indicate a two- to three-year resource level for each country would represent a significant departure from the project system, which has served WFP and its membership well in the past, and would ignore variations in production levels and resources available to the programme. In any case under the present system recipient countries had a rather good idea of the likely levels of commitments for projects in future years since most projects were of multi-year duration.

13. Among the governing bodies of the specialized agencies and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), both the Centre and the governing body of the Universal Postal Union (UPU) addressed the recommendation on joint programming. Habitat underlined the importance of joint programming and other methods to achieve maximum impact with limited resources. The governing body of UPU suggested that joint programming was mainly of interest to those organizations whose activities were complementary. In so far as UPU was concerned, given the specific nature of its activities there was no duplication with other agencies. However, it considered that joint programming between UPU and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) would be appropriate if, for example, a country were to request the intervention of the two agencies to restructure its vocational training system in the context of the activities of a posts and telecommunications school.

B. UNDP country programme as a frame of reference

14. In recommendation (i) the report (*ibid.*) states the following:

"The UNDP country programme has not in the past fulfilled the Governing Council's expectation of providing 'a frame of reference for all sources of United Nations system technical assistance'. The new instructions issued for the Fourth Programming Cycle, applicable from 1986, contain important innovations that should, if requesting Governments agree, result in a much broader type of country programme reflecting not only the use of the IPF [indicative planning figure] but also other sources of actual and potential assistance to the host Government, including parallel financing from bilateral and other multilateral donors and non-governmental organizations. The preparation and updating and implementation of this type of country programme will require much more active and substantive participation by the United Nations agencies than has been the case in the past, particularly by those agencies that are essential for joint (JCGP) programming. It remains to be seen whether the new country programme format turns out to be sufficiently useful in all countries to justify the time and staff resources needed to prepare it, or whether more latitude needs to be given to the resident co-ordinators and agency representatives to work out with the Government the format best suited to the circumstances in each country. If joint programming methods become prevalent in the United Nations system, it may be necessary to consider a different type of document based more on a programme than a project approach."

15. Among the governing bodies of the JCGP organizations, the UNDP Governing Council underlined that the best frame of reference for various inputs from the United Nations system would always be a programme of technical assistance requirements prepared by the recipient Government, reflecting the needs arising from its national development plans and priorities. In expressing this the Governing Council recognized, however, that the UNDP country programme did not currently serve the wider role as a frame of reference envisaged for it in General Assembly resolutions 32/197 and 41/171. The IFAD Executive Board agreed with the recommendation on the need to modify and transform the country programme format. It suggested that, firstly, it should provide a clearer frame of reference for all United Nations technical assistance while, at the same time, ensuring linkages between investment and pre-investment activities and technical assistance. Secondly, it might usefully include activities undertaken with the support of bilateral donors.

16. The UNICEF Executive Board emphasized the importance of maintaining the UNICEF country programme approach, which, it suggested, had several unique features closely related to the focused mandate and operating procedures of UNICEF.

17. The governing bodies of ILO, UPU, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) endorsed the idea that the sectoral knowledge of the technical agencies should be utilized more fully in the preparation of the UNDP country programmes. They suggested that sectoral analyses from the specialized

agencies should be an essential part of the country programming process. The ILO governing body noted with interest the proposal for a "government's indicative United Nations (system) programme". The FAO governing body noted that the process required closer links with overall national planning. The Executive Board of UNESCO endorsed the intention of the Director-General of UNESCO to reinforce the capacity of that organization to provide timely and comprehensive sectoral, cross-sectoral and thematic studies, which are needed for country programme and donor meeting exercises.

C. Focus and sectoral/thematic programming

18. In recommendation (e) the report (*ibid.*) states the following:

"The approach to programming needs a clearer focus. There should be sufficient emphasis on sectoral, subsectoral and thematic programming rather than the project-by-project method. This would increase the potential for the agencies to act together on a wider basis and would encourage investments from bilateral sources and capital assistance agencies. At the project level, greater attention should be given to the type of projects that can attract investments from external aid sources. There is a good case for concentrating United Nations system funds in most countries on a few priority sectors and programmes in preference to the concept of 'filling gaps'. The building of self-reliance should receive particular attention."

19. Among the responses from the governing bodies of the JCGP organizations, the UNDP Governing Council and the UNICEF and IFAD Executive Boards fully endorsed the need for sectoral, subsectoral and thematic programming. However, neither the UNDP Governing Council nor the UNICEF Executive Board agreed with the recommendation to concentrate United Nations system funds on a few priority sectors and programmes. Both stressed that the decision on the allocation of United Nations system funds rests entirely with the recipient Government. The IFAD Executive Board elaborated its response by stating that this approach would not only provide better opportunities for attracting investment funds it would also permit a country's economic sectors and its institutional framework to benefit from a more coherent, overall programme of external assistance.

20. The governing bodies of the specialized agencies endorsed the idea of a sectoral and subsectoral approach in the context of which their accumulated knowledge and experience could be fully utilized in assisting the countries to programme their resources. According to the governing body of FAO, since the share of United Nations assistance in the total received by the recipient country is so small it is often more useful to promote a sectoral and subsectoral approach, as opposed to an overall central approach to co-ordination. The governing body of ILO also emphasized that further efforts to enhance co-ordination should be sector-focused; they should also aim at strengthening recipient Government capacity.

21. The governing body of UPU did not fully agree with the idea of concentrating United Nations system funds on a few sectors since that might undermine the universal character of technical co-operation. It suggested that the United

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Nations assistance should enable all sectors to be taken into consideration by the Governments when priorities are defined.

D. Co-ordination and management capacity of recipient Governments

22. Recommendation (n) of the report (*ibid.*) states the following:

"The United Nations system should provide maximum assistance to Governments in strengthening their role as co-ordinators of external aid. The aim of achieving greater coherence of action among the United Nations agencies can certainly be advanced by regular joint programme consultations and other methods of 'natural' co-ordination (as opposed to co-ordination by exhortations from governing bodies). However, co-ordination will not be efficient unless it is clearly required by Governments having the capability to effect co-ordination."

