



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 31st MEETING

Chairman: Mr. NAVAJAS-MOGRO (Bolivia)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 82: DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION (continued)

(g) LONG-TERM STRATEGY FOR SUSTAINABLE AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND DEVELOPMENT  
(continued) (A/C.2/43/L.25)

Introduction of draft resolution A/C.2/43/L.25

1. Mr. ZIZKA (Czechoslovakia) introduced the draft resolution entitled "International operation for environmental security" (A/C.2/43/L.25), which was sponsored by the Ukrainian SSR and Czechoslovakia. He recalled the statements made by the delegations of the two countries in the plenary and the Second Committee. The socialist countries had moreover published an aide-memoire on international ecological security, which had been circulated as document A/C.2/43/6. The preamble of the draft resolution referred to the main previous initiatives already taken by the United Nations and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). It was nevertheless apparent that the deterioration of the environment and its link with poverty and underdevelopment were extremely serious problems and that international co-operation must be strengthened in order to face up to them. The last two preambular paragraphs specified what was meant by "international environmental security" and the conditions under which it should be ensured. In the operative part, the Secretary-General was requested to develop that concept and to propose the main elements of a strategy for its achievement drawing on the contributions of Member States and various bodies inter alia in anticipation of the second United Nations Conference on the Environment.

2. The sponsors of the proposed draft resolution were not seeking to supplant other initiatives aimed at improving the environment. The achievement of international ecological security was linked to the solution of economic and social development problems and would require concerted action at the national, regional and world levels. Essentially, the task was to promote international co-operation.

3. In drawing up the draft, the delegations of Czechoslovakia and the Ukrainian SSR had held informal consultations with other delegations. They were convinced that the constructive dialogue that had been initiated would make it possible to adopt a balanced and useful decision by consensus. They withdrew the text entitled "International ecological security" submitted at the forty-second session of the General Assembly (A/C.2/43/L.5).

AGENDA ITEM 84: OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT (A/43/3, A/43/273-S/19720, A/43/393-S/19930, A/43/457-E/1988/102, A/43/463-E/1988/106, A/43/587, A/43/671)

- (a) OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM (A/43/426 and Add.1 to 3 and A/43/426/Add.1/Corr.1-E/1988/74 and Add.1 to 3; E/1988/73/Add.1/Corr.1; A/C.2/43/L.8; E/1988/76)
- (b) UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (A/43/643, E/1988/19)
- (c) UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND
- (d) UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND (E/1988/18)
- (e) WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME

4. Mr. RIPERT (Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation) expressed regret that, despite the publication of two addenda to the annual report on operational activities (A/43/426), it had not been possible to provide comprehensive statistical data in time for the debate in the Second Committee, since the audited accounts became available only at the end of September, and data processing was a three-month task. The recently established working group on statistics should, in addition to reconciling definitions and designing new analytical tables, analyse new means of speeding up processing, and that should enable the deadlines to be met the next session, provided that members of the Second Committee agreed to receive unaudited figures in some cases.

5. The report on procurement prepared by the Inter-Agency Procurement Services Unit of UNDP again showed that despite efforts to provide systematic access by non-traditional sources of supply to information on business opportunities, satisfactory progress was still not being made. The operational activities of the United Nations could provide developing countries with an opportunity to demonstrate their capacity to participate more fully in international trade. In addition, major donors whose resources and capacities were under-utilised were rightly expressing their concern. The time had surely come for each organisation to examine the scope for modifying the procedures in force and take new initiatives to improve performance. As had been underlined during the Pledging Conference, the lack of significant progress in that respect had an impact on the ability to make a sound contribution to economic co-operation among developing countries and to mobilize required resources.

6. Document A/43/426/Add.3 summarized the comments of the governing bodies of organizations of the United Nations system on the conclusions and recommendations of the report on case studies on the functioning of the operational activities for development of the United Nations system prepared by the request of the Director General in 1987 (the "Jansson report", see A/42/326/Add.1-E/1987/82/Add.2). The supplementary responses from other United Nations bodies would be issued as a further addendum, if possible before the end of the forty-third session. Document A/43/426/Add.3 deserved the Committee's attention, since apart from providing an overall perspective of the responses of governing bodies, it constituted an attempt at preparing the consolidated reports called for by the Economic and Social Council

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in paragraph 2 (f) (iii) of its resolution 1988/77. He invited participants to address both the content of the document and its format, since their comments would be useful in preparing future reports of that kind.

7. Recalling the areas of economic and social development which required a strengthening of international co-operation, namely, first, debt financial flow and the adjustment process, secondly, trade and commodities, thirdly, environment and sustainable development, fourthly, human development, population, poverty and food security, and, fifthly, science and technology - a list which made no claim to be either definitive or exhaustive - he suggested that each of those areas called for an integrated approach which would involve the identification and adoption of appropriate policies for their utilisation, the launching of programmes to further analyse the issues involved where each topic was concerned, the proposal of solutions, the monitoring and evaluation of their implementation and the organisation of operational activities.

8. Operational activities were one element in that process. There was general agreement that the United Nations system had a unique contribution to make in that area, even though it was recognized that improvements were required. The room for progress, the need for contributions both from the representatives of Member States and from the secretariats of all organisations of the United Nations system, as well as the desirability of greater co-ordination of the efforts of all parties, certainly explained why operational activities had been singled out for special attention in the proposals of the Economic and Social Council on the revitalization of the economic and social sectors.

