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on Tuesday, 7 June 1988, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. MANGWAZI (Malawi)

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United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND (UNFPA) (agenda item 6) (continued)
(DP/1988/32 (Parts I and II), DP/1988/33 (Parts I and II), DP/1988/34, 35, 36, 37 and Add.1-5, 38, 39, 40, 42 and 43, DP/1988/L.6)

1. Mr. INKIRIWANG (Indonesia) said that the World Population Plan of Action launched in 1974 had clearly proved fruitful, as could be seen from the concern that was being shown for population problems in governmental policies, the important role that had been assumed by UNFPA and the record amount of contributions received by the Fund in 1987. However, the continuous population growth in absolute figures was threatening social and political stability in countries that were already finding it difficult to ensure sustained development. It was noteworthy that almost 90 per cent of the growth in world population had occurred in the developing countries. It was evident, therefore, that the population explosion in those countries and the magnitude of the problems that it posed - unemployment, food deficits and excessive urbanization - were closely linked to the level of development and, if there was no improvement in the prospects for economic development, the tremendous increase in the population living below the poverty line would have incalculable consequences.

2. Under those circumstances, it was important not only to achieve the purposes and objectives of the World Population Plan of Action through national and international programmes but also to purposefully support UNFPA activities. Indonesia approved of the new direction that it was intended to give to the Fund's programmes - increased effectiveness and outreach and more sophisticated assistance on population questions - with a view to enhancing their ability to meet the changing needs of countries that had already made significant progress in establishing population policies and programmes. The Indonesian Government was firmly convinced that the population question should form an integral part of national development policies and therefore welcomed the efforts that had been made by UNFPA to promote better awareness of the linkages between population and the environment. Indonesia was one of the world's most populous nations and, every year, the ranks of its economically active population were swollen by 2 million new entrants into the labour force. Although the Government must endeavour to curb population growth, it also hoped to transform the handicap of overpopulation into an asset through human resources development.

3. In actual fact, for the last 15 years, the Indonesian Government had been applying a two-pronged population policy comprising, on the one hand, a nation-wide family planning programme and, on the other, a programme of transmigration from densely populated areas to more sparsely populated regions offering better economic prospects. The family planning programme emphasized community-based activities and should therefore lead to greater self-reliance. Indonesia had recently launched its five-year development plan, the population policies of which were closely parallel to those of UNFPA. The Indonesian Government had always attached great importance to the activities of the Fund, to which it was making substantial contributions, and it hoped that the excellent co-operation that had been established between UNFPA and Indonesia would be further enhanced so that the country could respond to future challenges.

4. Mr. LE DINH CAN (Observer for Viet Nam) expressed great satisfaction with the Fund's numerous activities during the past year. Although Viet Nam, not being a member of the Governing Council, was hardly in a position to evaluate the Fund's overall activities, it was a recipient of UNFPA assistance and had therefore learned to appreciate all the benefits of that assistance in the field.

5. First of all, Vietnamese officials had clearly understood the vital importance of the population aspects of economic and social development, as could be seen from the evaluation of the UNFPA programme of assistance to Viet Nam for the period 1984-1987 and the new programme for 1988-1991. The Vietnamese Government would like to see youth and women's organizations play a dynamic role in population activities, since it realized that broader popular participation could ensure the quality and effectiveness of the results achieved. The assistance provided by UNFPA under the 1984-1987 programme for the improvement of population education and information facilities had been highly instrumental in mobilizing the population.

6. With regard to the co-ordination that the Fund was advocating in regard to field activities, it should be noted that, in many Vietnamese provinces, the Fund and UNICEF had successfully co-ordinated their assistance in various fields: primary health care, maternal and child health, vaccination, drinking water and sanitation, etc. Viet Nam therefore supported the Governing Council's request for better integration of the development-related operational activities in which various United Nations organizations were engaged.

7. In accordance with UNFPA policy, Viet Nam had already begun to manufacture its own means of contraception. Its national policy was also consistent with that of the Fund in regard to the role and status of women in population activities that had been integrated into economic and social development.

8. Viet Nam would have to make sustained efforts in order to reduce the population growth rate to 1.7 per cent by 1990 and the Vietnamese Government was determined to achieve that target by applying a development strategy based on human resources. In that respect, the experiences of other developing countries, UNFPA assistance and bilateral aid would be a source of great encouragement for Viet Nam.

