GOVERNING COUNCIL

Special Meeting

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 4th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 16 February 1983, at 10.30 a.m.

President: Mr. SLIM (Tunisia)

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Any corrections to the records of the meetings of this session will be consolidated in a single corrigendum, to be issued shortly after the end of the session.
The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.

OTHER MATTERS

1. Mr. LINDORES (Canada) said that, on behalf of his Government, he was pleased to be able to announce the following contributions to UNDP for 1983: a basic contribution of 54 million Canadian dollars, or approximately $US 44.25 million, which represented a 10.2 per cent increase over 1982, plus a supplementary contribution of 7 million Canadian dollars or $US 5.75, amounting to a total of 61 million Canadian dollars, an increase of 19.6 per cent as compared with 1982. He was sure that members would understand what a substantial effort that represented at a time of world-wide economic crisis, when all Governments were obliged to trim budgets, and that they would appreciate its implications in terms of the great sympathy felt in Canada for the objectives of UNDP. Although his delegation would still like to see improvements in UNDP's functioning, it had been greatly encouraged by the constructive participation of delegations, particularly in the work of the Intersessional Committee of the Whole.

2. He also announced contributions to UNFPA: a basic contribution of 8.75 million Canadian dollars or about $US 7.2 million plus a supplementary contribution of 1 million Canadian dollars or approximately $US 825,000.

3. The PRESIDENT, on behalf of the Council, expressed appreciation to the Government of Canada for its significantly increased contribution and expressed the hope that other donor countries would follow its good example.

COUNTRY AND INTERCOUNTRY PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS (continued)

(b) TRENDS AND PROBLEMS IN THE COUNTRY PROGRAMMES (continued) (DP/1983/2)

4. Mrs. KNEZEVIC (Yugoslavia) said that the report on relevant trends and problems in country programmes (DP/1983/2) revealed some trends which had been stressed in the course of the Council's debate as a positive response of participating Governments to further strengthening the role of UNDP. Those trends included a higher level of Government cost-sharing, increased reliance on pre-investment activities and supplementary resources from various funds established for the benefit of developing countries. Her delegation shared the view that those trends were encouraging, but also noted the warning in paragraph 33 of document DP/1983/2 that those trends could not be considered valid for the Programme as a whole. The critical financial situation of UNDP remained the key issue to be resolved without delay.

5. The declining trend in voluntary contributions to UNDP in recent years and the current shortfall in anticipated resources for 1983 would force recipient country Governments to accommodate their planned UNDP-supported activities within the limits of UNDP's reduced resource base. It was essential to mobilize efforts and political will to meet UNDP requirements on a steadier, more predictable and more continuous basis. Her delegation strongly believed that the results of the work of the Intersessional Committee of the Whole would give impetus to the political will...
of participating Governments which could lead to an increase in both the short-term and the long-term financing of UNDP, especially considering that UNDP had been set up for the benefit of developing countries with the main goal of ensuring self-generating development. The announcement made by the representative of Canada was encouraging in that respect.

6. Mr. VERCELES (Philippines) said that UNDP and its staff, faced with the formidable challenge of a decline in the amount of resources available for development at a time when they were most needed, deserved all the support the international community could muster.

7. Some of the trends in country programming presented in the report of the Administrator (DP/1983/2) were unclear. For example, the reference in paragraph 3 to a continued preference on the part of Governments to synchronize their country programmes with the indicative planning figure cycle rather than with their respective national plans was incongruous, since UNDP country programming should tailor itself to national development plans. UNDP assistance was only a minor element in national development planning and too much reliance on it, although it could be critical in some areas, could create problems, especially at a time of declining resources.

8. The report also referred in paragraph 21 to the high level of Government cost sharing in the programmes currently before the Council and the apparent correlation between the level of per capita gross national product and the relative importance of government cost sharing resources. That trend required more careful study, particularly if it were to be enshrined as UNDP policy. Cost-sharing arrangements were acceptable for high per capita income countries, but it would be unfortunate if poorer countries suffered a reduction in technical assistance due to an inability to participate in such arrangements.

