

United Nations  
**GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY**

UN LIBRARY

NOV 8 1976



THIRTY-FIRST SESSION

Official Records \*

UN/SA COLLECTION

SECOND COMMITTEE

30th meeting

held on

Wednesday, 3 November 1976

at 10.30 a.m.

New York

---

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 30th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. VALDES (Bolivia)

CONTENTS

- AGENDA ITEM 59: OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT
- AGENDA ITEM 68: TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES
- AGENDA ITEM 67: ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

---

\* This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be incorporated in a copy of the record and should be sent *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, room LX-2332.

Corrections will be issued shortly after the end of the session, in a separate fascicle for each Committee.

Distr. GENERAL  
A/C.2/31/SR.30  
5 November 1976

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

76-90589

/...

The meeting was called to order at 10.55 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 59: OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT (A/31/3; A/C.2/31/L.2, L.3, L.4)

AGENDA ITEM 68: TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (A/31/3, A/31/82 and Corr.1 (Russian only), A/31/197, A/31/237)

AGENDA ITEM 67: ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/31/197, A/31/237; A/C.2/31/7 and Add.1)

1. The CHAIRMAN said that, in accordance with the decision taken at the 25th meeting, the Committee would take up items 59, 68 and 67 together.

2. Mr. MORSE (Administrator, United Nations Development Programme), recalling his earlier pledge to the Governing Council of UNDP to bring the financial situation of the Programme under full control, said that, as a result of special contributions from a number of countries, more frequent and more closely monitored expenditure reporting by UNDP's agency partners, and the effective work of the UNDP staff, it had been possible to steer the Programme through difficult times with confidence that the ceiling established for programme expenditures in 1976 could be maintained. A blueprint for permanent improvements in the financial information system needed by UNDP was being completed and it would of course involve the co-operation of the Programme's agency partners. The Programme had reduced its administrative and programme support budget for 1976 by \$2 million, and the revised budget for 1977 to be submitted to the Governing Council in January provided for a \$4 million reduction from the figures originally suggested in January 1976. Much of that had been made possible by a 13 per cent reduction, through attrition, in UNDP professional staff posts. At the same time, as a result of generous offers from both recipient and donor Governments to assume costs of many projects, the activities that had been planned for 1976 had been sustained at a level of some \$430 million, \$60 million higher than the ceiling established for UNDP projects could allow.

3. Arrears in contributions prior to 1976 had been reduced from \$41.6 million to \$20.1 million and 96 per cent of all pledges for 1976 had already been paid in. He had undertaken initiatives toward the full use of non-convertible currencies. A number of generous additional contributions had been made to the Programme for 1976. Thus, the Programme's formidable deficit had been reduced to \$10 million. That did not take into account the special arrangements with the World Bank and other financial institutions which acted as executing agencies for the deferment until 1977 of reimbursements due to them in 1976. As a result of such arrangements, UNDP would not encounter any cash shortfall in 1976; however, in the time remaining in 1976 he intended to seek further contributions in order to close the year with

/...

no deficit at all. Nevertheless, he urged the Committee to support the recommendation of the UNDP Governing Council and the Economic and Social Council that carefully limited borrowing procedures should be approved. Common sense required some contingency arrangement, in view of the fact that UNDP would be starting 1977 without reserves and that even at the end of 1977, if all went well, its Operational Reserve would be only 10 per cent of what the Governing Council itself deemed prudent.

4. In order to streamline the headquarters staff in keeping with the Programme's decentralized nature, the budget estimates to be submitted to the Governing Council in January would provide for 202 professional staff in New York in 1977, as compared with 241 in 1976, and approaches to further decentralization were under study. He would now devote much of his time to the search for intellectual excellence, innovation and higher quality in serving the developing countries with greater dispatch, greater cost-effectiveness, less red tape and, above all, newly heightened respect for the supreme objectives of helping to build national and collective self-reliance and a new international economic order.

5. In June 1976, the Governing Council had approved indicative planning figures of some \$2.5 billion for the Second United Nations Development Co-operation Cycle, a 66 per cent increase over the first cycle. It had also confirmed the agreement for a significant redistribution of indicative planning figures in favour of the least developed countries. As a result, one third of the resources for the second Cycle were earmarked for Africa south of the Sahara and up to \$6 million for national liberation movements recognized by the Organization of African Unity. The Governing Council had also decided that Namibia should have the status of a newly independent country with an appropriately increased indicative planning figure. Lastly, it had approved increased IPFs for Mozambique and Angola.