9. To the extent that a general consensus was developing around priority themes of the kind just mentioned, those themes could usefully serve as the frame of reference for establishing an overall framework of objectives for the medium term; for dialogue with the development co-operation officials of individual countries in the design of programmes and projects; for actions aimed at strengthening the capacity of developing countries to participate in project formulation and management and that of the United Nations system to provide integrated, ongoing, technical advice; for the prospective study of requirements for technical co-operation and possible modifications in the organization of the United Nations development system that he had proposed in his annual report.

10. The members of the Committee would have at their disposal a conference room paper updating the work accomplished, under way or envisaged, in implementation of General Assembly resolution 42/196. One of the starting points for resolutions 41/171 and 42/196 was the impression that the reforms introduced 10 years before in the context of the previous restructuring exercise had not produced all the expected results because, inter alia, of structural obstacles and the strength of traditions. The first phase of implementation of the resolutions had confirmed the complexity of an exercise that involved adapting varied and decentralized structures to the requirements of a different and increasingly diversified environment. On the one hand, a broad consensus had emerged from governing bodies through their review of the General Assembly recommendations. On the other hand,

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significant differences had surfaced in the identification and implementation of specific proposals.

11. Progress was most likely to be achieved through determined and sustained commitment to reach agreed goals, through consensus-building and incremental change rather than through the drastic modification of relationships, mandates and operational modalities. The approach adopted was consultative and participative; each organisation was given the opportunity to make its contribution to the achievement of commonly agreed goals, to formulate suggestions and to organise pilot operations that should be of interest to others. That approach applied equally to the field representatives of the system who, under the leadership of the resident co-ordinators, were requested to participate in the process. He intended to report regularly, starting in 1989, on the modalities of co-operation between the resident co-ordinators and other representatives of the system, the involvement of whom was already producing encouraging results.

12. The support of Member States was essential and he intended to organise informal consultations with their representatives and his colleagues of the United Nations system. The support of Member States should also be measured in terms of the resources allocated to the various organisations for the funding of operational activities. The results of the 1988 Pledging Conference on Development Activities were encouraging, but, with a few outstanding exceptions, those activities necessitated the consolidation of real resources in a period of relative stability of exchange rates and lower inflation rather than additional contributions of the magnitude required to respond to rising and increasingly diversified demand. As progress was made in the utilization of the resources made available to developing countries through the United Nations system, it was particularly important that additional contributions to general or specific-purpose funds should be confirmed. The confirmed effective support of the developing countries themselves was a further reminder of the value of multilateral co-operation.

13. As the Secretary-General had underlined in his message to the Pledging Conference, there had rarely been a time when increased support was such an urgent necessity and when there was such scope for investing in peace for the future through sustained development efforts.

14. Mr. DRAPER (Administrator, United Nations Development Programme) expressed the hope that the recent progress in the international political arena would be matched in the area of economic and social development. Although the economies of developing countries were showing improved growth, difficulties still persisted in most of the developing countries. Debt burdens, chronically unstable commodity prices and desperate poverty highlighted the challenge. Against that background, UNDP continued to support the development efforts of low-income countries in a variety of ways by meeting a growing range of needs, from the attack on AIDS to the ongoing promotion of effective management. Greatly encouraged by its successes, UNDP had to prepare itself for the future and determine, together with Member States, how best to further its pre-eminent role in international development. He thanked all the donors for their contribution to the success of the Pledging Conference which had achieved a 6-per-cent growth in contributions totalling over

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\$1 billion to UNDP central resources. He was deeply grateful to the developing countries which had increased their contributions in spite of many hardships; their support was particularly important as a vote of confidence in UNDP.

15. At its thirty-fifth session, the Governing Council had approved the remaining country programmes of the fourth cycle, bringing the total value of country programmes to over \$3.5 billion, to which it had allocated an additional \$676 million. The Council had also agreed with his request to strengthen UNDP staffing for Africa, which was continued evidence of UNDP's commitment to the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development. UNDP was adding 183 posts for economic planning and co-ordination, for emergency operations and for strengthening middle management in the field offices; it was already well on the way to filling those posts. It was also providing advisory teams designed to strengthen African Governments' ability to manage structural adjustment programmes. As stated in its decision 88/31, paragraph 10, the Governing Council had established a Special Programme for Management Development and Related Institution-building to help developing countries improve management of their human resources in the public sector. The Council had allocated \$60 million for that purpose. The five reports submitted by him to the Governing Council, in response to General Assembly resolution 42/196, concerning co-operation between UNDP and the World Bank, UNDP's response to the Jansson report, inter-country programmes, agency support costs, and rationalisation of the field offices structure, had served as the basis for the Council's formulation of decision 88/56.

16. As for the future, the Governing Council had supported his initiative for tackling the challenges of the 1990s and beyond. A number of issues had surfaced from the series of discussions held with UNDP staff members: first, how to attract and retain skilled personnel; secondly, how to remain relevant to the needs of such middle-income countries as Brazil, the Republic of Korea and Argentina, while continuing to serve the poorest nations; thirdly, whether UNDP should narrow its programme focus or continue to cover all aspects of development; fourthly, how to persuade donor nations to support UNDP's central funding role actively so as to enlist the co-ordination which they demanded; fifthly, how to persuade recipient countries which had not even made a nominal contribution to UNDP's core funding to do more, as that was psychologically of great importance; sixthly, how to make country programmes more effective as a framework for technical co-operation; and, seventhly, how to develop new yardsticks for measuring the quality of human life.

