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SECOND COMMITTEE  
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New York

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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 38th MEETING

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ORGANIZATION OF WORK

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DISTR. GENERAL  
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28 November 1989

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The meeting was called to order at 3.35 p.m.

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

(b) TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT (continued) (A/C.2/44/L.42)

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Draft resolution A/C.2/44/L.42

1. Mr. JOSSE (Nepal), introducing draft resolution A/C.2/44/L.42 on specific action related to the particular needs and problems of land-locked developing countries, said that, although the international community had on various occasions recognized the particular needs and problems of those countries and had appealed for increased financial and technical assistance to them, the measures taken to alleviate those needs and problems had fallen far short of what was needed. The sponsors hoped that the current session of the General Assembly would provide another opportunity to pledge meaningful support to those countries.

2. Although the draft resolution was greatly influenced by the language of previous General Assembly resolutions, it attempted to break fresh ground, based on realities reflected in various relevant reports of the Secretary-General of UNCTAD. The sponsors hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

Draft decision on economic and technical co-operation among developing countries (A/C.2/44/L.44)

3. Mr. TAI (Malaysia), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77, said that, as a result of positions adopted by some developed countries, it had not been possible for the report of the High-level Committee on the Review of Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries (TCDC) on its sixth session to complete its passage through the UNDP Governing Council and the Economic and Social Council, in accordance with recommendation 37 of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action, before being considered by the General Assembly. Following a meeting of regional chairmen and representatives of the European Community, the Presidents of the UNDP Governing Council, the Economic and Social Council and the High-level Committee on the Review of TCDC and the Chairman of the Group of 77, consensus had been reached that the Second Committee would consider the report on an exceptional basis. He wished to recall that the preference of the Group of 77 would have been for the High-level Committee to meet in May 1989, but that on the advice of the Special Unit for TCDC, the meeting had in fact been held in September.

4. Mr. HARRISON (United Kingdom) said that while the United Kingdom was not enthusiastic about the draft decision and stood by the consensus and the Buenos Aires Plan of Action that the report should be considered by UNDP and the Economic and Social Council before submission to the General Assembly, it was prepared to countenance its adoption on an exceptional basis. The decision to postpone the

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(Mr. Harrison, United Kingdom)

High-level Committee meeting had created procedural disarray, and while the proposal by the Group of 77 meant that the report would be adopted without the benefit of consideration by the UNDP General Council or the Economic and Social Council, it had reluctantly to be accepted as the only way out of the impasse.

5. Mr. KRAMER (Canada) said that, while his delegation regretted that the draft decision was not a text of the Chairman and that the General Assembly's consideration of the report would be affected by the lack of guidance from the UNDP Governing Council and the Economic and Social Council, it did not object to the draft decision, on an exceptional basis, as the only way out of the procedural dilemma.

6. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to adopt the draft decision.

7. Draft decision A/C.2/44/L.44 was adopted.

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

(a) COMPREHENSIVE POLICY REVIEW OF OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM (continued) (A/44/324 and Add.1-5)

(b) UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (continued) (E/1989/32; A/44/389)

(c) UNITED NATIONS CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT FUND (continued)

(d) UNITED NATIONS TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION ACTIVITIES (continued) (DP/1989/46 and Add.1-3)

(e) UNITED NATIONS VOLUNTEERS PROGRAMME (continued)

8. Mr. DRAPER (Administrator, United Nations Development Programme), referring to the triennial policy review of the operational activities of the United Nations system, said that it had become increasingly clear that three distinctive elements, namely, co-ordination, national management and execution, and central funding, would shape the results of those activities. It was important to recall that the actual interplay between those three elements occurred not in New York but in the developing countries themselves, where UNDP had 112 field offices.

9. With regard to co-ordination, he stressed the importance of the role of the UNDP resident representatives, who also served as resident co-ordinators of the United Nations system as a whole. He welcomed the recommendation of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation that the role of resident co-ordinator should be enhanced. If the United Nations system was to serve developing countries more efficiently, development assistance must be managed more effectively. To that end, the resident co-ordinator system must be

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(Mr. Draper, UNDP)

strengthened, and UNDP was actively working with agencies and the Office of the Director-General on introducing better briefing and training for those newly appointed or about to be reassigned.

10. With respect to national management and execution, decentralization was at the core of UNDP, which had shown the way in evolving and implementing Government-led, multi-sectoral technical co-operation. UNDP-financed programmes were Government-managed and made full involved use of the technical expertise of the United Nations family. In its efforts to increase national execution, UNDP would adapt its policies and decentralize its procedures to conform to the realities of the countries involved. Its programming, through NaTCAPs, round-tables, etc., helped to ensure that the complex multi-sectoral programmes of the future would have the benefit of modern management and the best expertise of the United Nations system.

11. As to central funding, the UNDP Governing Council had traditionally endorsed strengthening co-ordination through the Programme's position as the central funding agency. A simple, cost-effective, clear-cut funding mechanism would maximize the United Nations system's responsiveness to diverse national and global realities. In addition to seeking means to increase core resources, UNDP would also continue to explore country-specific and issue-focused approaches to resource mobilization as part of the elements of its funding strategy.