9. Mr. GERDAU (Peru) said that, in his country, family planning had remained virtually in an embryonic state until 1974, the year of the World Population Conference at Bucharest, which had made population questions a matter of national concern. In 1976, the Government had formulated the principal guidelines for Peru's population policy. The Constitution of 1979 recognized the right to responsible procreation and a legislative act promulgated in 1985 had established the legal framework for a population policy. In the meantime, the Ministry of Health had begun to provide family planning services within the context of its maternal and child health programme. At the same time, a Population Department had been established at the National Planning Institute so that population-related activities could be integrated into development plans. The Peruvian Government had also recently adopted a National Population Programme that was geared primarily to the reduction of fertility, a decrease in maternal morbidity and mortality, the creation of conditions favourable to the exercise of the right to family planning, and an appropriate

population distribution throughout the national territory. That programme had established priority fields of action, namely: the provision of information on population questions through the media, school or pre-school education for young persons and adults, assistance in birth-spacing, and the population surveys needed to lay down the foundations and improve the effectiveness of policies in that respect.

10. The Government of Peru hoped that the technical co-operation and international assistance activities would reflect the country's priorities and objectives. Since 1972, UNFPA had provided Peru with considerable assistance. On the whole, that support had had a positive effect, although the desired results had not been achieved in all fields. The Government would be conducting an exhaustive study of the causes of those failures so that, in future, the resources provided by UNFPA could be put to optimum use. Like other countries of the region, Peru would like to see the Fund extend its activities in Latin America. Finally, the task of the Governments concerned would be greatly facilitated if they could have access to a larger number of publications in Spanish.

11. Mr. GAUR (India), referring to the introductory statement by the Executive Director of UNFPA, supported the proposal to continue using the present indicators to determine the priority status of countries, to include female literacy rates as an additional indicator and to review the threshold of rates in order to take into account the changing situation in the developing countries (DP/1988/38). He believed that, in that way, UNFPA would be able to help a larger number of countries to control the increase in their population. He also supported the efforts that the Fund had made to establish a computerized data base in the light of the information provided in the evaluation report (DP/1988/36) and noted with satisfaction the activities relating to the management control systems, project evaluation and the dissemination of information concerning population questions, as proposed in the inter-country programme for 1988-1991.

12. He invited the Council to approve the proposal for additional field posts, since such a step, which reflected a policy directive given by the Council, would make it possible to meet the needs of sub-Saharan Africa more effectively. Although India fully supported the Strategy for UNFPA Assistance in sub-Saharan Africa, it nevertheless hoped that the Asia and Pacific region would also receive increased assistance. He also expressed approval of the various proposals concerning the restructuring of the Fund and the decentralization of its operations (DP/1988/42). The adoption of those proposals would undoubtedly put UNFPA in a better position to meet the changing needs of countries.

13. He noted that the increase in income in 1987 had exceeded the 15 per cent expected, even though the United States Government was no longer contributing to the Fund. For its part, India had been paying increased contributions to the Fund since 1985.

14. He welcomed the strategy that the Fund had formulated in regard to the role of women in population and development. The Indian Government was convinced that it was essential to improve the status of women in order to overcome the major problems posed by family planning.

15. He welcomed the publication of the report on the state of the world population in 1987, which provided an opportunity to view population problems from the wider standpoint of questions relating to the environment. He also appreciated the usefulness of other works, such as the study entitled Annual Review of Population Law, which made it possible to assess the impact of normative legislation and policies on population growth in various countries.

16. Mr. OMAR (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that the report prepared by UNFPA highlighted the complexity of the interrelationship between population, resources and the environment, which was not always clearly understood. Although it was true that a decline in the population growth rate reduced the pressures that population exerted on resources and the environment, his delegation believed that the problems of population and development, particularly in the countries of the third world, were aggravated by other factors, such as systems inherited from the colonial era, the protectionism practised by the developed countries, the decline in commodity prices (in contrast to the increase in the prices of manufactures), the increase in indebtedness and the rise in interest rates. However, the UNFPA report had rightly highlighted the responsibility of the developed countries in regard to industrial development in the developing countries. It had also emphasized that, in the field of population and the environment, measures must be taken at both the national and the international levels.

