



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 33rd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. NAVAJAS MOGRO (Bolivia)

later: Mr. OTOBO (Nigeria)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 84: OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT (continued) (A/43/3, A/43/273-S/19720, A/43/293-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. Mr. MILTNER (Austria) said that the previous year's debate on operational activities for development had been characterized by a large measure of consensus, which had found its expression in the far-reaching guidelines contained in General Assembly resolution 42/196. Document A/43/426/Add.3-E/1988/74/Add.3 could be regarded as a first progress report on the implementation of that resolution, a process in which all organizations of the United Nations development system must participate. The implementation of that resolution required Governments to convey more coherent messages to the many forums in which operational activities for development were discussed, since a reading of document E/1988/76 gave the impression that at present, many Member States promoted different ideas in different forums.

2. It was generally agreed that the report on case studies on the functioning of the operational activities for development of the United Nations system, known as the "Jansson report" (A/42/326/Add.1-E/1987/82/Add.1, annex) had been a significant development in the search for more effective ways of delivering development assistance through the United Nations system, but all kinds of excuses were forthcoming regarding the recommendations whose acceptance might infringe on the spheres of influence of the various agencies. Nevertheless, most of the latter had realized that Governments were becoming more and more interested in concrete improvements of the system. His delegation was therefore hopeful that the process set in motion by General Assembly resolutions 41/171 and 42/196 and the Jansson report had gained such momentum as to become irreversible and, together with other delegations, urged the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation to interpret his mandate as broadly as possible and to take the necessary initiatives to steer and guide that process. It was to be hoped that the proposals made in document A/43/426/Add.3 would eventually lead to concrete action.

3. The Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation had emphasized in his report (A/43/426, annex, para. 6) the need for a substantial and real increase in the flow of concessional resources, particularly grants. At

(Mr. Miltner, Austria)

the meetings of the governing bodies of the main funding institutions of the United Nations system, substantial increases had been registered in contributions to UNDP, UNICEF and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). UNDP's income had reached and surpassed record levels, and UNICEF and the United Nations Population Fund had also reported substantial increases in income in 1987, with the expectation that that trend would continue in 1988 and 1989. However, a major part of the nominal increase had resulted from the decline in the value of the United States dollar, in other currencies and was probably offset to some extent by decreases in purchasing power, which had affected even the operating costs of many agencies in major European capitals.

4. His delegation considered that the Governing Council of UNDP had addressed those problems in a balanced way. The redistribution of expected additional resources among indicative planning figures (IPFs) and Special Programme Resources as provided for in Governing Council decision 88/31 was a compromise which should be acceptable to all parties concerned. Austria also believed that the establishment of a Management Development Programme was timely and considered that the Governing Council had acted rightly in deciding to grant special support costs payments to those agencies most affected by exchange rate fluctuations. In that context, the question of support cost arrangements after 1992 should be studied without delay, and everything possible should be done to ensure that the relevant negotiations got under way by the end of 1989. Austria shared the view of other delegations that the outcome of those negotiations would have a major impact on UNDP, the various agencies and the recipients of aid.

5. Mr. GALKA (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that operational activities for development complemented the efforts of developing countries in the economic and social spheres, and that current conditions were conducive to a strengthening of that complementary role, as had been apparent from the recent 1988 United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities.

6. In its role as central financing body, UNDP performed an extremely important function in operational activities for development. To enable it to work effectively, the Governing Council should base itself on the principle of universality embodied in the Consensus of 1970 and focus its efforts on increasing and mobilizing resources, as well as on harmonizing its programmes with the economic and social development objectives of developing countries. In that respect, the need must be emphasized for UNDP to provide democratic and balanced technical assistance to those countries, which had the sovereign right to take the final decisions regarding the utilization of the resources made available; the multilateral technical assistance activities of the United Nations should be conducted with due regard for the priorities of the various recipient countries. On another subject, the Byelorussian SSR welcomed the fact that UNDP had begun to evaluate its activities in the field of the environment with a view to promoting environmentally sound and sustainable development.

7. The Byelorussian SSR was currently restructuring its co-operation with developing countries with a view to increasing import and export activities, promoting scientific, technical and trade assistance and encouraging the

(Mr. Galka, Byelorussian SSR)

establishment of joint enterprises. In the context of transfer of technology, training was provided for nationals of more than 90 developing countries, machinery and equipment were supplied and experts were sent to developing countries to provide training in the field. A seminar had recently been organized on the viability of supplying energy sources, and had been attended by participants from developing countries. It was hoped that the meeting would become a regular event in future. Moreover, the Byelorussian SSR trusted that UNDP would give serious consideration to the possibility of using the services of Byelorussian consultants.

8. His delegation was in broad agreement with the basic objectives of UNICEF's activities, particularly with reference to universal child immunization and the allocation of funds to developing countries, and supported the proposals on the rationalization of its work with a view to saving resources and concentrating them in key sectors; in the latter respect, the UNICEF Executive Board should monitor world-wide activities more closely.

9. Lastly, the Byelorussian SSR trusted that multilateral technical co-operation among the States Members of the Organization would increase.

10. Mr. KAGAMI (Japan) expressed the hope that the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation would provide the United Nations system with strong leadership in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 42/196. While resources were limited and he sometimes lacked sufficient authority to enforce the necessary changes, the Director-General could make a definite intellectual contribution to the implementation of that resolution and to the preparation of the triennial comprehensive policy review which would take place in 1989.

11. It went without saying that operational activities for development should always be relevant to current major international economic problems if they were to contribute to their solution in the context of international economic co-operation. Taking three current critical issues - debt, the environment and natural disasters - by way of example, consideration should be given to the way in which operational activities of the United Nations could help improve the situation in each of those areas.