17. Referring to the first issue he had mentioned, he said that UNDP had long recognized that the success of its programmes and projects was largely dependent on the quality and effectiveness of the staff, whether UNDP staff in field offices or technical personnel employed by executing agencies. The recent deterioration of conditions of service, particularly salary levels, had seriously hampered the ability of UNDP to recruit and retain highly qualified personnel at all levels. The situation had assumed crisis proportions, in particular with regard to project staffing. In many cases, executing agencies were losing high-quality technical project personnel to competing employers outside the United Nations system.

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Because United Nations salaries and allowances were not competitive, project delays were common. The quality of projects was also endangered. The very credibility of the United Nations system's operational activities was being undermined. Thus, with respect to projects financed in 1987, there had been 537 resignations, requests for transfer, early separations, non-renewal of contract and refusals of offers of employment. In view of the seriousness of the problem, he asked representatives in the Second Committee to influence their colleagues in the Fifth Committee to respond positively.

18. Despite such difficulties, 1988 had been a very exciting year for UNDP, which had, in its own quiet way, been involved in peace-building initiatives of its own, which had been as important as the striking breakthroughs made by the United Nations in both peace-keeping and peace-making. UNDP had worked with all concerned on urgent preparations for the resettlement of 5 million Afghan refugees; had managed and financed development work of the Mekong Committee, in the context of which neighbouring countries overcame the differences which had long divided them; had developed a special plan of economic assistance for Central America, which would mobilize \$4.3 billion in support of the agreement for a stable and lasting peace signed by the five Presidents of the countries of the region in August 1987; had responded to the Palestinian emergency by asking the Governing Council for an increase of \$4 million to improve the living conditions of the inhabitants of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip; had participated in peace-building in the Maghreb, where Algeria and Morocco, once at odds over Western Sahara, were now co-operating with Tunisia in a project to manage the region's water resources. The year 1988 had also marked the tenth anniversary of close co-operation between UNDP and China. UNDP had recruited over 2,000 consultants for the Chinese Government, many of them to help launch the country's sweeping economic reforms. Drawing inspiration from the initiative of the United Nations Fund for Science and Technology for Development, China had organized its first business "incubator", which had brought together 24 Chinese entrepreneurs with high-tech skills. The "incubator" had been such a success that the Government planned to hold 50 more over the next two years. UNDP had also organized 170 dialogues in more than 80 countries between top government decision-makers, senior civil servants and executives from the private sector, for the purpose of examining strategies for releasing the energies of private entrepreneurs. UNDP had committed nearly half a million dollars in support of efforts by the Gulf States to promote local investments in new industries.

19. UNDP had increasingly been called upon to assume a leading role in environmental concerns and had, inter alia, funded a sweeping plan to bring clean water and sanitation systems to the north-eastern part of Pakistan, had invested nearly \$1 million to help Viet Nam to manage its water supply and forestry service; and had promoted a wind-power programme in Egypt. It had also joined with the Canadian International Development Agency and the Latin American countries to make plans to map a new environmental strategy for the region. In Africa, the UNDP Sudano-Sahelian Office had mobilised more than \$24 million for land management and afforestation projects to help beat back the advancing desert. In response to the

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report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, he had asked all 112 UNDP resident representatives to convene meetings with the Governments they served to help them design or refine national policies on the environment.

20. UNDP had also provided assistance to the victims of natural disasters in Bangladesh, the Caribbean and Nepal, to name only a few of the places. The UNDP resident representative and staff in the Sudan, a nation plagued by locusts, flooded by heavy rains, burdened with a rising tide of displaced persons and torn by a civil war, had, in spite of extremely difficult working conditions, helped to draw up a relief plan calling for \$407 million in assistance. The plan would be submitted to a meeting of donor countries in Paris in December 1988. The Sudan had also been helped under a \$3.3 million UNDP initiative to combat the spread of locusts throughout much of North Africa and the Sahel.

21. UNDP had launched a new "Partners in development" programme, under which 44 non-governmental organisations had received up to \$25,000 for innovative community-based projects, which included a programme to combat drug abuse among the young in Guatemala and Uruguay and a people's theatre project to be used for rural development training in Ghana.

22. UNDP was continuing to respond to the needs of women, and UNIFEM had set a new record of funding for women by supporting a broad spectrum of catalytic projects throughout the world. The Division for Women in Development had instituted additional training programmes in every region served by UNDP.

23. The year 1988 had also seen a tripling of the number of round-table conferences in Africa and Asia designed to help developing countries prepare their case for donor countries. The six round-table conferences scheduled to be held in Africa in 1989 should help to raise more than \$1 billion per annum over the next two or three years, which was an effective measure of UNDP's pragmatic co-ordination.

24. In order to deal with the social consequences of the cost-cutting measures which Governments in developing countries were forced to take in order to pay their debts, UNDP had joined with the World Bank and the African Development Bank in a \$10 million project. There had been tremendous expansion in another area to which UNDP attached great importance - technical co-operation among developing countries - which had generated an additional 600 projects. Two new publications, World Development and Update, had been launched to help consultants and contractors keep abreast of business opportunities in developing countries. In 1988, UNDP had sent its 2,000th consultant into the field under the Transfer of Knowledge through Expatriate Nationals Programme (TOKTEN). Some 1,500 United Nations Volunteers were currently serving in over 100 developing countries. The United Nations Capital Development Fund had approved a record \$60 million in small capital projects and the number of volunteer executives helping to solve commercial and public service problems in over 30 countries had doubled.



