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Chairman: Mr. Bródi (Hungary)
*Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative
and Budgetary Questions:* Ms. McLurg

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

Agenda item 118: Programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009 *(continued)*

Improving the effective and efficient delivery of the mandates of development-related activities and revised estimates relating to the programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009
(A/62/7/Add.40 and A/62/708)

1. **Ms. Migiro** (Deputy Secretary-General), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on improving the effective and efficient delivery of the mandates of development-related activities and revised estimates relating to the programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009 (A/62/708), said that development for all was the foundation of a peaceful, equitable and just world.

2. A stronger United Nations must rest on a stronger development pillar. The Secretary-General had submitted his proposals to strengthen the development pillar to the General Assembly at its sixty-second session; however, the Assembly had decided to postpone consideration of the item until the current session. It was encouraging to note that the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions had since reviewed and broadly enforced the thrust of the proposals.

3. The scale of development challenges had intensified in the past year. The world had been presented with challenges that pushed the Organization to accelerate development, namely the devastating effects of climate change, the impact of recent food and energy prices, and the global financial downturn. Those challenges required global responses. The implementation of the recommendations in the Secretary-General's report had thus acquired renewed urgency.

4. The immediate future was uncertain and there would undoubtedly be setbacks in the efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the internationally agreed development goals. Globally concerted efforts were needed to redress the situation and avoid more problems down the road. The interests of all countries could be articulated by the United Nations; the challenges were interrelated and required enhanced short-, medium- and long-term action.

5. The Secretary-General's report outlined a number of key proposals on how to fill the critical gaps in

capacity and improve efficiency in the use of resources, while placing particular focus on strategic planning and strengthening coherence and responsiveness. However, the proposals were not intended to provide for restructuring of the current institutional arrangements in the development field. Rather, they aimed to ensure that the United Nations delivered more effectively on its considerably expanded obligations in the context of the development agenda. That agenda continued to grow; yet there had been no commensurate increase in the level of resources for the Secretariat. As a result, resources had been spread too thinly over a broad range of activities, with shortfalls in important areas. In short, there was a serious mismatch between mandated responsibilities and available resources.

6. Some examples of the new responsibilities and the work ahead included the focus on MDGs in recent high-level events; the Secretary-General's priorities to strengthen the United Nations development work; and the need to address the myriad issues on the United Nations development agenda.

7. An extensive consultation process had been held within the Secretariat to ensure that the comprehensive proposals would strengthen synergies and coherence in the work of all development entities. The Secretary-General, by situating the proposals within the wider context of his overall endeavour to improve the delivery of mandates and strengthen United Nations system-wide coherence, had made it clear that it was important to take into account the complex multi-stakeholder environment in which the Organization operated, including other United Nations and non-United Nations partners, such as civil society and the private sector.

8. The proposed strategic integration planning capacity was aimed at improving the coherence and effectiveness of the Secretariat's development work, including through the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs.

9. The Secretariat recognized that interrelatedness of current development issues required an efficient leadership response, backed by strong partnerships and political support. At the same time, more strategic implementation of the development agenda demanded quality analysis of cross-cutting issues. If the Secretariat was to deliver better on its mandates to

identify and address such issues, it must strengthen its analytical and research capacity.

10. In that context, dedicated attention would have to be given to climate change, innovative financing, international migration and development, violence against women and indigenous issues. The United Nations must continue to support national development strategies to achieve the MDGs and other internationally agreed development goals. Strengthened Secretariat capacities would also effectively support developing countries' policy-making and capacity-building in a number of critical areas.

11. The Organization undoubtedly would need to strengthen its normative and policy support for United Nations intergovernmental development processes. The 2005 World Summit had placed new responsibilities on the Economic and Social Council and had established an annual ministerial review of progress towards the MDGs and the internationally agreed development goals. It had also established a high-level Development Cooperation Forum to review trends in development cooperation and its effectiveness in supporting the achievement of goals.

12. The Secretariat needed adequate capacity to carry out important functions effectively. The development challenges were daunting and had become even more so as the world faced a global financial crisis of profound magnitude.

13. There were no simple solutions. Member States had high expectations of what the Secretariat could and should do to support the intergovernmental debate and help find coordinated and comprehensive responses. The Secretariat was expected and continuously endeavoured to offer sound policy analysis and statistics to support the process and to deliver targeted and effective capacity development to interested Member States, working closely with the United Nations Development Group and its core membership. To respond effectively to the various demands, there was an urgent need to strengthen the development pillar. The Secretary-General and the Deputy Secretary-General were counting on the support of the Fifth Committee.

14. **Ms. McLurg** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/62/7/Add.40), recalled that the Secretary-General's report (A/62/708) had been issued

in response to General Assembly resolution 62/236. The Advisory Committee recognized that the Secretary-General had had limited time to prepare the report between the adoption of that resolution in December 2007 and the issuance of the report in February 2008. It had originally found the Secretary-General's report to be lacking in analysis and presentation of detailed information in some areas, such as climate change, knowledge management and statistics. However, upon request, it had been provided with additional information that facilitated a better understanding of the proposals.