23. Among the governing bodies of the JCGP organizations, the UNDP Governing Council and the IFAD Executive Board fully endorsed the concentration of efforts on assisting Governments in strengthening their role as co-ordinators of external assistance. The UNDP Governing Council, however, emphasized that coherence of action among agencies and harmonization of procedures and formats by multilateral and bilateral donors were necessary supplements to the co-ordination efforts of the Governments. The UNICEF Executive Board also agreed with the need for coherence of action among the organizations of the system and underlined the need for co-ordination to be consistent with the objectives of the recipient Governments.

24. The governing bodies of FAO, UNESCO, WHO, UPU and ILO fully endorsed the view that the primary responsibility for co-ordinating all external assistance rests with the recipient Government. The role of the United Nations system should be to assist the Government in building up its capacity for sectoral and subsectoral planning, co-ordination and policy analysis.

E. Provisions of resolution 42/196 on programming questions

25. The theme of coherent and integrated programming was addressed in several inter-linked paragraphs of General Assembly resolution 42/196. In paragraph 12 (a) the Assembly emphasized that the developing countries had the primary responsibility for co-ordinating the operational activities for development of the United Nations system, and that the main role of the United Nations system in that regard should be to reinforce and strengthen the capacity of the developing countries to co-ordinate international co-operation and assistance in accordance with their priorities and needs. In paragraph 12 (b) the Assembly acknowledged that the developing countries could not exercise their responsibility for co-ordinating external assistance effectively unless the programming procedures for the operational activities of the United Nations system were made more flexible so that they might correspond to the policies, procedures and objectives of the recipient countries. That would permit the recipient countries to allocate external assistance in the context of a programme approach and enable them to

manage their external assistance in a coherent and integrated manner by exploiting substantive linkages among projects and sectors. In paragraph 12 (d) the Assembly reiterated that multilateral and bilateral donors should endeavour to harmonize and simplify their rules and procedures in order to respond as fully as possible to conditions and practices in the recipient countries. That would facilitate the task of developing countries to manage and co-ordinate the external assistance that they receive.

26. While the General Assembly endorsed the principle of a programme approach to the allocation of United Nations system funds, it was also careful to point out that such an approach would require adequate government capacity to co-ordinate and manage external assistance, if necessary with United Nations system assistance; it would also require concerted adjustments in the rules and procedures governing the programme and project cycles of the individual organizations of the United Nations system. This, according to paragraph 19 of the resolution, should be accompanied by simplification, decentralization and harmonization of procedures. The objective of these exercises should be to reduce the effect of differing rules and procedures that impose an administrative burden and limit the Government's capacity to participate in operational activities and to manage effectively its programme of external assistance.

27. In paragraph 15 the Assembly requested the Administrator of UNDP and the executive heads of other organizations of the United Nations system to review the UNDP country programming process, to consider a wider, more effective process in terms of improved coherence of action and effective integration of the various sectoral inputs of the United Nations system and to identify the grant organizations and resources that such a process might take into account. At the same time, in paragraph 16 the Assembly requested information on the nature and scope of the joint and collaborative activities of the JCGP organizations.

F. Action envisaged by the Director-General on issues relating to programming

28. The Director-General, in addressing the issue of programming in his annual report on operational activities for development (A/43/426-E/1988/74, annex, para. 79), stated that in the light of the experience of the past three years and the recommendations of the General Assembly in resolution 42/196, it would seem appropriate to consider updating the initial policy statement of JCGP on joint programming and launching a new initiative through the field office network. The Director-General is exploring such a possibility with the executive heads of JCGP.

29. In this process several issues, such as the identification of substantive goals for joint or collaborative programming, the formulation of an overall statement related to these goals, the harmonization of resource planning periods and policy frameworks, and closer linkages with the Government's own planning cycles in the elaboration of multi-year programmes, would need to be addressed.

30. In a broader context the Director-General has commissioned a report on the programming of operational activities from an independent consultant, retained on

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his behalf by UNDP. The report was commissioned in response to paragraph 15 of General Assembly resolution 42/196.

31. This report is currently being studied by the organizations of the United Nations development system and will be the subject of review at the spring session of the Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (Operational Activities) (CCSQ(OPS)) in 1989. Specific recommendations based on this review, together with the outcome of consultations with developing countries, will be included in the Director-General's report for the triennial policy review of operational activities in 1989.

III. SIMPLIFICATION, DECENTRALIZATION AND HARMONIZATION OF RULES AND PROCEDURES

32. The Jansson report (A/42/326/Add.1-E/1987/82/Add.1, annex, para. 82) also acknowledged the linkage between joint programming and greater simplification, harmonization and decentralization of rules and procedures governing the programme and project cycle in its recommendation (d), which reads as follows:

"To facilitate a wider application of joint programming methods, there should be greater decentralization of the management of operational activities and gradual harmonization, to the extent possible, of procedures among the agencies, including programming cycles, project documentation, financial rules and delegation of decision-making authority to field representatives. This is a matter of importance for the Director-General and the inter-agency co-ordinating machinery, including the Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (Operational Activities), to take up."

33. In recommendation (h) (*ibid.*) the report also states:

"UNDP should achieve a higher degree of decentralization to increase efficiency at the country level. The first step should be to raise the present \$400,000 project approval limit of the resident representatives depending on the size of the IPF and other UNDP resources. The aim should be eventually to abolish the approval limit on a strictly selective basis within approved country programmes and to concentrate the work of UNDP headquarters on mobilization of resources, monitoring, evaluation and management support for the resident representatives."