6. Even though the Programme's immediate financial difficulties were over, he was morally bound to appeal for determined efforts to realize the growth in resources each year that the figure of \$2.5 billion implied. Estimates based on the 1976 Pledging Conference indicated that the Programme would have only \$501 million in voluntary contributions for 1977 unless additional contributions were forthcoming. That represented a significantly lower rate of increase than the 14 per cent on which the Governing Council had predicated its allocation of resources for the next Development Cycle. Moreover, with those resources it was necessary to start to rebuild the Operational Reserve. The Governing Council had asked that every effort should be made to lift the actual volume of IPF expenditure in 1977 above that of 1976, and he would therefore be seeking additional contributions from all possible sources.

7. At the same time, UNDP must vigorously watch the unfolding content and substance of its programme in order to ensure that the resources it did have were used as wisely and as effectively as possible. The setting of national priorities and objectives was, of course, a matter for Governments alone; the responsibility

/...

(Mr. Morse)

of UNDP was to ensure that its resources were deployed so as best to serve those priorities and objectives. The global, regional and interregional programmes of UNDP afforded major opportunities for effective project development in areas on which attention had been focused by the fourth session of UNCTAD, the World Employment Conference and the Habitat Conference, which, together with other recent international conferences, had provided strategic concepts of development that UNDP must seek to apply at the operational level. At all those conferences, growing concern had been expressed by the international community about the development gap both between and within countries. On the one hand, the widening of the gap in per capita income between developed and developing countries must be halted and reversed; on the other hand, development programmes and projects must be so designed as to assist in meeting the basic needs of the poorer strata of each society by creating productive employment opportunities for them. The Governing Council, in its decision on new dimensions, had recognized the importance of those objectives for UNDP.

8. As another new dimension of international co-operation, technical co-operation among developing countries, if vigorously pursued, would prove to be a most important vehicle for implementing the historic decisions of the sixth and seventh special sessions of the General Assembly with rapidly unfolding implications for economic co-operation among developing countries. The day was past when technical co-operation could be viewed as consisting exclusively of a transfer from developed to developing countries. There were immense opportunities for developing countries to take advantage of each other's skills and technological capabilities. In many cases, moreover, the experience of developing countries was of far greater relevance to the solution of their common problems. Thus, TCDC was not a separate or isolated programme but a dynamic process of development through mutual sharing in which UNDP and the organizations of the United Nations system should assume an active and creative role. Since the General Assembly had endorsed the report of the Working Group on Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries in December 1974, UNDP had initiated or assisted a number of projects designed to advance TCDC with the full involvement of United Nations participating and executing agencies. It has also launched an information referral system to collect and disseminate information on the capacities of developing countries which could be made available for bilateral or multilateral technical co-operation programmes and projects with other developing countries. In the past, the lack of appropriate information had hindered the evolution of horizontal exchanges.

9. The study requested by the General Assembly at its thirtieth session concerning recruitment of experts, awarding of fellowships and subcontracts and equipment purchases by organizations of the United Nations system had been carried out with the assistance of a distinguished member of the international community, Mr. Odero-Jawi. An excellent response had been received from the organizations of the United Nations system to requests for data and information, and the report in question would be presented to the Governing Council at its twenty-third session.

/...

(Mr. Morse)

10. He attached special importance to the United Nations Conference on Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries and was in constant communication with the Secretary of the Economic and Social Council in order to ensure full co-ordination in the preparations for it. Three productive regional meetings had already been held, and he was sure that the meeting in Kuwait early in 1977 would make a further distinctive contribution. The objectives and agenda of the Conference, as well as the proposed plan of action, would be the concern of the Preparatory Committee, which would meet in January 1977. Special arrangements had been made to provide that Committee with the necessary documentation and the support of an interagency task force for the Conference, which was scheduled to meet at the same time as the Preparatory Committee. The financial provisions so far made for the Conference were exceedingly conservative, as a result of the general financial constraints on UNDP. Preparations for the Conference could be strengthened in several ways, but only if the necessary resources were to be made available. He earnestly hoped that the General Assembly would provide the necessary resources to ensure the success of the Conference.