15. The Secretary-General had indicated that, while the Secretariat's development-related mandates and responsibilities had continued to grow, there had been an erosion in the resources devoted to development activities, resulting in gaps in the Secretariat's capacities. The Advisory Committee had noted that the Secretary-General's proposals aimed to address those gaps in seven main areas of mandated activities or new and emerging issues, without modifications to the existing logical frameworks.

16. The Secretary-General's proposals focused on further improving the delivery of the mandates of the Secretariat's development-related activities, as requested by the General Assembly. Had they been situated in a broader context, consideration of the proposals could have been enhanced by further clarification of the roles and responsibilities of the Secretariat departments, regional commissions, funds and programmes and other entities of the United Nations system charged with the implementation of development-related activities.

17. The proposals mainly involved the strengthening of capacities, some structural changes and organizational adjustments, as well as limited redistribution of functions and resources.

18. With respect to organizational adjustments, following the alignment of the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa under the same leadership, the Secretary-General had proposed to abolish the Under-Secretary-General post for the Special Adviser on Africa under section 11. The Advisory Committee had commented extensively on the proposal and was of the view that the organizational changes proposed for

those two offices were inconsistent with a number of recommendations made previously by the General Assembly, and that it was a matter to be decided by the Assembly.

19. The Advisory Committee had also noted that the Secretary-General had not yet acted on the General Assembly's request to restore the post of Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), which had been lent temporarily to the United Nations Office at Geneva, or to undertake urgent measures to fill the post as a matter of priority. It had requested that information on the status of implementation of that request should be provided to the General Assembly at the time of its consideration of the present item.

20. With respect to the strengthening of the capacities of the Secretariat entities dealing with development, it had been proposed that 152 posts should be established under nine budget sections, from 1 July 2008. The resulting implications for post and non-post resources for the current biennium would have amounted to \$25.5 million. At full costing for a complete biennium, the requirements would have risen to \$52 million. The additional resources proposed appeared to be allocated more or less proportionately across the nine development-related budget sections. However, different approaches to strengthening capacities had been taken: some entities proposed to spread the resources requested across all areas of their programme of work, while others had chosen to concentrate efforts in specific areas or establish units for new and emerging tasks.

21. Chapter II of the Advisory Committee's report contained its observations and recommendations on the revised estimates, by budget section. The Advisory Committee had taken into account the supplementary information received as well as extensive additional information provided in response to its enquiries. It had made specific recommendations — set out in its report — on all the posts proposed.

22. Of the 152 posts proposed by the Secretary-General, the Advisory Committee has recommended approval of a total of 135 new posts and one position to be funded from general temporary assistance. In view of the timing of the consideration of the General Assembly's proposals, it had recommended that the posts should be established from 1 January 2009 rather than 1 July 2008.

23. If adopted by the General Assembly, the Advisory Committee's recommendations would result in a total reduction of \$9,327,700 gross from the Secretary-General's estimate of \$25.5 million. That amount included the related impact of post reductions on non-staff sources, as well as further adjustments proposed by the substantive departments to take into account the lapse in the effective implementation date of 1 July 2008 originally anticipated by the Secretary-General.

24. **Mr. Hunte** (Antigua and Barbuda), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that all peoples had a right to development. That right had been affirmed over the past two decades by world leaders when they had set a series of development goals. The Group of 77 had consistently emphasized the importance of the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs. The United Nations development agenda was just as important as its work in peace and security and human rights.

25. The founders of the Charter had sought to create an organization that ensured respect for fundamental human rights; established conditions under which justice and the rule of law could be maintained; and promoted social progress and higher standards of living. The Charter emphasized that not only were development, peace and security, and human rights equally imperative, they also reinforced each other. Unfortunately, that was not currently the case in the United Nations.

26. The 2005 World Summit had recognized the need to strengthen the development pillar to help achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs. The developing country Member States in particular had formed the expectation that the United Nations would strive to fill the implementation gap between promises and results at the international, regional and country levels. The current food, energy and financial crises, compounded by climate change, seriously jeopardized the capacity of the majority of developing countries — especially the most vulnerable and the least developed — to achieve the MDGs by 2015.

27. The United Nations needed to strengthen its analytical capacity and promote norms and policy guidelines to deal with the mounting effects of the recent crises. It also needed to improve its substantive

reports so that it could engage in dialogue with other organizations dealing with development issues.

28. Despite growing demands for the United Nations to be the key global driver for development, resources for the development agenda, in terms of share of the total regular budget and number of posts, had declined. In its report, the Advisory Committee had observed that the combined initial appropriation for the development-related section of the regular budget had fallen from 21.8 per cent in the biennium 1998-1999 to 17.8 per cent in the biennium 2008-2009. The picture was even darker if account was taken of the sum of the other budgets, particularly the peacekeeping budgets. Regional commissions had experienced a substantial reduction in development resources over the past decade, losing 220 regular budget posts or more than 10 per cent of their capacity, since 1990-1991.

