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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 25th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Monday, 20 June 1988, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. MANGWAZU (Malawi)

later: Mr. ZIELINSKI (Poland)

CONTENTS

Other matters:

- (c) Issues of concern to the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme arising from action by the General Assembly at its forty-second session (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

OTHER MATTERS:

(c) ISSUES OF CONCERN TO THE GOVERNING COUNCIL OF THE UNITED NATIONS
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME ARISING FROM ACTION BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT ITS
FORTY-SECOND SESSION (agenda item 10 (c)) (continued) (DP/1988/61, 63,
64, 68 and 69)

1. Mr. GAJENTAAN (Netherlands) said that the process of considering operational activities for development, including the Jansson report (A/42/326/Add.1) and General Assembly resolution 42/196, had certainly helped, as had the current financial problems of the United Nations, to make both donor and recipient Governments more aware of the need to improve the quality of the end product of those activities, as well as the efficiency of the organizations participating in them. That process was very important in regard to the future role of UNDP and it would be advisable for the high-level general debate in 1989 to focus on the role of UNDP in the 1990s and on its reaction to changing development priorities.

2. In his view, the Jansson report made a lot of sense and he approved the general tenor of the conclusions and recommendations made in paragraph 82. He recognized that the importance of the assistance provided by the United Nations system far exceeded its quantitative value in terms of the total volume of flows of assistance and that coherence, integration and co-ordination were indispensable if limited resources were to have maximum impact. In that regard, he supported the idea that the Joint Consultative Group on Policy should be strengthened. However, he did not agree with the recommendation that the function of resident co-ordinator should be separate from that of UNDP resident representative in countries with large bilateral and United Nations programmes. As the Administrator had rightly pointed out (DP/1988/64, para. 19), a resident co-ordinator without operational functions or financial resources would almost certainly be working in a vacuum. However, it might be appropriate to redefine the role of the resident co-ordinator. Since UNDP field offices sometimes spent more than 40 per cent of their time on activities that were unrelated to country programmes, it might be advisable for the resident co-ordinator to delegate greater authority to his deputies. In fact, some recommendations of the Jansson report advocated a decentralization of decision-making and management as a logical outcome of the report's findings, which indicated that uniform policy prescriptions for all countries were no longer valid and should be replaced by tailor-made solutions. His country also recognized the need for a clearer definition of programming methods and for a greater concentration of United Nations funds on a limited number of priority sectors and programmes, which could be achieved while fully respecting the development priorities established by the recipients. UNDP should therefore use every means at its disposal to help the developing countries to strengthen their national management, planning and co-ordination capacities.

3. General Assembly resolution 42/196 defined the action to be taken in coming years to improve the quality of operational activities for development. Governments, as well as United Nations organizations, should give their full support to the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation to ensure that those tasks could be carried out successfully.

4. In his statement on 15 June, the Director-General had submitted three questions for consideration by the Council. The first concerned the central funding role of UNDP. That role had undoubtedly diminished over the years and the substantive activities of UNDP had probably been affected by that change. However, given its tremendous accumulated expertise in technical co-operation, it was vital that UNDP should focus on its comparative advantages.

5. The second question related to joint programming. It would be interesting to discuss with the recipient countries the Director General's proposal that each recipient country and representatives of the United Nations system should formulate a general declaration of intent that could promote joint programming and even lead to a common code of conduct for United Nations organizations. In that respect, he requested more information on the functioning of the Joint Consultative Group on Policy and the experiment in joint programming to which reference had been made in paragraph 5 of document DP/1988/64. Furthermore, to achieve effective joint programming of the activities of all United Nations organizations, it would be necessary to proceed in stages, applying existing mandates in a flexible manner and seeking the opinion of the recipient countries.

6. The third question concerned the role of the resident co-ordinator: joint programming would be an excellent means to strengthen it. Ad hoc arrangements in the field among United Nations organizations could also help in that respect and could be tested before the establishment of a unified overseas development service.

7. With regard to the harmonization of procedures, the idea of developing a uniform project document for the United Nations system was interesting. In conclusion, he expressed the hope that, through concerted efforts by Governments and United Nations organizations, the General Assembly would one day be able to note real progress in operational activities for development.

