GOVERNING COUNCIL

Thirtieth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 35th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 22 June 1983, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. SLIM (Tunisia)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

OTHER FUNDS AND PROGRAMMES (continued)

(i) ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SUDANO-SAHELIAN OFFICE (UNSO) AND OTHER ASSISTANCE TO DROUGHT-STRICKEN COUNTRIES IN AFRICA (continued)

   (i) PLAN OF ACTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION IN THE SUDANO-SAHELIAN REGION (continued) (DP/1983/38, DP/1983/41; DP/1983/L.15)


   (iii) OTHER ASSISTANCE TO DROUGHT-STRICKEN COUNTRIES IN AFRICA (continued) (DP/1983/40 and Corr.1)

1. Mr. QUINLAN (Australia) said that his country was providing assistance to the Gambia and Mali through the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office (UNSO). Although Australian aid programmes had not traditionally focused on the Sudano-Sahelian region, it must be conceded that special priority should be given to the countries of that region, owing to their distressing problems. His delegation was especially reassured by the Director's latest word on the further success he had had in mobilizing additional resources over the past few months and wished to encourage him to continue his efforts to mobilize a yet greater volume of resources. The problems of the countries concerned were increasing, and the recent publicity given to the worsening drought in those countries and the contiguous areas had highlighted how urgent it was for UNSO to intensify its efforts, in even closer association with the donor community.

2. Mr. WANG Jinren (China) said that his delegation wished to commend UNSO for the progress it had made in its work and to encourage it to continue its efforts. His Government was in favour of extension of the authorization concerning UNSO in Council decision 82/5. His country maintained good relationships with the countries of the Sudano-Sahelian region and wished to expand its co-operation activities in the region through multilateral channels.

3. Mr. KELLY (United States of America) said that his Government was committed to long-term assistance to the Sudano-Sahelian region, which would enable the States concerned to mitigate the effects of drought and attain food security. It was important to have a properly co-ordinated multi-donor assistance programme. His delegation noted the progress made by UNSO in combating desertification in the Sudano-Sahelian region and its co-operation with the Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) and the Club du Sahel in providing development assistance to the countries concerned. The latter were to be congratulated for their own efforts to combat the effects of drought.

/.../
4. Mrs. BALLESTER (Observer for Cuba) said that her delegation wished to encourage UNSO to continue its efforts to mobilize resources. CILSS had a major role to play in that connection, and considerable progress had been made. However, the process of desertification was even more serious than indicated in the documents before the Council. A far greater volume of resources must be made available for combating the effects of drought, and an effort must be made to find long-term solutions. Her delegation wished to become a sponsor of the draft decisions in document DP/1983/L.15.

5. Mr. HARE (Canada) said that his delegation supported the proposals set forth in the note by the Administrator on the UNSO-UNDP/UNEP joint venture (DP/1983/41). It also noted with satisfaction from paragraph 7 of the Administrator's report on implementation in the Sudano-Sahelian region of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification (DP/1983/38) that it was expected that the Executive Director of UNEP would soon submit a comprehensive report on the impact of desertification control measures taken since the adoption of the Plan of Action. In connection with section III of the report, concerning co-ordination and inter-organizational co-operation, he wished to emphasize the importance of improved co-ordination in the area in question and to invite UNSO to intensify its efforts to co-operate with the Club du Sahel and major bilateral donors.

6. His Government was concerned at the gravity of drought-related problems in the African countries in question and continued to provide substantial assistance to Governments in support of their own efforts to deal with those problems, both in the short-term perspective of desertification control and in the long-term perspective of recovery and rehabilitation. The drought-stricken African countries referred to in note 1 to document DP/1983/38 had received a total volume of resources exceeding $110 million in bilateral development assistance, in addition to food aid to the value of $32 million, from Canada over the past fiscal year. Canada was also contributing $352 million to active bilateral projects addressing food security issues in Africa, most of which were in drought-stricken countries.

7. Mrs. LOECKX-DROZDIAK (Belgium) said that the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on the activities of UNSO (A/38/180) was extremely useful.

8. Her Government was providing assistance to the countries of the Sudano-Sahelian region through a large number of bilateral and multilateral projects and strongly supported UNSO activities.

9. Mr. BIDAUT (France) said that priority should be given to assisting the most seriously affected countries of the region through sustained action by multilateral institutions. Emphasis should be placed on pre-investment and follow-up activities through multilateral and regional financial institutions. His delegation approved of the participation of the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) in UNSO activities but believed that the availability of bilateral funds must not be permitted to have an adverse effect on the overall balance of projects.