12. In addition to those key themes, UNDP would not ignore the Director-General's recommendations on technical co-operation among developing countries, which it supported, or the importance of increasing further procurement from developing countries.

13. Mr. GEBREMEDHIN (Ethiopia) noted the suggestion by the Director-General in paragraph 19 of the comprehensive policy review report (A/44/324) that concentration on sustained development should be the point of departure for United Nations operational activities for development, so as to help ensure adequate linkage between international strategies and country programme goals. His delegation considered that approach to be important, provided that questions of priorities, resources and organization, and specifically the volume and predictability of multilateral resources, greater country-specificity and the paramountcy of recipient countries in determining priorities, were adequately addressed in advance.

14. While linkage was desirable, specific sectoral or multi-sectoral objectives must be seen in relation to the development co-operation programmes to be agreed upon between the Governments of developing countries and the United Nations development system. International themes and objectives were important in many respects, including the creation of greater awareness of problems. However, there was a risk that over-emphasis on them might distort national priorities, and the ability of donors to influence programming through resource commitments was not only a theoretical possibility.

(Mr. Gebremedhin, Ethiopia)

15. Nor, indeed, was the United Nations system fault-free in that respect. Experience had shown that at times it was easier to persuade organizations of the system to commit resources to projects concerned with current global themes than to respond quickly to chronic problems or ongoing activities which had become less attractive to public opinion in donor countries. His delegation therefore supported a coherent country programming approach, determined by the recipient country's national plan, where relevant international themes were included on the basis of need, compatibility and availability of resources.

16. His delegation was greatly concerned at the stagnation of grant funding and the continued low level of growth in official development assistance. The trend towards diverse channels of funding was also contributing to the stagnation of the amount of resources mobilized through the core funds. He therefore supported the Director-General's recommendations calling primarily for an increase in real terms in the resources available to the core funds of the principal programmes financing technical co-operation.

17. In his delegation's opinion, the role of technical co-operation was determined by the objective, which must continue to be national capacity building through increased national execution of projects. That in turn required the removal of impediments identified in existing structures, policies and procedures.

18. The trend towards increased national execution also called for greater decentralization of the existing system and the harmonization of its procedures with those at the national level. UNDP had commendably continued to simplify its procedures and increase their efficiency: the decision taken in 1988 to increase the project approval authority of its resident representatives to \$700,000 was a case in point. However, the fact that nationally executed projects were excluded denied the benefit of decentralization to Government-executed projects. That not only made the important measures taken by UNDP less meaningful but also did little to remove the impediments to national capacity building inherent in the existing structure. In view of its strong support for UNDP's efforts, his delegation hoped that the Programme would institute flexible procedures which favoured national execution of projects.

19. His Government agreed with the Director-General on the need to shift from the project approach. However, that move must be preceded by appropriate measures to ensure co-ordination, coherence and harmonization of procedures with those of the recipient countries.

20. With regard to central funding, at a time when a concerted effort was required to alleviate the rising problem of absolute poverty, the effectiveness of the United Nations development system must be improved by channelling resources to well-co-ordinated and coherent programmes instead of spreading the scarce resources thinly on the canvas of developing countries' needs.

21. His delegation hoped that problems of tied supply and the need for increasing procurement from developing countries would be appropriately addressed through the

(Mr. Gebremedhin, Ethiopia)

decentralization of decision-making authority to country-based officials. Measures must also be taken to reduce the considerable incidence of errors and delay in the delivery of equipment.

22. The studies before the Committee provided a realistic assessment of the system's deficiencies. The findings and recommendations they contained, along with the views of Member States, needed to be taken seriously so as to ensure their implementation.

23. Mr. SCIALOJA (Italy) said that, in his delegation's opinion, the main focus of technical co-operation in the 1990s would have to be on self-reliance of developing country Governments, through the enhancement of development management capabilities in their national institutions. The United Nations must also help developing countries to face economic adjustment at the lowest possible cost to their poorest and most vulnerable social groups.

24. During the discussion of the fifth programming cycle, many countries - mainly donor countries - had expressed their intention to shift resources towards poverty-oriented programmes. Italy welcomed that idea, but would reject any interpretation of it which might exclude from the benefits of United Nations operational activities countries which could not qualify as "poorest" in terms of per capita GNP but which were experiencing a reversal in their development process.

25. The integrated country reviews on the functioning of operational activities for development had clearly demonstrated the will of Governments to undertake more direct execution of projects through governmental and non-governmental institutions. The Governments of many least developed countries did not yet have the management resources to take on more national execution, and a United Nations agency would have to assist them by providing expertise, training and equipment. There were, however, a large number of developing countries which had the capacity for national execution, and the United Nations should move rapidly to implement that modality.