9. The large number of agency programming missions dispatched to the field seemed to indicate a lack of confidence in the resident representatives concerned, who presumably were competent to undertake preliminary programming of UNDP assistance. His Government disapproved of sending too many such missions - they were costly, cumbersome and often unnecessary. The so-called "agency salesmanship" which spawned such missions should be reduced throughout the United Nations development system.

10. The prospect of reducing programme delivery to 55 per cent of the illustrative IPPs during the third cycle had caused great disquiet. Such a reduction could have disastrous consequences in the recipient countries which relied on UNDP aid in critical areas. It also eroded the credibility and capability of UNDP as a source of technical assistance. It seemed that the impetus for multilateral development was being lost. Of the countries which had met the target of a 14 per cent increase in contributions, the majority were developing countries. If that trend continued multilateral co-operation might well collapse, which would mean the demise of UNDP. In that regard, the increased contributions announced by Canada were extremely welcome. It was to be hoped that other developed countries would follow that example.
11. Mr. DE ROJAS (Venezuela) said that the success of the cost-sharing arrangements in Latin American countries demonstrated the region's support for UNDP. The funds provided by his Government for cost sharing were higher than the IPF for Venezuela, and should be considered an additional contribution to UNDP.

(c) IMPLEMENTATION OF SELECTED COUNTRY PROGRAMMES (continued)

(d) CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL OF COUNTRY PROGRAMMES (INCLUDING REQUESTS FOR EXTENSIONS) (continued)

African States

12. Mr. BASSOLE (Observer for the Upper Volta) recalled that his country's Minister for Foreign Affairs and Co-operation had already voiced profound concern at the drastic reduction in the financial resources of UNDP and had appealed to donor countries to boost the Programme's intervention capacity, which had fallen far short even of its level of 10 years ago. That appeal remained topical in view of the disappointing results of the latest Pledging Conference, and UNDP's contribution was clearly going to fall far short of the expectations of the developing countries, and especially of the least-developed countries.

13. It had been particularly gratifying to hear the representative of Austria commenting so positively on the third country programme for the Upper Volta (DP/CP/UPV/3), in view of the effective work being executed bilaterally by Austria. His delegation was grateful to all countries which understood the need to give special attention to the development problems facing countries such as his own and wished to thank all delegations which had commented on his country's programme, thus demonstrating their concern and interest.

14. The Upper Volta's country programme for the third cycle reflected the approach defined by the Government and its priority objectives, which took account of the country's main limitations and were therefore, as the representative of Austria had said, well adapted to the country's genuine and particular needs, which remained unchanged despite the political developments which had taken place since 7 November 1982. He assured the representative of Austria and other interested delegations that the new authorities had no intention of revising or deviating in the future from the main areas of intervention which had been selected.

15. Although the assistance forthcoming from UNDP under the current country programme, given the Programme's financial difficulties and his country's enormous needs and limited local resources, would undoubtedly fall short of requirements, his delegation was profoundly grateful to UNDP for its current level of assistance, hoping in the future to see its intervention capacity increased, together with an upward revision of the Upper Volta's indicative planning figures. He expressed appreciation to the Government of Canada for the contributions just announced.

16. Mrs. NJIE (Observer for the Gambia) emphasized the widening technological gap between Africa and the rest of the world; the continent was incapable of putting its tremendous mineral and other resources to good use without a massive and
concerted transfer of technological know-how from the developed countries. Lack of development of human resources, and especially the chronic shortage of scientists and technologists, was a major obstacle to Africa's development and called for resolute action.

17. Similarly, despite Africa's vast land, water and human resources, its food deficit was of astounding proportions. With the rapid increase in population, the demand for food had far outstripped current agricultural production, particularly in the Sahelian region, where the drive towards increased production had been severely hampered by chronic drought and other adverse climatic conditions. Food self-sufficiency was therefore a major objective for that region, for food insecurity was a major restriction on development, leading to a constantly increased burden of food import costs which absorbed much-needed foreign exchange earnings that might be more usefully invested in social and economic advancement.

