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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 40th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. GHEZAL (Tunisia)

later: Mr. DOLJINTSEREN (Mongolia)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 86: OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT (continued) (A/44/3, A/44/361, A/44/376, A/44/401, A/44/409 and Corr.1, A/44/477, A/44/551, A/44/646, A/44/689)

- (a) COMPREHENSIVE POLICY REVIEW OF OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM (continued) (A/44/324 and Add.1-5)
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1. Mr. OSMAN (Somalia) said that after 40 years in which the spirit of the Charter had been overshadowed by the harsh realities of the cold war, an era of international détente was beginning. However, the increasing threat posed by other disruptive phenomena such as the growing disparity between rich and poor, environmental degradation and mismanagement and human resources must not be forgotten. It was to be hoped that the improvement in international relations would generate the energy required to overcome those problems.

2. His Government had studied with great interest the report of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation (A/44/324), the recommendations in which, if implemented, could bring about the global revolution that the developing countries were hoping for. In his Government's view, the most important of those recommendations was the one relating to the dire need for a dramatic increase in the resources made available for multilateral technical co-operation. If the proportion of official development assistance which went towards multilateral aid could be increased from the present 12 per cent to 25 per cent, funding for the programmes of the United Nations would be doubled.

3. Another noteworthy feature of the Director-General's report was the emphasis placed on human resources development as the core of any development strategy. The educational base needed to be strengthened, training accelerated and the scientific and technological capacity of the developing countries enhanced. At the same time, UNDP needed to make use of the human resources already available in the countries in which its activities were conducted. The TOKTEN programme, which aimed at mobilizing expatriate nationals for short-term assignments, could also be strengthened. The study proposed by the Director-General to identify emerging trends in technical co-operation requirements was especially appropriate at the present juncture, and might lead to a more integrated approach in the activities of the United Nations system at the country level. Clearly, UNDP was no longer

(Mr. Osman, Somalia)

playing the role of central funding agency. That trend had begun in the mid-1970s, when the unexpected financial crisis of UNDP had sapped the agency's confidence in its ability to discharge a leadership role. At present, the relationship between UNDP and the agencies was very different from that envisaged in the 1970 consensus resolution.

4. He firmly believed that one of the main objectives of the United Nations system for the coming decade should be to implement the Director-General's proposal that the United Nations should take advantage of the unique position it occupied in the global technical co-operation process to become an international clearing house for research and evaluation. That was a function no bilateral programme could perform, and one which could provide a wealth of experience and information that could directly benefit countries like Somalia, which did not always possess the technical information they needed. For the developing countries to acquire the capacity to manage their own development, the United Nations must strengthen its representation and co-ordination at the country level and promote greater technical co-operation between developing countries.

5. Mr. PILBEAM (Australia) said that the Director-General's report, which was of fundamental importance, had not received from the Economic and Social Council the attention it deserved. Accordingly, his delegation supported the suggestion of the Nordic countries that the reports of the Director-General should be placed on the agenda for the next summer session of the Council.

6. In Australia's view, the key questions of managerial decentralization and local co-ordination were closely linked. United Nations activities in the field often lacked coherence, and inter-agency competition at all levels led to waste not only of multilateral resources, but also of the counterpart resources of recipient countries. Australia had also noted a positive correlation between the effectiveness of an agency's operations in a developing country and its degree of administrative decentralization. That was not surprising, since field level staff were generally better acquainted with local needs and opportunities and with the most cost-effective ways of getting the job done, but they also frequently lacked the delegation of central powers to act in a decisive and timely fashion and to co-ordinate their activities with those of their colleagues in other agencies. His delegation supported the proposal of the delegation of Japan that United Nations agencies should submit a comprehensive package of measures to achieve decentralization to their governing bodies by 1991.

7. Australia also supported the Director-General's proposal that United Nations agencies should harmonize their planning cycles among themselves and with the planning cycles of individual countries. That proposal had already been submitted in other forums, but the multilateral system had taken no action on it. The need to harmonize programming cycles must be recognized, and a target date set for the attainment of that objective. That matter should be taken up in the resolution to be approved by the General Assembly on operational activities for development.

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8. Mr. MUTOMBO TSHITAMBWE (Zaire) said that, despite three development decades, the operational activities of the United Nations had not made a sufficient contribution to solving the developing countries' economic and social problems. The basic reason for that was the lack of resources. In that respect, the results of the most recent Pledging Conference had been disappointing. His delegation hoped that, bearing in mind the situation of international détente, part of the resources released by the reduction in the arms race would be devoted to development.