10. He noted that co-operation between UNSO and CILSS was progressing well. Furthermore, the Club du Sahel was an appropriate forum for harmonizing actions to
benefit the Sudano-Sahelian countries, and the relationship between the Club and UNSO was extremely important. France had been supporting CILSS, the Club du Sahel and certain joint programmes for a number of years. A large proportion of French development assistance was being channelled to the countries of the Sudano-Sahelian region, and his Government strongly supported UNSO activities.

11. Mr. KRSTAJIC (Yugoslavia) said that his delegation strongly supported the efforts being undertaken by UNSO. As indicated in the report of the Secretary-General on implementation of the medium-term and long-term recovery and rehabilitation programme in the Sudano-Sahelian region (A/38/152), in 1982 his Government had contributed through UNSO to projects in Mali, Senegal and the Upper Volta. Further arrangements were being made, in co-operation with UNSO, for more joint activities in other countries of the region.

12. His Government was concerned at the funding situation of UNSO, since it wished to see the Office's activities further strengthened.

13. Mr. KROUSTALEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said it was clear from the documents before the Council that the countries concerned were facing major problems. Document DP/1983/38 showed that external assistance was a valuable adjunct to the efforts being taken by the African countries themselves. That report also drew attention to the impact of the current economic crisis on the African countries' endeavours to overcome their difficulties.

14. The Soviet Government and public organizations in the Soviet Union were giving assistance to drought-stricken countries in Africa, chiefly on a bilateral basis. That assistance, the purpose of which was to eliminate the effects of natural disasters, took many forms and was not made subject to any conditions. It was provided on the basis of humanitarian considerations, without interference in the internal affairs of the countries concerned. In addition to humanitarian assistance, the Soviet Union provided technical assistance in areas in which it had considerable experience, such as measures to combat desertification. It had adopted an integrated approach in sharing that experience with the countries of the Sudano-Sahelian region. For example, his Government had provided wide-ranging technical and economic assistance to Benin, Ethiopia, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique under inter-State agreements that were not subject to the whims of individual companies and banks, which meant that the obligations assumed were always fulfilled.

15. Mr. HAMDI (Tunisia) said that his delegation was pleased with United Nations efforts in the Sahel. Tunisia itself was concerned about desertification and drought and accordingly encouraged and supported the activities of UNSO. It wished to become a sponsor of the two draft decisions under that item.

16. Mr. EL GHAOUTHE (Mauritania) said that the statements made during the debate showed the special interest which members of the Governing Council had in CILSS. At the time of the 1969-1973 drought, it could hardly have been imagined that the United Nations would be able to set up an office and mobilize resources to combat...
desertification. Today, fundamental changes were occurring in the region because UNSO had implemented appropriate measures to combat desertification and drought and had demonstrated its ability to mobilize resources. For its part, Mauritania had entered into an agreement with UNSO for programmes to build dams and to exploit ground-water resources. In implementing those programmes, UNSO acted with flexibility and in such a way as to minimize costs. It was therefore essential that UNSO's role should be expanded and strengthened and his delegation would like the kind of dynamism showed by the Office to prevail throughout the United Nations system. Mauritania hoped that the draft decisions in document DP/1983/L.15 would be adopted and thanked all fraternal countries and FAO and WFP for their support.

17. The PRESIDENT announced that Chad, China, Cuba, the Gambia, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Nepal, the Niger, Pakistan, Senegal, Sierra Leone, the Sudan, Tunisia and Yugoslavia had become sponsors of the draft decisions contained in document DP/1983/L.15.

18. Mr. EL HASSAN (Observer for the Sudan) said that, while the report of the Secretary-General on UNSO (A/38/152-E/1983/38) was valuable, his delegation was more interested in the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (A/38/180), in particular the recommendations in paragraphs 128 to 140, which were worth pursuing.

19. Mr. LA MUNIERE (Director, United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office) thanked delegations for their remarks and their encouragement to UNSO, which would continue to serve the countries of the region. Desertification was a growing problem all over Africa and in other continents, and in some areas it was becoming disastrous. UNSO was fully aware of that situation and was in direct contact with the countries concerned. Its activities were aimed more and more at finding a permanent solution to those problems. It was not, therefore, merely a matter of stabilizing sand dunes but of carrying out research to see how the affected populations could in future exploit the resources of the region while avoiding desertification and combating the effects of drought.