17. At the national level, Libya had formulated plans aimed at, inter alia, the free provision of health and education services and the promotion of participation by women. Moreover, the Libyan Government was endeavouring to curb the trend towards migration to urban areas. The principle of decentralization had been established and the municipalities had greater autonomy in regard to decision-making. Measures had also been taken in favour of rural areas: loans to farmers, the construction of housing and the establishment of economic development and vocational training centres.

18. At the international level, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya had granted assistance, concessional loans and donations to a number of developing countries. The value of the concessional loans amounted to \$829,300,000 and that of assistance and donations in cash to \$223 million. That assistance was intended primarily for the construction of hospitals, schools and roads, as well as the establishment of agricultural ventures. Libya had also provided assistance in kind, in the form of pharmaceuticals, education equipment, food, clothing and agricultural implements to a value of \$200 million. Furthermore, Libya was endeavouring to promote technical and economic co-operation with the other developing countries and had signed the Agreement on the Global System of Trade Preferences among Developing Countries on 13 April 1988.

19. In conclusion, he said that the Fund's report would be extremely useful for the formulation of the development plans and strategies of the countries of the third world, as well as the developed countries. He hoped that the Fund would attach increased importance to sub-Saharan Africa and occupied Palestine, since both those areas were deprived of their resources and were living in a state of insecurity incompatible with the welfare of their populations. His delegation hoped that the Fund's documentation would once again be published in Arabic, as had been the case in the mid-1970s.

20. Mr. POPOV (Bulgaria) said that his country's considerable interest in the activities of UNFPA had prompted it to organize, in collaboration with that Fund, two training courses for specialists from developing countries. He emphasized that, in all its activities, the Fund should take account of local religious, ethnic, historical, national and cultural particularities, as well as governmental priorities. Bulgaria was delighted to learn that contributions to the Fund were on the increase, since that would undoubtedly enable it to respond more effectively to the needs of the developing countries and to achieve its objectives.

21. Mr. NISSEN (Norway) said that, in its report on the state of the world population, the Fund had emphasized the relationship between population growth and the use of natural resources, which confirmed one of the conclusions reached in the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development.

22. Ideally, population should constitute the principal asset of all nations. However, in some countries, its excessively rapid growth was impeding development. It was common knowledge that the future increase in the world population would be witnessed primarily in the developing countries and that increase was already placing severe pressure on environmentally fragile regions, as illustrated by the deforestation and desertification in sub-Saharan Africa. Accordingly, there was a need not only to protect the environment more effectively but also to curb population growth. In that connection, his delegation found it alarming that so few resources had been allocated to family planning and population activities. According to OECD figures, most countries were allocating less than 0.5 per cent of their budgets to family planning. Moreover, population and family planning assistance constituted only 2 per cent of total ODA, which was very little in view of the magnitude and urgency of the problem.

23. Apart from its long-term ecological impact, the imbalance between population and resources also had a severe and direct effect on living conditions since, except in the case of Asia, the developing countries had to import a constantly increasing proportion of their food requirements and undernourishment and malnutrition were becoming widespread in the third world. The World Fertility Survey clearly showed that the number of persons wishing to plan their families far exceeded the number that currently had access to family planning services. However, family planning was not only a means to maintain a balance between population and resources; it was also a fundamental right. All women should be able to make a free choice in that respect and women, like men, should have access to family planning services.

24. Although decisions concerning contraception and family size, etc., were taken at the family level, the sum of those decisions had a considerable effect on macro-economic factors such as overall welfare and the environment. His delegation therefore supported the proposal that almost 54.2 per cent of the UNFPA resources allocated to country programmes should be spent on family planning and 19.2 per cent on information, education and communication.

25. With regard to the regional distribution of country activity resources, his delegation welcomed the Fund's intention to allocate almost 30 per cent of its resources to sub-Saharan Africa during the period 1989-1992. Given the rapid population growth in that region and the severe economic and ecological problems with which it was faced, that proportion could have been even higher.

26. Norway attached high priority to the campaign against AIDS, to which UNFPA could make a crucial contribution, particularly through its IEC programmes. His country therefore supported the suggestion made by Canada that the Executive Director should submit a report on that subject to the thirty-sixth session.

27. The Norwegian Government fully supported all the efforts that were being made to improve the UNFPA evaluation system. It noted with satisfaction that the Fund intended to place increased emphasis on monitoring and evaluation as an integral part of its programming process and that, in its substantive analyses, it intended to move away from individual projects towards country and intercountry programmes. Although the evaluation of individual projects should not be neglected, it must be admitted that one of the weaknesses of UNFPA country activities had often been the lack of linkages among the various projects, and programme coherence had suffered as a result. The Norwegian Government, which was always eager to enhance its co-operation with UNFPA, had recently financed an evaluation of its multi-bilateral projects with the Fund.

