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OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

Canada, Germany, Federal Republic of, Italy, Japan, Netherlands,  
Norway and Sweden: draft resolution

Comprehensive triennial policy review of operational  
activities for development

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 32/197 of 20 December 1977 on the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system and 41/171 of 5 December 1986, 42/196 of 11 December 1987 and 43/199 of 20 December 1988 on operational activities for development,

Recognizing the diversity in the situation of developing countries, taking into account the special needs of the least developed countries, and the consequent need for the responses of the United Nations development system to be tailored accordingly,

Recognizing the growing importance of problems of a transboundary character and the greater emphasis which needs to be attached to strengthening regional and global co-operation for the solving of common problems,

Perceiving a pressing need both to strengthen co-operation among partners in the United Nations system by adapting the role and relationship of funding, technical and specialized agencies to draw on their comparative advantages and to consider how to support national management of external resources, including execution of programmes and projects,

Highlighting the need to re-examine and adapt the field representation of the United Nations system so as to strengthen the team concept under the leadership of

the resident co-ordinator, enhance capacity for integrated multisectoral advice and ensure the alignment of representation with substantive programme functions,

Affirming the responsibility of the Director-General for leadership in promoting the coherence, co-ordination and effectiveness of the operational activities for development of the United Nations system and the need to amplify the relevant mandate of its resolution 32/197 and to enhance the related capacities of the Office of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation,

Recalling the role of the United Nations Development Programme as the central funding mechanism for the United Nations system of technical co-operation, the full potential of which has not yet been realized,

Stressing the importance of intensified efforts towards the attainment of the official development assistance target of 0.7 per cent of the gross national product of developed countries as a means of increasing significantly the flow of concessional resources to the developing countries,

#### I. Goals and objectives

1. Welcomes the report of the Director-General on operational activities for development, 1/ which includes insights from the integrated country reviews and the erstwhile case studies, which remain valid;

2. Affirms as fundamental characteristics of the operational activities for development of the United Nations system their universality, voluntary nature, neutrality and multilateralism and their responsiveness to the priorities, goals and objectives of the developing countries;

3. Considers that, within the general framework of support for the goal of self-reliance and sustained equitable growth and development, the operational activities for development of the United Nations system should be designed to promote:

(a) The eradication of poverty, through support for the poorest countries and people;

(b) The development of human resources;

(c) Capacity-building for self-reliance, especially with respect to the management aspects of the development process, including the capacity for macroeconomic planning and analysis and socio-economic policy formulation and for the integration of external assistance into national development processes;

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1/ A/44/324-E/1989/106 and Add.1-4.

4. Welcomes in this connection the priority given to capacity-building by the United Nations Development Programme Governing Council in its decision 89/20 <sup>2/</sup> on the role of the United Nations Development Programme in the 1990s and encourages other appropriate organs and organizations of the United Nations system, within their mandates, also to enhance efforts in this regard;

5. Requests the Director-General to present to the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session proposals for more specific objectives for the operational activities for development of the United Nations system, in order appropriately to reflect the outcomes of the special session of the General Assembly devoted to international economic co-operation, in particular to the revitalization of economic growth and development of the developing countries, the preparatory process for the international development strategy for the fourth United Nations development decade and the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries;

6. Calls for the strengthening of technical co-operation programmes designed to assist countries so requesting to strengthen their overall economic management and integrate the social dimension into the process of structural transformation;

7. Requests the Director-General to recommend to the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session action-oriented measures to strengthen the role of operational activities for development in helping to meet the needs of the poorest people;

8. Encourages maximum participation of populations in the development process and in the broadening of the capacity-building process through increased engagement, at the request of Governments, local communities, the enterprise sector and non-governmental organizations;

9. Affirms the need to promote the full integration of women in all aspects of the development process in accordance with the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, <sup>3/</sup> and requests the Director-General to include in his annual report on operational activities to the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session an appraisal of the steps taken within those activities to ensure that the development concerns of women are fully reflected and integrated in the mainstream of various programmes;

<sup>2/</sup> See Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1989, Supplement No. 13 (E/1989/32), annex I.

<sup>3/</sup> See Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Nairobi, 15-26 July 1985, (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.85.IV.10), chap. I, sect. A.

## II. Principal policy considerations

Stressing the need to adjust and reorient the United Nations development system with a view to achieving the goals and objectives of the operational activities for development, in particular the enhancement of human and institutional capacities for development, through integrated and comprehensive policies, inter alia, in the following areas:

- (a) Programming;
- (b) Programme and project management;
- (c) Provision of technical advice and backstopping;
- (d) Country-level structure and co-ordination, including role and function of the resident co-ordinators;
- (e) Decentralization;
- (f) Funding.