20. The representatives of Canada, France and the United States, among others, had stressed the need for more effective regional co-operation, and UNSO agreed with that observation. To that end, it was working increasingly closely with all countries of the region to achieve effective overall co-operation. Co-operation was also required at the national level, and projects relating, for instance, to reforestation and agriculture should accordingly be included in all national development programmes.

21. With respect to another comment made by the representative of Canada, UNSO would submit a report to UNEP in 1984 on the results of the review of UNSO's priorities and those of the Governments of the region. He also noted the suggestion by the representative of China that UNSO should investigate ways of co-operating with his country in order to increase the effectiveness of UNSO's activities. UNSO would send a mission to China to explore the possibilities.
22. Finally, he wished to thank the observer for the Sudan for drawing the Council's attention to the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit. However, he would not comment on the JIU report, since it was to be taken up by the General Assembly at its thirty-eighth session and he believed that it would be better for members of the Council to await the views that would be expressed both in the Assembly and in the Economic and Social Council.

23. Mr. BLAIN (Observer for the Gambia), introducing the two draft decisions contained in document DP/1983/L.15, said that, since they were modelled on previous decisions of the Council, he hoped that they would be adopted by consensus.

24. He also introduced a draft decision sponsored by the Gambia and Mauritania that would be issued as document DP/1983/L.19. A similar decision had been adopted at the twenty-ninth session, and the Council should therefore have no difficulty in adopting it.

25. The PRESIDENT said that, if there was no objection, he would take it that the Council adopted the two draft decisions contained in document DP/1983/L.15 by consensus.

26. The draft decisions were adopted.

27. Mr. OLCESE (Acting Assistant Administrator and Regional Director for Africa), introducing the report contained in document DP/1983/40, said that, on the whole, weather and crop conditions in the Sahel had been better in 1982 than the previous year although the situation in Mali remained difficult. The drought in Ethiopia was still serious. Several appeals for assistance, covering grain, supplementary food, medical supplies, clothing and shelter, had been launched, but the inaccessibility of certain regions and the shortage of means of transportation were hampering assistance. The United Nations system was playing an important role in mobilizing assistance and supporting the national management of relief. The northern and central regions of Tanzania had suffered from low rainfall and the outlook for the 1983 crop was doubtful. He feared that large imports of grain would continue to be necessary. The Resident Representative in Uganda reported insufficient rains in parts of the Karamoja region, where it was feared that famine might develop later in the year or early in 1984. WFP, UNHCR, bilateral donors and non-governmental agencies were continuing to provide relief to refugees and displaced persons.

28. Drought in the Sudan in the 1982/83 season had affected both pastures and rain-fed cultivation. The deteriorating grazing potential had been aggravated by an outbreak of rinderpest in Darfur and Kordofan, causing the loss of 100,000 head of cattle. The production of sorghum in traditional and mechanized rain-fed agriculture had reached only 1.8 million tons compared with the previous season's 3,040,000 tons. Millet production had been less than 50 per cent of the 1981/82 crop. Since 98 per cent of the millet was grown by traditional farmers living largely on subsistence production, populations in the affected zones had suffered malnutrition and hunger. Production of gum arabic in the 1982/83 season had been
drastically affected by lack of food for gum tappers on the one hand, and low rainfall and extremely cold weather on the other. It was not yet possible to predict the size of the final crop.

29. Apart from food for the south of the country, the relief measures suggested in the report of the Secretary-General on assistance to drought-stricken areas in the Sudan submitted to the General Assembly at its thirty-sixth session (A/36/277) had not yet been put into effect. Some of the projects proposed in that document were closely related to combating desertification. UNSO was supporting the restocking of the gum belt in northern Kordofan and the work of the National Desertification Control Co-ordinating and Monitoring Unit, and was financing the management of grazing resources around permanent water supplies in western and northern Kordofan. Projects which still required urgent financing were the establishment of a drought monitoring office within the national desertification control unit; the protection of rangelands against annual bush fires; water harvesting projects; grain storage facilities; and restocking of the gum belt in north-western Kordofan and northern Darfur.