12. A number of proposals relating to the problem of debt had been put forward and some measures to mitigate it had already been implemented, but it was obvious that debt remained the most serious problem facing the international economy. Leaving aside external factors which had eroded the repayment capacity of many debtor countries, and bearing in mind that the debt problem was essentially monetary in nature and called first of all for a monetary approach, it could not be denied that macro-economic mismanagement had exacerbated the situation in many cases. The United Nations system could do much to improve the management capacities of developing countries, and of the least developed debtor countries in particular, in such fields as fiscal policy, tax systems and foreign investment policy; his delegation welcomed the fact that United Nations technical assistance bodies, particularly UNDP, were increasingly turning their attention to that question. His delegation also believed that United Nations operational activities for development

(Mr. Kagami, Japan)

should be closely co-ordinated, where appropriate, with the implementation of structural adjustment policies. Measures to solve debt problems should be growth- and market-oriented, with a view to revitalizing the economy, and especially the private sector, which had a key role to play in developing countries; they should also lay the groundwork for sound and sustainable development, thereby resolving the debt problem in the medium and long terms. That was why Japan had supported the UNDP initiative on private-sector activities in the hope that it would lead to concrete results. That initiative could effectively complement bilateral and multilateral financial relief measures.

13. Regarding the relationship between the environment and operational activities, his delegation believed that the United Nations system should find an appropriate methodology for incorporating environmental concerns in the design and selection of development projects. There was also a need to formulate projects specifically designed to improve and protect the environment. Some concern had been expressed that doing so would be tantamount to imposing new conditions on development co-operation; however, his delegation did not believe that environmental considerations were incompatible with the objectives of growth and development; in fact, recipient countries and donors could work out mutually acceptable principles for achieving sustainable growth which took such considerations into account.

14. There were many areas in which United Nations operational activities could contribute to the solution of environmental problems in developing countries. For instance, those countries could be given assistance in the formulation of a master plan or in the execution of feasibility studies so that environmental considerations could be integrated in the early stages of development; they could also be given assistance in the development of human resources in the field of environmental protection; they could be given help in designing and improving environmental monitoring systems so that the environmental situation in each country could be accurately assessed; finally, the United Nations system could help promote public awareness of environmental problems in those countries through public relations campaigns, as those problems frequently were not given high priority owing to other, more pressing requirements. It was to be hoped that the resident co-ordinators and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) would strengthen their efforts to make United Nations operational activities an effective instrument for solving the environmental problems of developing countries.

15. The damage caused by natural disasters, of which there had been a tragic series during the current year, drained scarce resources from the countries stricken and undermined those countries' prospects for long-term economic development. Emergency relief assistance was not sufficient to remedy long-term problems, and, while UNDP had played a useful role in that area, more systematic and sustained efforts were needed; the United Nations could contribute greatly through its operational activities. In the area of disaster preparedness, United Nations organizations could co-ordinate national and regional efforts to improve early warning systems, communication, and the collection and dissemination of data, particularly in countries and regions where cyclical natural disasters occurred. Resident co-ordinators could play an important role in co-ordinating operational activities for medium- and long-term mitigation of natural disasters in especially

(Mr. Kagami, Japan)

vulnerable countries so that assistance could be provided in the most timely and effective manner possible. In that connection, his delegation hoped that the proclamation of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction would help to promote awareness of that problem and mobilise international support so that concrete results could be achieved in that very important field.

16. Mr. YUAN Shaofu (China) said that the availability of resources and technology were the main factors in development. Although General Assembly resolution 42/196 had emphasized the need for a substantial increase in resources for operational activities for development in real terms, and in grants in particular, the results of the recent pledging conference had been disappointing, since the anticipated rate of increase over total pledges for the previous year had not been attained. There had been a slight increase in official development assistance, but other forms of assistance to developing countries had declined sharply. In addition, the decline in the exchange rate and purchasing power of the dollar had offset the increase generated by the appreciation of some major donor countries' currencies against the dollar and by the provision of emergency relief to some areas of Africa. It was therefore of the utmost importance that the international community, and the developed countries in particular, should increase their contributions for United Nations operational activities for development so that UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP and other organisations could continue to provide assistance as mandated.

17. UNDP had made efforts to consolidate programme management and delivery and to enhance their quality and efficiency. During the first year of the current programming cycle, IPFs had been more fully utilised than they had been in the last year of the preceding cycle; in 1987, the project delivery rate had reached 75 per cent. However, unduly complex procedures for project formulation and approval must continue to be streamlined, as should management methods. The consensus of 1970 and the new areas of technical co-operation adopted in 1975 must continue to serve as the basis and guiding criteria for the work of UNDP so that the Programme could play its role as the central funding agency and co-ordinator of technical co-operation within the United Nations system more effectively.

18. The rapid growth of the world's population, which would reach 6 billion people by the end of the current century and might double during the next century, was an extremely serious problem. Such population growth would lead to severe food and water shortages and would result in over-exploitation of natural resources, to the detriment of the environment. The world population must therefore be stabilized as a matter of urgency, and all countries should support the efforts of UNFPA to that end.

19. Women and children were the group most affected by natural disasters and economic difficulties; for that reason, the efforts of UNICEF to improve children's welfare throughout the world were commendable. Of particular importance in that connection were activities relating to child survival and development; the Bamako Initiative, aimed at improving primary health care for children in Africa; and the Grand Alliance for Children. The Chinese Government attached great importance to the formulation and implementation of a convention on the rights of the child and

(Mr. Yuan Shaofu, China)

would participate actively in the work done in that area, as well as in all aspects of operational activities for development of the United Nations system.