28. In document DP/1988/38, the Executive Director had reviewed UNFPA experience in regard to the system of priority countries and had made suggestions for the future. His delegation welcomed the inclusion of the female literacy rate as an additional criterion for the selection of priority countries. It was convinced that the level of literacy among women was a good indicator of women's status in society and, consequently, of country needs for assistance in family planning activities. During the period 1982-1987, 70 per cent of the resources had been allocated to 53 priority countries. Moreover, the 56 priority countries on the revised list accounted for more than 70 per cent of the total population of the developing countries. It might be wondered, therefore, whether the target figure for allocations to the 56 priority countries should not be higher than the proposed 75 per cent.

29. In the United Nations system, the role of UNFPA was to promote population programmes and co-ordinate projects supported by the Fund. His delegation believed that the Fund should play an increasingly active role in the formulation of country and regional policies and strategies concerning population and family planning. That co-ordinating role should also apply to the activities of the World Bank at the country level and in regard to technical matters.

30. In conclusion, his delegation welcomed the Jansson report, which had been prepared in accordance with General Assembly resolution 42/196.

31. Mr. TABAH (France) said that his delegation had been greatly impressed by the increasing extent of UNFPA activities. It had noted that the concept of population was viewed in a broader perspective than in the past and that constant endeavours were being made to integrate it into overall development efforts in the manner advocated at the Bucharest and Mexico Conferences. Like the Norwegian delegation, France welcomed the fact that the UNFPA annual report focused on the complex relationship between population, resources, the environment and development, which constituted the only fundamental long-term factors. In that respect, his country placed great hopes on the linkages that UNFPA was establishing with the other UNDP development sectors.

32. It was also gratifying to note that, over the years, UNFPA activities had achieved a better balance between programmes aimed at short-term or long-term results through direct action, on the one hand, and programmes geared towards a far-reaching transformation of societies through changes of attitude and behaviour by indirect methods, on the other. That second category of programmes was beginning to assume greater importance than the first and, although France believed that family planning services should continue to enjoy high budgetary priority, it also felt that the United Nations should give close attention to activities aimed at improving the degree of receptivity. Accordingly, his country was glad to learn that the Fund was granting higher priority to programmes aimed at the promotion of awareness and to activities conducive to the modification of behaviour in regard to reproduction and, primarily, to improvement of the status of women. France also welcomed the increasing importance that was being attached to population education programmes.

33. Some thought should also be given to the geographical distribution of programmes. The previous decade had witnessed world-wide economic and demographic upheavals, which were closely interlinked. Although some third-world countries had achieved amazing economic progress and demographic transformation, others had had no part of that progress. Almost all the sub-Saharan countries fell into the latter category, and it was towards them that UNFPA had rightly decided to direct its efforts as a matter of priority. For its part, France had recently established a Population and Development Centre (CEPED), the activities of which were also directed primarily towards that region, and it would always be willing to participate in activities in that field at the request of Governments.

34. Data collection, analysis and research, which were essential components of population activities, were costly operations and it was understandable that the Fund, which had previously devoted a large part of its budget to those operations, was hoping to obtain specific contributions from wealthy countries for that purpose in order to maintain the diversity of its activities. In future, a research strategy would co-ordinate censuses and surveys, particularly during the new phase of the World Fertility Survey, full responsibility for which would henceforth be borne by the countries themselves. France attached the utmost importance to the work of the United Nations system, which the Fund was supporting from its resources, with a view to integrating the demographic variable into development planning. Accordingly, his country was eagerly awaiting the first report on activities under the Population and Development Training Programme.