9. Another reason why the desired results had not been attained was the lack of coherence in implementing programmes and the lack of co-ordination at the field level. Consequently, his delegation proposed that: needs should be determined on the basis of the priorities drawn up by States, and with particular attention to the social sectors and agriculture; maximum use should be made of national experts, and their working conditions should be improved in order to put an end to the brain drain; equipment and materials for projects should be suited to the specific site conditions, should be sent by the specified deadlines and should contribute to the transfer of technology to the recipient countries; programme implementation should be co-ordinated so as to avoid duplication of effort in different projects, and to that end each participating agency should provide the Government with an analysis of its implementation strategy; and financing should be provided for missions to evaluate completed projects.

10. The UNDP Governing Council had held an important debate on the role of UNDP in the 1990s and had adopted decisions consistent with the concerns of Zaire. In particular, it had decided to encourage countries to achieve self-reliance in seeking solutions to their major problems. Continuing to argue about the 1970 Consensus could have a regressive effect on national structures. The role of the resident co-ordinator was adequately defined and it was counterproductive to question the situation of the executing agency at every opportunity. With respect to the work of the Multinational Programming and Operational Centres (MULPOCs) in central Africa, operational activities should to a large extent form part of subregional projects so that the three Member States concerned - Rwanda, Burundi and Zaire - could accelerate their priority projects.

11. Mr. DUMITRIU (Romania) said that the operational activities of the United Nations system played an important role in the economic and social progress of developing countries and frequently their effects surpassed what could be expected from the modest level of resources invested. In keeping with the 1970 Consensus, assistance rendered by the United Nations system in future years should be based on economic criteria and consistent with the national sovereignty, priorities and specific interests of the developing countries.

12. In the 1980s, there had been a slowdown in world growth which had affected the developing countries in particular. Under the crushing burden of external debt, they had been unable to meet their long-term development objectives or improve the level of living of their peoples. Some developed countries and international institutions had taken advantage of the situation by trying to impose colonial-like programmes which ignored the national characteristics and historical traditions of

(Mr. Dumitriu, Romania)

each country. The "adjustment programmes" had resulted in deteriorating economic conditions in the countries which had implemented them. The assistance rendered by the United Nations system could not be based on such an approach; its target should be to support the public and co-operative sectors in order to promote a balanced economy without imposing conditions involving the privatization of sectors and enterprises. In that connection, it should not be forgotten that the report of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation emphasized the primary responsibility of developing countries in all aspects of the planning, formulation, co-ordination and evaluation of development programmes.

13. General Assembly resolutions 42/196 and 43/199 were a sound basis for improving the implementation of operational activities for development. In view of the importance of increasing resources for such activities in real terms, the outcome of the recent pledging conference was encouraging.

14. The situation of developing countries in the 1990s would depend on how the international community approached the issues of increasing interdependence, one of which was the debt crisis - an obstacle to development and a threat to the well-being of mankind. Consequently the United Nations development system, particularly UNDP, was important. Although the resources channelled through UNDP in 1989 would increase to over \$US 1.2 billion and voluntary contributions would be higher than ever, they would not suffice to meet the pressing needs of developing countries.

15. It must be remembered, however, that the task of achieving economic and social progress was incumbent on each developing country. The experience of Romania showed that the efforts of all its people had resulted not only in the implementation of its development programmes, but also in substantial economic and social progress. Undoubtedly a national effort could be made more effective through international co-operation, provided that the co-operation enabled each nation to develop without external interference. For that reason, UNDP should maintain its universality and neutrality which had ensured its vitality over the years. His delegation attached particular importance to the statement in the report of the Director-General that the trend towards Government execution would continue as national capacities increased. Of equal importance was procurement from developing countries, which not only promoted technical co-operation among developing countries but also had a direct bearing on programme implementation and contributed to self-reliance. According to the report of the Director-General, in 1988 total procurement had increased by 18.05 per cent over 1987 and the procurement of equipment, by 22.49 per cent, which was a positive, though as yet unsatisfactory, trend.

16. His delegation attached great importance to the valuable work of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) all over the world and to the activities of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); both funds had adapted their programmes to the specific conditions in each country.

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(Mr. Dumitriu, Romania)

17. In view of the increased technical capacity of developing countries and the advantages of technical co-operation among developing countries (TCDC) in terms of cost-effectiveness, the United Nations system should promote that form of co-operation more strongly. Romania, as a socialist developing country, attached particular importance to such activities. It had concluded more than 100 long-term agreements with developing countries, and transactions with those countries accounted for 20 per cent of its total foreign trade. It had also established many joint ventures in developing countries for the supply of industrial and agricultural equipment, the development of infrastructure and the transfer of technical expertise, and it exported to more than 60 developing countries. Moreover, every year nearly 10,000 students from developing countries took specialized courses at its universities, organized with the assistance of the UNDP resident co-ordinator in Bucharest. In its declaration of principles concerning Operational Activities in the 1990s, adopted in April 1989, the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination had reaffirmed the resolve of the members of the United Nations system to continue adapting, both individually and collectively, to the future needs of developing countries. Romania, as a member of the UNDP Governing Council, would continue to contribute actively to the search for effective solutions in that regard.