26. His delegation attached special importance to the recommendation made by the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation on country statements of priority objectives for the United Nations system in support of government development efforts (A/44/324, para. 225). The General Assembly should request the Director-General to formulate a concrete outline for such statements, and it might even be possible to begin implementing that procedure in two or three developing countries on an experimental basis. A first report on the outline and on the way the experimental implementation was proceeding could be submitted to the Economic and Social Council in July 1990.

27. The resolution on the current triennial policy review should address the issue of programming, and the General Assembly should request UNDP to set up more programme-oriented mechanisms to support national programmes in order to reduce the unacceptable burden the proliferation of projects placed on countries. With regard to co-ordination, the General Assembly should consolidate the mandate of the

(Mr. Scialoja, Italy)

resident co-ordinator through closer co-operation among United Nations agencies and programmes at the field level. The Director-General could be requested to introduce, on an experimental basis, multidisciplinary country teams under the leadership of resident co-ordinators. The General Assembly should also decide that the United Nations system at the country level should share premises. The Assembly should adopt the concept of government execution of projects as the normal mode of execution best suited to maximize capacity-building in developing countries, and should clearly state that the successor arrangements for agency support costs must be speedily defined on the basis of the interests of developing countries and co-ordination among United Nations agencies and organs.

28. Lastly, his delegation did not concur with requests for a postponement of the deadlines given to the expert group on the study of issues connected with agency support costs.

29. Mr. ANDRÉEN (Sweden), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, said that the increased emphasis on capacity-building should not obscure the important humanitarian role of the United Nations in providing relief to the poor and hungry, refugees and displaced persons. The Nordic countries were strongly committed to that aspect of international solidarity, and it was particularly important to pay increased attention to the transition from humanitarian assistance to long-term development assistance. Such global challenges required increased transfers of resources, and the United Nations must be prepared to accept the costs. All donor countries should take specific measures to fulfil the 0.7 per cent target for official development assistance. In that connection, the implementation of General Assembly resolution 43/197 should be pursued in all relevant forums. Donors also shared the responsibility to provide adequate means to United Nations operational activities for development.

30. The Nordic countries were becoming increasingly concerned at the current uneven pattern of contributions to the voluntary funds of international organizations. It was not reasonable that a relatively large proportion of such contributions was covered by a few small and medium-sized countries, and appropriate measures should be taken to ensure those organizations' financial stability. The Nordic countries supported the decision of UNDP to draw up a funding strategy, including different methods to achieve greater financial stability for the future.

31. In his recommendations on resource mobilization, the Director-General seemed to be inclined to dispose of the central funding concept in favour of a system of additional funding. While the Nordic countries were aware that the full potential of the central funding role of UNDP had not been realized and that that method had a number of disadvantages, they did not agree that multiplicity of funds was equivalent to additionality. Many of the separate United Nations funds had not mobilized adequate resources. Some of the virtues behind the central funding concept remained valid, and UNDP should continue to have a major, although, in some contexts, no longer central, funding role.

(Mr. Andréén, Sweden)

32. Procurement from developing countries was an essential part of the development process, and further efforts should be made to increase their valuable participation. Some of the observations and recommendations contained in the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) (A/44/646) merited further consideration. However, before any decisions were taken on increasing procurement from developing countries, the developing countries themselves should express their views on the proposals contained in the Director-General's report (A/44/324, annex).

33. The Nordic countries attached great importance to the need for co-operation among United Nations organizations in operational activities. Such activities should be coherent in order to benefit the recipient countries they were meant to serve. The Nordic countries agreed with several of the Director-General's recommendations on the forthcoming negotiations regarding successor arrangements to the support-cost system. Although the views and experiences of all organizations concerned must be taken into account, negotiations on a new arrangement or arrangements could be conducted only in the UNDP Governing Council.

34. A major task for United Nations organizations was to strengthen the capacity of the Governments of the recipient countries to assume responsibility for the co-ordination of external assistance. In many countries, the lack of coherence of United Nations efforts remained a serious problem, and competition between the various parts of the United Nations system had led to waste or under-utilization of resources. The round tables and consultative group meetings organized in a large number of countries had made it possible to discuss the resource situation and other development co-operation measures in an overall context involving Governments, the United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions, regional development banks and bilateral donors.

35. The Nordic countries welcomed the Director-General's idea of common country statements. Joint programming should comprise assistance provided by the programmes participating in the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP) and, ultimately, all United Nations assistance. At the request of the recipient country, UNDP should initiate such joint programming, which could facilitate a more strategic planning process.

36. Co-ordination, co-operation and coherence of the activities of the United Nations system had a bearing on the question of the division of labour. The Director-General had correctly pointed out that many current problems were of a multisectoral or cross-sectoral nature, and that the lead agency role in any given matter could be assigned to one of the operational funds, to a sectoral body or regional commission, or to a combination of the three. Although they had not yet had time to reflect on the practical implications of those recommendations, the Nordic countries agreed that the designation of the leading role should be based on merit. However, that proposal might not reduce the rivalries within the United Nations system or increase efficiency, and might lead to a lack of clarity. The primary goal of the United Nations system should be to meet the requirements of the recipient countries. While there might be room for a revised division of labour between UNDP and the specialized agencies, there was still a need for one United Nations agency which was neutral, universal and decentralized.