35. Finally, although the expansion in UNFPA activities should be welcomed, it must be recognized that, since choices had to be made, many fields of activity were being neglected. For example, international migration, which seemed to be the most critical, not to say the most explosive, of the problems to be faced at the end of the century, was hardly mentioned in the texts submitted to the Governing Council. The same applied to questions of internal migration although all the third-world countries, by the very fact of their growth, had been severely affected by population movements conducive to a demographic distribution that was detrimental to the development of resources. If UNFPA did not tackle those problems, it might be wondered who would. The problems of aging were also justifiably beginning to disturb a number of developing countries which, as could be seen from the experiences of the industrial countries, needed to make preparations several decades in

advance before they became fully exposed to the effects of that phenomenon at the beginning of the next century. There was also the question of adult mortality in the third world, on which very little was yet known. It was noteworthy that concern had finally been shown for AIDS only after its spectacular entry on the world epidemiological stage. It would therefore probably be found that, in the third world, that pandemic was linked to patterns of behaviour that were influenced by other demographic or development factors, and France welcomed the fact that UNFPA was giving serious consideration to that question.

36. Mr. MILTNER (Austria) said that, in the latest UNFPA report, he had been interested to note the linkage that had been established between population growth and environmental problems. It was evident that population policies must form an integral part of development policies. The Austrian Government hoped that, in future, it would be possible to increase the relatively modest assistance that it was giving to the Fund.

37. The introductory statement by the Executive Director and the documentation submitted to the Council showed that, in 1987, further progress had been made in assisting the developing countries to solve their population and development problems. Although one of the major donors had stopped paying contributions in 1987, the Fund's income had continued to increase (by 11.9 per cent as compared with 1986). However, that increase was largely due to the persistent weakness of the United States dollar and, in real terms, expenditure had probably increased only marginally, although it was difficult to clearly establish the decrease in value of project expenditure as a result of the depreciation of the United States dollar. The explanations given in paragraph 4 of document DP/1988/34, concerning the comparatively low rate of project expenditure in 1987, seemed justified. Under circumstances beyond the Fund's control, a cautious approach to the allocation of resources was certainly advisable.

38. With regard to the distribution of expenditure by major activity and geographical region, his delegation approved of the priority that was being given to the family planning programme and to assistance for Africa. It also welcomed the fact that Governments and non-governmental organizations were increasingly being called upon to help in implementing projects.

39. Like other delegations, the Austrian delegation regretted that the UNFPA report on the application of General Assembly resolution 42/196 had not been issued as an official document sufficiently far in advance to enable Member States to study it in detail. However, his delegation was grateful to the Executive Director for her extremely comprehensive note on the Jansson report and her detailed statement on the co-ordination efforts that had been made by UNFPA. On the whole, Austria agreed with what had been said in the note, and particularly the indications given concerning participation in inter-agency programming operations, the promotion of co-operation among the main financing institutions of the United Nations system and measures to enhance the co-ordination mechanisms of the recipient Governments.

40. His delegation welcomed the UNFPA proposals concerning modification of the criteria applied in the selection of priority countries. Austria had supported the Strategy for UNFPA Assistance in sub-Saharan Africa, which had been adopted in 1987. Although that Strategy had not yet had a great influence on the Fund's programmes, it was to be hoped that that situation

would change in the coming years. It seemed that most of the additional posts requested in document DP/1988/42 were needed in the field for the implementation of the Strategy, and he expressed the hope that the Council would give favourable consideration to that request.

41. In conclusion, he assured the Council that his country would continue to support UNFPA and its objectives.

42. Mr. OUDRAOGO (Burkina Faso), speaking on behalf of the African countries members of the Governing Council, welcomed the fact that one of the major donors, although not contributing directly to UNFPA, had allocated \$20 million to programmes in Africa. He urged the contributing countries to make an even greater effort to ensure the effective implementation of the Fund's projects and programmes. In his opinion, population policies should be adapted to the economic, social and cultural circumstances of the recipient countries, and he noted with satisfaction that, in the new programmes, considerable importance was attached to the status of women. The situation in Africa was disturbing in many respects and the Fund should be congratulated on the efforts that it was making to find a solution. In conclusion, he assured the Fund of the support of the African countries.

43. Mr. PERRIS (United Kingdom) welcomed the measures taken by the Executive Director to improve the organization and effectiveness of UNFPA. His country supported the general objectives and long-term strategy that had been adopted, particularly the measures concerning staff training and decentralization, which were conducive to greater efficiency.

44. His country was fully in favour of the Fund's decision to provide increased support for sub-Saharan Africa and looked forward to receiving further information on the distribution of resources in that connection. His country also supported the Fund's decision to highlight the interrelationship between women, population and development. Activities to improve the situation of women must be integrated into development programmes, as the United Kingdom had done in its bilateral aid programmes. The importance that UNFPA attached to training, particularly in the field offices, was highly encouraging.