18. Mr. CRUZ (Chile) said that, as stated in the "Comprehensive policy review of operational activities of the United Nations system" (A/44/324), it was increasingly necessary to raise the creative capacity of countries, strengthen the adjustment process so essential for sustained and lasting growth, ease the adverse social effects of adjustment and accord priority to the human dimension of development through concerted action against dire poverty and the participation of all social sectors. His delegation agreed with that analysis but also stressed that, in the struggle for development, a realistic and pragmatic attitude, setting specific and attainable goals, would have to be adopted.

19. He underscored the importance which his country attached to the consensus reached at the ministerial meeting of the Group of 77 held at Caracas in June 1989 and emphasized the realism of the approach outlined by the Administrator of UNDP in his statement when he had stressed the need to make every effort to revive economic growth in the entire developing world because, failing that, it would not be possible to achieve all the other objectives. To that end, strict internal measures must be adopted in order to mobilize additional resources for effective investment while unnecessary economic controls must be eliminated. Chile, which in recent years had made a great effort to maintain sustained economic growth in a context of monetary stability and strict compliance with its international financial commitments shared that view. In order to achieve those results, it had had to tackle, realistically and decisively, the necessary process of internal adjustment which, in the early years of its implementation, had required substantial creative ability in order to cope with the negative social effects.

20. From the analysis in document DP/1989/14 it was clear that UNDP activities should be oriented basically towards providing necessary collaboration to Governments so that they could develop their capabilities and achieve sustained

(Mr. Cruz, Chile)

growth. Chile shared the view that the developing countries should gradually take over the national execution of projects as that was the only way in which they could utilize their capabilities fully. The only solid basis for the effective functioning of UNDP continued to be the mechanism of the 1970 Consensus which guaranteed universal application of the system consistent with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and safeguarded the sovereign right of Governments to decide how their resources should be used. His delegation did not agree with the concept of limiting the funds allocated to developing countries on the basis of criteria which, like reimbursement by countries with GNP over \$3,000, did not always reflect permanent situations. On the other hand, there should be no reduction of future IPF allotments for the fifth cycle in the case of countries which, like Chile, had achieved economic growth thanks to efficient use of the resources received.

21. Chile attached particular importance to technical co-operation among developing countries and had executed a number of projects involving the exchange of experts and consultants with other developing countries at the regional (Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Honduras and Panama) and interregional (Indonesia, People's Republic of China and Vanuatu) levels. In addition, it had provided training for professionals in the social evaluation of projects, aquaculture, gastric cancer, animal breeding and bank administration. Nevertheless, it had to be recognized that many regional projects existed which were of no real benefit to countries; there was therefore a need for greater participation of developing countries in the process of managing, executing and monitoring regional and interregional projects in order to make them meet real needs. His delegation shared the view that it was necessary to increase the resources for technical co-operation among developing countries allocated to the Latin American and Caribbean region and emphasized the importance, in that connection, of involving the private sector which would make it possible to satisfy national needs better. Multilateral economic co-operation would in itself be enough to justify the existence of the United Nations because operating devoid of ideologies, it was more than a simple means of co-operation: it was a symbol of international solidarity seeking to raise the living standards of mankind.

22. Mr. AMAZIANE (Morocco) said that the 1980s had ended on a sad and even desperate note for the majority of mankind: one fifth of the world's population lived in abject poverty, per capita income in the great majority of the developing countries was stagnating or had declined as compared with the 1960s and 1970s, basic social infrastructures had been relegated to second place because the scanty resources available were being used for other problems and the reforms implemented had not produced the results hoped for; to crown it all, even the most optimistic projections did not foresee a radical change in the situation.

23. He reaffirmed the importance of the apolitical and neutral character of the development assistance provided to developing countries by the United Nations system, welcomed the statement of the Director General for Development and International Economic Co-operation in his report (A/44/324/Add.3) that the strategies adopted by each developing country constituted the "frame of reference"

(Mr. Amasiane, Morocco)

for operational activities for development and supported the concept, put forward in the report, of a common country statement on the principal objectives for the achievement of which input from the United Nations system was required.

24. In a situation where the developing countries were making enormous sacrifices to fulfil their debt-servicing obligations through adjustment programmes which always resulted in decreasing the purchasing power of a large part of the population, the United Nations system could use its financial and human resources to reduce poverty by devising compensatory programmes for the most vulnerable sectors of society, in particular, women and children. Moreover, if the education of women and their full participation in the development process was not given the attention it merited, a final solution would not be found to the problem of the erosion of economic growth caused by demographic growth.