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37. Mr. MOHIUDDIN (Bangladesh) said that recent pledging conferences for operational activities for development indicated a discouraging trend in the mobilization of resources for operational activities. Nevertheless, despite severe economic problems, many developing countries had increased their pledges, and that spirit must be matched by action on the part of their development partners in order to ensure a substantial increase in resources for operational activities. Additional resources should be provided in a sustained and predictable manner, commensurate with the increasing requirements of developing countries, in particular the least developed countries. There was also a need for the priority allocation of grant resources to programmes and projects in the least developed countries.

38. The development goals of the United Nations system must be consistent with the policies and priorities of the recipient countries, and national execution must be affirmed as a principal modality in project implementation. The United Nations system, in particular UNDP, had an important role to play in helping to meet the technical co-operation needs of recipient Governments through human resources development, institution building and the transfer of technology. Increased attention must be devoted to national capacity-building and improved utilization of existing capacity in order to promote self-reliant and sustained growth in those countries.

39. The programming procedure for operational activities should be made more flexible in order to correspond to the policies, procedures and objectives of the recipient countries, permit allocation of external assistance in the context of a programme approach and enable those countries to manage their programmes and take advantage of substantive linkages among projects and sectors in a coherent and integrated manner. It was also necessary to harmonize the planning periods of funding organizations and to ensure their close co-ordination with the planning cycles of recipient countries.

40. A major obstacle to increasing procurement from developing countries was the lack of good and reliable information. A more efficient information system must therefore be established in order to ensure the better collection and flow of data concerning sources of supply and their prospective users, accompanied by the decentralization of decision-making authority to the country-level officials directly dealing with project activities. Attention should also be given to ways and means of enhancing procurement of technical assistance from under-utilized donor countries.

41. His delegation hoped that the Secretary-General's recommendations concerning the greater utilization of technical co-operation among developing countries, including new institutional arrangements, would be duly considered, particularly in the context of the emerging capacities of the developing countries.

42. The objective of United Nations operational activities should be to provide Governments with a range of choices on particular problems, rather than a package of solutions. Over time, operational activities would have to become increasingly country-specific, with all the flexibility which that entailed at the field level. Problems should be viewed from a multisectoral and multidisciplinary perspective. That cross-sectoral approach would require the United Nations to place

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(Mr. Mohiuddin, Bangladesh)

multidisciplinary teams at the country level, and would have important implications for recipient Governments, since they would have to devise intersectoral mechanisms to address problems from a multisectoral point of view.

43. Multilateral assistance was not only of benefit to individual recipient countries, but could help deal with problems of a multilateral nature, such as environment, management of common resources, natural disasters and communicable diseases. The very transboundary nature of such problems would require multilateral initiatives and involvement.

44. In order to restore and maintain the credibility of the operational activities of the United Nations system, serious consideration should be given to the issues of attracting highly qualified personnel and service conditions. As a first step, the much neglected service conditions of locally recruited professional and staff at the field level should be improved as a matter of urgency.

45. Mr. BOECK (Austria) welcomed the spirit of partnership displayed by all parties associated with the comprehensive policy review, which reflected their conviction that interdependence had become an indisputable fact of international relations. The industrialized countries clearly bore the main responsibility for creating conditions conducive to global economic and social development, and, given the continuing critical needs of the developing countries, they would have to allocate more resources for development. It might be unrealistic, however, to expect that a significant increase would be forthcoming. An essential task of development co-operation in the 1990s, then, would be to achieve sustainable and equitable growth with limited resources while bearing in mind the global concern for environmental protection and the rational utilization of non-renewable resources.

46. A central feature of future co-operation policies and programmes should be human resources development. Greater emphasis should be placed not only on the eradication of illiteracy but on such other measures as national capacity-building and management development programmes.

47. Increased emphasis should also be placed on market-oriented economic mechanisms, such as decentralization of decision-making and free enterprise. In addition, development co-operation must be carried out with a view to preserving the quality of the environment. Additional resources would be required to that end, a requirement that would no doubt be met with understanding by the industrialized countries.

48. While many views had been expressed and a number of studies commissioned on the central funding role of UNDP and the problem of agency support costs, those issues ought to be dealt with primarily by the UNDP Governing Council. Questions had also been raised as to the usefulness of the country programming exercise. His delegation believed that that exercise should be continued, taking into account the specific requirements of individual countries. His delegation also supported the trend towards national execution of projects and programmes, but believed that collateral measures were also necessary.

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(Mr. Boeck, Austria)

49. His delegation supported the proposals that had been made with a view to enhancing the efficiency of UNDP, particularly those pertaining to the decentralization of management. Furthermore, any measures to enhance co-ordination within UNDP and between the Programme and the specialized agencies and funds with which it worked were to be encouraged. As the world was clearly moving towards a service society, proper management methods which allowed for a quick flow of information and smooth co-ordination were an increasingly important prerequisite for any useful activity. Any decisions taken in that regard should be the subject of consensus, and he believed that the proposals made by the representative of Japan in that connection could be of value.