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25. Recalling that the ultimate success of UNDP's technical assistance would depend on human resources, he suggested that human resource development rested on five pillars: education, health and nutrition, environment, employment and, finally, political and economic freedom. Education played a critical role in improving conditions of life. While literacy rates had doubled in the past 40 years in the developing countries, the remaining illiterates would be the hardest to reach. Rural education was being shortchanged as low-income countries endeavoured to make the necessary structural adjustments to their debt-ridden economies. There was a tendency to forget that building a school was an investment and that, in the long term, it could have a higher return than an investment in a factory or a port. Education and financing of education should be the first priority for all Governments in the world. Although welcome improvements had been made in the field of health, for example with respect to life expectancy and infant mortality, in the developing countries much remained to be done to bring them up to the rates that existed in the industrialized countries. The situation with regard to nutrition had deteriorated: in the past 20 years agricultural production in Africa had increased only 1 per cent each year while the population had increased at the rate of 3 per cent. Much could be done to improve health by means of better management of available resources. The environment, which included both housing and physical environment, was increasingly being jeopardised on a global scale. The problem of decent living conditions was particularly acute in the huge metropolises of the developing world. In order just to maintain existing marginal standards, most countries would have to expand all their urban services (water, sanitation, transport and communications) by 65 per cent over the next 12 years. Employment, too, was suffering, both in the towns and in rural areas, from the rapid population increase, posing the threat of unemployment and critical poverty. It was estimated that the developing countries would have to create 700 million jobs by the end of the century, more jobs than currently existed in the whole of the industrialized world. The industrialized countries would also have a major responsibility in that task and would have to open their markets to products and services originating in the developing countries. Protectionism was the enemy of development just as it was the enemy of consumers in the industrialized countries. Referring to the last pillar of human resources development, namely, political and economic freedom, he recalled that people must have a voice in their own development and must also have the economic freedom to participate in their own development. The private sector was a driving force for development and could unleash the dynamism, creativity and talent of individuals throughout the world.

26. Finally, he recalled that UNDP's most important function was co-ordination. It was the common thread running through all its activities, whether in terms of the environment and emergency relief, or round tables, country programmes, sectoral NATCAPs and missions or efforts to combat AIDS. UNDP was already playing a very varied co-ordinating role and was ready to do more and to continue, together with donor and beneficiary countries, to consolidate its successes in building a better world for everyone.

27. Mr. GRANT (Executive Director of UNICEF) said that recent successes achieved by the United Nations in such areas as conflict resolution and peace-keeping had won it world-wide acclaim and had demonstrated the effectiveness of multilateralism in a world of crises and interdependence. The challenge now was to translate that new potential into comparable progress in the economic and social spheres. Considerable groundwork had already been laid to meet that challenge. Through the lens of its operational activities to improve the health and well-being of children throughout the world, UNICEF had perceived a crucial interrelatedness among development problems. That interrelatedness could be used to advantage to create a synergistic impact by mobilising the entire United Nations system to focus on certain common objectives.

28. The agenda of the Second Committee indicated precisely the areas in which concerted action was needed: international debt, the fourth development decade, sustainable development and the role of women in development. Experience had shown that there were two main difficulties: achieving consensus on plans of action in priority areas and, once consensus was achieved, translating it into true international mobilisation for action. The adoption of General Assembly resolution 42/196 on operational activities had helped ensure the mobilisation of the United Nations system. Now it was time to go further; UNICEF was committed to playing an active role in the process.

29. Formulating the right goals at the beginning of collaborative efforts was the key to success. That was true both at the international level, as, for example, in the formulation of an international development strategy, and at the national level, since obviously, development goals must represent the priorities of the recipient countries if they were to have any chance of being achieved. In high priority areas in which international co-operation seemed desirable, UNICEF had selected the following goals: achieving further increases in child survival through primary health care measures such as universal immunisation and oral rehydration therapy; consideration of the social dimensions of the adjustment processes; and strengthening of the role of women in development.

30. One of the most serious shortcomings of the operational activities of the United Nations system was, perhaps, the fact that common priority goals had been inadequately defined. Many institutions in the economic and social sectors had embarked on a reassessment of their mandate and priorities; that reassessment in particular, the deliberations on the fourth United Nations development decade, should help to remedy the problem at the international level. Naturally, complementary efforts would have to be made at the country level. In that connection, the United Nations institutions could play a valuable intermediary role.

31. Work in UNICEF was already under way. The secretariat had been urged to prepare a policy paper on goals and strategies for children in the 1990s in the context of preparations for the fourth decade. The relevant proposals would include strong linkages with regional and country-level efforts. In that connection, UNICEF was planning to participate actively in the work of the high-level inter-agency group which the Director-General for Development and

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International Economic Co-operation was planning to establish. The preliminary studies carried out by UNDP on its role up to the year 2,000 were very interesting. The proposal made by the Chairman of the Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (Operational Activities) (CCSQ (OPS)) concerning co-ordination of efforts to support the goals of recipient countries in the 1990s was also worth mentioning.

32. Other deliberations had dealt with the specific aspects of UNICEF's mandate. For example, at a meeting held in Talloires, France, with the participation of the executive heads of several major United Nations organisations (UNICEF, WHO and the World Bank) and ministerial-level representatives from donor and recipient countries, the Task Force on Child Survival (Bellagio group) had adopted a declaration setting forth a number of goals.