25. With reference to technical co-operation among developing countries, the United Nations system should assist those countries to establish data bases covering supply and demand in that connection, and thus put an end to the mind-set that the only valid technical assistance was that which came from the North. The United Nations development system should play an important role in creating and strengthening subregional and regional groups; that was the only road the developing countries could follow if they were to participate in decisions relating to the future of the world.

26. Given the range and diversity of the tasks for which assistance from the United Nations system was sought, in particular, rational exploitation of natural resources and protection of the environment against the degradation caused by extreme poverty on one hand and extreme greed on the other, the system did not seem to have sufficient financial resources, adequate technical competence and effective organization; there was therefore a need for all countries, and in particular, the developed countries, to increase their contributions to the United Nations agencies and funds responsible for financing development activities.

27. The quality of technical knowledge available to the system in different sectors could be enhanced through training and information courses designed, in particular, for staff working in the countries. In addition, the system should offer more interesting career prospects with a view to enlisting the collaboration of the best experts in fields which were decisive for development, and should promote the participation of national experts in all project phases. Experience showed that it was more useful to employ short-term specialized consultants rather than resident experts responsible for a complete project, because if the expert left, the project was often interrupted. The United Nations development system must, to the extent possible, use experts available in the region or subregion of the country concerned because their knowledge of the local culture facilitated contacts and accordingly made the success of the project more likely.

28. From the organizational standpoint, the United Nations development system must step up its procurement in developing countries; although such procurement had increased in recent years, it continued to be less than the potential of the

(Mr. Amaziane, Morocco)

developing countries. To that end it might be useful to have up-to-date files of suppliers in developing countries available and to provide information on the procurement procedures of the United Nations.

29. The system should synchronize the allocation cycles of the various agencies so that they coincided with national planning cycles. It would also be necessary to expedite procedures for the approval, follow-up and evaluation of projects and, in that respect, he welcomed the decision taken by UNDP to the effect that only projects with costs exceeding \$750,000 would require prior approval by headquarters and that other projects would be approved by the resident representatives. The proposal that all agencies with field representatives should share office space would make for lower costs and facilitate co-ordination and contacts with the host country. Sufficient human and financial resources should be allocated to resident co-ordinators so that they could perform their task efficiently. The United Nations development system should construct and operate a viable information network, with data banks on the economic and social development of the host country. The reports on co-operation for development prepared by UNDP's field offices provided a good illustration of such information activities.

30. Lastly, he said that his delegation supported the recommendations of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation (A/44/324/Add.3), which sought to improve the efficiency of operational activities for development. The establishment within the framework of the Economic and Social Council of a committee on operational activities and of some sub-committees within the governing body of each organization would help to define a new consensus for the coming years on the role to be played by the system in development.

31. Mr. KALAW (Philippines) said that the problem of loss of international credit seriously threatened the economic growth and national development of developing countries. Whenever a country requested a reduction in its external debt it lost, through the inexorable rules of the international financial system, the medium-term and long-term credit it needed for its development. The solution to that problem was to be found not in the financial world, which had rigid rules on insolvency but perhaps in the United Nations or in newer agencies with more creative vision. In that regard, his delegation was encouraged by the report of the Secretary-General (A/44/324) which indicated that the total amount of official development assistance made available through the United Nations system had increased by 11 per cent over the corresponding figure for 1987.

32. The greatest problem facing the indebted countries was not the debt itself but the difficulty of acquiring new productive technologies with which to erase that debt. In that field, UNDP, UNIDO and other pertinent agencies could play a very important role. He stressed the need to transfer not only scientific technology but also the technology of production, marketing and management, so that the developing countries could produce export goods. Where the technology was in the hands of private enterprise, as in the case of industry, the United Nations agencies could help to bring together the recipient country and the holder of the production technology. Where the technology was of common knowledge, such as in agriculture, the agencies themselves could promote the transfer of technology.

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(Mr. Kalaw, Philippines)

33. It was crucial that the beneficiary countries should begin to take on the responsibility of executing projects funded by the United Nations through its operational activities or technical co-operation. Every country could assume that new responsibility to the extent of its possibilities, taking into account the fact that the objective was to build national development capacities through government execution of projects funded by the United Nations as well as the broadening of geographical sourcing for procurement and recruitment in the developing countries. The capacity of new suppliers to respond rapidly and effectively to opportunities must be improved, and that would require the adoption of specific measures, such as preferential arrangements for subregional purchases or the purchase of surpluses of basic commodities or manufactured items. The operational activities of the United Nations system should serve as a channel to demonstrate the capacity of developing countries to participate more fully in international trade. The Asia Pacific Economic Conference, which had held its first meeting recently at Canberra, was dedicated to the purpose of intensifying South-South co-operation, and the United Nations agencies could lend it their support.

