



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 35th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. NAVAJAS MOGRO (Bolivia)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 84: OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT (continued) (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 (continued) (A/43/426 and Add.1-3 and A/43/426/Add.1/Corr.1-E/1988/74 and Add.1-3 and E/1988/74/Add.1/Corr.1; A/C.2/43/L.8; E/1988/76)
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1. Mrs. CHALLENGOR (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) said that since assuming office nearly one year ago, the new Director-General of UNESCO, Mr. Federico Mayor, had taken concrete steps to revitalize UNESCO's structures and streamline its procedures to improve the effectiveness of its operational activities. The Director-General was considering the establishment of a bureau of technical co-operation which would be responsible for formulating general policies and co-ordinating procedures in the operational field, keep abreast of Member States' aid requirements, ensure co-ordination with funding sources and resident co-ordinators/representatives and co-ordinate the delivery of project experts, equipment and fellowships.

2. In addition, the Director-General planned to decentralize UNESCO's field representation more effectively, prepare sectoral needs assessments to facilitate country programming and donor meetings, strengthen the development support capacities of the organization's field offices, and strengthen project design capacity.

3. With the support of the Executive Board, the Director-General had also increased co-operation with other agencies of the system, particularly at the country level, to which end he had instituted various types of contacts. In 1990 UNESCO would host an international conference on essential education, a joint initiative with UNICEF and the World Bank. UNESCO's co-operation with UNFPA in project execution had nearly doubled during the preceding two years, increasing from \$5.2 million to \$8.9 million. UNESCO had also expanded co-operation with the African Development Bank, and similar arrangements were being negotiated with the Inter-American Development Bank and the Asian Development Bank. In contrast, UNESCO's participation in co-operative programmes with the World Bank had decreased, although consideration would be given in the future to new modalities for co-operation with that institution.

(Mrs. Challenor, UNESCO)

4. Ever since, 40 years earlier, UNESCO had co-sponsored with the Government of France the creation of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, UNESCO had accorded considerable attention to environmental issues and sustainable development, an interest which had been manifested, for example, in the Arid Lands Research Programme, the establishment of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, the International Hydrological Programme and the International Geological Correlation Programme, the responsibility entrusted to it by the Economic and Social Council to study natural disasters, and the creation of the Man and the Biosphere programme. In July 1988, the Director-General had convened two meetings on the environment and sustainable development prior to the Oslo Conference on the subject. UNESCO fully supported the findings of the Conference and administered programmes in virtually all of the priority areas it had defined. The Director-General had decided to appoint an independent external advisory group to monitor UNESCO's activities in the field and to advise him on future programmes. In addition, he would personally chair an internal intersectoral group to co-ordinate UNESCO's programmes on the environment, natural disasters and sustainable development. UNESCO also participated actively in the Steering Committee of the International Decade for Disaster Reduction, and one of the seven major programmes proposed for the third Medium-Term Plan for 1990-1995 dealt with science for progress and the environment.

5. UNESCO attached considerable importance to General Assembly resolution 42/196 and had taken steps to implement its provisions. With respect to the Jansson report on the case-studies on field co-ordination, the Executive Board had in the spring of 1988 adopted decision 129 EX/6.1.3, in which it had endorsed the report's recommendations. UNESCO was considering the possibility of placing educational advisers in selected UNDP resident representative offices on a trial basis. UNESCO had demonstrated great interest in technical co-operation among developing countries (TCDC). It was currently assisting the Government of Egypt, in co-operation with UNDP, in the preparation of an intergovernmental TCDC programming exercise, and was negotiating with Korea, Brazil, India, Nigeria and Kenya to assist them in organizing similar TCDC exercises in the field of UNESCO's competence. Significant progress had also been made by UNESCO in using the capacity of developing countries in project delivery, with the result that an estimated 70 per cent of the expertise used in projects administered by UNESCO came from the developing world. UNESCO also was increasing its procurement of equipment from developing countries.

6. With regard to the role of women in development, at the end of 1987, UNESCO had organized an international symposium on methods for the integration of women's issues in development planning, in order to evaluate the results of two pilot projects in Thailand and Senegal. Early in 1988 UNESCO had hired a new Co-ordinator for women's programmes, and efforts to increase the participation of women in all of the organization's activities were continuing.

7. UNESCO accorded critical importance to human resources development, and therefore enthusiastically endorsed the Amman statement of the North-South Round Table held recently in Jordan. That meeting had suggested that by the year 2000, human development would take on a new importance as competitiveness, productivity,

(Mrs. Challenor, UNESCO)

skilled labour and management capacity became even more important factors in development. It should be noted that, despite budgetary constraints, UNESCO had made an important contribution to the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development.

8. In its resolution 41/187, the General Assembly had proclaimed the period 1988-1997 the World Decade for Cultural Development, for which UNESCO would serve as the lead agency. UNESCO would be working with the international community during the Decade to develop procedures to take into account cultural factors in the implementation of United Nations development system technical assistance, since at times international experts faced difficulties in their work owing to their lack of familiarity with the social and cultural environment in which they were working. It could be that a cultural implications statement, along with considerations about the impact on the environment and on women, should be an element in project design.

9. General Assembly resolution 42/196 provided major guidelines that should occupy attention during the coming few years, and in that connection, she drew attention to several significant studies to be undertaken by the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation, UNDP and the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination pursuant to that resolution.

10. Lastly, she assured delegations that UNESCO stood ready to co-operate fully in order to ensure that the technical co-operation system addressed the priorities established by the national plans of the developing countries, and she emphasized that the maintenance of peace required not only the containment of military aggression, but also the attainment of economic justice.

11. Mr. EMENYI (Nigeria) said that the reduction in other types of resource flows to the developing countries had made operations' activities for development even more necessary. The States Members of the United Nations had strongly supported those activities, shown by the general increase in pledges for them in recent years. In view of the fact that most developing countries were experiencing severe economic problems, it was possible that, in the years ahead, the developing countries would increasingly rely on assistance from the United Nations system. The system should therefore improve its operational machinery for dealing with socio-economic problems on a medium- and long-term basis. General Assembly resolution 42/196, whose provisions the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation was already endeavouring to implement, was a significant step in that direction.