29. In its resolution 62/236, the General Assembly had requested the Secretary-General to provide a comprehensive proposal on development at the first part of its resumed sixty-second session. The Group regretted that the General Assembly had not taken up the matter earlier, especially since development should and must be a priority. Member States must provide the United Nations with the resources required to enhance its overall capacity to monitor developments and provide early warning on key development issues.

30. The Secretary-General's proposals, which aimed to increase the portion of the 2008-2009 regular budget allocated to development to 18.2 per cent only, did not address the current imbalance between the three pillars of the Organization. The proposed percentage still fell well short of the 21.8 per cent appropriation in the biennium 1998-1999. However, the proposals were an important step in the right direction. Still more needed to be done and, given the nature and pace of challenges to economic and social development, the Secretariat's needs in the field of development should be kept under constant review.

31. The Group reiterated the importance of the Development Account as part of the United Nations overall development pillar and noted that, more than ten years after its establishment, the Account was still nowhere near the proposed level of \$200 million. The transfer of savings to the Account had failed to provide for an adequate level of funding. It was therefore time that a viable system to ensure sustained funding of the Account was put in place.

32. **Mr. Brunel** (France), speaking on behalf of the European Union; the candidate countries Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; the stabilization and association process countries Albania and Serbia; and, in addition, Armenia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, said that development lay at the heart of the United Nations agenda. The European Union was committed to that agenda and to working through the United Nations to achieve the internationally agreed development goals. As the European Union provided more than 50 per cent of the voluntary contributions to United Nations funds and programmes, its commitment to the Organization and its work in development could not be questioned.

33. The European Union supplied over 50 per cent of overall official development assistance and, in 2007, had committed nearly \$72 billion. It had agreed to increase its official development assistance to 0.56 per cent of its gross national income by 2010 and was well on its way to achieving the 2015 target of 0.7 per cent. Half the additional aid would go to Africa, with special attention being given to the most fragile States, countries with a low number of donors and the poorest populations in middle-income countries.

34. Development-related sections accounted for \$744 million in the biennium 2008-2009, after deducting support costs. Given the development challenges facing the Organization, it was particularly important that the resources should be used as efficiently and effectively as possible. The European Union looked forward to a detailed debate on the roles and responsibilities of all Secretariat departments and United Nations system entities involved in the delivery of development mandates. The debate should also cover the use of resources already allocated to the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the regional commissions, with a view to ensuring that optimal structures were in place and that the expected results would be achieved through the exploitation of synergies, with no overlapping of functions.

35. **Mr. Martins** (Angola), speaking on behalf of the African Group, said that Africa had fulfilled all its economic, political and social commitments. Many violent civil wars had ended and there were fewer inter-State conflicts; however, peace in Africa could endure only if it was accompanied by economic and social development. The African Group was pleased that the United Nations had played an active role in resolving many of the continent's conflicts.

36. Aid alone could not end poverty in Africa; the rule of law and peace and security were also prerequisites for strong and sustained development. Unless prosperity was widely shared, stability would not last and democratic institutions could not flourish.

37. The recent high-level meeting on Africa's development needs had demonstrated the international community's increasing concern at the slow rate of development in Africa. In their political declaration, world leaders had reaffirmed their commitment to addressing the special needs of Africa — a continent where, despite considerable improvements, the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs, remained elusive.

38. The declaration had stressed the need to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations system to support Africa's development. It had further requested the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly, at its sixty-fourth session, a comprehensive report, with recommendations, with a view to the formulation, by the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly, of a mechanism to review the full and timely implementation of all commitments related to Africa's development, building on existing mechanisms, to ensure that Member States remained seized of the issue of addressing Africa's special development needs. However, that could not be achieved when there was a constant decline in resources allocated to development. The African Group had been disappointed to learn, in the context of the latest review of mandates older than five years, that the Secretariat faced major gaps in the implementation of those mandates, owing primarily to a lack of financial and human resources.

39. The current food, fuel, financial and climate change crises threatened to undermine the progress made by the developing countries, particularly in Africa, in their struggle against poverty. The United Nations was clearly unable to respond to those growing challenges.

40. The African Group welcomed the establishment of the Millennium Development Goals Africa Steering Group and the Millennium Development Goals Gap Task Force, led by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). However, their efforts would not be successful unless the Secretariat improved its analytical capacities to deal with critical development

issues, development cooperation and the regional dimensions of development.

41. The Secretary-General's proposals represented an important step in the right direction in that they contained modest but relevant organizational and funding suggestions to help exploit synergies between the normative and analytical bodies of the United Nations, such as the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the regional commissions and UNCTAD, to complement the activities of the operational entities dealing with development issues.

42. **Mr. Heller** (Mexico), speaking on behalf of the Rio Group, said that strengthening United Nations work on development was a priority for the Group. The Secretary-General's proposal would help fill the gaps resulting from years of overstressing staff with additional duties and fulfil the mandate to strengthen the Economic and Social Council. Pursuant to the mandate enacting from the 2005 World Summit Outcome, the Council, in addition to its regular functions, had been carrying out annual ministerial reviews of the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals and had been convening a biennial Development Cooperation Forum to analyse trends in international cooperation for development.