18. Recognizing that the primary responsibility was theirs, the aim of the countries of the Sahelian region was an immediate improvement in the food situation and the ultimate attainment of self-sufficiency. To that end, the Gambia continued to pursue, as a matter of priority, the execution of the Trans Gambia Barrage Project within the framework of the Gambia River Basin Authority, an organization which brought together Senegal, the Gambia and Guinea in a collaborative effort to develop the entire Gambia River basin. Food self-sufficiency could not be achieved as long as the region remained dependent on erratic and insufficient seasonal rainfall, and it demanded the rapid expansion of irrigated agriculture through the harnessing and use of the vast local water resources. Upon completion of the barrage, the Gambia hoped to be able to produce rice on 24,000 acres of newly irrigated land.

19. The region's own efforts needed to be complemented by international assistance on a scale that would induce a real breakthrough in that vital area. Food aid was therefore appreciated only as emergency relief; what was really needed was greater financial participation in infrastructure projects which would enable water resources to be harnessed for agricultural and energy needs, ultimately reducing or eliminating the need for food aid and freeing scarce resources for other projects.

20. An equally important factor for the Gambia was energy. Most developing countries were experiencing balance-of-payments or other economic difficulties arising from higher fuel bills. In the long run, the solution to the fuel crisis lay in the development of alternative and renewable energy sources, but much of the current energy crisis in Africa stemmed from a shortage of firewood, the denudation of forest cover, and desertification. The situation called for a global energy strategy combining conservation of remaining forest cover with vigorous and extensive reafforestation. These were aspects to which her Government gave priority attention.

21. Her Government's policy aimed at transforming the country's economy from very low levels of output and income and dependence on a single export crop to a diversified, increasingly self-reliant economy, capable of sustained economic and
(Mrs. Njie, Observer, Gambia)

social progress through the development of its own natural, human material resources. It was obvious that such goals could not be achieved without the help of UNDP and other external funding resources. It was her Government's hope that UNDP would be helped out of its current difficulties and that the example set by the United States and Canada in their contributions would be initiated by other donors. The ultimate objective of giving aid was in fact to eliminate the need for aid, but that was only possible when the right type of assistance was given at the right time and in the right way, on the best possible concessionary terms and in the areas determined by recipient Governments, since they were in the best position to decide what would be of most benefit to their populations.

22. Mr. OLCESE (Acting Assistant Administrator, Regional Bureau for Africa) referred to the questions asked on the previous day by the representative of Austria. He had enquired whether the change of Government in the Upper Volta was likely to bring about any deviation from the line along which the country's development was currently being directed. The answer had in part already been given by the representative of the Upper Volta. Furthermore, during his recent visit to the country, discussions with government officials had indicated that there would be no change in development policies and that they would continue to give full support and endorsement to the current country programme prepared by the previous Government. The Government had also requested UNDP assistance for the preparation of a donors conference to be held at the end of 1983.

23. The Austrian representative had commented that there were too many missions visiting certain countries. It was true that the number and frequency of missions to some countries were excessive, leading to some duplication with other donors, especially bilateral ones. In the specific case of the Upper Volta, useful co-ordination had been achieved, but there was still room for improvement. He appealed to bilateral donors to try and co-ordinate their activities with UNDP when requested; in one unfortunate case three missions had been dispatched at the same time to a certain country to study the same sector and the bilateral donors had been reluctant to co-operate in a joint mission.

24. The Austrian representative had spoken of his impression that the country programme for Togo did not take the United Nations global priorities sufficiently into account. In fact, every consideration had been given to those priorities, although some were not mentioned specifically; for example, the needs of the poorest had not been referred to specifically in the documentation, but the project "Integrated Development Programme for North Togo" (TOG/81/101), among others, related to that underlying objective. That was a project on which UNDP had worked together in close co-ordination with the European Communities and bilateral donors. There was one issue, however, that of the importance of women in development, which had not been given attention, for the Government had not requested it, possibly because in Togo the participation of women in development was already very active and positive.

25. The representative of Japan had expressed surprise that the country programmes did not include greater assistance to industrial support institutions. That was in
most cases due to the fact that the industrial development projects planned by Governments had been taken up by bilateral funding sources or supported by the Governments themselves and therefore few requests for assistance had been made to UNDP.