A. Comments of organizations of the United Nations development system

34. Among the responses from the governing bodies of the JCGP organizations, the Governing Council of UNDP welcomed the recommendation and, while noting the existing degree of decentralization within UNDP and UNFPA, encouraged further steps. It recommended that the representatives of the executing agencies for UNDP and UNFPA projects should also possess uniformly the same degree of authority in order to respond flexibly to emerging situations. The UNDP Governing Council

suggested that the increased harmonization of procedures, using to the extent possible government planning and operating cycles, procedures and formats, must be pursued.

35. The UNICEF Executive Board claimed that UNICEF operations were already substantially decentralized. It stressed, however, that the harmonization of procedures could be facilitated if the United Nations system undertook greater decentralization of its operations to the field level. Like the UNDP Governing Council it was of the view that the programming cycles of the JCGP organizations should to the extent possible conform to the planning periods of the recipient Governments. The IFAD Executive Board suggested that increased decentralization to the field offices was needed with a view to focusing greater attention on the process of selecting projects. In any case it considered that the requirements of joint programming and better integration of capital and technical assistance necessitated increased responsibilities for decision-making for staff and representatives of United Nations agencies at the field level.

36. Among the responses from the governing bodies of the specialized agencies and Habitat, the governing body of ILO recalled that ILO already had a decentralized structure that was determined by the need to make optimum use of scarce staff and other resources and to achieve the most cost-effective arrangement. This decentralized structure was under constant review. On the issue of harmonization, the governing body confirmed that further efforts to harmonize procedures through the inter-agency mechanisms received the continuing support of ILO. It stressed, however, that a balance needed to be struck between requirements of harmonization and the preservation of flexibility, since diversity itself could enhance efficiency. It also reflected a system concerned with such diverse fields as food aid, vaccination programmes, dam building, emergency relief, skills training and capital aid. The governing body suggested that the emphasis should be on simplification/harmonization of procedures at the country level.

37. The governing bodies of both UPU and Habitat recalled that their organizations follow UNDP procedures. In the case of UPU it followed the UNDP programming cycle when its projects were funded through the IPF. The programming of activities financed under its own resources was done annually, on the basis of a comprehensive programme drawn up in accordance with the priority objectives laid down for a five-year period by the Universal Postal Congress. It pointed out that this five-year period did not coincide with the UNDP resource planning cycle. UPU planned to adopt the UNDP project document format for projects financed by its own resources. The Executive Council has decided to undertake a study related to the decentralization of the technical co-operation activities. While supporting greater decentralization of authority for programming to the resident co-ordinator or agency representative at the country level, the governing body of UPU nevertheless emphasized that account should be taken of United Nations agencies that had no regional office structure and that should also be involved in programming so as to enable them to make a solid contribution.

B. Provisions of resolution 42/196 on simplification,
decentralization and harmonization

38. In its resolution 42/196 the General Assembly underlined that the objective of simplification, harmonization and decentralization of rules and procedures governing the programme and project cycles should be to reduce the administrative burden on the recipient Government and allow it to integrate external assistance into the priorities of its development plans or strategies as well as to participate more effectively in management and co-ordination of that assistance. In paragraphs 19 and 20 of resolution 42/196 the Assembly sought detailed information from the Director-General on the existing measures being taken by the United Nations system on the simplification, harmonization and decentralization of rules and procedures governing the programme and project cycles. They should be examined to ensure that they achieve the objective of enabling the Governments effectively to manage and integrate external assistance in their priorities and plans. Harmonization should be the ultimate goal in this exercise after it was established that the rules and procedures were sufficiently simplified and decentralized to ensure full government participation in exercising its responsibility for identifying projects as well as monitoring and evaluating their implementation.

39. In the sixteenth preambular paragraph of its resolution 42/196, the Assembly clearly recognized the linkage between the Government's ability to exercise its responsibility to co-ordinate and manage its external assistance in an integrated manner and the differing rules and procedures governing the programme and project cycles of the multilateral and bilateral donors, when it stressed the urgent need for harmonized, flexible and simplified procedures for operational activities of the United Nations system in order to respond better to the needs of developing countries and particularly to reduce the administrative burden on Governments and facilitate their participation in those activities.

C. Action envisaged by the Director-General in the areas of
simplification, decentralization and harmonization

40. With the exception of the UNDP Governing Council and the Executive Board of IFAD few of the governing bodies refer to the linkages between government capacities for managing and co-ordinating external assistance and the process of simplification, decentralization and harmonization within the United Nations system. In addition to the analysis of scope for progress in this area and of the implications for each organization, an assessment of the feasibility of measures to ease the administrative burden on Governments and the identification of such measures are required.

41. As requested by the Assembly in paragraphs 19 and 20 of resolution 42/196, the Director-General is examining the existing efforts of individual agencies to achieve greater simplification, decentralization and harmonization. Selected rules and procedures governing the programme and project cycles will be reviewed against the objective of reducing the administrative burden of Governments in order to allow them to exercise fully their responsibilities for the management and

co-ordination of external assistance. On the basis of this review specific further steps will be proposed.

IV. ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME AS A CENTRAL FUNDING AGENCY

42. In recommendation (g) (ibid.) the Jansson report states:

"More attention should be given to reinforcing the role of UNDP as the central funding agency. Donors should be asked to channel trust funds as much as possible through the Programme. This should not include 'advocacy agencies' such as UNICEF that have their own long-established forms of trust fund programmes tapping donor resources available explicitly for the objectives these agencies pursue. While trust fund arrangements with specialized agencies are sometimes needed to ensure additionality of resources, and in some cases for purely practical and technical reasons, this procedure should not be allowed to undermine the role of UNDP as the main funding organization in United Nations operational activities."

A. Comments of organizations of the United Nations development system

43. Among the responses from the governing bodies of the JCGP organizations, the UNICEF Executive Board agreed that the advocacy role of UNICEF did not conflict with the central funding concept. The Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes (CFA) of WFP also recognized that the central funding concept only applied to technical assistance, but nevertheless encouraged WFP to co-operate closely with UNDP within the terms of its own mandate.