12. In view of the importance of adopting practical concerted measures to solve the problems arising within the framework of operational activities, the case-studies on those activities, collected in the Jansson report, were noteworthy. However, the United Nations agencies differed on some of the issues raised in the report, such as the central funding role of UNDP, country-level co-ordination and co-operation with the World Bank and regional banks. Increased co-ordination was therefore needed among the United Nations agencies in the implementation of field programmes.

(Mr. Emenyi, Nigeria)

13. Nigeria valued its relationship with UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and other United Nations agencies and intended to continue co-operating actively with them, particularly on projects to cushion the impact of the harsh structural adjustment policies which it had been necessary to adopt in recent years.

14. In that regard, UNICEF deserved special mention for its child survival and development activities and its activities in food security, the participation of women in development, education, immunisation and social mobilisation. The Bamako Initiative was also very praiseworthy. Its aim was to extend primary child health care, encouraging the involvement of rural communities in the implementation of the programme.

15. He reiterated the need to integrate the programmes and activities of the international agencies into the recipient countries' development plans and to tap local skills and experience effectively. It was to be hoped that the next triennial policy review would help to identify ways of enhancing the effectiveness of the operational activities with a view to meeting the social and economic needs of the developing countries.

16. Mr. GEBREMEDHIN (Ethiopia), after reaffirming Ethiopia's interest in the operational activities for development of the United Nations system, because of their useful catalytic role, emphasised the importance of General Assembly resolution 42/196, whose objective was to promote the leadership of the United Nations system in development and international economic co-operation. That resolution appeared to go further than previous efforts towards co-ordination, decentralization and harmonisation of policies and procedures, emphasising both the implementation of projects by the recipient Governments themselves and the enhancement of national capacities. Its implementation was therefore of paramount importance. As to the role of the resident co-ordinators, Ethiopia supported measures to strengthen that role, but reiterated the validity of General Assembly resolution 2688 (XXV) with respect to the mandate of UNDP.

17. As to increasing the effectiveness of operational activities for development, he believed that they must also be made more flexible and simplified, while recognizing the need for joint programming to take full account of the policies and objectives of the recipient countries.

18. His delegation agreed with those who believed that the operational activities to be undertaken in the 1990s must be different from those carried out in recent decades. However, it did not share the view that such activities must be reoriented because, in its opinion, the needs and priorities of the developing countries had not changed very much. Institutional and human resources development and the transfer of know-how and technology remained the essential needs of the developing countries. That did not mean that Ethiopia was opposed to introducing reforms or to adapting to new circumstances.

19. Lastly, he expressed satisfaction at the level of contributions for 1989. His delegation agreed with the Administrator of UNDP that the increase in the level of

(Mr. Gebremedhin, Ethiopia)

resources was a vote of confidence in the work of the agencies involved in development.

20. Mr. SALES (Mozambique) joined those who had welcomed the favourable outcome of the Pledging Conference, which had registered a 6 per cent increase compared with the previous Conference. That rise was encouraging, particularly at a time when the developing countries were confronting tremendous difficulties and desperately needed external assistance, especially grants and untied concessional aid. Paradoxically, in recent years new issues of global concern had emerged and been included in the agenda of the United Nations and various other organisations of the system. In that regard, it was necessary clearly to delineate the focal point within the system and the responsibilities and tasks incumbent upon each organization. It was also imperative to make substantial new resources available, so that the system had the necessary means to take action. Consequently, his delegation would consider it to be a matter of concern if the scant resources which had initially been programmed to meet pressing needs and to respond to other priorities defined by the developing countries were earmarked for "new priorities".

21. In 1987 the General Assembly had adopted resolution 42/196, which had marked the beginning of the intense preparation for the next triennial policy review of operational activities. The first reports drafted by the Office of the Director-General contained useful information. It was to be hoped that the other reports would provide a more comprehensive picture of the situation, making it possible to formulate opinions on the various proposals which had been tabled. He particularly emphasized the quality of the report contained in document E/1988/76. The current year was basically a period of transition. While the Secretariat had already been entrusted with the preparation of most of the relevant documentation, Mozambique was ready to participate in informal exchanges of views or in discussions on any issue not covered under resolution 42/196.

22. Mozambique believed that UNDP should take immediate action in respect of human resources development, particularly in view of the fact that adjustment programmes and other reforms had a negative social impact on the recipient countries, including growing urban unemployment and reduced budget allocations for education, health and food subsidies. As the central funding body for operational activities, UNDP should heed the concerns expressed by UNICEF, ILO and other agencies and should be prepared to provide financial and other assistance for carrying out studies and evaluations and for holding fund-raising meetings with the donors to address those serious problems.

23. UNICEF's "Grand Alliance for Children", whose main objective was to promote activities for child survival and development, was a praiseworthy initiative. UNICEF had always demonstrated its solidarity with Mozambique, a country where systematic external attempts at destabilization undermined development and social progress, with grave repercussions, particularly on children. As a result of the publication of a book entitled Children on the Front Line and the recent holding of a symposium in Harare, the world had become more keenly aware of the plight of the children in the region.

(Mr. Sales, Mozambique)

24. His delegation acknowledged the significant efforts made by the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), which were beginning to yield positive results, and praised the Fund's increased work in Africa as reflected in the establishment of a strategy for sub-Saharan Africa. In that context, priority should be given to the provision of resources to support population activities and the training of national staff in project formulation, monitoring and follow-up.

25. At the approach of the 1990s, it was becoming clear that sooner or later plans would have to be made for the future. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) had already created a task force, and UNICEF and UNFPA had submitted a number of interesting ideas. The preparation of the international development strategy for the fourth United Nations development decade would dominate the work of the Organisation for the next two years. His delegation called upon all bodies within the United Nations system to participate actively in the preparation of the new development strategy and stressed the importance of an integrated approach using all the co-ordinating mechanisms available to guarantee that the United Nations development system could attain the goals set forth in the fourth international development strategy during the next decade.

26. Mr. MacARTHUR (United States of America) was pleased that the Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (Operational Activities), the Joint Consultative Group on Policy and the Office of the Director-General were collaborating on a number of interrelated critical issues, such as country programming, decentralisation of operational activities to the field level and strengthening of the role of the resident co-ordinators. His delegation would like to have the Economic and Social Council informed periodically of progress achieved in developing an integrated response to United Nations resolution 42/196 on those issues.