34. He reaffirmed the importance of the target of devoting 0.7 per cent of the gross national product of developed countries to official development assistance and expressed his disappointment at the fact that only a handful of developed countries, namely Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden, had gone beyond that mark. The international community should bear in mind that even though the total amount for United Nations operational activities had grown in recent years, the share of official development assistance intended for those activities had declined during the same period.

35. He urged countries which had the capacity to create advanced technologies to share them with other countries and not to use the right to intellectual property as an excuse for withholding such knowledge, without which the indebted countries would not succeed in breaking the vicious circle of debt.

36. Mr. SISOUVONG (Lao People's Democratic Republic) said that the negative trends of the international economy would persist in years to come unless decisive steps were taken. Tremendous international efforts were needed to lend assistance to developing countries, and especially to the least developed ones. He shared the view expressed earlier in the discussion that there was an increasing interdependence between developing and developed countries and that the latter bore the main responsibility of contributing to world socio-economic development. As pointed out by the Nordic countries, the international donor community must not let its development assistance stagnate, and all donor countries should take concrete measures to meet the 0.7 per cent target.

37. Most developing countries were facing severe economic problems in the solution of which the United Nations system could play an important role. He expressed his country's gratitude to UNDP, UNICEF, WFP, WHO, UNFPA, FAO and other agencies carrying out programmes in his country and pointed out that, in view of the limited resources available to the United Nations system, all forms of aid should be co-ordinated. In that respect, mention should be made of the UNDP-sponsored

(Mr. Sisouvong, Lao People's
Democratic Republic)

round-table meeting for Laos held in April 1989, which had proved effective in mobilizing external assistance.

38. The primary objective of the operational activities of the United Nations system was to help developing countries to attain self-reliance. The effectiveness of those activities could be measured only by the extent to which they fitted into the development plans and priorities of the recipient countries. The idea that the Director-General should carry out a study in 1991 on absolute poverty in the least developed countries and the medium-income countries was worthy of consideration. In his delegation's opinion, the participation of the developing countries in operational activities should be promoted. UNDP and its executing agencies should make greater efforts to stimulate the procurement of goods and services from developing countries. Greater decentralization of UNDP authority in the field would ensure a more prompt and effective response to unique circumstances and the changing needs of developing countries. It was also essential to ensure close co-ordination of all assistance programmes of the United Nations system. In formulating assistance projects, UNDP and other operational agencies should take into account the severe financial constraints of the recipient least developed countries.

39. Mr. Doljintseren (Mongolia) took the Chair.

40. Mr. VANGENBACHER (Observer for Switzerland) said that the question of defining the goals and objectives of the operational activities of the United Nations should not be examined in isolation but should be seen in the context of the special session of the General Assembly in April 1990, the preparation of the new international development strategy, the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, to be held in Paris, the discussion of the future role of UNDP and preparations for its fifth programming cycle. The Second Committee had already established general principles and had identified the eradication of poverty and hunger, human resources and institutional development, the environment, food and agriculture as the priority aspects of development, and in addition the Governing Council of UNDP had defined its main programme directions in its decision 89/20.

41. However, the operational activities of the United Nations system could not have a substantial influence on the development process if the available resources were too limited. It was therefore necessary to identify areas in which those activities could be most effective. The United Nations had comparative advantages in such fields as needs assessment, the formulation of global, regional and sectoral strategies and policies, planning and management of development, aid co-ordination and international negotiation. He also stressed the importance of participation, which could become a key notion of development in the 1990s.

42. With regard to current action by the United Nations, he shared the disappointment of the Group of 77 over the fact that too many of the General Assembly's decisions and recommendations had not been fully implemented and had not

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(Mr. Vangenbacher, Observer,
Switzerland)

had the desired effects in developing countries. Switzerland therefore supported the appeal by Japan for a more action-oriented approach to operational activities. The Second Committee should concentrate more on the working relationship between the General Assembly and the various agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system. It was essential, for the purposes of defining the mandates of the various partners in the system, to maintain the principle of central funding and the specific roles of UNDP and UNFPA in co-operation with UNICEF and the World Food Programme; to reaffirm the objective of joint programming of all operational activities; to establish common principles and objectives for the execution of all operational activities; and to strengthen the co-ordination of those activities. Attention should also be given to the field structure of the United Nations system.

43. Issues for further consideration included the proposals to introduce country statements and multidisciplinary country teams under the leadership of the resident co-ordinator. The need for caution should be stressed, since the introduction of new layers of instruments and institutions in the administration and management of operational activities would imply the readjustment of the existing structures, instruments and institutions, which only needed to be improved to meet the newly identified needs.