44. The UNDP Governing Council acknowledged the important role of UNDP as the central funding and co-ordinating mechanism within the United Nations system for technical co-operation and recalled that the UNDP was structured to be responsive to the priorities of developing countries and not intended to promote any particular sectoral approach. By contrast it pointed out that UNFPA appropriately adopted an advocacy approach to its population mandate.

45. The UNDP Governing Council in endorsing this recommendation recognized that while the initiative rested mainly with Governments, nevertheless co-operative attitudes among agencies of the system were also an important factor. In this context, the Council urged the UNDP Administrator to explore means of establishing more collaborative relationships with the executing agencies. The Governing Council also took note of the fact that the relationship between the executing role of the specialized agencies and the funding role of UNDP had become increasingly blurred as each had acquired expertise in the other's area. At the same time the Governments were becoming increasingly capable of executing programmes funded by UNDP. The Council underlined the need to assess this evolving relationship within the United Nations development system.

46. Among the responses from the governing bodies of the specialized agencies, the ILO and FAO governing bodies emphasized that the channelling of trust funds directly through specialized agencies had provided additionality to multilateral aid flows and had responded to mutual concerns of donors and recipients. They had also enabled the organizations to address human and social aspects of development that did not always attract other sources of financing. Trust funds have in any case been utilized within the framework of national plans and priorities and, wherever possible, within more specific frames of reference. The FAO governing body could thus not endorse the recommendation that trust funds should be channelled as much as possible through UNDP. It recognized, however, the importance for co-ordinating trust fund projects with other technical co-operation activities in the overall context of national plans. This, in its view, did not in itself necessarily require any centralization of trust fund resources. The ILO governing body pointed out that trust fund donors had recently reaffirmed their continuing support for existing arrangements. It did not agree with the reference in the report to UNICEF alone as an organization with an advocacy role. It claimed that other organizations and agencies, such as ILO, also had an important role in advocating employment, human resource development and participatory approaches.

47. The FAO governing body, while recognizing that UNDP was the largest single source of finance for FAO field programmes, expressed the hope that the share of UNDP resources channelled through FAO would be increased.

48. The UNESCO Executive Board noted that, in support of the central co-ordination role of UNDP, UNESCO should provide timely and complete information to UNDP field offices on projects undertaken by it through multi-bilateral funding arrangements. It also suggested that the channelling of multi-bilateral trust funds might also be effected through UNDP whenever appropriate.

B. Provisions of resolution 42/196 on the central funding role of UNDP

49. In paragraph 11 of resolution 42/196 the General Assembly reaffirmed the central funding and co-ordinating role of UNDP within the United Nations system. It recommended to the intergovernmental bodies concerned that the need to preserve this role should be fully taken into account in the consideration of new funding arrangements for technical co-operation activities, and requested the Director-General to submit to it at its forty-fourth session, through the Economic and Social Council, an analysis of the issues relating to the implementation of the central funding concept.

C. Action envisaged by the Director-General

50. The Director-General has undertaken to organize an independent study on issues relating to the implementation of the central funding role of UNDP that would explore both the historical perspective and the validity and implications of alternative funding arrangements in a changing context. It is hoped that this study will facilitate analysis of the issue and adoption of a co-ordinated policy by the same Governments in the different governing bodies.

V. COUNTRY-LEVEL CO-ORDINATION, STRUCTURE AND TECHNICAL ADVICE

A. Role of the resident co-ordinator

51. The report in recommendation (c) (*ibid.*) addresses the subject of the role of the resident co-ordinator. It states:

"The leadership role and operational functions of the resident co-ordinators and their application in practice should be more exactly defined through an inter-agency agreement. The resident co-ordinators should be given sufficient authority to provide leadership in the interest of enhancing the total impact of the United Nations system. The resident co-ordinator assignment should be separated from that of the UNDP resident representative in countries with large United Nations and bilateral programmes. In these countries the resident co-ordinators should be provided with a small substantive support staff of experienced development management specialists. This could be done on an experimental basis through limited redeployment of United Nations and agency staff to the field. If an inter-agency agreement is reached on the future role of the resident co-ordinators along these lines, this may lead, under appropriate circumstances, to practical steps towards greater consolidation of agency offices under the guidance of the resident co-ordinators. The support of the host Governments should be sought for these arrangements since their attitude *vis-à-vis* the role of the resident co-ordinators has much to do with the success or failure of the resident co-ordinator concept."

52. Among the governing bodies of the JCGP organizations, the UNDP Governing Council, while recognizing the implications of varying situations and circumstances in recipient countries, emphasized the importance of the relationship between the resident co-ordinator and the recipient Government, arguing that that was crucial to the coherence and co-ordination of the assistance provided by the United Nations system. It underlined that this should include a clear expression by Governments of the responsibilities of the co-ordinator. This, the Governing Council indicated, should be complemented by actions within the United Nations system to enhance the authority of the resident co-ordinator in order to provide effective leadership; a stronger, more precise inter-agency agreement would be an important contribution. The Governing Council indicated that resident co-ordinators could be drawn in certain circumstances from outside the permanent staff of UNDP. Therefore, it encouraged the UNDP Administrator to select qualified staff from other United Nations agencies to serve as UNDP resident representatives. It did not agree that the co-ordinator should be established as a separate function in countries with large programmes; in its view, much of the potential effectiveness of the co-ordinator derives from his or her access to the resources of UNDP. The UNICEF Executive Board reaffirmed the role of the resident co-ordinator as defined in General Assembly resolutions 32/197 and 41/171 but suggested that it would vary according to different circumstances in each country.