27. The United States agreed that there would be considerable advantages in moving the secretariat of the Consultative Committee to New York and integrating it in the Office of the Director-General. It would also support increased participation in the work of the Committee by senior officials directly responsible for the management of operational activities and agreed that the Consultative Committee should continue to emphasize issues that would enhance co-ordination at the field level. However, a system-wide focus should address not only the co-ordination and integration of field activities but also the overall collaborative relationship and division of labour between UNDP and sectoral agencies, at Headquarters as well as in the field.

28. Therefore, his delegation was pleased that the Consultative Committee had decided to establish a task force to elaborate agency views on agency support costs, in the broader context of the evolving relationship between UNDP, executing agencies and Governments. It was to be hoped that the task force, as well as the expert group to be established by UNDP to study the same question, would examine all relevant issues in the broadest possible terms, bearing in mind the need to build up the capacity of recipient Governments to manage United Nations-assisted

(Mr. MacArthur, United States)

development programmes. That could best be achieved by decentralizing to the field level the design and implementation of United Nations development assistance so as to facilitate and encourage greater Government participation in those processes and a more effective transfer of technical and management expertise from the United Nations system to recipient Governments.

29. Thus, the problem of agency support costs was closely linked to the other important issues addressed by General Assembly resolution 43/196, such as the central funding role of UNDP and the need to strengthen the role of the resident co-ordinators. For example, UNDP's central funding role within the United Nations development system could be used to encourage an integrated approach not only to the country programming of United Nations development system resources, but also to the provision of policy, technical and management advice to Governments. Sectoral and technical advice, however, was generally considered to be a non-operational activity of specialized agencies. That was a false distinction, and his delegation therefore suggested that consideration be given to making the resident co-ordinators responsible for ensuring that all developmental activities at the country level were properly co-ordinated.

30. It was to be hoped that the examples he had mentioned would show that the negotiation of new arrangements for agency support costs involved issues which should be addressed as part of an integrated response to General Assembly resolution 42/196. It was therefore essential that the efforts of the Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (Operational Activities) and the Joint Consultative Group on Policy be synchronized with the work of the UNDP expert group on agency support costs and the parallel Consultative Committee task force, which would not be completed until the spring of 1990. Therefore, it made sense that the Director-General should not be expected to submit a final, comprehensive response to resolution 42/196 until the 1989 summer session of the Economic and Social Council.

31. Mr. JAYASHINGHE (Sri Lanka) said that one of the main purposes of the discussion was to identify the areas in which operational activities must be further improved in order to increase the effectiveness of the agencies concerned. It was also important to understand what changes might be necessary to cope with the challenges that had emerged over the years, particularly in the 1980s, and that were likely to continue into the 1990s.

32. During recent years, the annual increase in the flow of external resources to developing countries had been limited to 2 per cent in real terms. Although official development assistance had increased, particularly to the least developed countries and to those most seriously affected, the overall level of such assistance remained unsatisfactory. Those OECD countries that had registered economic growth had failed to allocate 0.7 per cent of their GNP, as agreed, to official development assistance; during the 1980s, their contributions had remained at approximately 0.3 per cent of GNP. During the period 1980-1986, export credits had fallen sharply - from 13 per cent to 2 per cent - and private capital flows to developing countries had fallen from 51 per cent to 32 per cent of the total inflow of resources.

(Mr. Jayasinghe, Sri Lanka)

33. Other developments on the international economic scene had further restricted the capacity of developing countries to execute meaningful development programmes. Among them were the debt and debt-servicing burdens, the high cost of credit, low commodity prices coupled with an adverse balance of trade, fluctuating exchange rates and the adoption of an increasing number of protectionist policies in the developed countries. The result had been a net annual transfer of capital resources amounting to \$US 60,000 million from the developing countries to developed countries and an annual debt and debt-servicing burden of \$US 150,000 million. In some of the least developed countries socio-economic conditions had further deteriorated since the late 1970s as a result of drought, famine, floods, cyclones and other natural disasters that had inflicted untold misery on millions of people.

34. Consequently, the agencies must explore new methods of handling new types of challenges. Some of those challenges were so serious that they might lead to political, economic and social instability, not only in the countries concerned but also at the regional and global levels. The solution was to mobilize additional resources as well as to make adjustments and improvements within the agencies.

35. The time had come for the agencies to consider themselves as part of a global strategy to combat underdevelopment and other economic and social evils. Given that the activities of the agencies must complement national and international efforts, greater integration must be achieved among all participants - donor and recipient Governments, multilateral agencies, non-governmental organisations and other institutions such as the mass media. That would improve the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of projects and programmes and also avoid duplication of work in the developing regions.

36. In addition to recognizing the importance of greater co-ordination at global and national levels, his delegation considered that there was also a need for greater co-ordination between agencies, both at Headquarters and in the field. It welcomed the Director-General's suggestion that a co-ordinating body should be established at Headquarters and was of the view that the membership should include a few political representatives as well as representatives and experts from the agencies. The time had also come to re-examine the mandates of some of the agencies. Over the past few decades political, economic and social trends had changed tremendously, as had priorities. In the 1970s, economic and social issues had begun to take a more prominent place in the activities of the international community, and an emphatic appeal had been made for the remedying of certain imbalances and injustices in international economic activities. However, despite the efforts made during the 1970s and 1980s those problems remained unresolved, and the difficulties facing the developing countries had become more acute. Some countries were now facing the virtual breakdown of their economic and social systems, which could have far-reaching repercussions on their political systems. Accordingly, there was an urgent need to re-examine the mandates of some of the agencies with a view to bringing them into line with the new priorities of the international community, and particularly of the developing countries.

37. Finally, his delegation was happy to hear that there had been a substantial increase in pledges at the recent Pledging Conference.

38. Mr. LOOS (World Bank) said that, in the final analysis, development was about human aspirations and the individual's realization of his or her own potential. Consequently, the central aim of the World Bank was to reduce poverty, which was preventing a billion people from having even minimally acceptable standards of living. As the President of the World Bank, Mr. Conable, had said recently, to allow every fifth human being on the planet to suffer such an existence was a moral outrage; furthermore, it was bad economics, a terrible waste of precious development resources.

39. He had gone on to say that action was required on five major fronts to: secure economic growth; combat hunger; curb excessive population growth; invest in education; and protect the interests of the poor during the economic adjustment process.

40. The inescapable imperative in the drama of development was the question of what measures must be taken to provide a more favourable environment for growth in both the developed and the developing countries, and what must be done to stem rising poverty in developing countries. The concept of human dignity was one that must be defended, by helping those men, women and children whose lives and dreams were being cut short by degrading poverty.