20. Mr. AYUBI (Afghanistan) stressed the usefulness and importance of United Nations operational activities for development, which assisted the developing countries, particularly the least developed, in their efforts to attain economic independence. His delegation was pleased with the outcome of the pledging conference which had achieved a satisfactory level of voluntary contributions to United Nations funds and programmes.

21. In order to promote development and eradicate poverty, it was necessary to mobilise the domestic resources of the developing countries themselves. However, the role of assistance from developed donor countries and international organisations was also extremely important. United Nations operational activities for development should reflect the overall objectives and priorities of the international development strategy and should be carried out within the framework of national development plans and programmes.

22. Despite all the limitations and the special situation in the country, the Government of Afghanistan was doing everything possible to consolidate its economy, increase industrial, agricultural and handicraft production and promote external trade, for which incentives had been provided to the private sector and annual and mid-term development plans were being implemented. Its most pressing tasks were to reconstruct speedily the infrastructure damaged by the war, promote industrial development, modernise agriculture and the irrigation system, carry out a literacy campaign and establish an adequate transport system and a network of public services. To accomplish those tasks, assistance was being provided by UNDP, UNICEF, WHO, FAO, UNFPA, UNIDO and other United Nations agencies; it was hoped that IFAD and WFP would collaborate with FAO and UNDP to provide assistance to Afghanistan in connection with agricultural research, forestry, irrigation, veterinary services and pastures.

23. He called upon the agencies of the United Nations system and other financial institutions which had suspended their assistance to Afghanistan, such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the Asian Development Bank, to re-examine their positions and resume their activities and development programmes in the country, for which purpose they could send assessment missions whose studies would enable them then to select feasible projects.

24. Mr. BORCHARD (Federal Republic of Germany) said that, as the Federal Chancellor of his country, Mr. Helmut Kohl, had stated at the recent annual meetings of IMF and the World Bank, developed countries had the duty to provide assistance to developing countries, taking due account of the specific conditions in each country. The Federal Republic of Germany had announced the cancellation of some pending official debts of least developed countries and of the official debts of poor and highly indebted African countries, provided that they carried out adjustment programmes in collaboration with IMF and the World Bank; the total official debt cancelled by his country would amount to the equivalent of \$4.4 billion. Within the framework for debt rescheduling established by the Paris

(Mr. Borchard, Federal Republic of Germany)

Club, additional grants to highly indebted sub-Saharan African countries had been made in order to reduce interest payments by up to 50 per cent and official development assistance loans had been simplified and the conditions for obtaining them facilitated. Within the framework of development assistance, special emphasis had been put on multilateral technical co-operation, in which his country supported the co-ordinating function of UNDP. Special attention had been given to the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990 and the Federal Government had geared its co-operation with Africa to the priorities of that Programme and had actively participated in its mid-term review.

25. He reaffirmed his delegation's support for the annual report of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Development on operational activities for development (A/43/426-E/1988/74, annex), and expressed appreciation for some of the steps envisaged by the Director-General, such as the aid co-ordination study aimed at adapting procedures to the capacity of each developing country, and the review of the impact of UNDP activities as a frame of reference for the operational activities for development of the entire United Nations system. With regard to the difficulties and lack of means limiting his work, as he pointed out in his report (para. 140), the Director-General should specify the needs of his Office in that regard. His country was prepared to support the Office and consider the suitability of providing it with extrabudgetary resources for specific measures, especially in the field of operational activities.

26. His delegation agreed with the Director-General about the need to link operational activities for development and a general reorientation of the institutions of the system in the 1990s with the global objectives and targets of the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade, which should not be a list of global problems, but should be operational in nature. It was hoped that that question, as well as that of the accountability of executing agencies for projects financed by UNDP, could be addressed during the triennial review of operational activities to be carried out in 1989. Furthermore, the Administrator of UNDP and the Executive Directors of UNICEF and UNFPA should without delay take the necessary action to implement the recommendations contained in the respective reports of the Board of Auditors on the accounts of those organizations for 1987.

27. Mr. SISILO (Solomon Islands), speaking also on behalf of the other member countries of the South Pacific Forum represented at the United Nations - Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, Samoa, Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu - said that the activities of the United Nations system in the area of development were of considerable importance to the member countries of the South Pacific Forum. Although only 7 of the 15 members of the Forum were States Members of the United Nations, 13 were direct recipients of development assistance. In view of the small population of the majority of those countries and the shortage of trained personnel, co-ordination of development activities was essential in order to ensure the effectiveness of assistance provided by United Nations agencies.

(Mr. Sisilo, Solomon Islands)

28. In the South Pacific, as in so many other regions, the driving force behind development activities was UNDP, whose three offices in the region, each of which covered a number of countries, were carrying out commendable work. Mention should also be made of the dedicated staff of the UNDP Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific. In that regard, it was heartening to learn that, after a long absence, the Administrator of UNDP was scheduling a visit to the Pacific region for early 1989.

29. While the country programme allocations of the UNDP fourth programming cycle were the major focus of each country's contact with the United Nations development system, due recognition should be given to the impact of the UNDP regional programme, which in many ways acted as a backstop for many development programmes. The growing trend towards government execution of UNDP-funded projects should also be commended as a cost-effective means of spreading the impact and benefits of the United Nations funding which had also enabled the secretariat of the South Pacific Forum to become more closely involved in United Nations programmes. He hoped that such co-operation would continue.