53. Among the governing bodies of the specialized agencies and Habitat, the ILO governing body, in reaffirming the resident co-ordinator's role, stressed that the effective functioning of the co-ordinator had less to do with an elaboration of

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mandates or authority than ensuring that resident co-ordinators are of an appropriate calibre, are truly representative of the system as a whole, and hence can make optimum use of its accumulated knowledge and experience. It is in this context that the ILO governing body reiterated its support for a broader-based selection process for resident co-ordinators. The governing body agreed with the UNDP Governing Council in its decision 87/11 that the main responsibility for determining at the country level the activities of the resident co-ordinator, within the framework of Assembly resolutions 32/197 and 41/171, lay with host Governments.

54. Both the governing bodies of FAO and ILO noted that circumstances differed from country to country and that flexibility and pragmatism were needed in determining the role of the resident co-ordinator in any given situation. The FAO governing body, in addition, stressed that co-ordination should be continually improved by more frequent exchanges of information and other modalities worked out at the country level. The governing body of WHO agreed with the need to strengthen the role of the resident co-ordinator as a team leader to improve complementarity of action by the United Nations system at the country level. The governing bodies of UPU and Habitat pointed out that they had no decentralized structure at the regional level and therefore the resident representative of UNDP had always been their spokesman even before the post of the resident co-ordinator was created. The governing body of UPU, in addition, considered it essential to build up this role with a view to improving the co-ordination and coherence of the United Nations system with respect to development co-operation.

B. Field representation of the United Nations system

55. In recommendation (p) (*ibid.*) the report states:

"The case-study missions' findings regarding agency representation were inconclusive. There was considerable support among government officials and agency staff for maintaining the present pattern of offices and field representation. However, some island Governments and some bilateral donor representatives clearly favoured consolidation of some parts of the United Nations system at the country level with particular reference to technical assistance agencies. The vagueness of the position of the resident co-ordinators was no doubt a factor in these assessments. The picture may change if the role of the resident co-ordinators is reinforced. As to the matter of common premises, the case-studies indicated that while maximum co-location of offices has many advantages, this cannot be considered of great importance from an operational point of view. Nevertheless, the policy of aiming at common premises should be maintained, particularly for reasons of economy."

56. Among the responses of the governing bodies of the JCGP organizations, the UNDP Governing Council expressed the need for greater co-operation between the representatives of UNDP and the specialized agencies at the country level so that they could provide multisectoral and integrated advice when requested by the Government. This could be reinforced by sharing common premises. In that context

it hoped that JCGP would reach an agreement soon on this issue followed by effective implementation. CFA felt that this was not an issue for WFP since most of its country offices were already co-located with UNDP except where physical facilities did not permit such co-location.

57. Among the governing bodies of the specialized agencies, the governing bodies of ILO and FAO welcomed the acknowledgement in the report of the essential role that agency field representation played. They, nevertheless, wished to recall that the role of their field offices was far broader than the administration of technical co-operation programmes. A significant part of their activities involved providing technical advisory services in their respective sectors and serving as a channel of communication between agency headquarters and officials of the country. The ILO governing body, in addition, noted that in the case of ILO its field offices also had major responsibilities with regard to non-technical co-operation activities, as, for instance, with regard to the regulatory, legislative and promotional responsibilities of the agency.

58. The ILO governing body also recalled that ILO field offices were not established unless it was clearly demonstrated that the required services could not be provided in any other cost-effective manner. At the same time, field offices were under clear instructions to collaborate closely with the resident co-ordinator and to take advantage of all opportunities for sharing common premises. It further pointed out that the resident co-ordinator in turn must discharge parallel responsibilities in ensuring that the technical knowledge and experience of the system were fully mobilized and integrated.

59. The governing body of FAO recognized the need to realize cost savings and the other advantages that might be achieved through sharing of premises. It also pointed out that co-location could convey a sense of unity of purpose. However, it underlined that some Governments preferred FAO representatives to be located in or near the relevant agricultural ministry. On the whole, therefore, the governing body advocated a case-by-case approach to this matter, with preferential treatment to be given to co-location when this was feasible.

60. The Executive Board of UNESCO was in full agreement with the General Assembly in resolution 42/196 that the review of each organization's field office structure should take full account of the need for provision of technical advice to developing countries. It also fully supported the efforts of the Director-General of UNESCO to implement decentralization policies that placed emphasis upon the provision of technical advice and analysis at the country level.

61. The governing body of WHO agreed with the principle of common premises for the United Nations system, while maintaining that WHO representatives at the country level, as technical advisers to the ministers of health, needed to be located close to them.

C. Technical advice from the United Nations system

62. In recommendation (k) (ibid.) the report states:

"The United Nations system's capacity for analytical work at the country level should be enhanced, inter alia, through redeployment of substantive staff. This concerns especially in-depth sectoral, cross-sectoral and thematic studies needed for programming and aid co-ordination purposes. The resident co-ordinators should provide leadership in this work on a system-wide basis drawing on staff resources by the agencies and using consultants, as necessary."

Recommendation (l) on a related issue states:

"There should be greater interaction with the Governments in matters of development policy. This may be possible if the role of the resident co-ordinators is strengthened along the lines suggested above and if they are given sufficient substantive underpinning by the system as a whole. In this the agencies have an important role and a consensus among the United Nations agencies at headquarters level will be important."

63. Among the responses of the governing bodies of the JCGP organizations, the UNDP Governing Council felt that the capacity of the system for analytical work at the country level could be enhanced by ensuring that the representatives of the specialized agencies had technical functions and capacities in their sectoral areas, and by strengthening the capacity of the resident co-ordinator to draw upon this expertise in support of government programmes. The UNICEF Executive Board was of the view that due to the decentralized structure of UNICEF, its field offices had the capacity to conduct country-specific situation analyses.

64. Among the responses from the governing bodies of specialized agencies, the governing body of UPU pointed out that for every programming exercise the UPU conducted on-the-spot sectoral analysis based on the macro-economic situation of the country concerned. The report of the analytical mission was submitted to the national authorities and to the resident co-ordinator.