41. It was essential to take direct action to combat the problem of hunger, by increasing agricultural production and adjusting economic policies to raise incomes.

42. In sub-Saharan Africa more than 100 million people - one person in four - was not getting enough to eat. The Bank was working in conjunction with African Governments, official and non-governmental donors, and other international institutions to make food security a reality.

43. Rapid population growth was a serious threat to sustainable economic growth and a prime cause of poverty. The World Bank was committed to a significant increase in lending for population programmes, many of which emphasized child spacing for maternal and child health.

44. Women were often a forgotten factor. High fertility, poor health conditions, inadequate education and limited job opportunities restricted their full participation in society, and the World Bank had thus identified women's issues as a priority area.

45. Although the productivity of an educated work force was the fundamental basis for economic growth, investment in education had declined as the need for it had increased; currently 100 million children were not attending school. Consequently, the World Bank was also giving priority to education.

46. Technological capabilities had become increasingly important to developing countries. As the developed world moved towards a shift in its composition of industry and imports from the developing world, the developing countries would need to alter their approaches to science and technology and their role in development.

(Mr. Loos, World Bank)

The World Bank recognized the importance of that fact, and was seeking to come to terms with the problem.

47. An increasingly significant item in the Bank's lending was structural-adjustment lending, namely, rapid disbursement of balance-of-payments support to countries that agreed to modify specific economic policies. In some cases the adjustment programmes might be accompanied by a reduction in living standards, incomes and consumption for some segments of the population. However, most of such social costs were transitional. Policy reform was in the long-term interests of the poor, whereas distortions and misconceived economic policies harmed them more than other segments of the population. Social conditions in many developing countries had begun to deteriorate well before serious adjustment efforts had been undertaken, a fact which highlighted the importance of domestic political support for anti-poverty programmes.

48. In preparing adjustment programmes an attempt must be made not only to ensure that social expenditures were cost-effective and focused on the poor, but also to compensate the poor directly, particularly in nutrition and employment.

49. Another central question was environmental degradation. Poverty was a major cause of such degradation, but environmental neglect destroyed assets vital to life itself. The Bank had increased its assistance to programmes to preserve biological diversity, control air and water pollution, improve water supply and sanitation and help countries to develop the capacity to manage industrial hazards. The urgent need to break the vicious cycle of poverty and environmental degradation was self-evident: desertification in just one African country, Mali, had drawn the Sahara 350 km. farther south in the past 20 years.

50. The debt problem called also for urgent and effective action. The Bank's strategy in the case of the heavily-indebted middle-income countries was designed to help them to restore growth so that they could gradually reduce their debt ratios and increase per capita income. It included increased lending for structural and sectoral adjustment, sustained investment financing, and greater assistance in mobilizing financial support from commercial and official lenders.

51. Africa required flexible assistance, taking account of the human dimension and social factors, without losing sight of the importance of long-term sustainable development. Accordingly, the Bank had recently initiated a Special Programme of Assistance for Africa, featuring increased allocation of funds and accelerated disbursements from the eighth replenishment of the International Development Association (IDA), amounting to some \$US 6 billion over the three-year period 1988-1990, debt relief on more concessional terms from official creditors, and a substantial increase in quick-disbursing concessional resources from donors to co-finance IDA-supported adjustment operations, amounting to some \$US 6.5 billion over the next three years.

52. While many of the Asian countries had made substantial progress in recent years, they still accounted for the largest proportion of the world's population

(Mr. Loos, World Bank)

living in dire poverty. It was necessary, therefore, to continue to assist those countries in their fight against poverty and in the development of their basic infrastructure.

53. Nevertheless, current resource flows were generally insufficient to meet the minimum needs of the developing countries, and growth could not be sustained unless it was adequately financed. As Mr. Conable had pointed out, the Bank was committed to bearing its share of the burden and, during the current fiscal year, both new Bank Group commitments and gross disbursements had reached unprecedented levels.

54. Mr. AL-SAADY (Oman) expressed satisfaction with the activities of the United Nations through its specialized agencies in the field of development, and underlined the very positive contribution they made to the strengthening of technical co-operation among States.

55. Oman was convinced of the need to find better ways to exchange sectoral and technical knowledge and experience, above all with regard to problems of particular concern, such as the deterioration of the environment, disregard for human development, mounting demographic pressure, and increased poverty.

56. His delegation considered international and multilateral co-operation essential in providing fresh impetus to the North-South dialogue, taking account of the interdependence of countries and of their common objectives.

57. Oman welcomed the international climate of political détente, and trusted that it would help to maintain balance in the world economy.

58. It reaffirmed its support for the proposal by the Group of 77 to convene in 1990 a special session of the General Assembly to discuss the most appropriate means of reactivating economic growth and development, on the basis of effective measures to remedy the critical economic situation prevailing throughout most of the world but, in particular, in the African countries.

59. Lastly, he considered it important for the organizations of the United Nations system to continue their efforts in development and in other fields, thus making it possible to achieve greater integration of operational activities and to draw on the extensive experience already acquired.

60. Mr. PINZON (Colombia) acknowledged the intensive activity of the bodies responsible for implementing the individual development programmes. Almost every part of the world was going through a transition period and experiencing the winds of change. In the light of recent political changes, it was appropriate to strengthen the financial and administrative aspects of operational activities for development throughout the United Nations system. Such activities depended currently on the contributions of a few countries, including Colombia, which was convinced of the importance of multilateralism.

(Mr. Pinson, Colombia)

61. The Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation had indicated a number of priority areas in which international co-operation should be strengthened. Those areas should be taken into account in the preparation of the introduction to the medium-term plan, and of the strategy for the fourth United Nations development decade. Both of the documents in question, together with the resolutions and decisions adopted during the current session, would provide a solid basis for the preparation of specific programmes of action to implement thoroughly structured operational activities for development. He agreed with the Administrator of UNDP that the system required the collaboration of suitable Professional staff, and shared his concern with regard to the difficulty of retaining highly qualified personnel.

62. Praising the operation of the World Food Programme, which in recent years had been providing unprecedented quantities of food aid for development projects, he said that allocations to such projects should be regarded not as hand-outs, but as fundamental contributions to the development of the recipient countries.