30. The dramatic drought that continued to affect most of southern Africa had been widely reported. Substantial assistance would be required, given the accumulated food deficit of 1982 and the following years, the depletion of grain and feed reserves and the critical situation of cattle. Lesotho expected to average only one third of its normal cereal production, and government surveys indicated that some 420,000 people were affected by the drought. WFP assistance had been approved, and he understood that the United States and the European Economic Community were considering the country's request for further assistance. Three quarters of the staple cereal crop in Mozambique had been lost. An extensive campaign had been launched to increase planting in the second crop season, but the rains had failed again and the very low level of the rivers made irrigation practically impossible. The Government had launched emergency aid programmes in 31 of the country's 110 districts. Additional FAO/WFP emergency food aid had been granted, and Zimbabwe had made a donation from its own reserves, but FAO estimated that 280,000 tons of additional food aid had still been required as at the end of March. Partial or complete failures of crops, and the destruction of grassland and fodder, were also reported in Botswana, Swaziland and Zimbabwe.

31. The Central African Republic had requested international assistance, and on 4 May an emergency situation had been declared. A detailed report was awaited. Food aid, medicines and assistance for rural drinking water supply were urgently required. Persistent dryness in the north of Togo was causing concern, as many small rivers had dried out and bush fires threatened villages and plantations.

32. The picture was not rosy, and there were renewed fears of famine in Africa. The continent would have great difficulties in overcoming the consequences of its harsh climates. Yet considerable potential existed for increased food production, and agricultural development continued to receive the largest sectoral share of UNDP resources. He hoped it would be possible to pursue, in partnership with Africa, UNDP's stated goal of food self-sufficiency for the continent.
33. Mr. Thyness (Assistant Administrator, Bureau for Special Activities) said that delegations sometimes asked whether it might not generate savings and enhance efficiency if all the special funds were fully absorbed into UNDP. The answer would vary with the mandate and operational requirements of each individual fund. The Special Measures Fund, which was basically an addition to the IPF for a certain group of countries, could be integrated into the core programme of UNDP without any problem, but a fund with a separate, specialized function had to have a separate, specialized organ to administer it. Such highly technical projects as mineral exploration under the Revolving Fund for Natural Resources Exploration, for example, could not be identified, programmed, executed or monitored by technical assistance administrators in their spare time. The case of UNCDF lay somewhere between the two extremes. Capital projects were quite different from technical assistance projects, but there were many points of functional contact between the two and a large measure of co-operation with the UNDP core programme at the working level was possible. At present, 64 UNCDF projects received technical assistance financed by UNDP and UNSO. But the integration of UNCDF into UNDP and the transfer of its functions to the various organs responsible for the UNDP core programme, apart from being contrary to the Fund's basic legislation, would only lead to a corresponding increase in staff elsewhere, a decrease in project quality and, probably, less money because of the reduced visibility of a particular section of UNDP concentrating on capital assistance for small basic needs projects in least developed countries.

34. In the case of the Revolving Fund for Natural Resources Exploration, a small group of dedicated specialists went about their work with far too little notice and recognition. The year 1982 had been one of outstanding success in finding minerals, and the ratio of successful discoveries had gone far beyond any anticipated standard. It was almost incomprehensible that the Fund should continue to have such a narrow base of financial support from donors. A renewed effort would be made over the coming year to engender financial interest and participation commensurate to the competence of the operation itself.

35. In 1982, UNCDF had brought the greatest number of projects in any year to date to a conclusion, and had effectively programmed all the marginal resources available to it through the implementation of the partial funding system. From now on the Fund would suffer from steadily diminishing liquidity, and the volume of project approvals would revert to a level commensurate with contributions. A number of steps had been taken to draw together and increase the means available to UNCDF to carry out the most effective possible programme. They had included the continued presence of UNCDF at round-table conferences and other working-level meetings resulting from the Substantial New Programme of Action, closer contacts with the World Bank, continued close integration and co-ordination with the UNDP core programme, the use of trust funds and, above all, the first use of resources...
linked to procurement through sources of supply in the donor country. In terms of UNCDF's potential to respond to needs, and of overall service to recipient countries, 1982 had seen significant improvements. The positive attitude of donors to the Fund gave grounds for cautious optimism; two thirds of the donors had increased their pledges for 1983 in national currencies, and two new donors had joined the ranks. Trust funds stipulating procurement in the donor country might become an important additional source of income. Three countries had so far entered into such arrangements with UNCDF, and the supplementary assistance available through that channel might prove quite substantial. Since the Fund had had to wait for General Assembly approval before entering into such arrangements, it had been working in that area for only a few months; he hoped that by the following session he would be able to report substantial additional funds for UNCDF resulting from the new arrangements. Such trust funds were not, of course, a substitute for an increasing base of normal, untied contributions to the Fund itself. Lastly, praise was due to the staff of UNCDF itself. Over the past year the staff had borne an exceptional work-load in order to maintain a programme of the highest quality. There had been outstanding efforts and high competence at all levels, by technical and professional staff and also, at least as important, by the General Service staff of the Fund.