11. Another of the new dimensions approved by the Governing Council was the idea of combining technical and capital assistance in order to produce a greater impact on development among low-income groups. Considerable progress had been made along those lines and the United Nations Capital Development Fund was now committed to 38 projects in 19 countries, mainly the least developed. In 1976 its cumulative resources had increased to approximately \$34 million, and disbursements for 1976, while still limited, would be 10 times those in 1975. The work of UNCDF meshed with that of UNDP, the specialized agencies and the United Nations Volunteers, and also with bilateral assistance. A new kind of follow-up capital investment pattern, in which the World Bank could expand proven pilot activities carried out by UNCDF, was now discernible.

12. He had already pledged to give high priority to strengthening the Programme's relations with its agency partners in the United Nations development system. The Governing Council, and later the Economic and Social Council, had given full endorsement to that approach. Taking the request in Council resolution 2024 (LXI) as a basis for action, he had initiated without delay detailed consultations with each of the Programme's partners at the highest level, which had led to a satisfactory meeting of minds at the recent session of the Inter-agency Consultative Board on the concept of partnership and the practical steps which were to give reality to that concept. Detailed measures would be worked out in a series of consultations with all the organizations and programmes concerned, and he was confident that he would be able to report to the Governing Council in June 1977 on decisive new measures taken and real progress achieved in that vital task of strengthening mutual co-operation both at headquarters and in the field.

13. If UNDP had been able to surmount the immediate difficulties of recent months, it was because of the extraordinary acts of faith and practical support of Governments throughout the world. In order to meet the challenges ahead, it would need the same concerted action all the more.

/...

14. Mr. LABOUISSSE (Executive Director, United Nations Children's Fund) said that UNICEF had always been a field-oriented organization, most of its activities being aimed at improving the condition of children and their mothers at the level of the villages and the city slums. It assisted projects for child health, for better nutrition and for primary and non-formal education and helped in the training of personnel, particularly auxiliary personnel. It placed emphasis on programmes for women and girls in such fields as literacy, home economics and responsible parenthood. One of its most important endeavours was its assistance to clean water programmes in some 80 countries. A detailed account of the activities of UNICEF could be found in the report of its Executive Board to the Economic and Social Council (E/5847).

15. The African continent was of special concern to UNICEF, since it contained a large number of the least developed and most seriously affected countries, as well as newly independent countries with special needs. Africa therefore accounted for a considerable share of projects for which UNICEF sought special contributions. He was requesting authorization from the Executive Board to employ more of the general resources of UNICEF to help to meet some of the special and urgent needs in Ethiopia, Malawi, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zaire. Assistance programmes for Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique had already been agreed on. It was hoped that the volume of assistance could be expanded through the Secretary-General's appeals for Angola and Mozambique. The drought in the Sahel had at last abated, and the countries of that region were now able to turn their attention to the strengthening of long-term services for their children. UNICEF was assisting in that effort, and was encouraged by the founding of the Club des Amis du Sahel to support longer-term development.

16. In 1975, UNICEF assistance programmes had provided supplies and equipment for more than 96,800 institutions and centres and some type of training for 186,500 individuals, many of them women. However, UNICEF assistance, like that of all other multilateral and bilateral sources, and the efforts of Governments themselves, had reached only some of the places and people in need of it. The magnitude of unmet needs in the developing world was illustrated by the fact that less than 10 per cent of the rural population in developing countries lived within 10 kilometers of a health facility of any kind, that 85 per cent of the rural population in 91 less developed countries had no access to safe drinking-water, and that in 1970 more children of school age had been out of school than in school. In the poorest countries, not enough people, including children, benefited from development. Increased efforts and new approaches were therefore needed. One of the most significant changes in recent times had been the gradual recognition by Governments and by most aid-giving organizations that simpler, more direct, more massive actions must be taken promptly to bring to those most in need the essential services they had thus far never known. He had discussed that matter before the Second Committee at the preceding session and the General Assembly had followed up by asking the UNICEF Executive Board to report to it at the current session on what could and should be done to expand basic services for children. The Board's report, together with a draft resolution, was contained in document E/5848.

/...