63. Colombia firmly supported the activities of UNICEF and of the United Nations Population Fund, and was the foremost Latin American contributor. He emphasized, however, that the support of all the Member States was needed to meet current challenges and to provide a positive legacy for future generations.

64. Miss NCHAPI (Lesotho) said that her Government continued to attach great importance to operational activities for development, as it had demonstrated in announcing its modest contribution at the 1988 Pledging Conference for Development Activities. The adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 42/196 confirmed the significance of such activities. It was encouraging, therefore, to learn from document A/43/426 that measures had begun to be adopted in implementation of that resolution, which emphasized the need for a genuine and substantial increase in the flow of concessional resources on a predictable, continuous and assured basis. Nevertheless, ODA disbursements were still well below targeted levels, and further efforts were required on the part of OECD countries whose contributions fell short of expectations. In 1987 significant measures had been adopted to enhance flows of financial resources to Africa, especially the least developed countries, through the creation of structural adjustment facilities. Her Government had observed with concern, however, the failure of such measures to meet the requirements of countries which were making adjustment efforts without receiving the expected external support.

65. Although many of the specific issues raised in resolution 42/196 could be dealt with separately, several of them were interrelated and called for an integrated response. Accordingly, the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation was considering the possibility of undertaking a broader, action-oriented study of certain key aspects covered by the resolution. Her delegation was hopeful that the study would embrace as many developing countries as possible in order to give a true picture of the situation.

(Miss Nchapi, Lesotho)

66. Paragraphs 13 and 14 of the resolution were of particular interest to her delegation since they dealt with the activities of the governing bodies of organizations of the United Nations system with regard to implementation of the Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990, and of the recommendations of the mid-term review. In that connection, she reiterated the need to grant more assistance to the African countries for implementation of the Programme of Action and of the Substantial New Programme of Action for the 1980s for the Least Developed Countries.

67. With regard to the role of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as the central funding agency, it was important to note that the broad mandate of UNDP, as set out in the 1970 consensus, was based on the assumption that the Programme would continue to handle a large proportion of the overall resources available for international technical co-operation. However, that only applied to recipient countries with a limited number of programmes, and not to the other developing countries. In Lesotho, UNDP played a useful role as the central funding mechanism for operational activities, and a very commendable catalytic role in that country's economic and social development. Since the situation differed from country to country, further information must be obtained from Member States, so as to make it possible to propose measures which should be adopted with a view to strengthening the role of UNDP as the central funding and co-ordinating agency. In that regard, her delegation supported the view that co-ordination within the United Nations system should reinforce - not replace - co-ordination at the national level.

68. Regarding the strengthening of developing countries' capacity to co-ordinate international co-operation and assistance with their priorities and needs, she noted, in paragraph 33 of the Director-General's report, the intention to ask the Programme to review the impact of its activities, with particular regard to human resources development, institution building and transfer of technology. That area was of the utmost importance to developing countries because they bore the primary responsibility for co-ordinating international co-operation and assistance. However, the recipient countries often encountered problems in carrying out that task, and her Government therefore commended the decision of the Governing Council of UNDP to strengthen its staffing in Africa. Lesotho hoped that the new staff would establish contact with the ministries concerned in order to reinforce the capacity of developing countries in that very crucial area of co-ordination.

69. The decision of the UNDP Governing Council to establish a Management Development Programme was particularly relevant to Lesotho. Since that country was carrying out a structural adjustment programme, it had already requested that a mission should be sent to Lesotho under that Programme.

70. The information contained in the report of the Director-General on the responses of various specialized agencies (A/43/426/Add.3) would be extremely useful for the implementation of General Assembly resolution 42/196. It was interesting to note the different points of view expressed by the governing bodies on various issues raised in the Jansson report. A common element in all the responses was the view that the recipient countries deserved priority consideration

(Miss Nchapi, Lesotho)

in all cases. The UNDP country programme was based primarily on the national development plan of a recipient country, which bore the responsibility for co-ordinating all external assistance. Since the situation differed from country to country, Lesotho believed that progress could be achieved through a commitment to reach agreed goals.

71. Her Government supported the work of UNICEF and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) because of their exceptional importance to developing countries. In order for UNICEF and UNFPA to meet the needs of those countries, greater resources were required. Lesotho called upon the States Members of the United Nations to make the necessary contributions in order to enable those agencies to perform their mandates smoothly.

72. Finally, in view of the immense task which the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation had before him in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 42/196, her delegation welcomed the decision to create a unit for operational activities to deal exclusively with that task.

73. Mr. DEVOLDER (Belgium) said that operational activities for development encompassed a very broad area and had direct and specific implications for all States Members of the United Nations, particularly the developing countries.

74. His delegation had already referred to the report of the Director-General (A/43/426) at the second regular session of 1988 of the Economic and Social Council. It now wished to refer to several aspects which, in its opinion, were very important. First of all, Belgium reaffirmed its support for the implementation of General Assembly resolution 42/196, containing two basic principles which should govern all operational activities for development: the central role of the General Assembly and of the Economic and Social Council as forums for overall policy guidance and co-ordination of operational activities, and the central role of UNDP with respect to funding and co-ordination of technical co-operation activities. The importance of those two principles, at a time when the international community was returning to multilateralism and the United Nations was at the centre of international politics, could not be over-emphasized.

75. In relative terms, UNDP assistance had diminished in comparison with the assistance from other bilateral or multilateral sources. Belgium hoped that, as a result of the review of the role of UNDP as the central funding agency, the reasons for that phenomenon would be determined, and that practical conclusions could be drawn to put an end to it. In that regard, Belgium had already pointed out that one of the reasons was the increased administrative costs. It therefore attached great importance to the study of mechanisms for the reimbursement of support costs.

76. It should be recalled that the role of UNDP as the central funding agency was only one aspect of a broader problem, which consisted in determining the future role of UNDP, in accordance with the countries' wishes. That was the key question, and the time had come to make an assessment of past activities in order to guarantee a better future for UNDP.

(Mr. Devolder, Belgium)

77. With respect to certain, more specific aspects of operational activities in general and of UNDP in particular, his Government underscored the importance of the role of the resident co-ordinator and of the efficient utilization of country programming, which had the same objective: to ensure co-operation and co-ordination among the various agencies of the United Nations system in the various countries. Country programming should culminate in the establishment of a frame of reference to guarantee the coherence of the technical co-operation activities of all the organizations of the United Nations system, and at the same time to facilitate the co-ordination work of the Governments of the recipient countries. His delegation considered that the role of the resident co-ordinator should be strengthened, precisely because that would also strengthen inter-agency co-ordination and co-operation. The co-ordinator should have the necessary authority to avoid, as far as possible, duplication of effort and to ensure the complementarity of development activities.