26. The representative of Canada had made a general comment that the country programmes lacked detail in terms of the costing of individual projects. The preparation of the country programmes followed the current guidelines established by the Council itself. It would be possible to include more details, from the individual project fact sheets, for example, in the drafting, but that would require a decision and revised instructions from the Council.

27. The representative of Canada had referred to paragraph 4 of the note of the Administrator on the third country programme for Ethiopia (DP/CP/ETH/NOTE/3) which spoke of "project progress reports, tripartite review reports and various assessments and evaluations" which had been considered in selecting the projects. In principle, there would be no objection to making more of that background information available to the Council if so desired, although the mass of documentation involved might be difficult to handle. Such reports were given careful consideration during the preparation of the country programmes and in evaluating individual projects, in order to assess whether there was any need to change the focus of certain projects; such considerations often underlay the change of orientation discernible from one programming cycle to the next, about which some delegations had enquired on the previous day. Most projects benefited from that kind of in-depth analysis.

28. The Canadian representative had also asked about the reasons for the apparent shift in the current country programmes away from activities in the field of transport and communications. There were three main reasons for that: first, UNDP co-operated closely in that field with the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office, which was mounting a large programme primarily concentrating on road building, the investment being provided by the Office and UNDP supplying only the much smaller component of technical assistance, which was not reflected as a very high percentage of resources in the total for the programmes. Secondly, transport and communications was an area which was usually heavily investment-oriented and the main responsibility for those activities therefore lay with the financing institutions. Thirdly, the United Nations General Assembly had entrusted the Economic Commission for Africa with the major responsibility for the Transport and Communications Decade; the Commission was intensively engaged in that work, to which UNDP was contributing through the regional programme for Africa.

29. In connection with the possibility of having access to methods of evaluating and selecting projects for the Nigerian country programme, that country was a very special case, in that, before the preparation of the programme, the then Assistant Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau for Africa had held in-depth discussions in Lagos with the resident representative and with 10 Ministries, analysing the projects under consideration individually for the purpose of determining the re-orientation of the whole programme.
30. The Canadian representative had also asked about the omission of the Mali food strategy from that country's programme. It was worth remembering that the country programme of Mali was heavily oriented toward agriculture, with the ultimate aim of food self-sufficiency, one third of available resources being earmarked for that sector. The reason why the strategy had not been specifically reflected in the programme was that it had been finalized only in the course of the preparation of the donor conference held in December 1982 and so too late for direct inclusion.

31. The move away from basic, community-level development in Mali's programme, referred to by the Canadian representative, was in fact only apparent; paragraph 42 of document DP/CP/MLI/3 described a recently-started project entitled "Fund for assisting community initiatives" (MLI/80/012) which was specifically directed towards that kind of development and $6.7 million had been earmarked for similar projects. UNDP was very keen to co-ordinate its efforts in the field with those of the Canadian Government, as had been done in the past, for it felt that both shared the same approach and objectives.

32. The representative of the Federal Republic of Germany had referred to the question of high recurrent costs and whether they had been sufficiently addressed in the country programmes before the Council. That was a problem which had already been recognized by UNDP and was being carefully monitored.

33. The same representative had also referred to the question of co-ordination between UNDP and the assistance input of the Federal Republic of Germany. He could assure him that every effort was made to achieve effective co-ordination; a number of ongoing projects in Mali provided good examples of that.

34. The representative of France had expressed surprise at the low level of resources allocated to the health sector in the country programmes of Africa. It was true that both WHO and UNICEF had large-scale health projects in the African region; but UNDP also had some projects which were concerned mainly with primary health needs. It had a number of rural water development projects which were also concerned with health, and its other projects ultimately dealt with the same problem. UNDP had devoted considerable effort and resources to the eradication of a number of major tropical diseases in Africa and to the training of personnel, in association with other donors including the World Bank, WHO, UNICEF and bilateral donors. Many of those projects were not reflected in country programmes because they were financed under regional programmes. It might also be noted that the amount invested in the eradication of onchocerciasis was under $5 million but had successfully generated additional resources of some $150 million from the donor community.