1. Recommends the formulation in country programmes of clear strategies based on systematic analysis of development problems and constraints;

2. Stresses the need for the shift from project to programme approaches, and requests the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme and other relevant governing bodies to develop more programme-oriented mechanisms for the provision of technical co-operation with a view to allowing more flexible and effective support of national programmes;

3. Invites organizations participating in programming to improve coherence through joint programming in co-operation with Governments;

4. Recognizes national management of all external assistance as essential to capacity-building and the integration of projects into the institutional fabric of the recipient countries, invites the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme to consider measures designed to accelerate and facilitate the use of a strengthened national execution modality which provides for appropriate technical, administrative and management support from the United Nations system, and invites technical and executing agencies to adapt their functions accordingly;

5. Reiterates the need for the United Nations funding organizations, in working with executing partners, to ensure that the highest standards of technical expertise and advice, efficient backstopping and adequate accountability for the use of funds are maintained in the execution of programmes and projects assisted by them;

6. Encourages the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme to continue to consider the question of successor arrangements for agency support costs from the standpoints of how best to meet the needs of developing

countries and to foster co-ordination and coherence within the United Nations system, taking into account the need for wider use of national execution of projects, a more programme-oriented approach and regular and timely provision of technical advice and backstopping by agencies;

7. Stresses the need to reinforce the capacity of the resident co-ordinator to act as the team leader overseeing, within the United Nations system, the integration of the sectoral inputs of the United Nations system through, inter alia:

(a) A clarified and strengthened mandate from the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination which can draw, as appropriate, on the guiding principles for co-operation in the field as set out by the Committee in 1961;

(b) A focus in co-ordination on practical co-operation on substantive programme issues with a clear orientation to the development goals and objectives of recipient countries;

(c) The closer co-operation of the field representation of the United Nations system at the country level with the resident co-ordinator;

8. Recognizes the urgent need for the rationalization of the field representation of the United Nations system, and requests the Director-General to update the information presented by the Joint Inspection Unit in its report on field representation <sup>4/</sup> and to make specific recommendations for enhancing the relevance, impact and cost-effectiveness of that representation to the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session;

9. Recognizes food aid as an important instrument of support for development objectives, which should be programmed in co-ordination with economic and technical assistance, and encourages the participation of the World Food Programme in country food security action plans and the enhanced utilization of food aid, where appropriate, to support the social dimension of the adjustment process;

10. Stresses the continued need to enhance the use of technical co-operation among developing countries as a modality for co-operation within the United Nations system;

11. Affirms the commitment to the procurement from developing countries and from under-utilized major donor countries and recommends the implementation of the applicable proposals of the Director-General in accordance with the principles of international competitive bidding;

12. Stresses the continuing need for a real and significant increase in resources for operational activities for development on a continuous, predictable and assured basis, and urges all countries to increase their voluntary contributions for operational activities for development, in particular those countries whose overall involvement is not commensurate with their capacity;

4/ A/41/424.

13. Reaffirms the need for the priority allocation of scarce grant resources to programmes and project in low-income countries, particularly the least developed countries;

III. Action programme to enhance the effectiveness and support of United Nations system operational activities

Recognizing the need to establish within the United Nations system a framework of interrelated actions in order to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of operational activities and ensure that those actions are carried out in an integrated and mutually supportive manner,

1. Requests the Director-General to bring his report and recommendations, together with the present resolution, to the attention of all the organizations of the United Nations system concerned and invites the governing bodies of those organizations:

(a) To give in-depth consideration to the recommendations of the Director-General, taking into account the present resolution, with a view to preparing an action-oriented response;

(b) To establish appropriate intergovernmental mechanisms, within organizations that do not have them, for the specific consideration of substantive, technical and administrative questions relating to the operational activities of the United Nations system;

2. Recognizes the need for immediate action in the harmonization and simplification of procedures, especially programming, financial and administrative procedures, and:

(a) Requests all organizations of the United Nations engaged in operational activities to harmonize their programming cycles at the country level with the planning cycles of recipient countries;

(b) Decides that procedures pertaining to programme and project formulation, design and implementation, including procurement, monitoring, reporting and evaluation, should be standardized and simplified to the extent possible and should be designed to facilitate national management, and requests all organizations of the United Nations system concerned to take specific measures to this end;

(c) Requests funding organizations to simplify their project approval and implementation procedures for nationally executed projects;

(d) Invites the governing bodies to review existing budget, audit and other relevant practices with a view to taking specific decisions not later than 1991 on measures designed to facilitate the utilization of national capacity, including national management, a more programme-oriented approach and the improved provision of technical advice and backstopping;

3. Requests all organizations, organs and bodies of the United Nations system to undertake the necessary arrangements, in co-operation with host Governments and without delay, to establish common premises at the country level, and requests the Director-General to include in his annual reports on operational activities information on progress made in that area;

4. Requests the Director-General to further develop the concept of common country statements under the leadership of Governments and resident co-ordinators, taking into account other co-ordinating and programming mechanisms, in order to permit testing on a pilot basis over a two-year period, and to report to the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session on the experience to date, and calls on all executive heads to co-operate fully in this effort;

5. Requests the Director-General to further develop the concept of multidisciplinary country teams under the leadership of the resident co-ordinators and to review with Governments in consultation with the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme and other executive heads, the possibility of organizing such teams through, inter alia, more flexible utilization and co-operation of the field representation of the United Nations system, and to report to the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session;

6. Requests all organizations of the United Nations system engaged in operational activities to undertake further decentralization, and requests those organizations, in particular the United Nations Development Programme, to submit to their governing bodies, as soon as possible but not later than 1991, proposals for specific measures to achieve greater decentralization, while maintaining an adequate level of accountability, and requests the Director-General to include in his annual reports on operational activities information on progress made in the field of decentralization;

7. Requests the Director-General:

(a) To draw the attention of the Economic and Social Council at its second regular session of 1990 to recommendations on which he considers additional guidance is required;

(b) To apprise the General Assembly, in his annual reports on operational activities for development, of progress in the implementation of the present resolution;

(c) To submit to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session a comprehensive analysis of the implementation of the present resolution and make recommendations for the next triennial policy review.

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