65. As indicated above, the UNESCO Executive Board fully supported the efforts being made by the Director-General of UNESCO to implement decentralization policies that placed emphasis upon the provision of technical advice and analysis at the country level. The governing bodies of ILO, WHO and FAO emphasized that the field representatives of these organizations, in addition to providing administrative support to projects executed by these organizations, also had technical advisory functions in their respective sectors.

D. Provisions of resolution 42/196 on the role of the resident co-ordinator, field representation and technical advice from the United Nations system

66. In resolution 42/196 the General Assembly also addressed the issue of the role of the resident co-ordinator. In paragraph 12 (e) the Assembly stressed that in order to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of operational activities of the United Nations system, the resident co-ordinators should receive the necessary support from the United Nations system and donor and host countries in order to discharge their functions in accordance with the needs, priorities and objectives of the recipient countries. In paragraph 22 the Assembly invited Governments and organizations of the United Nations system to avail themselves, as envisaged in Assembly resolutions 32/197 and 41/171, of the services of the resident co-ordinators and to solicit the views of the resident co-ordinators in considering projects to be funded or implemented by the United Nations system. In paragraph 23, the Assembly requested the Director-General to assess the resources required by the resident co-ordinators to carry out their increasing responsibilities, taking into account differing national situations.

67. In paragraph 24 of the resolution, the Assembly expressed the urgent need to review and rationalize the field office structure of the United Nations system to enhance co-operation, coherence and efficiency through, inter alia, increased sharing of facilities and services and in this connection:

"(a) Expresses the need for such a review to take full account of the need for the provision, at the field level, of ongoing technical advice by the organizations of the United Nations system in accordance with the needs identified by developing countries;

"(b) Emphasizes that this advice should be offered in an integrated and multisectoral manner, as envisaged in resolution 32/197;

"(c) Requests the governing bodies to report thereon to the Economic and Social Council at its second regular session of 1988;

"(d) Also requests the Director-General to report periodically to the General Assembly, through the Economic and Social Council, on developments related to the field office structure of the United Nations system."

68. In resolution 42/196 the General Assembly addressed the three interrelated issues in this section, and expects them to be examined, in the context of an integrated programme approach, from the point of view of the quality and level of competences developed by the United Nations system at the field level and the degree to which these are made available to the Government upon request in an integrated, flexible and cost-effective manner.

69. The UNDP Governing Council in addressing these issues suggested that the capacity of the system for analytical work at the country level could be enhanced by ensuring that the representatives of the specialized agencies had technical functions and capacities and by strengthening the capacity of the resident

co-ordinator to draw upon this expertise in support of government programmes. The governing bodies of the specialized agencies generally underlined in their response to these issues that the technical expertise was already available at the country level. Some governing bodies suggested that decentralization of decision-making authority to the country level would also contribute to allowing the field representation of the United Nations system to function as a team in offering integrated advice to the Governments.

70. On the issue of co-location of field offices, while in itself co-location does not guarantee an integrated response to government requests from the United Nations system, it should facilitate the process of integration. There are also distinct savings involved for the recipient Government and the United Nations system. The governing bodies of the specialized agencies have underlined that their separate field offices are only established after fully determining their cost and the benefits arising from the services provided both for the management of development co-operation activities and through their other technical functions.

E. Action envisaged by the Director-General on the role of the resident co-ordinator, field representation of United Nations agencies and technical advice from the United Nations system

71. Answers to these interlinked questions raised by the Assembly in resolution 42/196 would contribute to making the resident co-ordinator's role more effective. Since the resident co-ordinators have no additional resources to offer to the Government, the key to successful substantive team leadership lies in their ability to mobilize the United Nations system to provide required technical advice in a multi-sectoral and integrated manner.

72. The Director-General has thus proposed that, in the light of the reactions of governing bodies, the review requested in paragraph 25 of resolution 42/196 be undertaken in two phases:

(a) ACC would review the existing inter-agency arrangements at its first regular session in 1988, in the light of a draft statement prepared by the Director-General in consultation with other organizations and submitted through CCSQ(OPS); this review would aim at identifying specific new tasks or responsibilities arising from resolution 42/196 and the additional resources, including those available within the United Nations system, required to undertake these tasks;

(b) A more formal review would be organized in 1990/91 in the light of consultations with the Governments of host countries and of pilot operations related to programming, simplification and harmonization of procedures etc. to be undertaken in the context of the implementation of resolution 42/196. The outcome of this review would be reflected in proposals for appropriate amendments to, and elaboration of, existing inter-agency arrangements, taking into account the experience of the past decade and at the same time the increasingly diversified context in which the resident co-ordinators will be called upon to operate in the 1990s.

VI. OTHER ISSUES

A. Allocation of United Nations system resources among countries

73. In recommendation (f) (*ibid.*) the report deals with the issue of allocation of UNDP resources and the changing needs for technical co-operation and states:

"Trends in the concept and modalities of technical assistance should be reviewed on a continuous basis in order to maintain the full relevance of United Nations system operational activities and their ability to adjust to changing conditions. At present, countries at the more advanced level of development seem to turn increasingly to the United Nations system for co-operation in the field of development management and, as their national capabilities increase, less for the transfer of technical knowledge and expertise. In the poorer and less developed countries operational activities continue mainly along conventional lines in most sectors through advisers, consultants, equipment and training. The question arises as to whether there needs to be a reconsideration of the criteria for the allocation of UNDP resources with a much larger share than at present being devoted to the poorest and least developed countries, including the small and vulnerable island countries, in order to make a stronger impact. In view of the gradually changing requirements of countries at the upper end of the development scale, and the increasingly important role of the World Bank group in providing technical assistance (now over thrice the volume of UNDP), the use of UNDP's very limited resources may need to be more strongly concentrated on a smaller number of countries with the greatest need for development assistance."