35. Turning to the questions about Togo, he noted that Togo had been classified as a least developed country and had received an additional $157,000 from the Special Measures Fund for Least Developed Countries. Togo would also be assisted in preparing a donor conference and $100,000 had been earmarked from the same Fund for that purpose. Additional assistance would probably be provided from the Capital Development Fund.
36. The representative of France had asked how long projects lasted and at what stage UNDP handed them over to Governments; in general, the length of programmes was limited and the objectives defined, but often, especially in Africa, the shortage of human resources created a problem. In its projects, UNDP proceeded step by step so that some projects might appear to last too long. The Administrator of UNDP was concerned about that problem and two years previously had initiated an analysis of all projects lasting more than a certain length of time; he could reassure the representative of France that UNDP was carefully studying the problem.

37. With regard to the question of the way in which UNDP co-ordinated its assistance with Governments, it did so first, through the preparation of the development assistance report, an annual compendium of requests made to all donors, prepared by the resident representative at the country level; the preparation of that compendium provided an opportunity to gain an overview of the provision of aid and to ensure that there was proper co-ordination. Secondly, resident representatives had periodic meetings with the representatives of the various agencies of the United Nations system and with bilateral donors. Thirdly, UNDP assisted Governments in holding donor conferences in which the donor community at large participated. Field officers also explored every possibility of co-operation and co-ordination with donors on a project-by-project basis.

38. The PRESIDENT said that if there was no objection, he would take it that the Council approved the following proposed country programmes for the duration of their programme periods and within the limits of their illustrative indicative planning figures for the period 1982-1986, taking into account the balance of over-expenditure and under-expenditure of their 1977-1981 indicative planning figures: Cape Verde (DP/CP/CVI/2), Ethiopia (DP/CP/ETH/3), the Gambia (DP/CP/GAM/3), Mali (DP/CP/MLI/3), Mauritania (DP/CP/MAU/2), Niger (DP/CP/NER/3), Nigeria (DP/CP/NIR/2), Sao Tome and Principe (DP/CP/STP/2), Senegal (DP/CP/SE/3), Sierra Leone (DP/CP/SIL/3), Togo (DP/CP/TOG/3) and the Upper Volta (DP/CP/UV/3).

39. It was so decided.

40. The PRESIDENT said that, if there was no objection, he would take it that the Council wished to take note of the extension of the country programme approved by the Administrator for one year for Benin (DP/CP/BEN/EXTENSION).

41. It was so decided.

42. Mr. SALIU (Observer for Sierra Leone) said that by approving Sierra Leone's country programme (DP/CP/SIL/3), the Council was enabling Sierra Leone to move further towards the achievement of its economic goals and objectives. However, his delegation noted with deep regret that the original funding targets for Sierra Leone's country programme had had to be considerably scaled down as a result of the serious programming crisis currently confronting UNDP and that prospects for improving the situation were rather dim. It hoped that a mutually acceptable
solution to the short-term crisis would be found, and expressed appreciation, in that connection, to the delegation of Canada.

43. Much had been said in the Council and in the Intersessional Committee of the Whole about generating confidence in UNDP. Sierra Leone had never had any doubt of about the value of UNDP; it was currently entering a third programming cycle of co-operation with UNDP and it continued to contribute to UNDP activities despite its own economic difficulties. The efforts made by UNDP to solve the economic difficulties of the developing countries despite the magnitude of the task had generated increasing confidence in UNDP over the years.

44. Although UNDP's contribution to the developing countries' development was relatively modest in relation to overall requirements, it was clear that the degree of success achieved would not have been possible without the generous financial contributions of donor countries of all regions, including net contributing developing countries whose efforts had not gone unnoticed among recipient countries. His delegation urged those countries to continue their efforts to help developing countries.

45. An appeal of that nature from a developing country sometimes gave rise to some frustration among donor countries; however, recipient countries also experienced considerable frustration of their own as was illustrated by the remarks of the representative of Nigeria on the imbalance between Nigeria's development needs and the assistance available through UNDP. It should be stressed that developing countries made requests for assistance on the basis of real needs, some of which were for rudimentary requirements of life. When that reality was seen in the context of the international situation, which was most often unfavourable to the development prospects of developing countries, the deep frustrations experienced by third world countries became clear. His delegation hoped that donor countries would try to understand the desperate situation faced by developing countries when trying to respond to their demands.