36. For the United Nations Volunteers, 1982 had seen the first steps to implement the recommendations arising from the Sana'a Declaration. One area in which great progress had been made was consultation and co-ordination with the countries sending volunteers. The first full-scale consultative meeting with supply organizations of both industrialized and developing countries had convened at Geneva in April 1983. The meeting had discussed redressing the imbalance of volunteers coming from the developing countries, new ways of increasing collaboration between sending organizations and UNV, and the possibility that some countries would fully fund all aspects of volunteers serving through the UNV programme.

37. UNV had felt the effects of the retrenchment which had affected the UNDP core programme, but not to the same extent as they had been felt within the country programme framework generally. Indeed, there were signs that countries would make even better use of volunteers as a response to the retrenchment. In April 1982 the first high-level co-ordinating meeting with an executing agency - ILO - had been held, and such meetings would be organized with other agencies that were major channels of UNV participation. By the end of 1983 the first exchange of volunteers under Domestic Development Services in Africa should take place; that was a very promising development. And UNV continued to work as one of the core members in the organization of the International Youth Year. He hoped that specific UNV activities for the Year would have been launched by the time of the next session of the Council.

38. Mr. NABULSI (Executive Co-ordinator, United Nations Volunteers) said that the consultative meeting with co-operating agencies held at Geneva in April had been attended by representatives of all the organizations with which the United Nations Volunteers co-operated, together with representatives of most of the industrialized
countries. Several participants had indicated an intention to step up their efforts to find suitable candidates for UNV. The representative of Sweden had delivered an excellent paper on development education which had stimulated a great deal of discussion, resulting in broad agreement that volunteers could, upon returning to their own countries, play an important part in building and restoring confidence in the United Nations. Increased attention would be paid to that aspect of the Volunteers programme, and a study on designing UNV activities to have the maximum positive impact on the image of the United Nations would be carried out. 

39. One purpose of the Geneva meeting had been to ensure a better supply of UNV candidates. Through advertisements in the media and consultations with Governments, the number of candidates on the roster had been increased to over 2,500, all of whom had excellent qualifications - a degree or advanced skills plus at least two, and normally five years of work experience. There was, however, a marked imbalance between candidates from developing and industrialized countries which he hoped to redress. The Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) organization in the United Kingdom had launched a special programme to find qualified British candidates for UNV service, which was already bearing fruit, and Finland had held a recruitment drive earlier in the year.

40. The number of volunteers working in the field had stabilized at around 1,000, although the demand for middle-level and higher-level expertise was greater than ever before. There were several encouraging signs that the Volunteers programme would soon resume its former growth. One Asian country had recently called for 50 more UNV posts to supplement the 20 it already had, and another country was also becoming an enthusiastic recipient of UNV assistance. It seemed that the programme was finally overcoming the illogical tendency for countries to "save" money by eliminating the highly cost-effective assistance that UNV could provide. The specialized agencies were increasingly recognizing the validity of designing projects and programmes so that the needs for experts could be entirely or almost entirely satisfied by the Volunteers programme.

41. UNV had continued to be active in the Domestic Development Services and youth fields. The implementation of the regional DDS programme for Asia and the Pacific was entering its second phase, and preparations for the African regional project were well under way. The DDS project for Asia and the Pacific appeared to have sensitized Governments to the idea of establishing projects to which United Nations Volunteers could be assigned. In the youth field, the regional project in Latin America had been successfully completed, as was evidenced by the decision of the participating Governments to establish a permanent structure promoting youth participation in regional development. UNV was now exploring the possibility of providing financial backing for that project.