43. It was the duty of the Fifth Committee, particularly at a time of economic crisis and uncertainty, to ensure that the Secretariat was adequately equipped to assist governments with their development endeavours. Discussion should focus on the resources required for normative and analytical capacities within the Secretariat. If any overlap or duplication existed with other United Nations entities, the Committee should ask why those entities were performing functions that fell within the purview of the Secretariat. Operational activities, on the other hand, were undertaken by organs such as the United Nations funds and programmes and were therefore not included in the proposals under consideration.

44. **Ms. Stevens** (Australia), speaking also on behalf of Canada and New Zealand, said that their Governments had committed some \$7.5 billion in official development assistance, much of it channelled through the United Nations, and they therefore attached great importance to the effective and efficient delivery of development mandates. The Secretary-General was engaged in the complex task of enhancing the Secretariat's capacity to do so within a strict

deadline set by the General Assembly. The proposals under consideration entailed costs of over \$50 million for a full biennium and provided for 152 new posts. Before committing additional resources, the three Governments wished to have a more detailed analysis of the potential for reallocating existing resources and details of how the additional resources would achieve outcomes. The Advisory Committee report did not provide adequate analysis and guidance.

45. For the United Nations to fulfil its normative and operational role in development, capacities within the Secretariat and across the broader United Nations system must be used in a complementary and coordinated manner. It would be useful to identify the partner organizations involved and their respective roles in fulfilling development mandates, as a way to strengthen both the approach to development and the United Nations system as a whole.

46. **Mr. Pramudwinai** (Thailand) welcomed the Secretary-General's proposals for making expenditures more commensurate with mandated development-related activities. In considering the budget, Member States must bear in mind that sufficient resources were a determinant of effective programme delivery.

47. It was imperative to address the imbalance between the increased workload and resources available in the seven areas identified by the Secretary-General in his report (A/62/708). The Secretary-General's request for some \$25.5 million and a net additional 152 posts was a reasonable first step in the effort to strengthen one of the main pillars of the United Nations system. Beyond that, his delegation hoped to see a long-term plan for strengthening synergies between the Secretariat and funds and programmes. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development had stated in its *Trade and Development Report 2008* that aid to productive sectors was a prerequisite for faster growth, yet such aid had been declining since 1990 as a proportion of total official development assistance. That trend must be urgently reversed if the MDGs were to be achieved by 2015.

48. Thailand had been a development partner of the United Nations for decades in programmes on drug eradication, crop substitution, HIV/AIDS and other pandemics. His Government therefore welcomed the proposals to strengthen South-South cooperation and also supported the work of UNCTAD in implementing

its trade and development mandates and on emerging issues such as climate change, migration, food and energy security.

49. The regional commissions, finally, played important roles in helping countries achieve the MDGs and shape their national strategies for economic and social development. In Asia and the Pacific, for example, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific served as a regional hub for the exchange of views on policy options, strategies and good practices. There was merit, therefore, in the proposal to strengthen those commissions.

50. **Mr. Kumalo** (South Africa) said that development was a right, central to the advancement of all humanity. The 2005 World Summit had recognized the need to strengthen the development pillar of the United Nations to help realize the internationally agreed development goals. Even before the current volatility in global markets, however, the achievement of the MDGs had already been in doubt for poor countries, with Africa the only continent not on track to meet any of the goals of the Millennium Declaration by 2015. His delegation appreciated the establishment by the Secretary-General of the MDG Africa Steering Group and the MDG Gap Task Force and the convening of a high-level meeting on the MDGs in September 2008 to find ways to bridge the implementation gap.

51. The Secretary-General's proposals to increase resources for development activities and the regional commissions marked the beginning of a process to address the imbalance between the three pillars of the Organization. He noted with concern that since its inception, the Development Account had consistently fallen far short of the proposed level of \$200 million. A sustainable funding source should be put in place immediately. At the critical juncture the world had reached, the General Assembly should act decisively to put the United Nations on a sustainable path towards strengthening its development activities.

52. **Mr. Abdelaziz** (Egypt) endorsed the statements by the Secretary-General on the need to build the capacity of the United Nations to deliver its mandates and respond effectively to emerging challenges in the area of development. Together with Chile and Indonesia, Egypt had presented an initiative to focus the general debate at the sixty-third session on the most pressing of those challenges: the food and energy

crisis. He therefore welcomed the establishment of the High-level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis.

53. The scope of the current financial crisis showed that solutions must be global. As the most representative multilateral forum, the United Nations must have the capacity to respond to the grave threats facing all States. In that connection, he supported the initiative of the President of the General Assembly to convene a high-level dialogue on the reform of the Bretton Woods institutions.