46. His delegation had carefully noted the comments made, essentially by donor Governments, on the presentation and approval of country programmes, and would transmit them to the appropriate government authorities for further consideration. However, it had a number of understandings as to the implications of those comments. It believed that they were solely intended to enable recipient countries to rationalize their assistance programmes in order to maximize the impact of those programmes on their overall economic development; that they were solely intended to facilitate the improvement of the economic lot of the recipient countries with a view to making them more viable partners for mutually beneficial international economic co-operation; that they were in no way intended to jeopardize the existence of UNDP as an instrument of productive and effective international development co-operation whose modus operandi was guided by the 1970 consensus; and that decisions arising out of those comments and suggestions would be taken in the interests of all countries and particularly the developing countries, bearing in mind the spirit of the 1970 consensus.
47. His delegation encouraged the Council to cultivate a constructive approach to the solution of the issues before it. Developed and developing countries should evolve a new co-operative spirit in which North and South would have as their primary concern the realization that they shared a common destiny.

48. Mr. BA (Observer for Senegal) expressed appreciation for the approval of the third country programme for Senegal (DP/CP/SEN/3). The comments made would be duly taken into account in the implementation of the programme. The programme was the result of close co-operation between UNDP and all other sources of financial aid at the bilateral and multilateral levels and was also relevant to the pursuit of global priorities, while taking into account national economic and social development objectives.

49. Senegal had taken into account recurrent expenditure in the projects submitted in the context of the third programming cycle. Moreover, as could be seen from the country programme (DP/CP/SEN/3), priority had been accorded to food self-sufficiency, water management and energy; those choices related to the problem of desertification which had prevailed in the country for some dozen years as a result of the exceptional situation prevailing in the Sahelian area. Senegal had thus placed great emphasis on the sectors which were essential to its economic and social development. Those choices had been made in agreement with all the countries and all the bodies of the United Nations system operating in Senegal; thus, as was noted in the country programme, the percentages were 29.5 per cent for agriculture (including 24 per cent for food self-sufficiency) and 8.3 per cent for training.

50. In order to rationalize the resources made available to it, Senegal was trying as far as possible to link all projects financed at the bilateral and multilateral levels. Domestic measures had also been taken in the context of the austerity and recovery plan. The country programme complemented Senegal's efforts in the context of the sixth plan for 1981-1985. It would be implemented in accordance with the choices made and the resources made available to Senegal would be fully used.

51. Senegal appealed to all donor countries and especially the major donors to find an effective solution to the financial crisis of UNDP. It hoped that the current implementation rate of 55 per cent of IPFs would be increased so as to facilitate the implementation of projects.

52. Mr. BARMA (Chad) said that although the documentation before the Council was reasonably clear, the costs of each project should be specified. UNDP's financial crisis was unprecedented and resulted from the disastrous world economic situation which considerably reduced the ability of the richer countries to make contributions, and nullified the development efforts of poor countries. It was impossible for countries which could not even ensure the vital minimum for their populations to make voluntary contributions to the development activities of the United Nations, even if those activities were in their own interest; that dilemma faced most third world countries and particularly the poorest of them. Thus it was for the richer countries, despite their own difficulties, to make even greater
(Mr. Barma, Chad)

sacrifices for the benefit of the rest of the world by increasing their voluntary contributions to development activities of the United Nations system so that the development plans of the countries concerned were at least maintained at a reasonable level. The decision to reduce the implementation rate of programmes to 55 per cent of illustrative indicative planning figures was deplorable because it jeopardized the development plans of countries, particularly the least developed countries, most of which were in Africa. Because of the limited resources of those countries, their development plans depended largely on contributions from UNDP and other United Nations bodies. That figure should be corrected for the least developed countries and particularly those of the Sahelian region which suffered enormously from the effects of drought.

53. The financing of recurrent costs was also a major problem for the Sahelian countries; an appropriate solution must be found by alleviating the burden for the countries concerned. It was also to be hoped that UNDP would continue to provide technical assistance to the least developed countries to enable them to organize round tables with contributors. Subject to those observations, his delegation approved of the 12 country programmes for the African region.