44. Mr. LATORTUE (United Nations Industrial Development Organization) said that the Industrial Development Board and other UNIDO organs had carefully studied the triennial comprehensive policy review of the operational activities for development of the United Nations system. On the question of resource mobilization, the Board believed that the international consensus on the role of UNDP in the funding of major portions of multinational technical assistance should be maintained, but that not all the trust technical co-operational funds should be channelled through UNDP. Many specialized funds had been established in the system because donors had an interest in promoting specific substantive activities, and those funding mechanisms had made it possible to increase assistance flows.

45. Contributions to the UNIDO Industrial Development Fund (IDF) were "additional" to other multilateral contributions because they allowed UNIDO to develop important programmes in areas which might not attract financing through traditional channels. The programming of IDF funds was carried out in consultation with the resident representatives and the Senior Industrial Development Field Advisors and was based on requests from Governments. UNIDO was undertaking a particular effort to match donor priorities with the requirements of recipient Governments.

46. An important source of funding for UNIDO activities was provided by the self-financing trust funds established through direct collaboration with the beneficiaries, such as the enterprises and institutions of developing countries. Payment depended directly on the timing and quality of the services delivered, which meant that decentralization was essential.

47. The Board had also mentioned that enhanced joint programming, which was closely related to thematic and sectoral programming, was desirable. The close

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(Mr. Latortue)

links between industry and sectors such as trade, agriculture, finance and education underline the need for co-operative action of specialized agencies to offer a coherent programme of assistance.

48. The country programme process, as the central programming instrument, could only succeed if proper use was made of the expertise in the system in the preparatory, implementation and evaluation phases. There were a number of available mechanisms for that purpose, such as the National Technical Co-operation Assessment and Programmes (NaTCAPs), round tables and consultative group meetings. A feature of programming in the coming decade would be a greater emphasis on sectoral, sub-sectoral and thematic programming, which would necessitate an initial macro-analysis to decide on major sectors to be covered and, following that, an in-depth sectoral analysis.

49. UNIDO also supported the recommendations concerning the simplification and harmonization of procedures, which could be of great benefit both to the recipient countries and to the donor community. As the Director-General had correctly pointed out, co-ordination, and particularly co-ordination in the field, was one of the weak points of the system. The recently signed memorandum of understanding between UNDP and UNIDO was, however, an important step in the direction of better co-ordination of assistance in the industrial sphere. The shortcomings in the area of co-ordination appeared to be connected with the need to enhance the efficiency of leadership in the field, by a person representing the United Nations system and having genuine powers to co-ordinate. In that connection, UNIDO welcomed the recommendations aimed at broadening the selection process for resident co-ordinators and facilitating the exchange of senior and middle level staff among organizations. The aim was not to create additional management mechanisms in the field, but to channel the technical and managerial expertise already available in the field, at UNDP headquarters and in the executing agencies into a single coherent programme for the developing country. It was therefore essential that the specialized agencies should have adequate resources and to ensure that all duplication was avoided, in both the technical and the administrative spheres. In conclusion, he stressed the importance attached by UNIDO to technical co-operation among developing countries and to the diversification of its procurement practices.

50. Mr. HARRISON (United Kingdom) stressed the importance of the triennial policy review and recalled that poverty was a pressing problem, which the operational activities of the United Nations must play a part in alleviating. It was to be hoped that a resolution would be adopted on the subject which was clearly aimed at the implementation of practical measures.

51. With respect to co-ordination, although efforts had been made to co-ordinate the activities of the United Nations system, eliminate duplication and establish common goals and priorities, much remained to be done, and it fell to the Committee to give clear guidance to the entire system. The role of the resident co-ordinator was crucial in that connection.

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(Mr. Harrison, United Kingdom)

52. It was important to bear in mind the principle of comparative advantage within and without the United Nations system. Every organisation should concentrate its efforts on what it did best, avoiding duplication of efforts and seeking good co-ordination. To that end, the System should not seek to compete with other parts of the international community, notably bilateral donors, which in many cases could do the job better. The United Nations system had formidable advantages in many areas: its universality, its impartiality, the voluntary nature of its activities and its tradition of seeking genuine consensus between donors and recipients; but it could not seek to solve all of the world's problems on its own.

53. He had read with interest the recommendations contained in paragraph 61 of the report of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation, and endorsed the view that the core funds of the major organs should be recognized as the principal channels for funding and that member States should continue to give priority to their contributions to those core programmes and funds. Trust funds should only be used if there was good reason not to put money into core funds. Moreover, it was essential that trust funds should pay in full for the activities carried out by them.

54. While it would continue to contribute to the core funds, the United Kingdom saw no prospect of substantially increasing its contribution in the immediate future. Other donors had made similar statements. Predictability in funding was of great value to the United Nations system; nevertheless, predictability and the size of the contributions were different issues and should be seen as such.