30. The United Nations was carrying out a number of development programmes in the less developed countries of the region, which included four members of the South Pacific Forum, namely, Kiribati, Samoa, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. Samoa and Vanuatu had recently participated in UNDP-sponsored round-table meetings in Geneva, and in-country meetings were being planned for Kiribati and Tuvalu during the first half of 1989. In future, round-table meetings organised by UNDP would be held in the area, rather than in Geneva, thereby enabling those assisting in the development of the region to see at first hand how development was being tackled "the Pacific way". The less developed countries of the region were looking forward to, and planning for, the United Nations conference to be held in Paris in 1990. They greatly appreciated the support of UNDP and UNCTAD in that process.

31. With regard to the programme of assistance for the Pacific, approved at the April meeting of the UNICEF Executive Board, the total allocation of funds was modest but the assistance it brought to the region was highly appreciated. Currently, the region-wide programme was overseen from Manila, and he welcomed the willingness of UNICEF's leadership to build up its capacity within the region so as to allocate greater responsibility to its Port Moresby and Suva staff.

32. Through its development assistance programmes, the United Nations made a valuable contribution to the region. With specific regard to the Solomon Islands, he said that his country had had many opportunities in recent years to appreciate the tangible assistance provided for its economic and social development programmes by the United Nations. The country had also received speedy and effective help from the United Nations when it had been devastated by Cyclone Namu in May 1986. The immediate assistance and longer-term rehabilitation support provided stood as an example for others of the way in which the United Nations had been able to respond with the minimum of delay. The country had also benefited from the round tables organized by the UNDP as a follow-up to the earlier meetings with its development partners on the subject of disaster relief. The meeting held recently in Geneva had been further clear evidence of UNDP's support for the Solomon Islands.

33. Mr. GOUDIMA (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that United Nations operational activities for development must help to accelerate the social and economic progress of the developing countries, incorporate them effectively into the international division of labour on the basis of sovereignty, equality of rights and mutual advantage, and create an independent national economy in those countries.

34. By virtue of its primary importance within the United Nations system of technical co-operation, UNDP had a major influence on its fundamental trends. Consequently, the UNDP Governing Council had a great responsibility with regard to the form in which technical aid was provided and the degree to which it responded to the developing countries' interest. UNDP's activities were based on the principles of universality and voluntary funding contained in the consensus of 1970 and in other fundamental decisions of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. Adherence to those principles in practice was a guarantee of the success of UNDP's future work, and the Ukrainian delegation was thus opposed to any attempt to revise or modify them.

35. One aspect of practical implementation of those principles which posed problems for the developing countries was that of ensuring that the aid programmes corresponded to national plans. In practice, they covered different periods and seldom coincided with such plans.

36. The governing bodies of the United Nations agencies dealing with technical aid, particularly UNDP, must fully respect the principle of the sovereign right of States receiving aid to decide for themselves on the development objectives and priorities for their national economies, to formulate, execute and appraise their technical aid programmes, and to co-ordinate sectoral aid with the financing sources. Constant attention must be given to ensuring that States receiving aid were able to exercise their sovereign rights. The recommendation contained in the report of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation (A/43/426-E/1988/74, annex, para. 21) that a broader action-oriented study might be undertaken, to examine, *inter alia*, the obstacles to the effective management by the developing countries of their external co-operation programmes, was extremely valuable.

37. His delegation noted the substantial work done by UNDP, by the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development of the United Nations Secretariat and by the regional economic commissions. One positive example of the activities of UNDP was the progress made in helping national liberation movements, and in particular the Palestinian people. In its extraordinary session held in February 1988, the UNDP Governing Council had responded positively to a request by the Administrator that emergency measures should be taken to step up aid programmes to the Palestinian people, through the granting of supplementary allocations from the Special Programme Resources, in addition to the resources already allocated for the period 1987-1991. Similar progress had been made in the UNDP activities relating to provision of aid to the national liberation movements recognized by the Organisation of African Unity.

(Mr. Goudina, Ukrainian SSR)

38. On the subject of rationalisation of the operational activities of the United Nations and enhancement of its efficiency and productivity, the Ukrainian SSR had expressed its position in the meetings of the Special Commission of the Economic and Social Council on the In-depth Study of the United Nations Intergovernmental Structure and Functions in the Economic and Social Fields. In order to improve the operational activities of the United Nations it was above all necessary to determine exactly the scope of the duties and functions of all the organs involved and to eliminate duplication and imprecise definitions of those activities. Questions relating to the formulation of policies and co-ordination of the operational activities of the United Nations system should focus on the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council at the intergovernmental level, on the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation at the Secretariat level, and on receiving Governments. With regard to co-ordination at the national level, the task of the United Nations system was to strengthen the powers of Governments and to provide advisory or other services solely in those sectors requested by Governments, without interfering with their prerogatives or detracting from their sovereignty. Those and other proposed measures would undoubtedly contribute to raising the level of efficiency of operational activities.

39. One of the important elements of co-operation for development was the training of qualified senior staff. There were currently around 30,000 foreigners studying in the Ukrainian SSR, which also offered training in the field to developing countries. Hundreds of Ukrainian experts were working in those countries, and practical seminars were constantly being held for experts from developing countries, particularly on the subject of metallurgy. The Ukrainian SSR was ready to co-operate with the developing countries in a number of fields.

40. Mr. KUECK (German Democratic Republic) said that the increasingly important operational activities of the United Nations system could succeed only if they were combined with gradual and co-operative steps to solve the urgent problems affecting the world economy. Unless the situation could be drastically improved and funds could be released through the adoption of effective disarmament measures, United Nations operational assistance programmes would continue to face difficulties caused by unfavourable external conditions.