50. Mr. JOSSE (Nepal) endorsed the statement made at the 37th meeting by the representative of Malaysia on behalf of the Group of 77. Nepal attached great significance to the operational activities of the United Nations system not only because of the support they provided for Nepalese development efforts but because of their multilateral, non-political and objective character. His delegation was therefore disappointed at the poor overall outcome of the recent pledging conference, and continued to believe that the target of 0.07 per cent of GNP for official development assistance should be met by all developed countries.

51. Because Nepal wished to see the operational activities of the United Nations generously funded, efficiently administered and consistent with national development priorities, his delegation fully supported the steps taken by the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation to that end, particularly those aimed at improving co-ordination. He welcomed the Director-General's report on the comprehensive triennial policy review (A/44/324) and shared the view that sustained development must be the primary goal of operational activities in the 1990s. His delegation also agreed with the report's analysis of the major challenges for the 1990s as well as with the thrust of the recommendations made to enhance the system's effectiveness, particularly with respect to the "basic needs" approach, referred to in paragraph 36 of the report.

52. While his delegation appreciated the valuable assistance which UNDP provided through a wide range of activities, he particularly wished to commend the Programme's role in the preparations for the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries. It was to be hoped that the criteria for the allocation of UNDP funds to those countries would be reconsidered with a view to increasing their share.

53. Nepal looked forward to co-operating with UNDP to achieve its goal of ecological security, particularly in the area of afforestation. His delegation also supported the emphasis placed on human development and welcomed endeavours by UNDP to improve both access to and the quality of education in developing countries. UNDP efforts to strengthen the role of non-governmental organizations in the development process and promote the role of women as participants and beneficiaries in its programmes and projects were to be encouraged.

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(Mr. Josse, Nepal)

54. UNICEF was unique among United Nations organizations in that roughly one fifth of its funding came from the public. His delegation commended the heroic efforts of UNICEF in the field of child immunization and welcomed its initiative in preparing strategies for children in the 1990s. Recent successes in the area of child health and development were encouraging, and he wished to reiterate his delegation's strong support for the UNICEF proposal to hold a world summit on children in 1990.

55. His delegation had always attached great importance to the role of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) because of the Fund's valuable support for family-planning and maternal and child welfare programmes in Nepal. His Government hoped to reduce its population growth rate from 2.5 per cent to under 2 per cent and its fertility rate from 5.8 per cent to 2.5 per cent by the year 2000, and his delegation was confident that continued support and guidance from UNFPA would enable Nepal to make significant advances towards self-reliance in population matters. He welcomed UNFPA efforts to decentralize its decision-making authority, particularly in the field, and agreed that goals for the 1990s should include improving women's position, managing migration and population distribution, striking a balance between population growth and resources and lowering infant, child and maternal mortality.

56. The United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) had provided concessional assistance to Nepal for a wide range of development projects, and he therefore wished to express his country's appreciation to all donors to the Fund. It was to be hoped that the Second United Nations Conference on the Least-Developed Countries would recommend that the Fund's resources should be increased.

57. Nepal's support for the United Nations Volunteers programme was based on the conviction that it represented a major alternative source of technical expertise for multilateral development co-operation activities. Nepal had both benefited from and contributed volunteers to the programme, which was totally consistent with the ideals and principles of the United Nations Charter.

58. Finally, he welcomed the useful work done by the World Food Programme (WFP) in meeting emergency food needs and promoting socio-economic development through food-for-work projects in countries such as his own. The international community should therefore maintain its support to the Programme at current levels or, if possible, increase it.

59. Mr. ZIELINSKI (Poland) said that the comprehensive policy review of operational activities was of special significance in view of the aggravation of development problems and the growing consensus within the international community on the need to work in concert to overcome global economic, ecological and social threats. Many countries were currently undertaking internal reforms and adjustments to create more opportunities for their citizens. The United Nations development system must do more to facilitate that process and improve the international economic environment.

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(Mr. Zielinski, Poland)

60. His delegation believed that the efforts of the UNDP Governing Council to define an orientation for future programme activities had been successful: the validity of the existing principles governing international technical co-operation had been confirmed and action-oriented recommendations made. He welcomed the fact that UNDP would continue to play its central funding and co-ordinating role, and expressed the hope that the Programme's future funding strategy would make it financially sound.

61. The many achievements of UNFPA in providing countries with assistance in the area of population were to be commended. There was no doubt that the review and assessment of population programmes and follow-up activities now being conducted would help in the identification of clear and ambitious goals for the 1990s.

62. His delegation fully supported the technical co-operation provided by UNICEF and the United Nations through the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development, as well as the achievements of the United Nations Volunteers programme.