54. Despite promises by developed countries to double aid to Africa by 2010, the volume of official development assistance had fallen for the second consecutive year. The United Nations must take action in areas where shortfalls existed, and must act as a forum in which a broad range of stakeholders could share lessons learned on ways to make aid more effective. The High-level Forum on Aid Effectiveness held in Accra in September 2008 was a good step that should be followed by other concerted action.

55. Additional resources must be allocated to financing for development to address the increased workload stemming from the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus scheduled for late November 2008 and to expand the Organization's capacity to evaluate and make recommendations on new initiatives, particularly those relating to innovative sources of financing. The United Nations also needed to be in a better position to address new and emerging barriers to trade liberalization, including non-tariff barriers, and to improve coordination between trade blocs and the multilateral trading system.

56. As coordinator for the question of Africa's development on behalf of the Joint Coordinating Committee of the Group of 77 and China, Egypt had been actively involved in the discussion of mandate review at the sixty-second session, which had revealed a shortfall in implementation of mandates on Africa's development in particular and had led to the adoption of General Assembly resolution 62/278 recommending that it should be addressed.

57. Egypt had always advocated stronger links between the normative and operational roles of the United Nations in the field of development as being critical to the integrated implementation of the

development agenda. The General Assembly must not miss the unprecedented opportunity before it to support proposals that would enhance the Organization's capacity to meet the aspirations of peoples the world over.

58. **Mr. Ali** (Malaysia) said there was a clear consensus that development was a vital pillar of the work of the United Nations and that realizing development goals was a responsibility shared by all. Only one month earlier, the General Assembly had given impetus to efforts to achieve the MDGs by 2015, although some of the provisions of General Assembly resolution 62/208 on the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system suggested that further action was required, particularly by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, on emerging challenges such as climate change and the food and fuel crisis.

59. In that connection, his delegation viewed a number of issues with alarm: the decline in appropriations for development-related activities, from 21.8 per cent of the total budget appropriation in the biennium 1998-1999 to 17.8 per cent in 2008-2009, and the accompanying decline in posts under the related budget sections; the inability to address imbalances between mandates and resources through greater efficiencies or restructuring; and the failure of piecemeal attempts to increase resources for development, including the Development Account — created in 1997 to finance capacity-building and technical assistance for developing countries — which stood at a paltry \$20 million. Without a solution to the United Nations financial crisis, caused by the late or non-payment of assessed contributions by the major Member States, the development pillar would be perpetually held hostage. All that demonstrated a failure to balance the three pillars of United Nations work and a lack of commitment to development.

60. The Organization had emphasized better use of resources through accountability and results-based management, but an equally important means of increasing its effectiveness was to establish clear mandates, which in turn required better understanding of expected outcomes, appropriate action and mechanisms for coordinating with other entities in implementing those mandates.

61. Unlike the revised estimates relating to the strengthening of the Department of Political Affairs

(A/62/521), which had not been based on an intergovernmental mandate, the report currently before the Committee (A/62/708) had been mandated by General Assembly resolution 62/236. While the report identified critical gaps in seven key areas of development, including efforts to achieve the MDGs, the environment, climate change and sustainable development, it nevertheless lacked analysis and detailed information on development activities. The United Nations could not assist Member States to achieve the internationally agreed development goals if it was constrained by the need to fund expenditure from within existing resources, nor could the problem be solved through cost-cutting in other priority areas. Earmarked funding would continue to hobble the United Nations by increasing administrative costs and promoting fragmentation. The lack of an objective resource allocation procedure and an effective accountability mechanism had led to the bulk of resources being devoted to special political missions.

62. A new approach was required to address the perpetual imbalance between development mandates and resources: continued funding of the Development Account through efficiency savings was untenable and must be phased out; and a mechanism to assess the funding required for development activities must be established, together with a follow-up process for implementation.

63. His delegation agreed with the Advisory Committee that organizational adjustments should not take precedence over General Assembly decisions, that such adjustments must have clearly defined criteria and be implemented with transparency, and that a clear division of roles was needed among entities dealing with cross-cutting issues such as climate change, advancement of women and humanitarian activities in order to avoid duplication and ensure greater coherence in delivering mandates.

64. **Mr. Tarragô** (Brazil) recalled that the General Assembly, in its resolution 62/236 on questions relating to the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009, had requested the Secretary-General to provide a comprehensive proposal for strengthening the Secretariat's development pillar, with the aim of securing effective and efficient delivery of its development-related mandates, including the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the regional commissions and the Development Account.

However, since the adoption of the resolution, the world economic situation had become much bleaker, endangering the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs, and making the poor especially vulnerable.

65. The proposals contained in the report of the Secretary-General (A/62/708) were an initial step in the long process of placing investment in each of the three pillars of the Organization — peace and security, development and human rights — on an equal footing with each other. Although the pillars should be considered indivisible, interrelated and interdependent, the biennial budget adopted in 2007 had not given development activities due priority.

66. While voluntary contributions to finance the activities of the Organization were welcome, such extrabudgetary resources should neither replace regular and predictable funding, nor be used to reorient, rather than simply support, the priorities agreed by Member States. If Member States were truly committed to the ideals of multilateralism, all core activities of the Organization should be financed from the regular budget.