74. Among the responses of the governing bodies of the JCGP organizations, the UNDP Governing Council stressed the continued relevance of the operational activities of the United Nations system in responding to the varied and changing requirements of developing countries. It pointed out that while requirements vary from country to country, the system should respond adequately to these needs. It welcomed the fact that the allocations for the fourth cycle of UNDP focused on the countries with the greatest needs, especially the least developed countries. According to the Executive Board of IFAD the policy decision on the allocation of resources among countries was as important as the need to elaborate policies on priorities for the allocation of resources within countries. It expressed the need for increasing allocations for projects and programmes at the country level, particularly for pre-investment activities and technical assistance, aimed at poverty alleviation.

75. Among the responses from the governing bodies of the specialized agencies, the governing body of UPU concurred with the report that the concept and modalities of technical assistance should be reviewed on a continuous basis. The Executive Council, in a report entitled "The future of UPU technical assistance", adopted the following guidelines:

(a) To transfer gradually to the countries current tasks involving "classic" technical know-how in order to devote further resources to more technical tasks

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and, in particular, to general activities designed to help reinforce and increase the effectiveness of efforts made by the countries or groups of countries;

(b) To continue to give priority to the least developed countries and to pay greater attention to the criterion of the requesting country's motivation;

(c) To help countries to develop themselves and make more effective use of technical co-operation.

In the discussion on this report at the Hamburg Congress of UPU a number of countries emphasized the fact that the needs were and continued to be substantial and that UPU technical assistance would still be essential for some countries, even for "classic" operational tasks.

B. Co-operation of the United Nations system with the World Bank and the regional banks

76. In recommendation (j) the report dealt with the issue of co-operation between the United Nations system and the multilateral financial institutions and stated:

"The World Bank and regional banks are becoming increasingly important sources of technical assistance in many countries. Possibilities for closer co-operation between these multilateral financial assistance sources and the United Nations agencies should be further explored, for example in areas such as needs assessment for technical assistance overall and in specific sectors."

77. Among the responses of the governing bodies of the JCGP organizations, the UNDP Governing Council considered that collaboration with the multilateral financial institutions should take into account the special character, mandates and policies of the institutions involved and respect their differences. It noted the arrangements devised to date and considered that as economic management became the focus of large numbers of developing countries, UNDP should be responsive to requests from recipient Governments for complementary technical assistance. It encouraged the strengthening of collaboration between UNFPA and the World Bank on population issues.

78. The UNICEF Executive Board noted that UNICEF, in advocating a policy of "adjustment with a human face", was fostering new forms of collaboration with the World Bank and IMF. That relationship, however, was embryonic, and it might be premature to assess fully its value. In this respect, the Board preferred to await the Executive Director's submission to it of a report on the content and nature of the current and prospective collaboration of UNICEF with the World Bank.

79. The Executive Board of IFAD claimed that IFAD as a multilateral financial institution had concluded co-operation agreements with UNDP and other United Nations organizations, as well as with the World Bank and the regional banks. These agreements, now widely used, not only allowed for joint programming and project planning but also facilitated the extension of IFAD collaboration with those agencies beyond the programming and project formulation stage to include

project financing and implementation. Consequently, the technical assistance components of IFAD projects might receive co-financing from UNDP, while the institutional capacity of other multilateral financial institutions and the Office of Project Execution of UNDP (UNDP/OPE) was being used for project supervision and loan administration.

80. The IFAD Executive Board also emphasized that greater attention should be given to selecting technical assistance projects with greater prospects for attracting additional investment from external aid agencies, in particular from financial institutions such as IFAD, the World Bank and the regional and subregional financing agencies, as well as from bilateral donors. In brief, linkages between pre-investment and investment activities, which were very weak, could be strengthened substantially. Likewise, it argued that more active consideration should be given to the provision of technical assistance by United Nations agencies in conjunction with capital assistance programmes through co-financing or co-ordinated parallel ventures. Consequently, there was a need for an extensive dialogue with the countries concerned to ensure that, during the preparation of country programmes and the allocation of UNDP IPF resources, as well as in sectoral and subsectoral programming, the scope for attracting additional resources received adequate attention.

81. Among the responses from the governing bodies of the specialized agencies, the Executive Board of UNESCO fully supported the recommendation on greater co-operation between the United Nations agencies and multilateral development banks in the elaboration of development policy advice and needs assessments. It noted with satisfaction, in this context, that ACC had begun an examination of the collaboration between the United Nations agencies and the World Bank and that the Director-General of UNESCO had initiated consultations with the World Bank in order to strengthen co-operation in the areas of policy advice and needs assessment at the country level.

82. The governing body of UPU considered recommendation (j) very important since the World Bank group and the regional banks were becoming an important source both of technical assistance and of loans on favourable terms in the sector covered by UPU. Consequently, it considered it desirable for these funding agencies to involve UPU in their activities at the country level. Closer co-operation would make it possible to exchange information and avoid duplication or overlaps. UPU will be studying ways and means of promoting such co-operation, particularly with the World Bank.

1. Provisions of resolution 42/196 on collaboration with the World Bank

83. In paragraph 18 of resolution 42/196 the General Assembly invited the governing bodies of the organizations of the United Nations system that provide grant assistance for technical co-operation to report to the Economic and Social Council on the content and nature of their current and prospective co-operation with the World Bank, including the criteria for the selection of the Bank as an

executing agency and also indicating whether project agreements for World Bank-executed projects differed in character from those for projects executed by other United Nations agencies.

2. Action envisaged by the Director-General on collaboration with the World Bank

84. At its autumn session in 1988 CCSQ(OPS) undertook a review of the rapidly evolving and complex relationship between the organizations of the United Nations development system and the World Bank. This review highlighted the multifaceted manner in which the financial and technical resources of the Bank were being mobilized in conjunction with grant-funded technical co-operation programmes. Similarly, experience gained in recent years, particularly in the context of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990 (resolution S-13/2), has confirmed the scope for greater co-operation. At the same time, it has brought to the fore the need for the other organizations, working in collaboration with the World Bank, to retain the objectivity and operational autonomy upon which much of their credibility as neutral development partners is based.