42. The Special Voluntary Fund resources available for UNV were still inadequate to meet the costs of providing volunteers from developing countries. Nevertheless, the Volunteers programme seemed to be on its way back to becoming an effective one.
43. **Mr. D'ORVILLE** (Assistant Secretary of the Council) said that, in a letter dated 14 June 1983, the Acting Chairman of the Budgetary and Finance Committee had informed the President of the Council that the Committee had completed its consideration of the financial implications of document DP/1983/31, and in particular of the proposed reimbursement of support costs to the United Nations Volunteers programme in accordance with paragraphs 24 to 33 of that document. While the members of the Committee had expressed particular support for the UNV programme, they had reached a consensus not to recommend at present any change in its existing financial arrangements.

44. The Committee's recommendation would effectively supersede that of the Administrator contained in paragraph 37 of document DP/1983/31 and would require the deletion of paragraph 2 of that recommendation.

45. **Mr. THYNESS** (Assistant Administrator, Bureau for Special Activities) said he believed that it had been the wish of the Budgetary and Finance Committee that paragraph 2 of the recommendation should be changed, rather than deleted. Otherwise, paragraph 1 of the recommendation, taking note of the annual report of the Administrator, might be interpreted as also taking note of the part of the report referring to the Administrator's suggestion concerning reimbursement of support costs for UNDP-funded projects. A better solution would be for paragraph 2 to be reworded to reflect the decision to retain the present funding arrangements for the United Nations Volunteers.

46. **Mr. BOHNTE** (Federal Republic of Germany) said his delegation noted with satisfaction that the UNV programme had continued its orientation towards assistance to the least developed countries, thereby helping to implement the Substantial New Programme of Action. His Government strongly supported UNV and had pledged DM 300,000, or about $120,000, to the programme in 1983.

47. While appreciating that, as stated in paragraph 3 of document DP/1983/31, renewed efforts had been made to increase the number of women volunteers, in accordance with the recommendations of the Sana'a Declaration, his delegation felt that that statement did not accord with the figures given in annex I to the same document, which showed that the number of women volunteers had decreased substantially. His delegation would like an explanation of that apparent contradiction.

48. His delegation welcomed the participation of United Nations Volunteers in activities associated with the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade. It greatly appreciated the fact that UNV had increased its commitment in that field through participation in a World Bank-executed, UNDP-financed project to test and perfect low-cost hand pumps and would like to ask whether an evaluation report was yet available on that important project.

49. His Government welcomed UNV involvement in special refugee activities in Africa.

50. As shown in annex II to document DP/1983/31, 763 volunteers came from 56 IPF countries. Of those 56 countries, one, namely Burma, was the country of
origin of 140 volunteers. That meant that one country sent 20 per cent of all volunteers and the other 55 countries shared the remaining 80 per cent among them. His delegation would be grateful for an explanation of that surprising figure.

51. Mr. DANBOLT (Observer for Norway) said experience had shown that the use of volunteers, especially young people with skills matching the needs of developing countries, could be of value to development assistance. His delegation fully agreed with the programme's orientation to the needs of recipient countries in terms of skills, rather than one determined by the types of volunteers readily available. While skills and qualifications were important, volunteers should also be committed and willing to place their services at the disposal of development.

52. Improvements could be made in the preparation of new volunteers because, with one-year assignments, it was crucial for volunteers to function effectively from the very beginning.

53. His delegation fully supported the involvement of UNV in the least developed countries in support of the Substantial New Programme of Action and in projects for the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade. In the context of the special project, funded by Norway, for the promotion and support of the participation of women in the Decade, his delegation would like to stress the need for further efforts to increase the number of women volunteers. He hoped that that project might help to reverse the decline in the number of women volunteers from 195 in 1981 to 169 in 1982.

54. His delegation would like some clarification on the implications of UNV involvement in the International Youth Year. While the youth of developing countries might well be in need of development assistance, that could hardly be only because they were young people. His delegation would like to know which social segments of youth would be reached by UNV activities and how the proposed regional youth centres would function. A pre-condition for Norway's support to the programme would be an assurance that the volunteers for which it was meeting external costs were involved in relevant development assistance.

55. As a donor to the Special Voluntary Fund, and having made a relatively large extraordinary contribution in 1982, Norway was concerned that the activities of the Fund should be on a sound financial basis, and further expansion should therefore be conditioned on the availability of funds.

56. It seemed that, at 81 per cent, the percentage of volunteers from developing countries might have reached a sufficiently high level, bearing in mind that external costs were needed for such volunteers and also that some room should be left for volunteers from developed countries. UNV should try to avoid imbalances, in order to preserve its universality. The same applied with regard to the number of volunteers both placed in and coming from particular countries.