67. The assertion that United Nations funds and programmes played the lead role in development issues often served as a pretext to deny additional development resources to the Secretariat, ignoring one of its crucial tasks: to help States to better understand the challenges of social and economic development. The Secretariat must become better able to help developing countries, particularly the least developed countries, to become part of, and benefit from, the global economy. Challenges such as climate change and the food and energy crises increased the need to establish trade and development policies focusing on the “bottom billion” inhabitants of the world neglected by economic growth, and to pursue the MDGs.

68. The May 2006 midterm review of implementation of the São Paulo Consensus, adopted at the eleventh session of UNCTAD in 2004, emphasized that UNCTAD should make a larger contribution to South-South cooperation, a phenomenon which the Secretariat should continue to monitor in order to support the formulation of a comprehensive development strategy which went beyond traditional North-South relations.

69. As conservation and sustainable use of forests was a key part of development strategies, and as the

General Assembly, in its resolution 62/98, had given the United Nations Forum on Forests new responsibilities, within its multi-year programme of work, for the implementation of the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests, the Secretariat would require additional resources. In addition, his delegation supported the strengthening of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, considering the resource requests of the Secretary-General to be an initial step towards that goal.

70. Providing more resources for the Development Account was an integral part of the efforts to consolidate the Secretariat's development activities. The Committee should reach agreement on a sustainable way of increasing those resources.

71. **Mr. Davide** (Philippines) recalled that the 2005 World Summit Outcome had confirmed development, peace and security and human rights as the three, interlinked, pillars of the Organization, recognizing that achieving peace and security was difficult without development. What was missing was a just, fair, reasonable and equitable balance in the resources allocated to each of the pillars. In the discussions relating to its organizational meeting at the beginning of the current session, the Committee had learned that the share of resources devoted to the peace and security and human rights pillars far exceeded the share devoted to the development pillar.

72. His delegation therefore welcomed the package of development-related proposals contained in the report of the Secretary-General, which reflected the mandate conferred by the General Assembly in its resolution 62/236 and which would help to restore some balance between needs and resources. Adoption of that package was made all the more important by the threat to development presented by the current global crises associated with climate change, energy, food, terrorism and, most recently, finance.

73. **Mr. Liu Zhenmin** (China) said that globalization had led to closer links than ever before between the three pillars of the Organization, and that without development, world peace and the protection of human rights would be in danger. Strengthening the Organization's development pillar was a matter of urgency, as there were few grounds for optimism that the Millennium Development Goals would be achieved on time, especially in Africa. The Organization should

enhance capacity-building efforts to play a greater role in furthering the MDGs and responding to the current rapid succession of crises and challenges.

74. Moreover, strengthening the development pillar was an important part of reform of the Organization, which for some time had paid attention to political issues at the expense of development issues. Those issues had been marginalized in terms of institutional arrangements, resource allocation and programme implementation. Strengthening the development pillar also required continuous improvement of efficiency in the Secretariat, so that resources could be effectively used to eradicate poverty and achieve development. Strengthening of the development pillar should be viewed from the strategic perspective of its effect on preserving peace, promoting human rights and achieving the MDGs.

75. **Mr. Muhith** (Bangladesh) said that the aim of sustained growth, sustainable development and poverty eradication, as enshrined in the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs, should remain at the heart of the Organization's activities. However, as the current development structure had failed to produce the desired results, an in-depth analysis should be performed to understand and identify the causes and remedy shortcomings.

76. Strengthening of the development pillar should not simply consist of allocating more financial resources and posts. Such measures were only a means to an end. All aspects of the development structure should be reviewed to ensure that the appropriate knowledge, skill, commitment and resources were available to address global challenges, including poverty alleviation and sustainable development. The current mismatch between resources and mandates had been well documented. His delegation was concerned at the decrease in the combined initial appropriation for the development-related sections of the regular budget from 21.8 per cent in the biennium 1998-1999 to 17.8 per cent in the biennium 2008-2009, and at the low level of the Development Account.

77. All development policies should focus on the least developed countries, whose populations constituted the bottom of the "bottom billion". The least developed countries unit of the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States should be given the means to fulfil

the intergovernmental mandate established by the General Assembly in its resolution 56/227, on the third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries. Recalling the Secretary-General's intention to assign to that High Representative the functions which the Member States had assigned to the Special Adviser on Africa, he pointed out that the mandates of the High Representative and the Special Adviser had been established by distinct resolutions of the General Assembly and that it was the exclusive prerogative of the General Assembly to alter them.

78. His delegation agreed with the Advisory Committee that the proposed realignment decision lacked clarity and was inconsistent with the decisions of the General Assembly, and feared that it would undermine the effectiveness of both offices. It called for the rapid restoration of their mandates, particularly to ensure the successful conduct of the fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries. The Organization's uniqueness and strength lay in its universality, legitimacy, transparency, accountability, emphasis on good governance and intergovernmental decision-making. It was the collective responsibility of the Member States to uphold the Organization's high standards. Any intergovernmental decision could be superseded only by another intergovernmental decision.