54. It was regrettable that Chad, one of the least developed countries which had suffered from the combined effects of drought and more than 17 years of war, did not have a country programme like other countries of the Sahel. Yet for reasons beyond the control of the Administrator of UNDP, and because of the particular situation in Chad, that had not been possible. His delegation hoped that in 1984 Chad would be accorded priority in country programming.

55. His delegation expressed appreciation for the efforts made by UNDP in Chad; UNDP had been one of the first United Nations bodies to resume activities at N'Djamena after the end of the war in June 1982 and had made a substantial contribution to the Chad Government's two-year national reconstruction plan.

Arab States

56. Mr. ZAAOUNI (Assistant Administrator and Director, Regional Bureau for Arab States) said that the Council had before it country programmes for Algeria, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the Sudan and Yemen. The shortfall in resources had posed considerable difficulties for the countries in the region, and it was to be hoped that appeals to the developed countries to increase their contributions to UNDP would be heeded.

57. The reduction in available resources had meant that UNDP had had to draw on all its accumulated experience to utilize funds to the maximum extent. The use made of cost-sharing formulas had gone some way to alleviate the situation, particularly in the second cycle. The decision adopted in 1982 to remove the ceiling on cost sharing had eased the situation at a critical juncture. Assistance given by donors for third party cost sharing had also been important. Cost sharing funds for the third cycle were expected to exceed $300 million. Such developments were extremely positive.
58. Turning to the country programme for Kuwait, he said that that country had met all the costs incurred. The current programme, aligned on the Kuwaiti development plan, provided a follow-up to the previous country programme, but concentrated on the development of human resources. The country programme for Algeria demonstrated the wish of that country’s Government to increase its contribution in a cost sharing arrangement, in accordance with its development goals.

59. The country programme for Saudi Arabia took account of its five-year plan to develop manpower and services. A number of projects had been brought under cost sharing arrangements to facilitate the continuation of UNDP programmes in the country. Consideration was being given to transferring other projects from a funded to a cost sharing status.

60. The Government of Yemen had benefited from certain third party cost sharing arrangements entered into by the Federal Republic of Germany, the Netherlands and Saudi Arabia. Yemen was a less developed country, and he trusted therefore that the limit on third party cost sharing would be waived, in accordance with Governing Council decision 82/5. The recent earthquake in Yemen had caused many deaths and the displacement of large numbers of people. The Government was currently reappraising its development priorities in view of the need for reconstruction.

61. The country programme for the Sudan concentrated on infrastructure, agriculture, industry and vocational training, particular emphasis being placed on the southern regions. The reduction in commitments for the third cycle meant that the amount of funds available for 1985 and 1986 would be only 20 per cent of the figures for 1982 and 1983. UNDP was making every effort to secure additional funding from regional and bilateral sources and from other funds which it administered. It might, however, be necessary to terminate the contracts of consultants engaged for certain projects, with effect from 1984. Unless the financial situation changed, it would be impossible to implement new projects under the third cycle.

62. Country programmes for Qatar, Syria and Lebanon were under preparation. Consultations on the programme for Qatar had proceeded satisfactorily, and the programme would be submitted at the next session. The Government of Qatar had agreed to meet all costs in full. Certain difficulties had arisen over the preparation of the country programme for Lebanon, but it would be completed as soon as possible.

63. A meeting of representatives of United Nations specialized agencies, regional organizations, ECA and ECWA had been convened in Saudi Arabia in January 1983 to consider priorities for the region. The priority needs of less developed countries in the region had been recognized, particularly in view of the reduction in resources. Attempts had been made to obtain additional aid through third party cost sharing and through co-ordination between regional and country programmes. At a subsequent meeting of resident representatives and representatives of executing agencies, also held in Saudi Arabia in January 1983, consideration had been given to improving the quality of programmes and to promoting economic and social
development. Every effort would be made to learn from past experience and to use resources more effectively. Debate had centred, inter alia, on pre-investment projects and on obtaining assistance from external sources.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.