33. There had been a whole series of international and regional initiatives to determine the goals for international co-operation to promote development and child protection. However, that was not enough. Achieving the goals would require genuine international mobilisation. UNICEF believed that such mobilisation must be secured as a matter of priority at the country level and that the resident co-ordinator could play a more dynamic role in helping identify key areas for collaborative efforts. For example, he could call programme-oriented meetings between United Nations organisations and their partners at the national level much more systematically to address such issues as environment and sustainable development. UNICEF had also submitted other proposals to CCSQ (OPS), which was currently reviewing the role of the resident co-ordinators in accordance with resolution 42/196.

34. It should be noted that the international and country-level mobilisations could be achieved within the existing mandates of United Nations organisations and resident co-ordinators. UNICEF's country-programming approach was a valuable asset. What was needed, rather than new structures, was more effective use of existing ones. That required leadership and commitment.

35. The Joint Consultative Group on Policy was also encouraging co-ordinated action by the various agencies at the country level. Since the adoption of resolution 42/196 significant progress had been made in a number of areas of joint programming (role of women in development, improvement of adjustment processes, implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development, etc). The Consultative Group had recently chosen a new issue - sustainable development - which would be the subject of its high-level meeting in spring 1989. Its meeting on adjustment programmes, hosted by UNICEF, had been very successful. As chairman of the Consultative Group and as the newly elected chairman of the Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (Operational Activities), Mr. Richard Jolly, UNICEF's Deputy Executive Director for Programmes, would certainly be in a position to report continued progress to the next session of the General Assembly.

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36. UNICEF had identified several issues warranting priority attention in the development field. First, in the economic arena, the problem of structural adjustment had a direct impact on UNICEF's efforts to improve the well-being of children and mothers. The title of its most recent publication on the subject reflected its position very well: Adjustment with a Human Face. It strongly endorsed the two comments made by the Managing Director of IMF concerning the impact which adjustment programmes might have on the poorest groups:

(1) adjustment programmes did not necessarily mean a lowering of living standards if they were well planned; and (2) the adjustment efforts would be more successful if they gave proper weight to social realities.

37. The successes of child-survival and development activities were due to an effective "formula" which combined the use of low-cost technology and new means of communication with families. It had thus been possible to save the lives of 2.5 million children and prevent the crippling of millions more within the past year alone. WHO had announced that the rate of immunisation of young children, which had been 5 per cent 10 years ago, had risen from 50 per cent to almost 60 per cent just since August 1987 and might reach 80 per cent by the end of 1990. That impressive performance had been confirmed by the Bellagio group at the meeting in Talloires referred to earlier. The group had concluded that, with a modest additional amount of political will, it would be possible to reduce the 1980 child death rate by more than half by the end of the century. If that was accomplished, more than 100 million children would be saved. However, such an accomplishment would require the simultaneous mobilisation of many social forces and not merely one body or one sector of society. The new Director-General of WHO had recently stated that it would be possible to save the lives of two thirds of the 14 million children who died every year if their families were properly informed and motivated. He had also referred to the need for a grand alliance of peoples, policy makers and health professionals to accomplish that goal. Such an alliance was beginning to come together. At the present stage it was a question of whether the world community would agree to invest further resources in the most promising areas in a period of economic retrenchment, in the knowledge that the well-being of children could be improved with modest resources, especially with respect to child survival and development. The "Grand Alliance for Children" was winning increasing attention from political leaders, in, for example, the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation and the Organisation of African Unity. In the joint statement issued by President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev following the Moscow summit the only reference to development issues concerned the improvement of children's health care. It was worth noting that it was easier to obtain collaboration in initiatives for children, and that fact might be an asset not only as a means of addressing the needs of children but also as a means of gradually encouraging other broader development and peace initiatives.

38. The growing support for the adoption by the United Nations of a convention on the rights of the child provided further evidence of the increasing concern for the health and well-being of children. UNICEF was most hopeful that the convention could be adopted during the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Child.

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39. Turning to new initiatives, he announced that WHO, UNICEF and UNESCO were currently preparing a collection of 55 priority messages on 10 themes under the title of Facts for Life to be published early in 1989. At present 91 non-governmental organisations were supporting the application of the content of Facts for Life and 143 others had committed themselves to using it in their national settings.

40. Another current development was a new global commitment to basic education. UNESCO, the World Bank and UNICEF were preparing a conference on that topic to be held early in 1990.

41. The Bamako initiative proposed by the African Health Ministers in September 1987 should also be kept in mind. It envisaged the establishment of a decentralised and self-sustaining system which would expand health care for mothers and children by the mid-1990s.

42. It was impossible to report on the - precarious - well-being of children and mothers without considering at the same time the international economic climate and its heavy toll on the population of the developing countries. The action opportunities mentioned earlier would bring about significant improvements in the lives of the most vulnerable groups. The international community had a duty to take up the challenge. However, those measures alone would not be enough. At the second regular session of the Economic and Social Council he had indicated the other necessary measures, stressing the link between the problems of the southern hemisphere and the financial crisis of the northern hemisphere.

43. In conclusion he said that the direction and the manner in which the United Nations system must act were quite clear. Most activities were now carried out on the basis of inter-agency collaboration. The Organisation's image had improved in the eyes of the world: public opinion now expected more from the United Nations, and such a situation was extremely favourable for the solution of world problems. It must be used to impart a new impetus to operational activities.

44. Dr. SADIK (Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund) said that at the time of its creation in 1969 the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) had been only a small organisation on the periphery of the United Nations system, and population questions had still been very controversial. Twenty years later UNFPA had programmes in 140 countries, its resources had grown from \$5 million in 1967-1969 to \$172 million in 1988, and the importance of population activities for development was universally recognised.

