Thirty-fifth session
DRAFTING GROUP
6 June–1 July 1988, Geneva
Agenda item 10(c)

Operational activities for development
Draft decision

The Governing Council,

Having considered the conclusions and recommendations of the report on the findings of the case studies on the functioning of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (A/42/326/Add.1) and the report of the Administrator containing the response of the United Nations Development Programme to the report on the findings of the case studies (DP/1988/64),

Taking into account the views expressed during its consideration of the item including the statement of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation during the high-level segment as well as the additional information provided by the Associate Administrator on the participation of the United Nations Development Programme in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 42/196 on operational activities for development;

1. Takes note with appreciation of the report on the findings of the case studies and the response of the United Nations Development Programme thereto;
2. **Decides** to submit to the Economic and Social Council the following conclusions of its consideration of the findings of the case studies:

(a) The Governing Council concurs with the view that the importance of assistance from the United Nations system goes beyond its quantitative value, because of its multilateral, non-political and impartial character including its provision on a grant basis; in order to be more effective the assistance of the United Nations system should be better co-ordinated, programmed and implemented with greater cohesion, particularly at the field level, in accordance with the development needs and priorities of developing countries; in this context, it reaffirms the importance of the central funding and co-ordinating role of the United Nations Development Programme in technical co-operation and the need to preserve this role in considering new funding arrangements for technical co-operation;

(b) The Council supports the recommendation that continued efforts are needed towards greater integration of the United Nations system operational activities in order to enhance their coherence and effectiveness. The Council encourages the Administrator to pursue within the framework of the Joint Consultative Group on Policy efforts towards joint and collaborative programming and other methods that take advantage of the complementarities that exist in the United Nations system;

(c) The Council reaffirms the importance of the leadership role and operational functions of the resident co-ordinator; it is, however, not convinced of the separation of the resident co-ordinator assignment from that of the resident representative of the United Nations Development Programme. Creating a new layer of authority in field offices does not guarantee resolving the difficulties hindering the exercise of the responsibilities of the resident co-ordinators under the current mandate. The Council agrees, however, with the observation that the active involvement in and support of the recipient government for efforts aimed at co-ordination are essential for the success of the resident co-ordinator concept;

(d) The Council welcomes the recommendation on the need for greater decentralization of management of operational activities and increasing harmonization of procedures among the agencies, including programming cycles, project documentation, financial rules and the delegation of decision-making authority to field representatives. The objective should be a better and more effective response to the requirements of recipient countries; in this context it welcomes the agreement among agencies on the formulation of a model
(e) The Council agrees with the observation that the building of self-reliance should receive particular attention in programming approaches and that it should remain the ultimate goal of all technical co-operation activities. While it might be useful to place emphasis on sectoral and thematic programming, rather than project-by-project methods, the choice of concentrating funds of the United Nations system on a few priority areas or on the concept of filling gaps should be left to the recipient government;

(f) The Council stresses the need for the continuous relevance of the United Nations system operational activities so as to respond to the varied and changing requirements of developing countries. While requirements vary from country to country, the system should respond adequately to these needs. The Council encourages therefore the present trend in the fourth cycle to devote a larger share of the resources of the United Nations Development Programme to the poorest and least developed countries, particularly in Africa;

(g) The Council endorses the recommendation that more attention be given to reinforcing the central funding role of the United Nations Development Programme. The analysis to be undertaken by the Director-General of the concept of central funding to be presented to the General Assembly in 1989 should present the opportunity to member States to take clear decisions on the issue; the initiative rests mainly with governments;

(h) The Council welcomes the decision of the Administrator to raise the project approval limit of resident representatives to $700,000 and encourages steps, wherever warranted, aimed at further decentralization with a view to increase efficiency at the country level without jeopardizing the quality of assistance. It takes note of the Administrator's comment on the recommendation to eventually abolish the approval limit and to change the functions of the headquarters of the United Nations Development Programme accordingly;

(i) The Council expresses keen interest in the study to be undertaken by the Director-General to assess the constraints on the use of the United Nations Development Programme country programme as a frame of reference for the operational activities of the United Nations system and to explore a wider, more effective programming process. The Council reaffirms that any frame of reference for various inputs should be based on a programme of technical assistance requirements of the recipient country reflecting the needs arising from its national development plans and priorities;
(j) The Council considers there is much to be gained from a close collaboration with the World Bank group which does not obscure the differences in the mandates and policies of the two institutions. The Council welcomes the arrangements devised to date and considers that as overall economic management becomes the focus of large numbers of developing countries the United Nations Development Programme should be responsive to requests for complementary technical assistance. The collaboration between the United Nations Population Fund and the World Bank on population issues is encouraged to deepen further;

(k) The Council considers that the capacity of the system for analytical work at the country level could be enhanced by strengthening the authority of the resident co-ordinators and by ensuring that field staff of the system have technical functions and capacities in their sectoral area;

(l) The degree of interaction on matters of development policy will depend on the Government's view of the appropriate role for the United Nations system. The Council believes, however, that the impact of scarce governmental technical co-operation resources would be enhanced by a deeper focus on issues of central importance;

(m) The Council supports the recommendation to increase the flow of development information to the field and that it should be made more accessible to governments and the donor community using modern information techniques;

(n) The Council strongly endorses the view that the United Nations system should provide maximum assistance to recipient governments to strengthen their capacity to co-ordinate external assistance. It is more worthwhile and cost-effective to assist recipient governments to build up their capacities in co-ordination with the United Nations system and other external aid at the field level than to attempt to achieve co-ordination through exhortation from governing bodies. The United Nations Development Programme has an important role to play in the building of recipient governments' capacities in co-ordination. Similarly, coherence of action among agencies and harmonization of procedures by multilateral and bilateral donors could greatly facilitate the co-ordination role of governments;

(o) The Council agrees that non-governmental organizations have an important role to play in operational activities in support of recipient government efforts and plans. Their great potential should be tapped. In
order to render external aid as a whole more effective and coherent, recipient governments may bring non-governmental organizations in the aid co-ordination arrangements they opt for;

(p) The Council notes the inconclusive findings on the question of agency representation. The Council encourages further vigorous efforts for common premises of the United Nations agencies in the field; it welcomes the steps undertaken by the members of the Joint Consultative Group on Policy and expresses the hope that agreement thereon among the heads of the organizations concerned be forthcoming shortly and that the effective implementation thereof will be pursued. Other agencies should be invited to join the agreement. It is recognized however that the sharing of common premises and services of the United Nations system organizations in the field is not a sufficient condition to achieve greater co-ordination, and does not automatically lead to the success of the resident co-ordinator concept;

3. **Takes note** of the views of the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 42/196 set forth the statements at its thirty-fifth session and its submission in the note on the subject made available to the Council and requests the Executive Director to periodically report to the Council on the views of the United Nations Population Fund and activities in support of the implementation of the resolution;

4. **Calls upon** the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme and the Executive Director of the United Nations Fund for Population to continue to give strong support to and co-operate fully with the Director-General in the implementation of resolution 42/196.