63. Of particular importance to economic and social growth were human resources development, institutional capacity-building and management. His delegation supported the recommendations made in that connection by the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation and the relevant objectives for operational activities set out in the Director-General's reports.

64. The increasing complexity and diversity of individual countries' development problems meant that the conducting of integrated country reviews was a timely exercise, and one which should help to make the programmes, procedures and structures of the United Nations development system more responsive to the challenges posed by those developments. He agreed with the Director-General that sustained development should be the primary goal of United Nations operational activities. As the world economy and individual countries underwent profound and rapid structural changes, a more participatory approach to development must be adopted. He therefore welcomed the Director-General's proposal to undertake an overall prospective study of emerging trends in development co-operation requirements and their implications for the United Nations system. Obviously, the study should be closely integrated with preparations for the new international development strategy.

65. The United Nations system had a clear responsibility to promote technical co-operation among developing countries. During the sixth session of the High-Level Committee on the Review of Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries, many delegations had reaffirmed their support for the principles of such co-operation and agreed that much progress, even though not as rapid or as widespread as anticipated, had been made in implementing the Buenos Aires Plan of Action. The Director-General's recommendations regarding technical co-operation among developing countries were consistent with the recent decisions of the High-Level Committee, and the Director-General's proposals regarding procurement were particularly welcome.

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(Mr. Zielinski, Poland)

66. His delegation attached great importance to the regional dimension of operational activities, and the work of the regional commissions complemented activities undertaken at the country level. He welcomed the role proposed for the Director-General in connection with the new arrangements for dealing with agency support costs. Project execution should increasingly be carried out at the national level, and his delegation supported efforts to identify and overcome obstacles to a more widespread use of that practice.

67. The core funds of the principal programmes which financed technical co-operation activities should be clearly recognized as the principal channels for funding through the United Nations system. His delegation firmly supported a substantial decentralization of responsibility to the country level in operational activities and favoured the establishment of multidisciplinary teams under the supervision of resident co-ordinators. Finally, it was of critical importance that the rules and procedures of United Nations organizations should be harmonized and simplified in order to make external assistance more effective. The establishment of a committee to deal with operational activities within the framework of the Economic and Social Council should be considered.

68. Mr. AHMED (World Food Programme) said that the operational activities of WFP were designed to meet two basic objectives: providing resources for development by using food to generate employment and income for the poor and disadvantaged; and providing humanitarian relief in times of distress and disaster. WFP assistance to developing countries counted for one quarter of the total assistance they received in the form of grants from the United Nations system as a whole. WFP resources came from voluntary contributions, nearly all from Governments. The Programme handled one fourth of all food aid world wide; its current portfolio of development projects totalled \$3.8 billion and reflected the Programme's close collaboration with Governments, which provided an additional \$7 billion for those projects, with approximately 15 per cent of total project costs provided by other agencies.

69. One tangible benefit to developing countries of WFP operations lay in the Programme purchases made in those countries, thereby promoting their food production and helping them achieve a positive balance of payments, as well as in triangular transactions, which stimulated South-South trade. To help Governments improve their project-management capabilities, WFP provided training for government officials in subjects ranging from accounting and record-keeping to food storage and distribution as well as programme planning, monitoring and evaluation. Some 5,000 government employees from over 80 countries had benefited from such courses during the past year.

70. WFP had made special provisions to help defray the cost of delivering food aid to final distribution points in least developed countries. The Programme was also providing support to Governments in the funding of additional technical and managerial resources for projects which it assisted.

71. WFP had always sought to promote accelerated economic growth, human resources development and the reduction of poverty and upgrading of the environment. But while over two thirds of the Programme's expenditures were used to promote

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(Mr. Ahmed)

development, WFP was more often cited for its role in emergency relief. Indeed, the Programme played a key logistical role in providing food in most disaster situations in developing countries. A good example of such efforts was to be seen in the WFP airlift of food into southern Sudan in 1988. Subsequently, the Programme had played a pivotal role in Operation Lifeline Sudan.

72. WFP commitments for emergency operations had tripled in the past decade. During the past year, emergency assistance had been provided to some 17.9 million people, including refugees and displaced persons and victims of drought and other natural disasters. Experience demonstrated that refugee flows were not generally a short-term phenomenon; consequently, reliance on continued emergency food handouts should be avoided. Likewise, Governments which took in refugees should not have to face uncertain or erratic food deliveries. The WFP governing body had therefore decided that long-term refugee assistance programmes should be funded from a specially allocated portion of WFP regular resources with a view to ensuring a more secure food supply line and placing greater emphasis on long-term refugee needs, such as health, education and training.

73. The Programme's natural partners were the other funding agencies of the United Nations development system - UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). There was also an established system of technical collaboration with other specialized agencies, including FAO, ILO, WHO, and with the United Nations Department of Technical Co-operation for Development, and the Programme expected to pay \$10.7 million to those agencies for their support during the period 1990-1991. The Programme also worked closely with the World Bank and IMF on matters relating to food security and the impact of adjustment policies on the poor.