45. The year 1987 had marked the arrival of the world's five billionth citizen. While the situation was in many respects more satisfactory than many experts had predicted at the beginning of the 1970s, the future would depend on the capacity to find a proper balance between the needs of a rapidly growing world population and the available resources. It was therefore probable that increasing demands would be made on UNFPA: an annual increase in resources of \$100 million would be required between now and the end of the century simply to maintain the momentum of

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population activities world-wide, meet the needs already identified and achieve a modest reduction in population growth rates. To decrease the speed of fertility decline would require a still greater commitment of resources.

46. The initial findings of the comprehensive review and assessments of the achievements of UNFPA and of the needs in the population field indicated that that field had come of age. There were very few countries still seriously opposed to family planning, which was accepted as a means to better health; 122 out of 170 countries offered direct support to contraceptive distribution; and out of 65 countries which regarded their population growth rates as too high, 52 - including all the largest developing countries - were taking action to bring them down. Even in Africa, the last region to become involved in action programmes, 31 countries had now adopted population policies. It was now necessary to go further: the current review and assessment would point out the most urgent needs and would help the Fund to mobilize more resources and make the most of the resources available.

47. As the Fund went into its third decade, it was concentrating on improving the quality and effectiveness of programmes by strengthening its field offices; improving monitoring, supervision and feedback; making more sophisticated use of evaluation and research; offering training for planners, administrators and operational staff; and increasing the number of trained service staff on the ground. It was improving outreach by adapting programmes to economic, social and cultural conditions in the country concerned; providing appropriate and adequate means of family planning; involving the community and working with Governments at their request; and devising systems which took services to scattered and poorly-served populations. For the most effective use of limited resources, UNFPA would be seeking better data-gathering; better integration of population programmes with other development programmes; safe, acceptable, cheap and easy-to-use means of contraception; better delivery systems; more self-reliance; and improved co-ordination within and outside the United Nations system.

48. Co-ordination had a special meaning for UNFPA, since population issues cut across many other sectors (education, health, housing, employment and the status of women), and successful population programmes involved government, community and individual commitment, and planning and communication decisions at all levels. From the sectoral point of view, it was UNFPA's responsibility to make population concerns integral to the regular activities of all organisations and agencies in the United Nations system. That was why it was engaged in a constant dialogue with each member of the international community, both intergovernmental agencies and non-governmental organisations, and was collaborating closely, both in the field and at Headquarters, with the various parts of the United Nations system.

49. Among issues which would concern UNFPA into the 1990s were: first, the situation in Africa, as the region in greatest need of assistance. UNFPA was therefore planning expansion both in resources committed to Africa and in staff assigned there. A second major concern would be the health and well-being of women, who were regarded both as objects and as agents of development. It was

(Dr. Sadik)

particularly important to increase the involvement of women as policy makers and planners, so that population programmes were designed with the interests of women uppermost. Third, the report on the world population situation for 1988 was devoted to the environment, because a balance between people and resources was the purpose of all effective development programmes. Finally, UNFPA would be looking for more funds to support increasing demands, and would be seeking to spread more widely the human resources found increasingly in developing countries. Above all, UNFPA looked forward to universal support, and to that end would continue its efforts to bring the United States back into the ranks of those who had committed their support to UNFPA.

50. Mr. BUCKMAN (Netherlands) said that the improved political climate, apparent in meetings inside as well as outside the United Nations, had enabled the Organisation to regain self-confidence and the confidence of its Member States. It must use that momentum to tackle the major problems still affecting the world.

51. The classic distinction between the industrialized and the developing countries had become an over-simplification: there was an increasing regional diversity among developing countries themselves, some of which were striding ahead while others were falling even further behind. The world had witnessed the emergence of a number of new economic centres which were advancing swiftly to join North America, Western Europe and Japan. Considerable economic changes were also taking place in the Soviet Union and some Eastern European countries. Those developments required a more differentiated view of development and of the economic problems which the different countries were facing.

52. The international community had become increasingly aware of the close intertwining of economic relations. It recognised, for example, that while economic growth in the industrialized countries was a key factor in the international economic climate, and therefore crucial to development, growth in the developing world was in turn very likely to contribute to growth in the industrialized world. There was also increased recognition of the contribution which a dynamic private sector could make to development; by contrast, the dominant role of Governments had been a barrier to development in many countries.

53. Lastly, there was increased awareness of the interdependence between different aspects of development; thus, with regard to trade and economic development, the trade barriers imposed by the industrialized countries had cost developing countries twice as much as the total flow of ODA funds they had received; population growth frequently outpaced economic growth, and the formulation and implementation of population policies were an important prerequisite for sustainable development; development could not be viable in the absence of an environmental policy; and structural adjustment must take more account of its social effects. In other words, a one-sided approach never led to sustainable development.

(Mr. Buckman, Netherlands)

54. The policies followed had not kept pace with new developments. In retrospect, both developed and developing countries had not always chosen the right priorities. There was need to devise an innovative strategy which took account of regional, subregional and national characteristics, embodied realistic macro-economic targets and set itself a time-frame for each developed country to achieve the 0.7-per-cent ODA target. The development strategy for the coming decade should be designed, first and foremost, to speed integration of the economies of the different categories of developing countries into the world economy. Furthermore, imaginative thinking was required in order to deal more effectively with the debt problems of the low-income as well as the highly indebted middle-income countries; national policies should be aimed at economic growth; the climate for private investment had to be improved; increased efforts should be made to diversify economies which had so far largely depended on one or two export products; food security must be ensured; co-ordination should be strengthened between the recipient countries, bilateral and multilateral donors and non-governmental organisations; development assistance should be in line with the macro-economic policy of each country and compatible with its national structural-adjustment programmes; special attention should be given to the environmental impact of development activities; participation of the population at all levels was crucial to development; and human-resources development should be a central objective in development co-operation; and population policies must be more clearly defined.