41. Strict adherence to the principles of universality, voluntariness and sovereignty of the recipient countries, to the fundamental provisions of the consensus of 1970 and to General Assembly resolution 3405 (XXX) of 1975 concerning new dimensions in technical co-operation was of the utmost importance for continued success in the work of UNDP. His country supported all measures intended to increase the effectiveness of those United Nations voluntary assistance programmes which were in conformity with the basic United Nations resolutions and principles relating to those programmes. During the 1988 sessions of the Governing Council of UNDP and of the Economic and Social Council, many delegations from countries with different socio-economic structures and distinct approaches to development had also emphasized the need to respect those principles and to uphold the responsibility of the recipient countries' Governments in all cases.

(Mr. Kueck, German Democratic Republic)

42. UNDP, in accordance with its mandate and with the objectives of the recipient countries, should provide assistance with a view to strengthening those countries' capacities in the areas of administration and planning, social and humanitarian affairs, analysis of the development process and identification of their own options and programmes. Since a large number of developing countries considered an efficient public sector to be essential for their economic and social development, UNDP should assist those countries in the elaboration and execution of projects which helped to strengthen that sector. Furthermore, his country considered it absolutely legitimate that the recipient countries should have exclusive competence with respect to structural adjustment measures, co-operation with private financial institutions and non-governmental organizations, the role of the public, private and co-operative sectors in their respective national economies, co-operation with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund and the use of UNDP country programmes as a frame of reference for all forms of technical assistance.

43. His country was interested in substantive and productive co-operation with UNDP and was prepared to continue considering various ways to make rational use of the voluntary contributions it had paid in recent years. All States should have the opportunity to participate broadly in the implementation of UNDP programmes and projects. With regard to the geographical distribution of supplies and services, however, the implementation of such projects continued to benefit only a minority of countries, and measures should therefore be taken to correct that situation.

44. The increasing recognition by UNDP, like other organs and organisations of the United Nations system, that the development of human resources was an important aspect of economic, social, scientific and technological progress constituted a positive development. During the Economic and Social Council's second regular session of 1988, his delegation had expressed its satisfaction at the approval of regional and country programmes submitted to the UNDP Governing Council at its thirty-fifth session, as well as at the participation of UNDP in the provision of United Nations economic and humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan and emergency aid to African States and Central America. The continuation of UNDP programmes for the benefit of the Palestinian people and of the national liberation movements recognized by the Organization of African Unity was particularly welcome. The UNDP administration and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) must co-operate in the formulation and implementation of UNDP projects in the occupied Palestinian territories. The strengthening of UNDP field offices in African States was also a timely step which could help towards implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development.

45. His delegation had studied with interest the report of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation on operational activities for development (A/43/426-E/1988/74, annex), and believed that particular attention should be devoted to the proposals and positions set forth in paragraphs 137, 142, 143 and 147-149 of that document, which could help to make the operational activities of the United Nations system more effective, provided that they adhered to basic democratic principles. There was no doubt that the Economic and Social Council had a decisive role to play in co-ordinating the operational activities of the various United Nations organs and organisations. Further analysis was required

(Mr. Kueck, German Democratic Republic)

of the recommendations made in the Jansson report (A/42/326/Add.1-E/1987/82/Add.1, annex) and, in view of the diverse and sometimes contradictory opinions of United Nations organizations on that subject (*ibid.*, Add.2, annex), both the report and the comments thereon should be further considered in the appropriate forums.

46. His country was pleased to note that UNICEF had begun to apply the concept of "adjustment with a human face", in solving the problems of economic and social development, since it would thereby help to improve the current living conditions of millions of children and families throughout the world. It also appreciated the Fund's efforts to protect human lives and to improve the living conditions of children in Africa, particularly in the front-line States and those countries which were affected by drought and other natural disasters. His country had always contributed to UNICEF activities and would continue to do so, as it had reaffirmed at the recent Pledging Conference. The appointment of Katarina Witt, a winner of two gold medals for figure skating at the Olympic Games, as a sports ambassador for UNICEF represented another contribution on the part of his country to the Fund's just and noble cause.

47. Mr. Ootobo (Nigeria) took the Chair.

48. Mr. GÂLGĂU (Romania) said that the operational activities of the United Nations system, despite their modest financial scope, played a unique catalytic role in multilateral co-operation, promoted the economic and social progress of the developing countries at the national level and often helped those countries to attain the common goals which they had set for themselves at the subregional and regional levels. If it were properly to fulfil its objectives, such assistance must be based on strictly economic criteria and on full respect for the sovereignty and national interests of countries, in accordance with the consensus of 1970.

49. The adoption of General Assembly resolution 42/196 provided a solid basis for the implementation of activities for development; its approval had given rise to initiatives which would soon bring practical and realistic solutions to long-standing problems. Adequate financial resources were essential for that purpose, and the results of the recent 1988 United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities were therefore encouraging.

50. He supported the idea of strengthening the role of UNDP as the central funding agency and co-ordinating mechanism for United Nations technical co-operation but expressed certain reservations with respect to the advisability of bringing further autonomous funds under its exclusive control, which could make the process of allocating resources more cumbersome. Further efforts were required to ensure better use of the UNDP country programme and programming process as a frame of reference for the operational activities of the entire United Nations development system, in accordance with the conclusions and recommendations of the Jansson report, which urged that all United Nations system assistance should be co-ordinated, programmed and implemented with greater cohesion, particularly at the country level. The Governing Council of UNDP and other governing bodies, such as the Executive Board of UNICEF, recognized that recipient Governments had a fundamental role to play in the co-ordination of assistance, the identification of

(Mr. Gălgaú, Romania)

priority areas of activity and the allocation of funds in accordance with those priorities. That recognition, together with the simplification and rationalisation of procedures and a review of the functions of resident co-ordinators or resident representatives, was an essential prerequisite for increasing the effectiveness of such assistance.