78. His delegation welcomed the decision of the Governing Council of UNDP, at its thirty-fifth session, to establish the Management Development Programme. It also wished to express its satisfaction with the current process of reflection and adjustment, and hoped that it would lead to the more dynamic and effective functioning of the operational activities for development of the United Nations system.

79. Mr. RAICHEV (Bulgaria) stressed the importance of the United Nations system for operational activities in assisting the developing countries, and reaffirmed that UNDP bore the primary responsibility for defining the basic trends in technical assistance within the United Nations system, in accordance with the basic principles of universality, voluntariness, and sovereignty of recipient countries, as laid down in the 1970 consensus and recently confirmed in General Assembly resolution 42/196.

80. The positive impact of the improved international situation had already been demonstrated by the encouraging results of the thirty-fifth session of the UNDP Governing Council, and of the recent United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities.

81. UNDP must foster environmental safety activities. It deserved full credit for its work in combating AIDS and the production and use of drugs, and in developing human resources and providing assistance to national liberation movements and the African countries. However, recently, UNDP activities had accorded too much significance to the role of the private sector in the socio-economic development of young nations. A more balanced and objective criterion must be adopted for the distribution of UNDP resources among projects in the public and private sectors. The sovereign right of each recipient Government to co-ordinate and direct the assistance provided to it must be respected. His delegation wished to reaffirm that the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council should be the heart of policy co-ordination and leadership in operational activities.

(Mr. Raichev, Bulgaria)

82. Bulgaria greatly esteemed the activities of UNICEF, whose purpose was to mitigate the negative consequences of adjustment policies and economic hardship in the developing countries. Of great importance in that context were the programme in the medium-term plan for the period 1987-1991 entitled "Adjustment with a human face" and the four objectives it contained for providing health assistance to children. Equally outstanding was UNICEF's involvement in the drafting of a convention on the rights of the child.
83. Referring to the restructuring of the regional activities and offices, he said that rationalization should not work to the detriment of the Geneva Office or links with national committees and non-governmental organisations.
84. In conclusion, his delegation wished to reiterate its support for the activities of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in helping the developing countries to solve their demographic problems.
85. Mr. DLAMINI (Swaziland) stressed the importance of the United Nations system's operational activities for development. His delegation welcomed the encouraging results of the recent pledging conference, which had witnessed an upward trend in voluntary contributions. The economic ills afflicting the developing countries stemmed from the imbalances in the world economic system and, hence, their solution required concerted efforts by the entire international community in a multilateral context.
86. The case studies on the functioning of operational activities for development, undertaken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 41/171, had proved to be very useful. However, because they represented only a small sampling, they had revealed the need for a broader approach. The report of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation (A/43/426) was also useful, and his delegation agreed with the conclusions contained in document A/43/426/Add.3. The establishment of a unit for operational activities in the Director-General's office represented a very encouraging step.
87. His delegation wished to commend UNDP for its role as a central funding agency and for its support of the development efforts of low-income countries. His delegation welcomed the increase in UNDP resources as a result of the recent pledging conference, which would improve the assistance UNDP could provide to developing countries. Particularly encouraging was the decision by the UNDP Governing Council to increase staffing for Africa with the addition of 183 posts for economic planning and co-ordination for emergency operations, strengthen management in the field offices and set up advisory teams for Africa designed to strengthen the ability of Governments to implement structural adjustment programmes. However, much remained to be done in order to enhance UNDP's responsiveness to the needs of the countries it served.
88. UNFPA efforts to control the rate of world population growth were also deserving of praise. Swaziland was one of the direct beneficiaries of the UNFPA programme which, in addition to providing assistance to strengthen the maternal and

(Mr. Dlamini, Swaziland)

child health and family planning programme, particularly in the rural areas, sent experts to train health personnel and build rural health centres. It also provided various types of technical support to the public health unit. UNFPA had conducted a comprehensive assessment of Swaziland's needs, which had served as a basis for deciding what assistance the country would be offered in future. No less important was the complementary role played by UNICEF, which was working hard to promote the development and welfare of children in Swaziland.

89. Dr. MUTALIK (World Health Organization) said that 27 October had been the date of both the fortieth anniversary of WHO and a discussion in the General Assembly on the prevention and control of AIDS. The statements made on that occasion by numerous representatives from all regions of the world, the President of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General and the Director-General of WHO had highlighted, as never before, the crucial importance of health as an integral part of development, from the perspective of both policy and operational activities for development.

90. For over four decades, and particularly in the past 10 years, WHO had earnestly strived to translate into action, through operational activities, global policies of great importance to human health. WHO's unique structure, particularly its regional decentralization and effective presence at the country level, had been a great asset in its work. The offices of the WHO representatives were generally located within the Ministries of Health and the representative functioned as technical adviser to the Ministry, with the objective of achieving harmonious integration between national priority programmes and technical co-operation from WHO. It was perhaps that combination of factors which had obviated most of the co-ordination problems confronting the United Nations system. The harmonious interface had made possible such historic achievements as the eradication of smallpox, the implementation of an effective strategy against tuberculosis, the containment of malaria, the near elimination of onchocerciasis and the current programmes to combat AIDS.

91. Furthermore, on the strength of the results achieved by WHO - and in co-operation with UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP, the World Bank and other agencies, and numerous non-governmental organizations - it had been possible to set such important goals as universal immunization for all children and the elimination of poliomyelitis by the year 2000.

92. It should also be borne in mind that, very often, co-ordination of operational activities at country level was simplified because a large proportion of the funds for such activities was derived from WHO's regular budget. Over 65 per cent of the WHO budget was earmarked for regional and country-level activities. That did not mean that there were no problems or that the current situation was ideal; indeed, the problems currently facing WHO at country level were enormous. The recently published seventh Report on the World Health Situation, used as a tool for evaluating the Global Strategy for Health for All by the Year 2000 clearly showed that while the Strategy had made great strides possible, and primary health care - its key component - had taken deep roots in most countries of the world, much remained to be done in order to achieve the target set.