74. While the Programme hoped to increase its voluntary contributions for 1991-1992 by 7 per cent over the previous two-year period, the cost of the food delivered by WFP had increased by nearly 20 per cent during the preceding 18 months. Thus the Programme's ability to maintain its level of food aid deliveries would be seriously affected by any fluctuation in resources, since most pledges were made in terms of monetary terms rather than in tons of food. Any reduction in the flow of food aid would be especially felt in low-income food-deficit countries. Yet the major food-aid donors had indicated that they intended to reduce their contributions, thereby widening the margin between food supply and food demand. Recent estimates indicated that, for the first time in more than five years, food aid would fall short of the annual target of 10 million tons set by the 1974 World Food Conference; moreover, it appeared that only 80 per cent of the pledging target for 1989-1990 was likely to be met. Clearly, an effort from donors was needed to stop that downward trend.

75. A food-assisted development process could not be conditioned by resource availability without having a severe effect in human terms. It was for that reason that the WFP governing body had urged that every effort should be made to reach the target proposed for 1991-1992, in the hope that such resources would be augmented by substantial additional contributions from other sources.

(Mr. Ahmed)

76. JCGP, chaired in 1989 by WFP, provided a framework for strengthened co-ordination between UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, IFAD and other United Nations bodies. The third high-level meeting of JCGP held in July 1989 had dealt mainly with the issue of environmentally and sustainable development in practical, operational perspectives. Preliminary analysis of the first round of consultation with local office staff on collaboration within the JCGP framework had revealed an encouraging degree of commitment and co-operation at the country level, an indication of the sustained efforts made by the United Nations system to enhance the collective impact of its operational activities.

77. Mr. UNNI NAYAR (International Labour Organisation) said that if the United Nations system as a whole was to play an effective role in the rapidly changing and increasingly complex international development environment, it was important to review alternative scenarios and identify priority areas in which innovative approaches and further adaptation would be required. Such willingness to act together on an equal and mutually supporting basis would require each agency to undertake a continuous review of its international arrangements, procedures and structures. The International Labour Organisation had engaged in just such an exercise, and had indicated its willingness to issue the relevant guidelines to its field representatives with a view to strengthening its role in support of the overall coherence of United Nations activities at the country level. The organization reiterated its unqualified support of government execution, and was currently engaged with its partners in the United Nations system in identifying further measures to ensure that their capacities were fully mobilized in expanding and strengthening that approach.

78. The question of centralized financing and, in particular, the notion of additionality had shown the need for substantial, predictable and sustained contributions to provide appropriate additional support for the efforts of developing countries. The ILO shared the opinion that the most favourable response should be given to the needs of Governments through complementary resources and means of action towards common objectives. The co-ordinated and integrated programme approach to development co-operation which had been suggested could provide the necessary guarantees.

79. The ILO agreed that the country-specific programme approach should be reinforced by the decentralization of responsibilities for formulating, approving and executing technical co-operation activities. Complex rules and procedures related to technical co-operation had placed major obstacles in the way of effective co-ordination at the country level. Rules and procedures must therefore continue to be simplified and decentralized.

80. In October 1989, the ACC subsidiary body for operational activities, the Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (Operational activities), had assured the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation of its full support in the system-wide efforts which would result from the conclusions and recommendations of his triennial review report. The Committee had felt that such efforts should follow a fully participative approach, including



(Mr. Unni Nayar, ILO)

not merely the secretariats of member organizations but also their respective governing bodies. The ILO would continue to be in the forefront of such efforts.

81. Mr. ABRAHÁM (Czechoslovakia) said that the worsening social and economic situation of developing countries required increased attention from the international community and stepped-up operational activities by the United Nations to seek ways of reviving their economic growth. The failure to implement such activities in a sufficiently effective way and the resulting disparities in the self-reliance levels of developing countries were attributable to a lack of co-ordination and failure to define clear objectives. There had also been persisting deficiencies in central funding, in which the main role should be played by UNDP.

82. Czechoslovakia therefore supported the Secretary-General's outline of United Nations operational activities for the 1990s, contained in document A/44/324, in which primary emphasis was laid on the achievement of self-reliance by developing countries. Capacity-building in developing countries should focus not only on technical but also on economic and managerial capacities, which were essential to the continued functioning of national economies once assistance provided by the United Nations or through bilateral channels had ended.

83. The participatory approach to development, whereby assistance was directed to the most disadvantaged population groups, would also help in the creation of an effective structure in developing countries, ranging from governmental institutions to the final beneficiaries of the assistance, with a strong feedback capability which would ensure its future independent operation.

84. The negative social aspects of structural adjustment were felt most keenly by the poorest groups of the population in developing countries. The United Nations and the Governments of developing countries should therefore co-operate carefully with the international financial institutions in incorporating social aspects into structural adjustment programmes, in order to cater for the needs of those population groups and the necessity to maintain investment in human development programmes. The new trend of encouraging government execution of projects, with the United Nations special agencies could serve both as a source of intellectual expertise and as a partner to the Governments concerned, would considerably facilitate the achievement of their self-reliance. Those and other questions could be considered in the proposed study of trends in development co-operation requirements called for in the Secretary-General's report A/44/324.