51. In resolution 42/196, the General Assembly called for recommendations for innovative, practical and effective measures to increase substantially the procurement from developing countries in United Nations development activities. The slight increase in such procurement during 1987 represented a positive trend, but the situation was still far from being satisfactory. Intensive efforts were required in that area in order to multiply the positive effects of operational activities.

52. Romania attached great importance to the work carried out by UNICEF for the benefit of the world's children. The conclusion in 1989 of the process of drafting the convention on the rights of the child would provide new impetus to efforts to elaborate an international child development strategy. His country also reiterated its support for the United Nations Population Fund, whose Executive Director was carrying out commendable work to make the 1974 consensus of Bucharest an operational reality. The new emphasis by UNFPA on improved programme delivery at the country level, which sought to adapt programmes to the specific conditions of each country, was essential for efficient assistance in the population field.

53. As a newly elected member of the UNDP Governing Council, Romania would work energetically to ensure the better adaptation of the operational activities of the entire United Nations system to an increasingly complex and diversified environment, at the national, regional and international levels.

54. Mr. SAQIB KHAN (Pakistan), said that General Assembly resolution 42/196 constituted a watershed in the evolution of operational activities for development and established a clear framework for channelling operational funds to enhance the technical capabilities of recipient countries. His delegation was glad to note that the Secretary-General and the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation had made a serious effort to implement the provisions of that resolution. As was evident from the note by the Secretary-General (A/43/426/Add.3-E/1988/74/Add.3), a process of interaction had been initiated with the governing bodies of the major United Nations funds and programmes with a view to adjusting operational activities as prescribed by the resolution. His delegation hoped that the process would be maintained and strengthened.

55. Turning to the various reports received and statements made during the debate, he said that it was imperative to allocate in a disciplined manner the limited resources available to priority activities approved in advance, in order to attain fairly rapidly the goals and objectives established by the recipient countries themselves. To that end, it was essential to ensure the close co-ordination of all assistance programmes of the United Nations system and the gradual reduction of

(Mr. Saqib Khan, Pakistan)

general and staff costs. The true objective was to enable the recipient countries to achieve self-sustaining growth and to resolve their own problems.

56. He wished to reaffirm that it was imperative to adhere strictly to the policies and priorities of recipient Governments. The validity of that principle had been recognized by all major funds and by the donor community, although the funding and executing agencies were inclined to promote projects and programmes which they deemed most useful from their point of view, a practice that must be eliminated. Moreover, the major concern continued to be the availability of reliable sources of funding and, accordingly, efforts must be intensified to secure additional funds for the next programming cycle.

57. The role which the United Nations should play in the economic development of the developing countries involved a number of measures. In the preparation of projects, there should be closer co-ordination between Governments, the United Nations and potential donors; the prospects of funding for major projects could be maximized if donor interest was established prior to the preparation of feasibility studies. Emphasis should be placed on the utilisation of local technical manpower with a view, firstly, to the gradual reduction and, later, to the complete elimination, of reliance on outside expertise. In addition, the officials assigned to operational activities should be familiar with the developing processes of the recipient countries, should respect their political sensitivities and should be in a position to provide useful and pertinent advice.

58. While UNDP played a useful role as an intermediary in technological transfers, his delegation would like to see greater emphasis on that aspect in inter-country programming. Asia and the Pacific region were well placed for such transfers. The transfer of technology had often been impeded by weak links with user institutions and networks, and the United Nations, in extending support for such projects, should bear in mind the ultimate recipients of new technologies.

59. During the third programming cycle, there had been a welcome trend towards decreasing the technical personnel component, including experts and consultants, accompanied by a proportionate increase in the training component; the expert component nevertheless remained high, and needed to be reduced further. There should be more effective evaluation of inter-country programmes, and the question of the procurement of equipment from developing countries should be examined in detail, with a view to increasing such procurement.

60. The role of UNDP in enhancing technical co-operation among developing countries should be further strengthened. The Special Unit for Technical Co-operation Among Developing Countries was no doubt making a contribution to "South-South" co-operation; in that connection, the programming exercise organized in Karachi, Pakistan, in September 1988 had been a complete success. Nevertheless, UNDP's role should be broadened and additional funds should be allocated to the Special Unit so that follow-up action was undertaken with additional funding, and not at the expense of the indicative planning figures.

(Mr. Raqib Khan, Pakistan)

61. His country believed that operational activities constituted one of the most dynamic aspects of the role of the United Nations in promoting international co-operation for development. The issue had acquired added significance in the light of declining resource flows, particularly official development assistance, from the industrialized countries to the developing countries. His country's support for operational activities, which had been strong and sustained - as reflected at the recent Pledging Conference, despite severe budgetary restraints - testified to the support which it attached to the role played by UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA. Pakistan would continue co-operating to promote and accelerate the rate of economic and social progress of the developing countries within the framework of an open and expanding world economy.

62. Mr. WILLIS (United Kingdom) said that his Government warmly welcomed the improvements made by the Secretariat and the governing bodies of UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and WFP in the administration, delivery, efficiency and relevance of programme activities.

63. Contributions to UNDP had increased by 9.4 per cent in dollar terms and 7 per cent in the currency of pledges. Several factors had encouraged contributors, including the high quality of the preparatory work carried out by the Secretariat, the studies of country programmes made by the Committee of the Whole and the attention paid to programme quality by the Working Group of the Committee of the Whole. Without the continued dialogue between Member States and the Secretariat through those informal bodies, it would have been difficult to authorize the programming of a further \$676 million over the fourth cycle. During its Mid-term Review of resources at its thirty-fifth session, the Governing Council of UNDP had decided to distribute the bulk of that amount to country and inter-country indicative planning figures in order to compensate for the fall in the dollar allocations agreed in 1985. In that way, UNDP would be able to retain the momentum already gained as a result of the prompt and efficient preparation of country programmes for the fourth cycle. Of equal importance was the decision to allocate some new resources to newly identified needs and new-found roles for UNDP. The approval of the new Management Development Programme had demonstrated the determination of Member States that UNDP should be able to play a role in assisting countries undergoing structural adjustment and thus ensure that UNDP remained in the forefront of international development activities.