17. The main objective of the "basic services" concept, as set forth in the Board's report, was to find effective ways of reaching the children and families at present unreached and to provide them with essential services at initial costs that the national Governments, helped by the international community, could afford, and at recurring costs which the Governments and local communities would be able to bear on their own in the long run. The main distinguishing element in that approach was the emphasis on the active participation of the people of the communities, the use of responsible volunteers or part-time workers, and the reorientation of the national structure to direct and support the new approach. It involved services at the level of the villages or the urban community in the fields of maternal and child health care, safe water-supply, waste disposal, better food production and nutrition, literacy and elementary education, and simple measures to lighten the daily tasks of women and girls and support the improvement of their position.

18. That approach was very much in harmony with the objectives of the new international economic order and with a number of declarations by the Group of 77 and the non-aligned countries in recent years. It did not require waiting for more fundamental structural changes which might be under consideration for the future; rather, it contributed to them by strengthening the people of each country. In his opinion, one of the main reasons why social services had not grown more rapidly in the developing world had been a tendency to follow models inherited or imported from industrial countries. The basic services approach could be made to work in different political or economic settings and systems, provided there was a collective will and determination to begin. In most countries, the infrastructure already existed to some degree; what must be added and made important was the "antennae" - the local individuals in each village or urban slum who could be trained as motivators and front-line workers, usually on a volunteer or part-time basis.

19. Basic services should not be viewed as second-rate services, but as the starting-point from which, as economic progress took place, more extensive and complete services would be added. Most importantly, basic services focused on children. It was well known that the first five years of life were the crucial formative years and that any child deprived of food and of elementary health care might be hurt for life and never grow into a normal adult.

20. Most of the basic services programmes in which UNICEF was already participating were still of limited scope, but their success was extremely encouraging. In Hyderabad, India, an urban community development programme linked physical improvement of the slums with human services. In Costa Rica, primary health care delivery had been extended into the unserved areas of the north of the country since 1972. In Senegal, a scheme for administrative decentralization had, since 1973, been the basis for extending village-level services to groups of rural communities of about 10,000 population. In Yemen, local development councils were involving villagers in water-supply projects, which served as focal points for community participation in starting other related services, especially the rural

(Mr. Labouisse)

primary health programme now getting under way. Similar types of activities with community participation were taking place in many other countries. Activities in the United Republic of Tanzania were of particular interest because of the policy of applying most of the principles of basic services on a nation-wide scale.

21. In July 1976 he had visited the People's Republic of China as a guest of the Government. Although UNICEF had no office and no projects in China, he had been interested to learn what measures were being taken there to provide children with their essential requirements. He had visited several rural and urban areas, and had been particularly impressed by the extension of health services to the local or village level. He had talked to many "barefoot doctors" who had started on the job with only a few months' paramedical training, had learnt through years of constant practice and from time to time were given further training in clinics or hospitals. There were some 1.3 million "barefoot doctors" in China, with the apparent result that a whole population was being reached and received medical attention. That health care, plus such other services as nurseries, day-care centres and early schooling, in villages and in the cities, were convincing evidence that basic services for children could operate as a reality.

22. The basic services approach fitted in with the current thinking of other concerned organizations within the United Nations family. The World Health Assembly in 1975 had recommended "primary health care", which constituted the health component of basic services. ILO had adopted a programme relating to "basic needs", and the World Bank was urging that greater attention should be given to rural development. A number of bilateral aid agencies had also shown interest in basic services and would probably be ready to give additional support to developing countries in that field. Technical support could be provided by the specialized agencies, by appropriate national institutions and by non-governmental organizations with the necessary expertise or with developmental experience. UNICEF had an important role to play in helping countries to adapt the concept to their own needs, and he hoped that it would be in a position greatly to augment its various forms of aid.

23. Co-ordination of basic services at the country level was naturally the responsibility of Governments. At the international level, regular consultations were already taking place, and UNICEF had proposed further arrangements for improved co-ordination.

24. He very much hoped that the Committee would give its full support to the draft resolution concerning the expansion of basic services provided by UNICEF in developing countries reproduced in document A/C.2/31/L.3. If the Assembly decided to declare an International Year of the Child, one of the important effects of the Year would be to publicize the possibilities inherent in basic services and to increase support for them in both developing and industrialized countries.

/...