(Dr. Mutalik, WHO)

93. The health infrastructure in most of the developing countries continued to be inadequate. Population growth, which had its own health implications, was a serious problem. In particular, a dramatically fast-growing urban population had resulted in the rise of peri-urban zones of poverty and ill health, with serious socio-economic consequences. Likewise, the overall world situation had worsened in terms of factors crucial to development like literacy, the food situation, the status of women, malnutrition, poverty, and AIDS - elements which were all major determinants of health. While steady progress had been achieved in controlling communicable diseases and diagnosing and treating many non-communicable diseases, diseases attributable to life-styles and behaviour (such as obesity, the sequelae of smoking, alcoholism, drug addiction and, recently, AIDS), were major health threats. The world health situation also showed increasing disparities between the developing and developed countries. Dramatic differences, for instance, in life expectancy, infant mortality, the prevalence of certain diseases and malnutrition existed and were widening. Also, the changing health spectrum in most countries had brought to the fore the situation of the elderly.

94. All those factors underlined the importance of global interdependence in health and the imperative need for intersectoral co-operation and co-ordination within the United Nations system. WHO had done its best to engage in such co-operation with its partners, not only within the United Nations family but also outside it. The effective joint co-ordination of health policies by UNICEF and WHO had stood the test of time and was harmonizing the work of the two organisations. WHO co-operation with UNFPA was evident in every region and country where the two organizations worked together closely. WHO and the World Bank had a number of joint initiatives, including the Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases and the recently begun Safe Motherhood Programme.

95. With UNDP, WHO had historically co-operated closely, and in terms of operational activities the now well-known WHO/UNDP Alliance to Combat AIDS had proven to be a most valuable mechanism for facilitating integration of national AIDS policies and programmes into national social and economic development programmes. Among other things, that mechanism showed how the role of the United Nations resident co-ordinator could be played to best advantage in sectoral operational programmes. WHO was also working closely with many other agencies of the United Nations system. WHO experience had shown that co-ordination worked exceedingly well when concerned organizations worked together, appreciating the advantages offered by each one and the complementarity of the parts they played in operational activities.

96. WHO had reached the conclusion that it was crucial to move away from the traditional project approach and to integrate programme contributions by agencies into national priority programmes. That had implications for central funding, an issue that the Committee was also considering. The validity of central funding concept depended entirely on the specific circumstances and needs. In the health sector, where technical inputs from global and regional offices were harmonized in the joint formulation of a programme budget at the country level by the United Nations and the national authorities, central funding could be counter-productive.

(Dr. Mutalik, WHO)

97. The world health prospects left no doubt as to the tremendous challenges that would have to be faced in the 1990s. As the Director-General of WHO had stated before the General Assembly, WHO experience over 40 years had taught that when people acted with determination and understanding in pursuit of goals they deemed essential, success was achieved. Many of the world's major health problems and many premature deaths were preventable through modifications of human behaviour that did not involve much cost. The know-how and technology were there, but they had to be transformed into effective action at the community level. At the current time, parents and families could save two thirds of the 14 million children who died every year, if they were properly informed and motivated.

98. In the years to come, WHO would continue making those challenges the main focus of its operational activities in order to achieve the goal of health for all by the year 2000.

99. Mr. CAPRIROLO (Bolivia) said that operational activities for development were important because they were the most practical and tangible way for international co-operation and multilateral action to contribute to the development of the developing countries.

100. The results of the latest United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities reflected renewed confidence, especially in UNDP activities. A real increase in the flow of funds on a continuous, predictable basis was the basic requirement for further enhancement of the important role UNDP played in development. Contribution by countries of 0.7 per cent of their gross national product to official development assistance should be achieved by means of multinational programmes. Bolivia was very grateful to those countries which contributed.

101. From a realistic point of view, there were three major problems in making multilateral co-operation in operational activities more effective. First, in the face of an external environment hostile to the developing countries, where indebtedness cancelled out all possibilities of development, and in the face of scarce financial resources and discouraging prospects for export earnings that might be allocated to development, the scarce but valuable multilateral assistance channeled through operational activities must be put to best use and jealously guarded, particularly through better co-ordination. Imperfect co-ordination resulted in under-utilization or wastage of scarce funds and both donor and recipient countries as well as international organizations were guilty in that respect. The General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council must be reaffirmed as central forums for policy guidance of operational activities, and their role in co-ordinating the entire system must also be reaffirmed.

102. Secondly, with a new decade in the offing that presented formidable problems for international economic co-operation, and given a situation that was so changeable and so different from country to country, it was necessary to establish an integrated process for setting priorities in order to resolve those problems. That would require adopting an integrated approach in which global and national

(Mr. Capriolo, Bolivia)

priorities were harmonized and in which the focus would be the basic goal of reactivating the development of developing countries. The operational activities of the United Nations system should be carried out in that context and they should increasingly become an integral component of the process of structural change in the developing countries, which should be the focus of concerted efforts by all concerned.

103. Thirdly, the basic principles of international co-operation which had come to be established must continue to be the essential corner-stone underlying the continuing process by which multilateral responses were adapted to actual situations and changed. At issue specifically was the universal character and voluntary nature of the Programme, the contingent relationship between contributions and the benefits that resulted from them, the multilateralism that guaranteed neutrality and country programming that respected the priorities set by the recipient country. The implementation of General Assembly resolution 42/196 would make it possible to review ways of improving international economic co-operation and giving it greater impact, and of perfecting the capacity to respond to a changing set of conditions.

104. In the process of economic reactivation and development, international co-operation faced not only the problem of the external debt and the scarcity of resources for development but also the need for improvement in areas, including operational activities, where there were still shortcomings.

105. UNDP had become the Programme with the greatest capability within the United Nations system owing to its central function of financing and co-ordinating international co-operation, a function which must be respected and reinforced.

106. One of the basic tasks for the 1990s was ensuring greater discipline on the part of both the donor community and the countries receiving technical co-operation. In order to make best use of multilateral aid, the institutional dimension of co-ordination should be consolidated. To achieve that, it was necessary to define in practice the Economic and Social Council's co-ordinating function with regard to operational activities and the central funding and co-ordinating role of UNDP; respect the priority development targets set by the recipient country in accordance with its development model or programme; make progress in consolidating and improving country programming and promote bilateral aid to the extent possible; and delegate greater responsibility to field offices for the purposes of decentralization. To that end, the office of the UNDP resident representative should be made sufficiently professional to conduct a substantive programming dialogue with the corresponding authorities in each country; furthermore, the authority of the resident representative should be strengthened to ensure that the co-ordination of operational programmes was truly meaningful.