79. **Mr. Al-Habib** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that development would continue to be one of the responsibilities of the multilateral system, as collective security had an economic and social component, as well as a human component, which must be addressed with equal attention. Developing countries made development part of their political agenda because of its close links with stability, poverty alleviation, employment and economic growth. In addition, efforts to prevent conflicts were meaningless if the economic roots of conflicts were not addressed.

80. While the drafters of the Organization's Charter, and the Secretary-General, had recognized economic and social development as crucial to peace and cooperation, that vision was not reflected in the allocation of resources for development, which — as the Advisory Committee had pointed out in its report — had been eroded for years.

81. Recalling the 2005 World Summit Outcome and numerous General Assembly resolutions, including, most recently, resolution 62/236, he said that Member

States wished to see a stronger and more effective and efficient mechanism for implementing development-related mandates. The report of the Secretary-General was an important first step in improving the Organization's capacities in that regard.

82. **Ms. Nuñez Mordoche** (Cuba) said that the discussion of the role of the Organization in development was highly topical at a time of world economic crisis. The failure of the neoliberal capitalist model could not be clearer, as the most ardent opponents of State intervention in economic matters were clamouring for a bailout from public funds. The era of supposed market omnipotence in the face of clear evidence to the contrary had come to an end.

83. The unjust and unsustainable world order must be restructured. It had delivered over 80 per cent of the population of the planet into poverty, left 800 million in hunger and desperation, brought the Doha Round negotiations on trade and development to stalemate, stood in the way of sustainable use of energy resources, and caused all but irreversible damage to the world's climate and environment. Yet a billion dollars were wasted on weapons and another billion on mundane commercial advertising every year.

84. It should come as no surprise that developing countries were insisting on the need to lend new impetus to the Organization's development activities, with both financial and human resources attached to those activities having fallen substantially between the bienniums 1998-1999 and 2008-2009. The regional commissions had also lost 220 development-related posts funded from the regular budget in the previous decade. Over the same ten years, the representatives in the Organization of many developed countries had made great efforts to erode the work of the Economic and Social Council and the Second Committee of the General Assembly. Those efforts had been countered by the firm opposition of the developing countries.

85. Emphasizing that the development-related mandates established by the General Assembly must be adhered to strictly, her delegation called for a rapid reversal of the harm done to countries with special needs by the decision of the Secretary-General to combine, without the assent of the Member States, the functions of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa and the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States. It also

hoped that the Secretary-General would make proposals to boost the Development Account, which was far from its originally promised level.

86. Reform of the Organization's development pillar should focus on the strategic aim of fulfilling the Millennium Development Goals, which were modest in scope. Although the proposals in question were also modest, particularly when compared to the immense scale of peacekeeping operations, they at least recognized the need for change. As much had occurred since the issuance of the report of the Secretary-General in February 2008, her delegation wished to see follow-up action on some of the proposals in it, in order to take into account the current state of debate on matters such as biofuels and coordinating measures to address climate change. What was needed more than an increase in posts connected with development was an increase in the number of activities connected with development, in order to support developing countries' pursuit of well-being for all their citizens. The answer was not in a miracle of the market, as the world insisted on a different, fairer order.

87. **Mr. Ntwaagae** (Botswana) emphasized the importance of devoting equal attention to the implementation of all mandated programmes and activities embracing peace and security, development, human rights and humanitarian issues. His delegation trusted that the improved initiatives in the area of peacekeeping and the ongoing work to improve the Organization's response mechanisms would result in meaningful achievements.

88. He regretted, however, the critical gaps in the development area identified in the report of the Secretary-General (A/62/708) and agreed that the resources approved by the General Assembly must be commensurate with the mandates entrusted to the Secretary-General by Member States. Payment by Member States of their assessed contributions in full and on time was particularly important in that context.

89. Line managers, who were in the best position to ascertain their resource needs, should not be subjected to an artificial zero-growth budget which made it impossible to hold them accountable for any failure on their part to implement the mandates for which they were responsible.

90. Attainment of the Millennium Development Goals was at the core of the Organization's work and it was unfortunately becoming increasingly evident that

no African country seemed likely to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by the target date of 2015. The Secretary-General should support the efforts of Member States and provide the Organization with strategic guidance in playing a lead role in that connection to supplement the work undertaken by the other substantive organizations of the United Nations family.

91. Africa remained a region of acute and persistent special needs and its already desperate situation was being exacerbated by the dramatic surge in food and fuel prices and the downturn in the global economic outlook. His delegation agreed with the Secretary-General that Africa should remain a priority in the work of the Organization, but it noted with concern the issues raised by the Advisory Committee concerning the initiatives relating to the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, and hoped that the organizational changes proposed by the Secretary-General would not be counterproductive.