55. The Director-General's recommendations on programming were of key importance. Projects in themselves had little value unless placed within the framework of a coherent programme of national development. His delegation had therefore studied with interest the idea of a country statement. Such statements should be produced by the recipient country concerned, taking into account its national development plans as well as policy framework papers such as those prepared by the World Bank. Country statements might perhaps be introduced on a pilot basis in a few interested developing countries.

56. The recommendations on the harmonization and simplification of procedures deserved careful attention. He hoped that they would be speedily implemented by all concerned to ensure better co-ordination. Also important were the recommendations concerning the goals of the organizations within the United Nations system that were working for development. In particular, the United Kingdom supported the recommendation that the Economic and Social Council should adopt a new pattern whereby it concentrated each year on a review of selected priority objectives, leaving the General Assembly to take care of operational activities in general. It also endorsed the recommendation on the need to strengthen the capacity of developing countries to design and manage their national development programmes and to set objectives for themselves and for the United Nations system. In that context, his delegation particularly endorsed the suggestion that the Director-General should carry out an action-oriented study on tackling poverty, with a view to its total eradication.

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57. Mr. Ghesal (Tunisia) resumed the Chair.

58. Mr. SZEDLACSKO (Hungary) stressed the importance of the operational activities of the United Nations system and said that the international community must renew its efforts to revitalize economic growth and development. As the Director-General pointed out in his report, new initiatives would be required in order to, among other things, strengthen development management capabilities and enhance productivity. In that connection, the overriding responsibility of Governments in defining their priorities must always be kept in mind. The main objective should be the strengthening of internal elements of development, since external assistance, though important, played a supplementary role in that process.

59. Multilateral technical co-operation within the United Nations system should be evaluated not only from a financial point of view but also in qualitative terms. It was clear that, in spite of their achievements, operational activities fell far short of satisfying the needs of recipient countries. As the central funding, planning and co-ordinating organization for technical assistance, UNDP exerted a significant influence on the economic and social development of the recipient countries. It needed to pay special attention to such issues as management capacity and the social and human aspects of development, especially in view of the unavoidable structural adjustments being carried out in many countries. At the same time, efforts should be made to mitigate the negative impact of those adjustments. His delegation agreed with the recommendation that the role of the resident co-ordinator should be enhanced and shared the Administrator's view that choosing competent personnel was the key to improving quality.

60. There was a need to move away from the proliferation of projects to a programme-based approach and to ensure that multisectoral programmes had the benefit of modern management and the best expertise of the United Nations system. He appreciated the efforts of UNDP to explore approaches to resource mobilization based on the specific needs of the countries and on concrete issues, although much remained to be done to improve operational activities in the area of procurement, among others. The efforts of UNFPA and UNICEF were also noteworthy.

61. With the burden of a disequilibrium inherited from previous years, Hungary had undertaken the difficult task of changing its structure and initiating a process of democratization by creating an institutionalized market economy system, restructuring the economy and moving into the world market. Under such circumstances, his country was interested in taking an active part in operational activities, especially in their new forms.

62. Miss NCHAPI (Lesotho) said that, as indicated in document A/44/324, the 1980s had been a lost decade with respect to the development of most of the developing countries. Moreover, it was highly likely that negative trends in the world economy would persist in the years ahead, which would be particularly detrimental to Africa, where the majority of the least developed countries were located. The international community had therefore to redefine the basis for more effective solidarity in international economic relations, and it was up to the United Nations to forge a new consensus in that respect.

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(Miss Nchapi, Lesotho)

63. One of the most important topics dealt with in the reports of the Director-General was the need to attain self-reliance by strengthening the national capacities of recipient countries in the planning, formulation, co-ordination and evaluation of development programmes. In view of the increasing interdependence of the world economy, the United Nations system needed to establish forums for dialogue between developing countries and their partners on development strategies and investment programmes. Some examples of that process were the round tables sponsored by UNDP and the consultative groups organised by the World Bank. Thus far, six round tables had been held in Lesotho.

64. Reaffirmation of the primacy of human beings, both as participants in and as beneficiaries of the development process, would require operational activities in the 1990s to focus on a direct attack on absolute poverty, for which a combination of institutional and policy development from within and appropriate support from outside would be necessary. The role of UNICEF and UNFPA had to become increasingly important in that regard. Arrangements were currently under way in Lesotho to implement a project funded by UNFPA and aimed at integrating population considerations into overall national planning.

65. Document A/44/324/Add.3 stated that national execution must become the principal method of project implementation, but not all countries had reached that stage: the least developed countries still lacked management resources and needed a United Nations agency to assist them with expertise, training and equipment. While Lesotho was not opposed to the idea of launching a prospective study of emerging trends in development co-operation requirements (A/44/324), it feared that, as in the case of earlier studies, the countries covered would not be representative of developing countries as a whole, and it therefore welcomed the point made in the same document that member States would wish to review the proposed study in detail and provide specific guidance on its scope and content.