(Mr. Labouisse)

25. With respect to UNICEF's financial situation, he said that, as a result of a monitoring exercise recently completed, it was known that expenditures during 1977 would be somewhat lower than the amount of \$160 million estimated in the financial plan a year earlier. Consequently, in order to put resources to the most effective use, he was recommending, through a mail poll, that the Executive Board of UNICEF should authorize him to utilize \$10 million of the Fund's general resources to finance some urgent special assistance projects for which sufficient special contributions were being sought but had not yet been received. Approval of the recommendation would make it possible to provide additional assistance to projects in more than 13 of the poorest countries, including relief and rehabilitation assistance to Lebanon.

26. UNICEF revenue in 1975 had reached a record level of \$141 million - 22 per cent higher than in 1974, but only 7-10 per cent more in real terms. In the light of the enormous needs of children in developing countries, the deterioration of services in many parts of the world during 1975 and the opportunities offered to improve the situation of children through the expansion of basic services, the Executive Board had approved an immediate target of \$200 million in annual revenue from regular resources and contributions for specific purposes. That target had been endorsed by the Economic and Social Council at its sixty-first session and was waiting approval by the Assembly. Indications were that total revenue in 1976 would be somewhat lower than in 1975, owing to the smaller amount of special contributions received in 1976 while revenue from general resources had increased only modestly. If UNICEF was to move forward along the lines he had described, it was of the utmost importance that every effort should be made by Governments to achieve the target of \$200 million as rapidly as possible.

27. Mr. SALAS (Executive Director, United Nations Fund for Population Activities) said that as at mid-October 1976 the Fund had received cumulative pledges of \$318 million, in substantially increasing amounts from year to year. The \$79 million pledged for 1976 represented an increase over the comparable figure for 1975 of some \$16 million, or 25 per cent. The figures for individual countries and groups of countries were impressive. The Arab world, for example, had spectacularly increased its support with pledges of \$9 million. Canada and Denmark had increased their contributions by 47 per cent and 42 per cent respectively, Norway and Japan had increased theirs by 29 per cent, and other donor countries, including Sweden, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, had also stepped up their contributions.

28. The Fund's rapid growth - the greatest in any major United Nations programme - eloquently indicated the increasing awareness on all continents of the important interrelationship between population activities and economic and social development, a keener perception that population was a significant and distinct element in the efforts of the international community to cope with the problems of poverty, and a growing realization of the potential effects of population policies on the well-being and happiness of mankind.

29. At the same time, Governments were asking for more and more assistance, which the Fund was unable to provide because it had not the money. Efforts to encourage

/...

(Mr. Salas)

Governments to increase their support were being pursued unremittingly and had met with particularly dramatic success in the Arab world. He was looking forward to participating in a further mission to some Arab countries later in the month.

30. He had had the honour of discussing population problems with the President of Venezuela, which had an active and effective population programme. UNFPA had expended to date some \$40 million in Latin America, and Latin American requests for 1977 alone totalled some \$20 million.

31. As part of the effort to deal with the gap between Fund resources and the requests of Governments for assistance, he had submitted a policy paper to the UNDP Governing Council in June 1976 outlining proposals for the establishment of priorities. In essence, the proposals identified the population activities falling within the Fund's mandate, outlined criteria for the selection of certain developing countries which would receive high-priority consideration, and suggested guidelines for the preparation of minimum programmes of support to recipient countries and the development of a strategy for intercountry activities. The proposals had all been approved by the Governing Council, and the Fund was currently working out a report on their application for submission to the Governing Council at its January session. The Economic and Social Council had adopted a resolution endorsing five general principles for UNFPA, which urged the Fund to aim particularly at meeting the needs of countries with the most urgent requirements and to carry out activities of special benefit to disadvantaged population groups.

32. In further attempts to deal with the gap between resources and requests, the Fund was developing arrangements for the multilateral funding of population projects. Multilateral assistance was not a substitute for direct contributions to the Fund, but rather a means of obtaining resources not otherwise available to it. Fund personnel were holding discussions with potential donors and recipients to explain more fully the concept of multilateral funding and to seek advice and co-operation; the outcome of such visits had been satisfactory to date. For example, the Federal Republic of Germany was considering the possibility of providing two thirds of the financing for a \$1.2 million project in the Caribbean region. The United Kingdom was supporting a project with an input of \$142,000 in the Solomon Islands and might also partially finance the cost of projects in Bangladesh and El Salvador. A sex education programme in Mexico was being executed with the financial aid of the Government of Sweden. Such projects provided a reassuring indication that the programme of multilateral collaboration would become an important tool with which to increase the quantum of population assistance flowing to requesting countries, with the qualification that in multilateral arrangements there was often a time-lag between the preparation of a project and its actual funding.