64. He then referred to the exceptional arrangements adopted by the Governing Council of UNDP to meet the increased costs of some executing agencies in 1987 and to the issue of replacing the arrangements for support costs which were to expire in 1991. On the latter point, the United Kingdom felt that it would be necessary to consider radical changes, as it could no longer be assumed that agencies were in a position to take on any project within the area of their competence; the right balance must be struck between the project work of agencies and their role as policy advisers. His delegation also supported the new financial and other arrangements approved by the Governing Council regarding the United Nations Volunteers programme.

(Mr. Willis, United Kingdom)

65. His delegation had been impressed by the efforts made by the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund to improve the organizational structure and general effectiveness of the agency and attached particular importance to the agreement to give special attention to population-related programmes aimed at improving environmental conditions. With reference to UNICEF, he recollected that, at the recent Pledging Conference, his delegation had congratulated the Fund on its excellent work for children throughout the world. Another welcome aspect was the attention paid during the past year to financial procedures so that UNICEF was now in a position to administer the vastly greater funds at its disposal.

66. The World Food Programme had been successful in reorganizing its structure following a management review implemented in 1987; the Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes had also overhauled its working procedures. His delegation attached importance to the implementation of the resulting improvements during the current financial year.

67. With reference to the report of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation (A/43/426-E/1988/74, annex), his delegation welcomed the emphasis in paragraph 23 of the report on the more systematic adoption of a programme approach and the simplification, or preferably the harmonization and adaptation, of procedures to conform to local conditions and administrative traditions. That was particularly important for the smaller countries and for countries where the United Nations contribution to development was considerable, as those were the countries most likely to gain by improvements in the co-operation and co-ordination activities of the United Nations system.

68. General Assembly resolution 42/196 had led to greater emphasis being placed on the importance of effective co-ordination of the operational activities of the United Nations system but more remained to be done. The study of the Jansson report during the current year by the governing bodies of the various agencies had demonstrated the progress made as well as the continuing shortfalls. The process had not been as fruitful as might have been expected, owing to communications failures between the respective secretariats and Member States. His delegation urged those governing bodies which had not yet discussed the Jansson report to obtain the views of their members and convey them to the Economic and Social Council in good time. All the agencies of the United Nations system should, as a matter of urgency, communicate their views on the key issues addressed in the report, as otherwise the recommendations made at the triennial review would not be realistic or soundly based.

69. In connection with agency reviews of their own field operations and structures, such as that of the Food and Agriculture Organization, the United Kingdom urged that such reviews should be co-ordinated with the preparatory work for the triennial review and in full knowledge of the conclusions emerging; otherwise, if the recommendations of agencies diverged from those of the triennial review, all the parties involved would need to reconsider their positions.

(Mr. Willis, United Kingdom)

70. He then stressed the importance which the United Kingdom attached to the triennial review and the opportunity which it provided for the Director-General to provide direction to the operational activities for development of the United Nations system. The excellent report on the previous triennial review had laid the foundation for the work which had culminated in resolution 42/196 and he hoped that the next review would continue in that tradition.

71. Mr. Navajas Mogro (Bolivia) resumed the Chair.

72. Mr. MENDEZ (Philippines) said that the operational activities for development of the United Nations system had in general obtained many positive results and had received widespread financial support. In that connection, the results of the recent Pledging Conference had been eloquent. Nevertheless, resources were not adequate: as the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation had pointed out in his report (A/43/426-E/1988/74, annex, para. 16), a major part of the nominal increase in grant resources for multilateral technical co-operation had resulted from the decline in the rate of exchange of the United States dollar and had been offset to a considerable extent by decreases in the purchasing power of their currency. The emphasis in paragraph 10 of General Assembly resolution 42/196 placed on a substantial and real increase in the flow of concessional resources, particularly grants, on a predictable, continuous and assured basis was fully warranted, particularly when, as had been pointed out in the preamble to the same resolution, a substantial part of world resources, virtually equivalent to the total combined foreign debt of the developing countries, continued to be diverted to armaments.

73. As regards the central funding role of UNDP, he considered that the Programme should continue to function as the central bank of the United Nations development system. The dispersion of contributions among various sectoral funds and specific projects must be avoided, as that practice violated basic resolutions against voluntary contributions in favour of specific Governments, agencies or projects. Governments should be consistent in the positions they adopted in the governing bodies of the United Nations system and resist the pressures of the specialized agencies to create their own funding mechanisms. The Director-General should oppose that trend and enhance the central funding role of UNDP.

74. His delegation also welcomed efforts to remove constraints on the use of the UNDP country programming process as a frame of reference for United Nations system activities. The process constituted an important means of co-ordination and enabled Governments to exercise their right to determine their own development needs and priorities. The Philippines looked forward to receiving the report of the consultant retained by UNDP on the issue.

75. He emphasized the importance of simplifying and harmonizing the rules and procedures of the United Nations system in regard to programme and project formulation, approval, implementation, monitoring and evaluation in order to facilitate the work of the Governments of the developing countries with the various United Nations agencies. On the issue of organization at the field level, his delegation welcomed the steps being taken by the Director-General to achieve

(Mr. Mendez, Philippines)

greater decentralization and increased responsibilities for resident co-ordinators, who should also be available to a host Government for a full tour of duty and should have authority to approve any type of project.