66. With regard to the objectives of United Nations operational activities, her delegation reaffirmed the validity of the 1970 Consensus and of the principles of universality, neutrality and non-conditionality on which it was based. Also still valid was the decision taken by the Governing Council of UNDP to respond favourably to requests to meet the most urgent needs of each developing country and assist the poorest and most vulnerable sections of their societies.

67. It was clear that, for the United Nations development system to respond to the growing volume and complexity of demands for operational activities, a major increase in funding in real terms was required. Although the recent pledging conference had registered some increases in contributions to the core funds of the principal funding bodies (UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA), available resources were modest in comparison with needs and with total official development assistance. The Government of Lesotho, for its part, had made a modest increase in its contribution to operational activities at the pledging conference, despite the ever-mounting economic problems it was facing.

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(Miss Nchapi, Lesotho)

68. Her delegation continued to regard the view as fundamental to the central funding concept: essentially that concept meant that resources made available for technical co-operation through the United Nations system were channelled through UNDP, which had played a very effective catalytic role in Lesotho's economic and social progress. However, UNDP should not be allowed to become increasingly involved in project execution. Her delegation also considered that national development plans remained the principal frame of reference, that the responsibility for co-ordination of external assistance programmes lay with recipient Governments, and that the Director General must elaborate further for the benefit of recipient Governments on the proposed common country statement, in particular on how it differed from current country programmes, in order to avoid further duplication of efforts.

69. With regard to the simplification, decentralisation and harmonization of rules and procedures, her delegation believed that development practices and regulations should be more responsive to the evolving circumstances of development co-operation, and that harmonization of the rules and procedures of agencies with those of recipient Governments would make aid co-ordination by those Governments much easier. Resident co-ordinators played a very important role because, among other things, they facilitated dialogue between Governments and their aid partners and helped Governments to mobilize additional resources for development. The effectiveness of resident co-ordinators often derived from their personal ability to achieve consensus, but also depended upon the willingness of Governments and agencies to make the best use of the institution of the resident co-ordinator.

70. Mrs. EKONG (Nigeria), recalling the importance of the triennial review, said that her country attached considerable importance to operational activities for development, whose fundamental sources of strength were their neutrality, impartiality and non-conditionality, as well as their flexibility and multilateralism. A consensus had evolved that the United Nations should strengthen the capacities of developing countries to achieve sustained and self-reliant development. That implied that the assistance given to each country should be in accordance with its national objectives, plans and priorities. The United Nations system's country programmes must continue to reflect the national priorities and objectives of each recipient country, and that country's development programme or plan should remain the main frame of reference. There was merit in the Director-General's proposal for the various United Nations agencies to produce a common country statement for each country.

71. It was inconsistent for the recipient country to retain primacy in designing the country programme and to have only limited involvement in its execution. There was an urgent need to make greater use of national project-execution capabilities. That did not mean reducing the role of the agencies which, on the contrary, once relieved of the task of project execution, would be able to concentrate on other technical aspects of co-operation. Lastly, the resources envisaged for funding operational activities in the 1990s seemed inadequate when compared with demands and expectations, which would doubtless increase during the decade.

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AGENDA ITEM 82: DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION (continued)

(f) ENVIRONMENT (continued) (A/C.2/44/L.43)

Draft resolution A/C.2/44/L.43

72. Mr. HUSSEIN (Malaysia), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77, introduced draft resolution A/C.2/44/L.43 entitled "Traffic in and disposal, control and transboundary movements of toxic and dangerous products and hazardous wastes", pointing out that it was divided into three parts which dealt respectively with traffic in toxic and dangerous products and wastes, protection against products harmful to health and the environment, and control of transboundary movements of hazardous wastes and their disposal.

(j) ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION OF EXTRATERRITORIAL SPACES FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS (continued) (A/C.2/44/L.41)

Draft resolution A/C.2/44/L.41

73. Mr. BORG OLIVIER (Malta) introduced draft resolution A/C.2/44/L.41 entitled "Environmental protection of extraterritorial spaces for present and future generations", and announced that Morocco and Togo had joined the sponsors of the draft.

AGENDA ITEM 85: PROTECTION OF GLOBAL CLIMATE FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS OF MANKIND (continued) (A/C.2/44/L.40)

Draft resolution A/C.2/44/L.40

74. Mr. BORG OLIVIER (Malta), introducing draft resolution A/C.2/44/L.40 entitled "Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind", said that it built on General Assembly resolution 43/53 and was worded in a way which balanced the interests of all countries and took into account the particular needs of developing countries, for which reason it was hoped that consensus could be achieved on the text.

The meeting rose at 6.25 p.m.