33. With respect to the programme financed by multilateral funds, he said that, with the approval of the UNDP Governing Council, UNFPA had launched or extended large-scale projects and programmes in Bolivia, Ecuador, Haiti, Jordan, Morocco and the Syrian Arab Republic, and it was planning the submission to the Governing Council at its forthcoming session of large-scale projects and programmes for Colombia, Egypt, El Salvador, Mexico and Thailand. During 1976, it had initiated the first biennial reviews of large-scale projects and programmes; those reviews had covered Bangladesh, India, Kenya, Pakistan and Turkey.

34. Describing the various features of the Fund's current operations in the regions, he said that in Sub-Saharan Africa the emphasis was on the collection and analysis of population data in preparation for the 1980 round of censuses; in addition, increasing interest was being shown in the development of services for child spacing and research into infertility. In Asia and the Pacific, the bulk of UNFPA support continued to be directed to country-wide family-planning programmes, although several of the smaller countries had requested assistance with data collection. The countries in Latin America and the Caribbean had increased their involvement in family-planning programmes integrated into health operations; however, data collection and research into the social and economic aspects of development in connexion with population matters were still relatively important in that region. In the Mediterranean and the Middle East, the major part of the resources were being allocated to the rapidly rising demands for national family-planning activities in the context of family welfare and the health of mothers and children; requests for assistance to schemes for civil registration, vital statistics and the analysis of demographic data continued to increase.

35. Activities carried out at the regional and interregional levels were constantly being revised and adapted to the varying needs of individual countries. The aim was to streamline operations, better define the roles of various participating organizations in the United Nations system, and work out a multidisciplinary approach.

36. With respect to public information, in 1976 UNFPA had released a series of monographs on population. It had issued its first country profile, on Singapore, and population profiles of the Caribbean and the Asian regions. Other publications included a study of law and population and studies of United Nations work on census programmes and on non-governmental organizations and population. A country profile on Thailand was due for publication soon. The Fund's quarterly, Populi, had been published in 1976 in a new format. The second edition of UNFPA's annual publication, Inventory of Population Projects in Developing Countries Around the World, continued to receive favourable comments from developing and developed countries. The companion volume to the Inventory, the Guide to Sources of International Population Assistance, which had been requested in the World Population Plan of Action and would be published every three years, had also been received favourably.

37. UNFPA took the view that the status and role of women should continue to form an important area of UNFPA-supported activities. It had established a set of guidelines for UNFPA staff members and others involved in programme development and project execution which were designed to give effect to policies linking the status and role of women with population activities. Of the Fund's Professional posts, 32 per cent were now filled by women.

38. UNFPA continued to provide limited support to non-governmental organizations, particularly those which emphasized the role of youth and women in population activities. Its support for several large-scale NGO activities - specifically, the World Fertility Survey, and the Research and Training Project on Cultural Values in Population Policy - had also continued during 1976.

(Mr. Salas)

39. Despite a 25 per cent growth in its volume of work, and notwithstanding the fact that the Fund was completely solvent with a reserve of \$20 million, UNFPA had not requested a single additional post in the budget proposals for 1977 submitted to the UNDP Governing Council. The Fund was continuing to restrict its headquarters administrative costs to not more than 5 per cent of the figure for the total annual programme, and its over-all administrative costs, including field operations, to 7 per cent of that figure. Estimated expenditure for 1977 was well under that limit, standing at 4.6 per cent for headquarters costs and 6.8 per cent for all administrative costs including field operations.

40. Mr. ROBINSON (Executive Director, World Food Programme) said that virtually all the food assistance provided by the World Food Programme was directed towards the achievement of one of the central objectives of the international development strategy, namely, the reduction of absolute poverty in the developing countries, through projects for increasing agricultural production, improving rural infrastructures and combating malnutrition, particularly among vulnerable age groups. The Programme deployed about one million tons of food-stuffs annually, to a total value of nearly \$400 million.