55. Turning to operational activities, he said that a clear agenda for action had been established - which should result in a better and more responsive system - by the process set in motion in 1986, the Jansson report and General Assembly resolution 42/196. The Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation should seize that opportunity and the goodwill shown by Member States in order to take the necessary initiatives.

56. A coherent, effective and efficient United Nations system required its various components to co-ordinate their activities so that each limited its activities to its field of excellence, taking into account the priorities set by the developing countries themselves. Where there existed a clear relationship between the programmes and projects of different organizations, co-ordination mechanisms between those organisations and the recipient countries should be improved. The World Bank, bilateral donors and non-governmental organizations should be actively involved in that process.

57. He welcomed the fact that some agencies and organizations were already endeavouring to be more responsive to the emerging needs of the 1990s, and urged other organisations to do likewise. He entirely agreed with the Director-General in his annual report (A/43/426-E/1988/74) that the prospects for effective implementation of General Assembly resolution 42/196 depended on the endorsement of common objectives by individual governing bodies and their secretariats, and that it was thus important for Member States to convey coherent messages in the many forums that addressed the complex issues involved. All Netherlands delegations to governing bodies in the system would thenceforth receive instructions to that end.



(Mr. Buckman, Netherlands)

58. Activities to strengthen the cohesion, effectiveness and efficiency of the United Nations system in the sphere of operational activities could be categorised in four main areas. Firstly, with regard to programming, planning and procedures, it would be desirable, as suggested by the Director-General, to harmonise the planning periods of funding organisations and to ensure closer linkages with the planning cycles of the recipient Governments concerned. Equally important was the adaptation of the procedures employed by United Nations organisations to local administrative and budgetary procedures. Secondly, with respect to decentralisation, considerable authority should be delegated to staff in the field so that they could adopt an approach suited to the economic, social, political and cultural characteristics of the country. Thirdly, there was the role of the resident co-ordinator, who should serve as the principal interlocutor of the Government and ensure an integrated approach. Fourthly and lastly, the Director-General, to some extent, should act as a resident co-ordinator at the highest level, promoting the harmonisation and integration of United Nations operational activities, and ensuring overall co-ordination and a multi-disciplinary approach.

59. Co-ordination was not an easy task, but was more essential than ever if recipient countries were to be given the means of utilising the aid they received more effectively and durably, as well as the means of effectively combating poverty throughout the world.

60. Mr. COTE (Canada) said that the operational activities for development of the United Nations system were the expression on a universal scale of the ideal of international solidarity through economic and social co-operation for development. Canada attached singular importance to ensuring that those activities were appropriately funded, relevant to development needs and efficiently administered. His delegation noted with concern that operational activities depended on substantial contributions from a number of small countries, and encouraged countries in a position to do so to increase their contributions for that purpose.

61. Over the past two years the international community had taken initiatives, adopted resolutions, undertaken reviews and carried out case studies with the aim of improving, with commendable concern for realism, the effectiveness of operational activities for development. That had been reflected in a few main messages, which, with the approach of the triennial policy review, it was important not to obscure by verbiage, and which could be summarised in a few points.

62. Firstly, United Nations system technical assistance was deeply valued in qualitative terms beyond its financial aspect. Secondly, responsiveness, flexibility and decentralisation should be key characteristics of such assistance. The overriding responsibility of Governments to define priorities must always be borne in mind, while the extensive field system developed by the United Nations must be one of the principal tools for responding to those priorities. Thirdly, Governments should have a means of articulating their priorities and co-ordinating the assistance they received. The United Nations system should strengthen government capacity in that area. Above all assistance must be provided in ways

(Mr. Cote, Canada)

that recognized the growing desire of Governments to oversee and integrate assistance into their normal operations. Account should be taken of that factor in re-examining current arrangements for project execution. Fourthly, the United Nations system should facilitate the task of already over-burdened public administrations and Governments by simplifying and harmonising procedures and cycles, which was not incompatible with maintaining the distinct mandates of organisations. Fifthly, the field representation of the United Nations system should be more technically oriented and more integrated in the provision of technical advice, under the leadership of the resident co-ordinator. It was important to ensure that field offices contributed in a systematic and substantive way to the development objectives of host Governments. The member organisations of the Joint Consultative Group on Policy were reviewing their pattern of field representation, and other organisations should participate in that review process. Sixthly, United Nations system programmes needed to be made more relevant to the current concerns of Governments and project execution needed to be of higher quality. Lastly, it had been recognized that the key instruments for cohesion were no longer functioning as envisaged. Some elements, in common with such new instruments as the Joint Consultative Group on Policy, retained their importance, however.

63. To make progress on those issues, the General Assembly, in its resolution 42/196, had entrusted the Director-General with a two-year work programme. The work that had been started should be completed with a view to formulating recommendations for the triennial policy review scheduled for 1989. The Director-General had immense responsibility in that respect: for the first time he had an opportunity to set out comprehensive proposals for strengthening operational activities. His proposals would necessarily be discussed within normal inter-secretariat mechanisms, but it was those proposals, rather than agreed compromises, which were of the greatest interest to delegations.