45. It was also gratifying to note that, in general, the Fund had reacted favourably to the recommendations of the Jansson report and was endeavouring to co-ordinate its policies with those of other institutions in a realistic manner. His country would like to know how far the advocacy role that characterized the activities of some agencies could affect programming procedures and the extent to which organizations should align their programmes with those of ministries.

46. There was a particularly urgent need to co-ordinate activities in the campaign against AIDS. In that connection, he welcomed the close collaboration between UNFPA and WHO, which was already receiving considerable financial support from the United Kingdom for that purpose.

47. With regard to population, his country was pursuing a policy of promoting multilateral assistance. The total contributions that it had given to the various population programmes amounted to more than £13 million, £3 million of which would go to multi-bilateral projects requiring UNFPA's collaboration.

48. Mr. KABIR (Bangladesh) noted with satisfaction the positive developments in the population field - broader understanding, better knowledge and greater awareness about the population situation as well as the relationship between population and development and the various population issues. All developing countries were currently engaged, in one form or another, in activities in that field, and population had become an integral part of the national development process, such activities often having been initiated in spite of socio-cultural constraints. The findings of UNFPA's review and assessment exercise should lead to appropriate policy measures in UNFPA. His delegation emphasized the importance of developing management capabilities in the developing countries, of using operational research in the formulation and implementation of programmes and of promoting community participation in that process.

49. In order to improve quality and effectiveness and extend the outreach of its activities, UNFPA must take fully into account the relevant socio-cultural factor in each developing country concerned. The Fund rightly intended to place more emphasis not only on individual projects but also on broader programme strategies, the participation of women and linkages between different components of overall development strategies, on the one hand, and population policies and activities on the other. Progress in programme implementation depended upon improvement in project design, appropriate follow-up and institutionalization. Decentralization must be carried out to the fullest extent, and the co-ordination mechanisms with other organizations with which UNFPA worked must be turned to maximum account.

50. UNFPA had submitted to UNDP a proposed intercountry programme for 1988-1991 (DP/1988/37 and Add.1-5); Asia and the Pacific were dealt with in Addendum 4. His delegation fully endorsed the major objectives of that programme, but feared that the allocations planned were too modest.

51. With regard to the designation of priority countries, it would be useful to adopt female literacy as a new criterion. His Government also supported the proposal to increase the share of allocations to those countries from two thirds to three quarters, because that would help those countries to intensify their efforts in the field of population.

52. His delegation appreciated the fact that UNFPA had taken note of the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development and recognized the complex linkages between population, resources and the environment. Developed countries had a responsibility to introduce new and safer technologies and to assist developing countries to contain the population problem in their search for safer industrial growth.

53. Mr. BORISENKO (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) expressed the hope that the measures adopted by the Executive Director to reorganize the Fund and to decentralize the decision-making process would soon bear fruit. With regard to the selection of priority countries, his delegation agreed with the Executive Director that the existing criteria should be maintained and that the criterion of female literacy should be added. The importance of the status of women for population policies and development deserved to be underscored, but criteria should also be defined that reflected a global approach to the development problem. The Strategy for UNFPA Assistance in Sub-Saharan Africa was completely justified, and the Soviet Union would contribute to it.

54. His Government considered that population issues must be viewed in the context of a whole set of socio-economic measures geared to each country. The Soviet Union had taken initiatives to ensure socio-economic development until the year 2000, including measures to lengthen life expectancy, and to improve working, living and health conditions.

55. The USSR had shown the importance that it attached to UNFPA activities by creating a trust fund in 1987 and by subscribing to UNFPA. His Government intended to contribute actively to training staff in developing countries in the field of population and socio-economic planning. More than 300 population experts had already been trained, and co-operation between Soviet specialists and United Nations experts had been a positive experience.

56. UNFPA could become an instrument for an equitable redistribution of resources released through a reduction in arms expenditure. Although demographic factors did not always play a preponderant role in social conflicts, their close links with development made them uniquely important for the international political situation. Population initiatives could only succeed if they were far-reaching, and they must therefore be closely associated with the economic and social objectives and development programmes of the developing countries. In that context, it would be useful to set up socio-economic and population programmes in association with governmental bodies, voluntary organizations and foreign donors.