41. About 10 per cent of the food resources deployed by the Programme went for disaster relief, while the rest was used to assist economic and social development projects. The governing body of the Programme, the Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes, would consider 23 new projects for approval at its forthcoming session; with the 53 projects previously approved, that would bring total new project commitments for 1976 to \$584 million. Over 75 per cent of those commitments were for agricultural production and rural development, and the remainder for improving the nutritional status of pregnant women, nursing mothers and children. Three quarters of the WFP aid went to the least developed and most severely affected countries, and was heavily concentrated in the poorer lands of southern Asia and Africa. Even in the "middle-income" developing countries, most of the beneficiaries of food aid were in the lowest income brackets.

42. As a channel of concessionary assistance to the poorer sectors of the population in developing countries, the World Food Programme was rivalled in importance only by the International Development Association. Indeed, IDA often acted as a co-financer, providing external financial and technical support for WFP projects. Some general or specialized financial institutions were also joining in co-financing arrangements. However, in cases where it was necessary to act swiftly in response to clearly established needs, WFP often acted alone.

43. No amount of outside assistance would ensure the success of development projects unless they received strong administrative and financial support from the recipient Governments. In the case of rural development projects, such support could only be the product of political decisions to change national investment priorities so as to put emphasis on helping the poor to become self-reliant and more productive.

/...

44. External assistance for anti-poverty-oriented development projects must be offered on highly concessionary terms, preferably in the form of grants. It was not realistic to expect the poorest nations to change their investment priorities by further increasing their already burdensome external debts. The international donor community had not faced up to its responsibilities in that respect. Not only had concessional aid been declining sharply in relation to GNP in recent years, but the poorest countries received less than half the total concessional aid to all developing countries, in spite of the fact that they accounted for a substantially greater part of the population of the developing world. It seemed imperative to redress the balance in favour of the poorest countries. Just as important was the need to ensure stability in the flow of concessional aid. In the case of food aid, where the need was quite evident, some progress had been made; Canada and Sweden, and more recently the European Economic Community, had announced their adherence to the principle of forward planning of food aid, recommended by the World Food Programme.

45. He was confident that pledges for the 1977-1978 biennium, which had reached \$563 million, would attain the target level of \$750 million; however, it would be helpful if additional pledges were made at the earliest possible date, since that would considerably facilitate their rational use. He again appealed to donor countries to indicate as soon as possible their contributions to the emergency food reserve recommended by the General Assembly at its seventh special session. The consensus reached by the Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes regarding the modalities of the reserve allowed for considerable leeway in the forms of participation available, so as to accommodate differences in national budgetary practices and legislative procedures. It also provided for a comprehensive system of information on food commodities available in member countries through WFP. Since the beginning of 1976 the Programme had drawn almost \$8 million in food and cash from the contributions of Sweden and Norway to the reserve, thus augmenting the \$40 million worth of WFP resources placed at the disposal of the Director-General of FAO for emergency feeding operations.

46. Mr. BURNS (Director, Office of Technical Co-operation) said that in 1975 the value of technical assistance provided by the United Nations had totalled \$95 million, a real increase after adjustment for inflation of 20 per cent over 1974. For the current year, delivery was expected to be only about \$80 million, owing in large part to a reduction in UNDP resources. Many projects had been curtailed and the implementation of new projects funded by UNDP had been virtually suspended.

47. One of the Office's main concerns during 1976 had been to retain inputs vital to projects for which Governments wished priority. Moreover, there had been no substantial reduction in programmes for the least developed countries, and it had been possible to begin implementation of projects in the former Portuguese colonies.

48. In terms of geographical distribution, 37 per cent of current total programme activity would be in Africa south of the Sahara, 24 per cent in Asia and the Far East, 23 per cent in the Americas, and 16 per cent in the Middle East, North Africa and Europe.

(Mr. Burns)

49. Of the total resources available to the Office of Technical Co-operation, 70 per cent were provided by UNDP; 14 per cent by UNFPA; 6 per cent by the regular programme; and 10 per cent by other sources such as trust funds.

50. There had been an increase in computer technology projects, stemming from the need for timely and accurate statistics for planning and development. Another new trend was the concern of Governments for environmental problems, which had resulted in a number of projects, designed in co-operation with UNEP, to study how best to ensure development without impairing the environment.

51. During 1975, investment commitments as direct or indirect follow-up to OTC projects had amounted to some \$400 million. Some large-scale projects were being developed through funds-in-trust arrangements, and discussions with the World Bank were in progress for expansion of projects initiated by OTC.