76. It was essential to broaden the geographical base of procurement. A policy was needed which would facilitate access to information and markets and would promote the ability of new suppliers to respond rapidly and effectively to opportunities. Such a policy would require special measures, such as preferential arrangements for subregional purchases, identification and purchase of surpluses of basic commodities or manufactured items, the establishment of efficient channels of communication at the national level and direct project support for export-product improvement and promotion. Furthermore, United Nations agencies must establish appropriate mechanisms to enable the developing countries to avail themselves of procurement opportunities. As indicated by the Director-General, the operational activities of the United Nations system should serve to promote the capacity of developing countries to participate more fully in international trade, to guarantee equal opportunities to non-traditional suppliers and to stimulate South-South co-operation. More attention must also be paid to the recruitment of experts, consultants and technical advisers from the developing countries. In addition to strengthening the capacity of the developing countries to participate in project formulation and management and the ability of the United Nations system to provide technical advice, it was necessary to focus on the more ambitious objective of helping the developing countries to become self-sufficient in the execution of proj.

77. Finally, he recalled that, in accordance with the spirit of General Assembly resolutions 41/206 B and 42/220 A II, the principle of equitable geographical distribution and of rotation must be applied to the composition of upper-echelon staff in the development sectors of the United Nations system, including UNDP. No post should be considered the exclusive preserve of any Member State or group of States.

78. Mr. BRODININGRAT (Indonesia) welcomed the positive outcome of the recent Pledging Conference, which had indicated a significant increase, in nominal terms, in the provision of funds for United Nations operational activities. Nevertheless, in comparison with the internationally agreed yardsticks, which emphasized the need for a real, continuous, predictable and assured increase in resources, the current situation did not justify complacency, which could be self-defeating. The real increase was much less than that described in nominal terms and, in spite of what had occurred in the past two years, the future continuity of the increase was questionable: it could in no way be considered predictable or assured. In paragraph 17 of his report (A/43/426-E/1988/74, annex), the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation had even referred to the increase as being "accidentally generated". In addition, as reflected in paragraph 18 of the report, the increase of financial resources had been partly counteracted by mounting costs and the consequent need to make support-cost adjustments. It was perhaps timely for the Director-General to conduct, as part of the triennial policy review, a comparative analysis of the relationship between the

(Mr. Brotodiningrat, Indonesia)

level of programme delivery and the administrative and support costs with a view to channelling maximum resources towards development activities and programme delivery.

79. The possible conflict between national and global priorities was one of the policy aspects which needed further consideration. While the principle that operational activities should be carried out in accordance with the policies and priorities of the recipient countries had been established in several resolutions on the subject, those same resolutions had also recognized the need for such activities to reflect global priorities. In theory, there should be no difficulty in arriving at an appropriate balance between national and global aspects of operational activities; yet, in practice, problems occurred, especially when there was an attempt to impose so-called "global priorities" - whose basis was in some cases unclear - on national policies. His delegation believed that, as set forth in General Assembly resolution 32/197, global priorities were only those explicitly established as such by the General Assembly and by the Economic and Social Council; moreover, in the case of a conflict between national and global priorities, the former should prevail.

80. There had long been an international consensus on the use of UNDP country programmes as a frame of reference for the operational activities of the United Nations system, with a view to improving coherence of action and to the effective integration of the various sectoral inputs of the system. Nevertheless, the Jansson report had indicated that there were still some obstacles to the practical implementation of that approach. His delegation was therefore looking forward to the Director-General's report on that issue requested in paragraph 15 of General Assembly resolution 42/196. It was important that the Director-General should endeavour to determine how more coherent, integrated and effective programming could fit in with the national development plans of recipient countries, which, in the final analysis, should constitute the basic programming framework.

81. Co-ordination had become a perennial issue for discussion. According to current guidelines, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council had a central role to play in providing overall policy guidance and co-ordination for the operational activities for development of the United Nations system, while UNDP had as its central function the financing and co-ordination of technical co-operation within the system. In practice, the relationship between the co-ordinating function of UNDP and that of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council was unclear. Therefore, since paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 42/196 requested the Director-General to submit in 1989 an analysis of the issues relating to the implementation of the central funding concept, it might be useful if that analysis could also address the co-ordinating function of UNDP, particularly in relation to the prerogatives of the General Assembly and Economic and Social Council in that area. Such an approach would be in compliance with the General Assembly's appeal in resolution 41/171 (annex, para. 14) for efforts to be made to "strengthen the necessary dialogue and interaction between the governing bodies of the organizations of the United Nations system concerned with operational activities for development so as to ensure consistency between decisions taken by policy-making bodies".

(Mr. Brotodiningrat, Indonesia)

82. The absence of co-ordination and coherence was not the only constraint on the effectiveness of operational activities. There was, in fact, growing recognition that over-centralization and the existence of complicated and varying rules and procedures concerning the operational activities of the United Nations development system represented equally serious obstacles. Therefore, it was gratifying that serious attention was being given to addressing those problems; that had been clearly shown in the Jansson case studies, in General Assembly resolution 42/196 and in various decisions adopted by the UNDP Governing Council in 1988. Nevertheless, much remained to be done. It was urgent to pursue common efforts for decentralization and for simplification and harmonization of rules and procedures, keeping in mind that minimization of regulations and bureaucratisation, which was widely advocated, was valid not only for national economies but also for the operational activities of the United Nations system.

83. He emphasized the importance that his delegation attached to operational activities for development and to its fruitful co-operation with all the bodies and organizations of the United Nations development system.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.