57. In view of the relatively low cost of UNV services, there should be a natural place for volunteers in a situation of increasing budgetary constraints.
58. Mr. FLEMMING (United States of America) said that the United Nations volunteers were a dedicated and economical adjunct to UNDP project activity. His Government was particularly happy to note that the number of volunteers in service continued to be above the 1,000 figure, even though during 1982 the total number had declined. In the light of the attempts to expand UNV activities, it was to be hoped that, within existing resources, as many volunteers as possible could be fielded. Continued efforts should be made to increase the number of volunteers from industrialized countries.

59. UNV provided a well-trained and dedicated group of young people, well suited to carrying out the development tasks they assumed. In many cases, the volunteers were able to provide services which would otherwise require much more costly experts. They could be of benefit to receiving countries not only by furthering development activities but by introducing those countries to the concept of voluntarism, with its attendant advantages for developing societies. Individual volunteers willing to make the necessary sacrifices could provide a valuable contribution to the economic and social progress of less developed countries.

60. More than 50 United States citizens were serving with UNV. Like the other volunteers, they were professionally qualified persons with several years of experience and a knowledge of at least one foreign language. Many of them had previously served in the Peace Corps and were able to use that experience to the advantage of the country of their assignment.

61. In addition to its support in United Nations forums, his Government had materially supported UNV through annual contributions to the Special Voluntary Fund. Through the Peace Corps, it had also provided travel and related costs for each United States volunteer, together with the administrative costs of recruitment. The fact that contributions to the Special Voluntary Fund were not keeping pace with increasing demand for the services of volunteers was a cause of concern. His delegation called upon all Member States to consider carefully the benefits of the volunteers and to contribute as generously as they could.

62. Mr. BACKMAN (Sweden) said the report contained in document DP/1983/31 showed that the UNV programme was one of considerable vitality. Nevertheless, while giving UNV credit for a fine effort, it was necessary to retain a sense of proportion. The volunteer was but one tool in development co-operation, although in almost all cases a very useful one. Volunteers could make an effective contribution when they worked in harmony with other domestic and external inputs.

63. It was motivation and age that made the volunteer special. The United Nations would fail in its most important objectives and jeopardize its future if it did not harness that energy and put it to good use. As in previous years, the report tended to underestimate that aspect and sought to justify the programme primarily in terms of the development effect of the work of United Nations volunteers. While not disputing that approach, his delegation would prefer a somewhat different emphasis. The consequences of such slight variations in emphasis might have little practical effect. However, greater attention to the special characteristics of people who became volunteers would tend to stress the importance of a rather special type of preparation and orientation course for volunteers and of the host
country's ensuring that volunteers were properly utilized. Volunteers who returned home disappointed and disillusioned could do immeasurable harm to the cause of international co-operation for development. The host countries must see clearly, and fully assume, their responsibilities in that respect. It was equally true that volunteers who returned home with a feeling of personal achievement could do much to influence public opinion in favour of international understanding.

64. His Government did not at present envisage any contribution to the Special Voluntary Fund. However, it had engaged in other forms of direct support to UNV by making 10 volunteers available at no cost to the programme. The costs thus incurred would, in fact, be larger than Sweden's previous contributions to the Fund.

65. Mr. OKABE (Japan) said his delegation was pleased to note that a growing number of developing countries were becoming aware of the high level of expertise and the important assistance UNV could offer. In some cases, volunteers were involved in the implementation of projects that might otherwise require highly paid experts. UNV was contributing substantially to TCDC by providing opportunities for skilled personnel from developing countries to serve in other developing countries. Japan had signified its support for UNV by sending a skilled volunteer, and it would continue to explore ways of strengthening its co-operation with the programme.

66. Mr. KRSTAJIC (Yugoslavia) said that his country had joined the UNV programme in 1982 and had established good relations with its office in Geneva in the course of preparatory work aimed at providing suitable Yugoslav candidates for assignments in developing countries. It viewed UNV primarily as a complementary source of multilateral technical assistance and an appropriate and very useful vehicle for enhancing TCDC.

67. The focus on the least developed countries in UNV activities was particularly commendable. His delegation welcomed the wide participation of developing countries in UNV activities and the programme's endeavours with regard to the participation of women and young people. To help in overcoming both financial and human resource constraints, his delegation suggested the increased use of short-term assignments, which were more attractive to volunteers.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.