85. Clarification of the "programme-oriented approach" could increase the effectiveness of United Nations operational activities and enhance understanding of the central co-ordination of those activities, which, in turn, would strengthen the role of UNDP. Czechoslovakia supported the proposal to strengthen the role of the United Nations resident co-ordinator and the capacity of the Governments of developing countries to co-ordinate and programme the foreign assistance provided to them.

86. Mr. ZHANG Guanghui (China) said that the Committee's careful consideration of the documentation on United Nations operational activities, would help the United Nations development system promote the social and economic development of the developing countries in preparation for the challenge of the 1990s.

87. The undeniable success of development assistance provided by the United Nations had been due to the principles of universality, multilateralism, flexibility and respect for the sovereignty of the recipient countries which characterized the Consensus of 1970. China believed that the United Nations development system should continue to follow the principles and spirit of the Consensus in responding to the growing needs of the developing countries.

88. China was of the view that the formulation of United Nations development assistance programmes was primarily the responsibility of the Governments of the recipient countries, which should determine, in the light of suggestions and proposals from the organizations and agencies of the United Nations development system, the priority areas and corresponding utilization of the assistance provided. In that regard, his delegation welcomed the Director-General's proposal that a country statement of priority objectives for the United Nations system should be compiled by the appropriate United Nations bodies to serve as the basis for the formulation of assistance programmes, and hoped that Member States would be given more detailed guidelines on the specific procedures to be followed.

89. The United Nations development system should adopt a flexible approach in defining programme content of recipient so as to cater for the complexities of each recipient country's social and economic development. Inter-country programmes implemented by the system would make the assistance more effective and of benefit to more countries in tackling regional and global problems, and should be implemented in co-ordination with the corresponding national efforts.

90. The programme cycle should be synchronized with the recipient country's development plan. Furthermore, increasing the proportion of government execution and creating favourable conditions for the execution at government level of all programmes would boost the self-reliance of developing countries and free the United Nations development system from tedious daily routines, enabling it to use its expertise and other services to better purpose.

91. Co-ordinating the assistance was the responsibility of the recipient Government and not of the resident co-ordinator, whose function should be to assist the Government in improving its co-ordination skills and to ensure better teamwork with the organizations and agencies of the United Nations system in co-ordinating the operational activities.

92. Gratifying progress had been made in technical co-operation among the developing countries since the adoption of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action. China had always advocated the promotion of technical co-operation among developing countries on the basis of equality and mutual benefit, and every year allocated for that purpose a specific sum under the UNDP country programme and from its own financial budget. However, the development of such technical co-operation was

(Mr. Zhang Guanghui, China)

still hampered by shortage of funds. China hoped, therefore, that the United Nations and the developed countries would respond to the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly by devoting more human, material and financial resources to technical co-operation among developing countries and the strengthening of their capacity for self-reliance.

93. China's commitment to the United Nations development system was exemplified by the 9.2 per cent increase in its pledge made at the recent Pledging Conference for Development Activities. China valued the work done by UNDP in resource mobilization, programme implementation and preparation for the fifth programming cycle and welcomed the flexible approach taken to the administration of certain funds, such as the Revolving Fund for National Resources Exploration, which had encouraged developing countries to extend technical co-operation among themselves.

94. On the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of UNFPA and the tenth anniversary of the Fund's co-operation with the Chinese Government, he applauded the Fund's achievements in rendering assistance to over 120 developing countries and contributing to the stabilization of world population. The problem of population growth remained an issue of wide concern, however, necessitating concerted efforts by all Governments and peoples and an enhanced role for UNFPA.

95. The Department of Technical Co-operation for Development was to be complimented on its achievements in enhancing the national capacity of the developing countries, and reaching its project implementation targets with notable results despite staff cutbacks. China's good relations with the Department were underlined by its co-sponsorship of the United Nations meeting on Marine Engineering Geological Survey for Petroleum Development in Developing Countries in November 1989.

96. UNICEF had achieved remarkable progress in such schemes as the Child Survival and Development revolution, universal child immunization and oral rehydration therapy. The recently formulated strategy for children in the 1990s would enable UNICEF to promote its traditional operational activities and, at the same time, strengthen some of the remaining weak links in its work. The confidence shown by donor and recipient countries in UNICEF was exemplified by the 10 per cent increase in voluntary contributions to the Fund for 1990 at the recent Pledging Conference.

#### ORGANIZATION OF WORK

97. The CHAIRMAN announced that a number of delegations wished to join in sponsoring draft resolutions which the Committee would consider. The draft resolutions and respective sponsors were A/C.2/44/L.22\* (agenda item 12) - Turkey, Vanuatu and Zambia; A/C.2/44/L.38 (agenda item 85) - Cape Verde, Maldives, Myanmar, the Philippines and Sri Lanka.

The meeting rose at 6.40 p.m.