57. Mr. HUGHES (New Zealand) said that sustainable rates of population growth were critical to national development. That applied both to countries with a population of several hundred million and to small island developing countries. His Government was pleased to note the proposal to include the female literacy rate as a new criterion for determining priority countries. It also approved the suggested changes in the various threshold levels and regarded the criterion of an annual population increment of 100,000 as appropriate, although that figure had no relevance for most of the island developing countries of the South Pacific. Two Pacific island countries were currently designated as priority countries, and it was to be hoped that that would continue to be the case under the new criteria. New Zealand wished to place on record its appreciation of the work of UNFPA's staff, both at Headquarters and in the field.

58. The PRESIDENT invited the members of the Governing Council to examine the cluster of questions and reports introduced at the previous meeting: (a) the report on policy guidelines and the periodic report on evaluation (DP/1988/36); (b) the report on developments in programme implementation since the thirty-fourth session of the Governing Council and the reports clustered at the request of the Council: (i) status of financial implementation of Governing Council-approved UNFPA country programmes and projects (decision 1984/21 III, para. 2 - DP/1988/35); (ii) report on the programming experience of the Fund in using the existing set of criteria in the designation of priority countries (decision 1986/34 I, para. 5 - DP/1988/38); (iii) work plan for 1989-1992 and request for approval authority (DP/1988/34).

59. Mr. FREE (Canada), referring to the question of evaluation (DP/1988/36), said that his delegation supported the Fund's decision to shift focus to a substantive analysis of country and intercountry programmes and thematic issues with a view to a comparison at international level. However, UNFPA

should not lessen its concern for a strong evaluation system at project level. Agency performance in that area had been less than satisfactory, and the Fund should therefore strengthen its training efforts in evaluation not only for UNFPA but also agency and national project staff. It should also take advantage of opportunities for co-operation in joint training efforts with other agencies, particularly UNDP, and should attempt to link evaluation results with project formulation and the development of an automated data base. His delegation regretted that the conclusions of the February 1988 WHO/UNFPA workshop and the results of the evaluation of FAO's interregional and regional population activities had not been made available in greater detail. Lastly, it seemed that the role of women as beneficiaries and agents of development had not always been adequately taken into account in the evaluation process.

60. With regard to the criteria for selection of priority countries (DP/1988/38), his delegation was satisfied with the general direction of the changes proposed by the Fund. However, a priority list of 57 countries with 70 per cent of the total population of the developing countries was a lot, given the financial and administrative resources of UNFPA. His delegation was not averse to increasing the proportion of total country programme resources to be devoted to priority countries to 75 per cent.

61. His Government wondered, however, how effective an instrument the criteria had really been in devoting maximum resources to priority countries. His delegation inquired whether, as an alternative approach, the actual allocations could be used for expressing priorities. Concerning the criteria themselves, female literacy deserved to be added, and it would also be useful to establish the same GNP threshold as UNDP. But it was not clear why the gross reproduction rate was used, when the net reproduction rate offered a more precise measure. Moreover, his delegation wondered why UNFPA used annual population growth increase of over 100,000 as a criterion. It also inquired what the effect had been on the list of priority countries of reducing the thresholds for infant mortality and gross reproduction rate. As a matter of principle, his Government was not convinced that thresholds should be adjusted in accordance with average changes in the indicators as a whole.

62. According to the report of the Executive Director (DP/1988/38, paras. 59-60), many priority countries had special needs with regard to staff time, programme composition, programming flexibility and innovation in terms of technical assistance modalities. His Government welcomed proposals to provide appropriate flexibility in programme and project design and implementation, but those questions required further clarification. Moreover, equipment accounted for almost half of spending in priority countries; his delegation had thought that training and personnel services would account for most of the expenditure in a technical co-operation programme. There again, comments would be welcome.

63. With regard to the UNFPA work plan for 1989-1992 (DP/1988/34), his delegation supported the Executive Director's request for a revised system for establishing programme approval authority and the net additional approval authority sought for the 1989-1992 programme period. It would, however, appreciate some clarification of the practical effects of a Governing Council decision in approving a provisional programme ceiling of \$US 179 million for 1989, since the approval of project allocations by the Administration seemed to relate more to the most recent estimate of actual income.