107. Lastly, he reaffirmed the value and usefulness of multilateral co-operation, which in the current international economic situation was of great importance, particularly for many developing countries.

108. Mrs. SAAD (Egypt) said that the debate on operational activities during the current session was highly important and essentially involved an assessment of what had been done during the past three years.

109. Referring to the possible assessment of the United Nations system at the global level, she said that the outcome of the meeting of the Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (Operational Activities) scheduled for the spring of 1989 to address goals and strategies for the 1990s would be based, inter alia, on various elements identified in the preparation of the fourth international development strategy. In that way, linkages were being established between the global objectives and targets set for the 1990s and the potential contribution of operational activities for development in the United Nations system. In that respect, she underscored the role of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination and noted with concern the absence of any reference to the Environmental Perspective to the Year 2000 and Beyond, particularly since that was an item which should be on the agenda of the high-level meeting on environment and development to be held by the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP) in the first half of 1989.

110. Furthermore, studies undertaken by different organizations and agencies of the United Nations system such as UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNESCO and the World Bank highlighted the issue of the decline in the central funding role of UNDP; therefore, it was essential to review that question with the specialized agencies that had extrabudgetary agreements and trust funds.

111. She also referred to the initiative of JCGP to encourage joint work on training and exchange of experience by its field staff with the presence of colleagues from headquarters and Government officials in order to achieve greater effectiveness at the country level, and the consolidated report of the Director-General on the results of ongoing work to define the operational relationship between the World Bank and the executing agencies of the United Nations system.

112. With regard to procurement and project execution, she noted that skills mobilization through technical co-operation among developing countries had helped strengthen the supply side in technical co-operation, as non-governmental organizations, UNV, TOKTEN experts and short-term advisory services had also done. Her delegation hoped that the initiatives of the Inter-Agency Procurement Services Unit (IAPSU) and the International Trade Centre would enhance awareness of what Egypt could offer as a developing country. With regard to the note by the Secretary-General in document A/43/426, she was concerned that both the section on substantive themes and the chapter on integrating women into development programmes contained phrases and concepts that were too vague and should be defined more precisely.

113. With regard to assessing Egypt's co-operation in the area of operational activities of the United Nations system, her delegation reaffirmed the importance which Egypt attached to multilateral co-operation, stressing that Egypt's support for UNICEF activities was unquestionable. Not only had organizations such as the

(Mrs. Saad, Egypt)

Council for Motherhood and Children, in Egypt, and the Arab Council for Children, in the Arab world, been established, but an effort was being made to increase co-operation with the Fund in all areas and essentially through the Vice-Chairmanship of the Programme Committee. Egypt also considered the population problem a main issue and sought to increase its co-operation with UNFPA.

114. Referring to UNDP, she pointed out that Egypt's co-operation was multi-faceted and diversified and that the funds provided by the Programme had totalled \$520,400 of the IPF allocated for the project to reconstruct the Library of Alexandria, a project that was dear to Egypt as well as the international community at large.

115. However, the most important area of co-operation with UNDP and one which deserved the highest priority was that of the Nile River. A recent study conducted under the auspices of the Center for Strategic and International Studies of Washington, D.C. showed that geopolitics in the Middle East had long been dominated by petroleum, but that now another liquid, water, was recognized as the fundamental political weapon in the region.

116. In spite of the enormous importance of multilateral co-operation in the field of water resources, as demonstrated by the Arab regional programme, UNDP co-operation continued to be essential. On the one hand, her country valued highly the projects approved at the country programme level and executed by the World Bank. On the other hand, since the Nile cut across several countries in Africa, Egypt had always sought to strengthen co-operation with the brother countries of the region. The TCDC programming exercise carried out in Egypt offered ample possibilities and her country looked forward to the conclusion of an international legally binding agreement governing the use of waterways. In January 1986, the representatives of the riparian countries had invited UNDP to extend the necessary assistance to study, propose and establish appropriate machinery for effective co-operation in order to harness the water resources of the Nile.

117. As clear proof of the fact that her country considered UNDP the central funding agency of the United Nations system for operational activities, in 1988 Egypt had decided to pledge to the Programme a contribution, which was symbolic in amount but generous in intention, at the United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities.

118. Mr. MUKHTAR (Sudan) said that the operational activities for development of the United Nations system sent a message to the entire world because they reaffirmed the idea of international economic co-operation as a condition for the survival of the planet. Accordingly, the Sudan favoured expanding those activities in order to overcome the difficulties facing developing countries, particularly poverty and under-development, as pointed out by the representative of Tunisia, in the statement which he had made on behalf of the member countries of the Group of 77. The Sudan had, therefore, noted with great attention the progress made in carrying out the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990.

(Mr. Mukhtar, Sudan)

119. His Government considered very important its close co-operation with the United Nations, which had existed for several years and had manifested itself in many ways. UNDP Governing Council decision 88/18 on government execution would make it possible to break the vicious circle in which the developing countries and, in particular, the least developed countries, were trapped. Regardless of the country in question, collaboration between the public and private sectors would promote the transfer of technology with the resultant strengthening of the national economic capability. That would do away with the excuse given by some donors to avoid providing aid to developing countries because they questioned their capacity to absorb the resources allocated for certain projects which were unfairly described as too ambitious.

120. His Government welcomed UNDP Governing Council decision 88/33 on country and intercountry programmes and projects, which had approved the programme of the Sudan. Nevertheless, the situation in the country had deteriorated as a result of the floods which had occurred in August 1988. In view of the enormous destruction brought about, any assistance which could be provided by the international community through the United Nations Secretary-General would be of great importance. In that respect, the collaboration of UNDP and the World Bank in reconstructing the devastated economic infrastructure would be decisive. Furthermore, UNDP should be flexible with regard to the current programming cycle in view of the problems affecting the Sudan.

121. His delegation was deeply grateful for the participation of UNICEF during the drought which had afflicted the country in 1984 and the relief which that agency had provided to the victims of the recent floods. The Sudan was also grateful for the invaluable co-operation provided to it by the United Nations Population Fund and the World Food Programme during the emergency.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.