64. The recent decision by the Governing Council of UNDP concerning agency support costs was a notable development. It was important for UNDP, agencies and recipients alike to be aware of the best means of providing services to developing countries in the light of new modalities of technical co-operation, new sources of expertise and the needs and demands of Governments. That issue was closely linked to Canada's concerns about unproductive field representation, destructive competition to secure a share of UNDP resources, and a disproportionate focus on building up project execution to the detriment of substantive and normative contributions to development programmes. While stressing the need to re-examine current practices, his delegation recognized the historic symbiotic relationship between UNDP and agencies and the need to derive maximum benefit from the latter's technical capacities.

65. In his report the Director-General suggested additional efforts in some areas. His delegation would welcome, for example, additional case studies on how the rules, procedures and field office structure of the United Nations system affected host Governments, as a means of spurring rationalisation in those areas. It also believed that the members of the Joint Consultative Group on Policy should

(Mr. Cote, Canada)

proceed with intensified efforts to promote more coherent and co-ordinated programming at the country level, for it was concerned about the limited progress made in that respect. The concept of continuous programming merited consideration, as it might better reflect the dynamic environment in which development activities unfolded.

66. With regard to the integration of women in development, his delegation welcomed indications that they were increasingly participating in mainstream programmes, but it required more specific information on which agencies had adopted specific measures and developed training programmes for women. While it welcomed the report summarizing the response of governing bodies to the Jansson report, it regretted that those responses had not been analysed.

67. The next development decade would see interdependence among countries deepen further at the same time that the technical co-operation needs of the developing countries became increasingly differentiated. In order for the operational activities of the United Nations system to play their unique role, and with the negotiations on the fifth cycle of UNDP programming just over the horizon, delegations must stretch their imaginations and capacity for innovation in order to direct increasing resources to the poorest countries, while maintaining the universality of participation in the programmes.

68. Mrs. EHRENREICH (Denmark), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, deplored the fact that overall development assistance was far from sufficient to meet the needs of the developing countries; if all donors allocated 0.7 per cent of their GNP to development, as had been agreed, the necessary resources would be available to strengthen multilateral development institutions. In many respects the operational activities of the United Nations were a unique contribution to development and merited the full support of all countries. The Nordic countries, which contributed 30 per cent of UNDP's resources and a substantial percentage of those of other bodies, were particularly eager to ensure the maximum efficiency of those activities.

69. General Assembly resolution 42/196 was a step in the right direction, namely, improved co-ordination of operational activities, but it had not yet had the desired results. Responsibility for that situation must be shared by donor countries, developing countries, the specialized agencies and UNDP itself. While it was only to be expected that vested interests would at times pose obstacles in the way of more coherence and co-ordination, the issue should not give rise to controversy. Perhaps sufficient attention had not been paid to the variety of situations in recipient countries. In some countries the development efforts of the United Nations system played so minor a role that they did not require co-ordination. In other countries, there was sufficient administrative capacity to deal with co-ordination problems at the national level and, while more coherent effort by the United Nations system in general might facilitate that co-ordination, it was not indispensable.

(Mrs. Ehrenreich, Denmark)

70. However, in a number of countries, many of which received the bulk of United Nations assistance, the absence of coherence and co-ordination caused waste and duplication. However, co-ordination within the system would prove fruitless unless the countries themselves had the required management capacity. Her delegation therefore wished to emphasise the role of the United Nations system as stated in General Assembly resolution 42/196, namely, to reinforce and strengthen the capability of developing countries to co-ordinate international co-operation and assistance in accordance with their priorities and needs. It hoped that the Management Development Programme established recently by the Governing Council of UNDP would be useful in that respect.

71. With regard to the report on operational activities of the United Nations system (A/43/426), her delegation would comment on only a few of the interesting issues covered therein. Firstly, it strongly supported the idea of organising a new round of country-oriented pilot activities based on host Government interest in a co-ordinated approach to programming (para. 81). However, it felt that, given the interest expressed by the UNDP Governing Council in joint programming in its decision 88/56, the exercise should not be limited to the programmes and bodies participating in the Joint Consultative Group on Policy.

72. Noting further, from paragraph 123, that the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) had felt that it would not be in the best interests of the other partners for it to join common premises, her delegation pointed out that UNHCR also dealt with the grey area between emergency assistance in the narrow sense and technical assistance. Common premises were a necessary requirement, though not the only one for improved co-ordination within the system. If any exceptions were to be made to the rule, the case would have to be very strong. It was therefore extremely important that all parts of the United Nations system should demonstrate a constructive attitude on the matter.

73. Her delegation looked forward to receiving the various reports requested from the Director-General in General Assembly resolution 42/196. It hoped that he would make specific, practical recommendations, take initiatives and not be afraid to suggest unorthodox solutions which might help to break the existing virtual deadlock, so that significant progress could be made.

74. With respect to the role of women, while noting with satisfaction that the approach of the organizations of the United Nations system had been to seek a balance between activities directed specifically towards women and mainstreaming, her delegation stressed the need, in the long run, for increased emphasis on the integration of women in the relevant aspects of all activities; in that connection, it welcomed the staff training mentioned in paragraph 112, and expressed the hope that the Director-General would be able to report further progress in 1989.

75. Lastly, she expressed the hope that environmental issues would be given increased attention. What was needed was not simply environmental protection in the traditional sense, but preservation of the environment and natural resources base in order to achieve sustainable economic growth.

(Mrs. Ahrenreich, Denmark)

76. Increased assistance and transfer of resources were required to strengthen the capacity of developing countries to promote sustainable development. The United Nations system could and should have a crucial role to play in that respect.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.