C. Flow of development information

85. In recommendation (m) (A/42/326/Add.1-E/1987/82/Add.1, annex, para. 82) the report stated:

"The flow of development information to the field needs to be greatly improved. This is becoming increasingly important in many countries as the concept of technical assistance changes from the transfer of specific knowledge and expertise towards technical collaboration and management support for countries reaching a more advanced level of development. This needs to be considered urgently by the United Nations system with the aim of making information easily accessible to Governments and the donor community using modern information techniques."

86. The governing bodies of UNDP, UNICEF and UPU supported recommendation (m) on the need to increase the flow of development information from headquarters to the field level using modern techniques. The UNICEF Executive Board expressed the view that this initiative could facilitate collaboration among organizations at the field level, thereby strengthening their capacity to discharge their responsibilities to the countries more effectively. The governing body of UPU indicated that UPU planned to modernize its information material and make it available to the Governments and the resident co-ordinators.

Action envisaged by the Director-General on development information

87. As the Director-General indicated in his statement to the Economic and Social Council at its second session of 1988, held at Geneva, the recommendation of the report on the role of information in the development process appears to have been

somewhat overlooked by the organizations of the system. However, the informal input by the Executive Director of UNFPA, note of which was taken by the Governing Council of UNDP, analysed the issue in some depth. The Executive Director indicated that UNFPA was making concerted efforts to utilize modern information management techniques in order to make more and better quality population-related information available through its field offices to developing countries.

88. Many other organizations appear to have realized the potential of this additional tool for development co-operation and are strengthening their capacities in this area. However, the question of access by developing countries to such information resources has yet to be addressed in a systematic manner. Collaboration among the United Nations agencies in ensuring access to each other's data banks and information systems in a timely and cost-effective manner also needs to be strengthened.

D. Collaboration with non-governmental organizations

89. The report in recommendation (o) (*ibid.*) suggested greater collaboration with non-governmental organizations:

"The non-governmental organizations have resources that greatly exceed those of the United Nations system. With the concurrence of the Governments, they should become part of aid co-ordination arrangements and be encouraged to participate in joint programming and in project implementation, particularly in the social sectors."

90. Among the responses from the governing bodies of the JCGP organizations, the UNDP Governing Council and the Executive Boards of UNICEF and IFAD agreed that non-governmental organizations have an important role to play in complementing the activities of the United Nations system, particularly through their involvement as intermediaries between grass-root groups, the United Nations and bilateral agencies and the Governments concerned. The UNICEF Executive Board pointed out that in UNICEF experience the involvement of non-governmental organizations in the areas of advocacy, social mobilization and fund-raising facilitated programme delivery. All three governing bodies recommended that this collaboration be strengthened.

91. The IFAD Executive Board argued that non-governmental organizations could have a much more significant role than that suggested by the report. Their efficacy, according to it, was not limited to the social sector. They could be effectively involved at all stages of project formulation and implementation as a number of IFAD projects have demonstrated. In the experience of IFAD, collaboration with non-governmental organizations was best assured when both IFAD and the individual non-governmental organization stood to benefit from the working relationship, when there was explicit understanding of the expectations and objectives of both parties and when the non-governmental organization already had a proven track record in undertaking relevant kinds of project activities. In short, the significance of dovetailing organizational "styles" and project and programme experience should not be treated lightly. Likewise, this approach forms the basis of the IFAD/NGO extended co-operation programme, which provides grants to selected non-governmental

organizations to undertake pilot activities, to test new technologies or institutional mechanisms etc. The results of these may be included in IFAD projects in the light of their possible long-term benefits and replicability beyond the specific results of the grant itself.

92. The UNDP Governing Council pointed out that in order to render development assistance as a whole more effective and coherent, recipient Governments could integrate non-governmental organizations into their development assistance co-ordination arrangements.

93. Among the responses from the governing bodies of the specialized agencies only the governing body of UPU had any comments. It pointed out that this recommendation was not applicable to UPU, which knew of no non-governmental organization involved in its sector.

Action envisaged by the Director-General on greater collaboration with non-governmental organizations

94. The recent mid-term review of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development has highlighted the increasing recognition by Member States of the role of African and non-African non-governmental organizations in the search for appropriate development policies and in the efficient provision of basic services. Collaboration between the organizations of the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations is growing in response to the changing perceptions of the developing countries. This has yet to be fully reflected in the formal review process of some of the United Nations organizations.

VII. CONCLUSIONS

95. The value and the importance of a process that can involve relevant governing bodies of the United Nations system in the ongoing deliberations of the General Assembly on operational activities emerges clearly from this report. It seems equally clear that the process can usefully be further refined.

96. The extent and depth of the responses by governing bodies have varied considerably, even on questions of direct interest to the organizations concerned. The Director-General suggests that all governing bodies involved might wish to review the consolidated responses to identify both common positions and differences in emphasis or approach.

97. The Member States, in considering further use of this process, may wish to bear in mind the importance of defining issues or questions in a sufficiently precise manner to permit a more thorough review and the formulation of more specific responses.

98. While the case studies upon which the report was based covered only a small sample of the issues relating to operational activities in selected developing countries, the most important findings relate to problems that have been frequently

cited in other studies and evaluations and confirm the statements of the General Assembly itself on the need for improvements.

99. The responses of the governing bodies reveal some of the difficulties that are likely to be encountered in the formulation of long- and medium-term goals and of improved policies and procedures as well as in the adjustment of the country-level structures of the system.

100. At the same time, Member States will find in this report further evidence of the need for greater coherence and co-ordination of their policies on operational activities as expressed in the different forums of the United Nations system. The intentions of Member States with a view to ensuring optimum service and support to the developing countries have been clearly expressed in the General Assembly. At the same time, differences in interpretation or emphasis underline the complexity of the process of achieving reforms and improvement of operational activities to which the United Nations development system is firmly committed.