52. The sixth and seventh special sessions of the General Assembly had given impetus to the concepts of technical co-operation among developing countries, decentralization to regional commissions, and self-execution by recipient Governments. Those concepts were being translated into practical activities. The Office was committed to the concept of self-reliance as the true goal of technical co-operation; wherever possible, its projects were directed by national project managers.

53. Although the regular programme of technical co-operation consumed only a small part of the resources available, it remained a valuable instrument for launching innovative types of activities and for responding flexibly to special needs of the developing countries. It had been one of the first programmes in the United Nations system to concentrate its resources on the least developed countries. Those countries would now be given special priority by UNDP, and the regular programme would devote its resources to two major areas: participation in regional programmes and institutions in order to promote technical co-operation among developing countries, and the provision of sectoral and multidisciplinary advisers at short notice to assist countries in formulating their priorities and defining the actions required to realize the new international economic order.

54. The primary emphasis in future activities should be on the development of the capacity for self-reliance. The United Nations system must be flexible enough to respond to the changing needs of the third world, while countries must be selective in their requests.

55. With national and regional institutions playing the central role in the United Nations development system, he anticipated that the task of the specialized agencies would become more and more of an advisory nature, with Governments taking increasing responsibility for the execution of projects. The role of the United Nations system would thus be that of a reservoir of knowledge, based on political neutrality, world-wide expertise and field experience, fully available to the developing world. The system could operate in many ways, including periodic visits by technical advisers, provision of consultants, and exchange and dissemination of information.

/...

56. Mr. GORDON (Co-ordinator, United Nations Volunteers Programme) said that in 1976 the number of volunteers had increased to about 300, and the proportion recruited from developing countries was now about 50 per cent; more than 60 per cent of the volunteers were working in the least developed countries. Fund-raising had gone better than in any previous year; \$517,000 had already been received, with two major contributions still outstanding. The increase over 1975 contributions was \$346,000. There had been a number of requests for new programmes during the past year.

57. The first phase of a project involving five Governments in Latin America, jointly financed by the United Nations Volunteers Programme and UNDP, to help to build up national volunteer and youth services had been completed. Requests were being received for a second phase, and a number of additional countries had indicated an interest in participating and had made commitments to provide training forces or other facilities. The project was developing in a way fully in keeping with the spirit of technical co-operation among developing countries, the emphasis being on exchanges of experience and personnel between the participating countries and a maximum of involvement on their part. The programme had negotiated a grant from a foundation to study, with a number of volunteer and youth groups in Asia, the possibility of a similar project there. The consultations would be held in Indonesia in December. A few small projects in Africa were being evaluated but progress had been slower, with the concentration still on the placement of foreign volunteers.

58. Despite the progress made, 1976 had been a difficult one for the programme: because of the financial crisis of UNDP and the consequent ending or curtailing of a number of projects, many volunteers had had to return home or be reposted before expiry of their contracts. At the same time, the Governing Council of UNDP had asked the programme to phase its volunteers onto IPF funding by January 1979; consequently, all new placements after 1 January 1977 would have to be financed from the IPFs in all countries, and the least developed countries would no longer be able to benefit from special funding provided by the Programme Reserve and the Special Voluntary Fund. Negotiations to effect the change-over smoothly had begun, but a number of difficulties were expected in 1977, given the tight position with regard to IPFs. However, the agreement by at least three Governments, including two Governments of least developed countries, to fund at least some of the volunteers from government funds were encouraging; other sources or funding were also being explored.

59. On the domestic development and youth side, a draft resolution before the Committee (A/C.2/31/L.4) recommended the carrying out by the programme of a number of functions previously performed by the International Secretariat for Volunteer Services, now in liquidation. He hoped that the Committee would give the draft resolution its full support. The programme had already begun the preparation of the annual statistical bulletin on national and international volunteer activities, previously prepared by the International Secretariat, and intended that the bulletin should henceforward be published annually. It had also extended the scope and coverage of its quarterly newsletter to give more information on bilateral and domestic activities.

/...

(Mr. Gordon)

60. At the request of the UNDP Governing Council, a qualitative evaluation of the programme was being prepared for presentation to the June session of the Governing Council.

61. The year 1976 had been marked by growing recognition, on the part of Governments and international agencies, of the great contribution which the technical skills of United Nations volunteers could make to development. That was why more and more countries and agencies were asking for their services.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.