64. His delegation would be interested in learning what portion of the increase in UNFPA's resources (DP/1988/34, para. 17) had been due to the depreciation of the United States dollar and in obtaining more information about the underlying assumptions regarding the assumed constant annual increase in receipts of 8 per cent. It would also appreciate additional comments on the rationale for excluding multi-bilateral activities from the work plan. Many country programme activities assumed co-financing from other donors; moreover, that was an area in which UNFPA must exert some effort to mobilize additional resources. Assumptions about the level of such activities had implications for the Fund's work plan and staffing requirements. In the opinion of his delegation, the level of resources devoted to intercountry activities must be kept under constant review.

65. Ms. FRANKINET (Belgium) said that her delegation did not object to UNFPA's shifting the focus of in-depth evaluations from individual projects to country and intercountry programmes or to its moving towards comparative analysis. However, the follow-up to the actual projects should not be disregarded, and all information on their implementation should not only serve to correct individual projects but should also be a valuable lesson for the execution of similar projects.

66. Her delegation agreed with the Executive Director that programme evaluation and implementation would be facilitated by a rigorous formulation, together with clear and measurable objectives. It welcomed the modifications made in the guidelines for evaluation. In particular, the feedback system would be extremely valuable, as would the training of officials. Her delegation wondered whether UNFPA had conducted an activity of that type for its executing agents.

67. With regard to the criteria for defining priority countries, her delegation fully endorsed the observations made in the UNFPA report contained in document DP/1988/38, in particular with regard to the impact of female literacy on evolving health practices, child-spacing and contraception. The additional criterion of the female literacy rate was thus welcome. UNFPA also suggested lowering the gross reproduction and the gross infant mortality rate thresholds, those rates having declined on average. On the other hand, her delegation wondered whether special attention should not be paid to countries in which those two rates remained higher than average, thus pointing to particular problems. Moreover, as maternal education had a positive impact on health practices and child-spacing, it would certainly have the same effect upon the infant mortality rate. Her delegation inquired whether there was not a danger of counting certain factors twice.

68. UNFPA had expressed its intention of giving particular attention in its programming to certain regional situations and more vulnerable groups. The recommendations made in that respect should be examined case by case, because they did not automatically follow from the classification of a country in the priority country category.

69. Her delegation subscribed to the work plan for 1989-1992 (DP/1988/34), subject to the observations made during the discussion on resources to be devoted to multilateral activities.

70. Mr. PERRIS (United Kingdom) noted with satisfaction that the Executive Director of UNFPA had adopted a refreshingly critical attitude towards evaluation in document DP/1988/36. It was a good thing that feedback would be systematically ensured in the future and that the lessons drawn from the evaluation would have an impact on future programme design. His delegation would be interested in knowing what the results of the new evaluation system would be in practice.

71. With regard to the work plan for 1989-1992 (DP/1988/34), his delegation shared the concern of other members of the Council that the proposals aimed at revising the criteria for determining priority countries might result in placing too many countries on that list. Lastly, his delegation would like some clarification of the way in which reallocation of resources to the countries of sub-Saharan Africa had been arrived at.

72. Mr. MUGUME (Uganda) said that his delegation approved on the whole the conclusions reached in the UNFPA report on evaluation (DP/1988/36), in particular with regard to the appropriateness of training national staff in project monitoring and follow-up starting at the project formulation stage. Moreover, programme coherence must be tangible in each project drawn up. However, excessive centralization of technical evaluation operations must be avoided, and the socio-cultural component of those operations must not be neglected, because it was fundamental in the field of population. Furthermore, although the information drawn from the evaluations was essential for managing programmes and projects, it must above all be intended for national decision-makers and planners.

73. His delegation had a number of reservations concerning the work plan for 1989-1992 (DP/1988/34). In drafting the plan, the Executive Director had assumed an 8 per cent constant annual growth rate for income. But the apparent increase in resources might well be due solely to the decline in the United States dollar, and optimism must therefore be tempered with a large dose of caution.

74. With regard to the work plan concerning the Strategy for UNFPA Assistance in Sub-Saharan Africa, his delegation would like to know how the Fund would seek to increase management resources in Africa and what additional resources would be devoted to research and training there.

75. Paragraph 20 (d) of document DP/1988/34 stated that UNFPA intended to allocate "the major share" of its resources for country activities to country programmes, but in such cases in which delays occurred in the formulation or implementation of projects in those programmes, resources reserved for a specific country programme would be made available for activities "in other countries". His delegation would like a clarification on that and hoped that the decision on the matter would not be left once again to zealous bureaucrats.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.