92. **Mr. Natalegawa** (Indonesia) said that development was one of the three main pillars on which the United Nations rested, without which the other two pillars — peace and security, and human rights — would never be sustainable. Development-related activities were therefore of strategic importance and it was particularly regrettable that development was seriously underfunded in the budget of the Organization. In 1970, General Assembly resolution 2626 (XXV) had called for the economically advanced Member States to pledge 0.7 per cent of their gross national product for official development assistance, but to date only five developed countries had achieved that target. In 1998 the Development Account had been established, but a decade later the proposed level of \$200 million had not been attained.

93. The promises made looked empty to the present generation who were witnessing the current financial crisis; over a billion people had been living in extreme poverty on less than \$1 a day for decades. More time, attention, efforts and resources must be provided for development under the auspices of the United Nations and his delegation would work with others to ensure the optimal utilization of the additional resources requested by the Secretary-General.

94. **Mr. Abdel Haleem** (Sudan) said that development was the cornerstone of peace and security, as had been confirmed by numerous conferences and resolutions and by the Millennium Development Goals. Despite the setbacks, the developing countries had not lost hope of achieving a reasonable level of development. By General Assembly resolution 62/236 they had requested the Secretary-General to make proposals with a view to improving the effective delivery of development-related mandates.

95. Emphasis should be placed on enhancing the capacity of the Secretariat in the field of development planning. In accordance with the Millennium Summit, the African continent should be given priority in the area of development, in particular through the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, who should be provided with the necessary resources to enable him to fulfil his mandate. Emphasis should also be given to the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which focused on development strategies supported by the development partners and technical support through the Secretariat. There was a need for a balance between the resources devoted to development and those devoted to peacekeeping, so as to address the root causes of problems and not just the symptoms. The Development Account should not rely on savings generated by increased efficiency but should be funded from the regular budget. Results-based management should be applied to the management of development activities. Transparency and accountability must prevail in development activities.

96. **Mr. Farooq** (Pakistan) said that although development-related activities and the role of the United Nations in international cooperation for development were of fundamental importance, as had repeatedly been acknowledged, that acknowledgement had not yet been translated into action. The development sector had long been neglected, as the Advisory Committee had emphasized. Over the past 10 years, the percentage of the regular budget allocated to development had declined, as had the proportion of posts in the corresponding budget sections. There were therefore critical gaps in the capacity of the Organization to deliver development-related mandates. In recognition of the urgent need to strengthen the development pillar, General Assembly resolution 62/236 had requested the Secretary-General to provide a comprehensive proposal with a view to improving the effective and efficient delivery of the mandates of the

development-related activities of the Secretariat. The proposals put forward by the Secretary-General were a step in the right direction but fell short of requirements.

97. He noted the importance of the Development Account, which over 10 years earlier had been expected to have a capital of \$200 million as a result of savings from increased efficiency. That method of financing, however, had failed to yield the desired results, and the time had now come to put in place a viable mechanism to ensure financing of the Development Account on a sustainable basis.

98. Development was an issue for the entire Organization and went to the very heart of its commitment to save future generations from the scourge of war and to ensure respect for human rights.

99. **Mr. Yamada** (Japan) said that General Assembly resolution 62/236 had emphasized the need to strengthen the development pillar of the United Nations Secretariat and the importance of strategic planning. The resolution had also requested the Secretary-General to make a comprehensive proposal to improve the effective and efficient delivery of the mandates of the development-related activities of the Secretariat. Comprehensiveness, effectiveness and efficiency represented the essential aspects to be taken into account.

100. His delegation would like to have an overview of the coherence and consistency of development activities in the United Nations system as a whole. The relationship between the United Nations and its funds and programmes should be clarified and the commitment of the Secretariat to its role in normative activities and advocacy should be confirmed. While the funds and programmes should be given the major role in implementing operational activities in the field, the respective roles of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UNCTAD and the regional commissions should be clearly identified.

101. The Committee should examine how the Secretary-General's proposals would bring effectiveness to the development pillar of the Organization. One means of ensuring effectiveness would be to avoid duplication of posts and activities. The Secretary-General's proposals involved a large number of additional posts throughout the entire range of departments and bodies and his delegation would examine every request by the Secretary-General on its

own merits in order to ensure that there was no unnecessary duplication.

102. Lastly, the Committee should spare no effort in examining the efficiency of the proposals from a budgetary perspective. It should be remembered that the proposals to be discussed by the Committee represented requirements that had not been included in the initial programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009 and those additional requirements should be handled in accordance with established budgetary procedures, namely through redeployment of resources or modifications of existing activities. The additional requirements should focus on high priorities and immediate needs to be met before the next budget cycle.

103. **Ms. Norman** (United States of America) said that her country, as the largest provider of development aid and the largest source of private capital flows to developing countries, supported the United Nations development agenda and the intergovernmental process underlying it. Recognizing that the United Nations was one of a number of organizations that provided guidance and direction on development policies, her delegation believed that consideration of the Secretary-General's report provided an opportunity to evaluate the role of the United Nations in development activities, the effectiveness and efficiency of current operations and practices, and the amount of resources required to further address development needs.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.