8. Mr. KRAMER (Canada) said that the Jansson report had confirmed what many people had already suspected, namely that the United Nations system had not succeeded in integrating its various development activities at the country level in a coherent manner, as had been recommended in General Assembly resolution 32/197. Some fundamental conclusions could be drawn from the report: Governments attached far more than merely financial value to United Nations assistance. The United Nations should respond flexibly to needs and should decentralize the management of its activities. Governments should be enabled to define their own priorities and co-ordinate the assistance that they received. A simplification and harmonization of the procedures of the various organizations within the system would facilitate the task of Governments. The field representation of United Nations organizations should be oriented more towards technical and advisory services under the direction of the resident co-ordinator. Programmes should be more closely related to the current needs of Governments and the quality of project execution should be improved. If there were an improvement in the functioning of some mechanisms, such as central funding, country programming and the services of the resident co-ordinator, they could help considerably to make activities more coherent.

9. Although there was nothing surprising in those observations, there was every reason to welcome the consensus that had been reached on the need to improve the functioning of operational activities for development. In its

resolution 42/196, the General Assembly had requested reports on the real scope for a wider and more effective programming process and on the reasons for the weakness of the central funding system. The question of future arrangements for agency support costs, which would determine the relationship between the Programme and the agencies to the year 2000 and beyond, offered the Governing Council of UNDP an opportunity to shape the future, since that question had a bearing on the cohesion of the development activities undertaken by United Nations organizations. In his view, the present system of compensating agencies on the basis of a percentage of the total cost of projects impeded co-ordination in so far as it provided an incentive to maximize the volume of projects.

10. The tendency to entrust the execution of projects to Governments, the extension of co-operation with the World Bank group, the trend towards shorter-term and more specialized technical assistance and competition from other sources of expertise such as non-governmental organizations, universities and the private sector were all factors that indicated the timeliness of reconsidering current arrangements for the programming and implementation of UNDP projects. Consideration should be given to the accountability of agencies and to some key problems, such as the effectiveness of field representation, competition among agencies to obtain a share in the financial support provided by UNDP, and the disproportionate focus on project execution to the detriment of the advisory functions and technical specialization of the agencies.

11. Governments already appeared to be gradually taking over from the field offices in the execution of their projects. Even if the objective results were not substantially different, it seemed that the projects that Governments were executing themselves were being integrated more effectively in their administrative systems. That was a key viability factor. Accordingly, there would probably be a radical change in the procedures for agency participation in project execution and it would be advisable to plan the future on the basis of close collaboration among the secretariats of the agencies in joint studies of that question.

12. The specialized agencies must face the facts: resolution 42/196 showed that the General Assembly was concerned not only by the quality of project execution but also by the fact that some field offices were not fulfilling technical functions. UNDP, for its part, would have to equip itself to engage more fully in the co-ordination of assistance and prepare to respond to the concerns of numerous developing countries, in which there would be a shift towards overall macro-economic strategies.

13. Mr. KELLAND (Denmark), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, said that General Assembly resolutions 42/186, concerning the environmental perspective to the year 2000 and beyond, and 42/187, concerning the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, were based on the concept of sustainable development. Accordingly, there was no dichotomy between environment and development, since every effort should be made to ensure that current economic activities did not irremediably erode the resources on which future economic activities would be based. International ecological co-operation should therefore form an integral part of international economic co-operation. Development plans should be designed accordingly and the developing countries would need increased assistance, which UNDP was in a good position to provide, particularly within the context of country programming.

UNDP should aim at strengthening the capacity of developing countries to manage their natural resources and should help them, through the provision of expertise, to identify specific areas in which action should be taken. The Governing Council should adopt follow-up decisions on General Assembly resolutions 42/186 and 42/187.

14. With regard to General Assembly resolution 42/196 and the Jansson report (A/42/326/Add.1), concerning operational activities for development, he indicated that the concern for cohesion and co-ordination should not cause people to forget the variety of situations in the recipient countries; everything depended on the relative scale of the assistance provided by the United Nations system and the administrative capacity of countries to co-ordinate that assistance.

15. Although the Jansson report made a valuable contribution, it should be borne in mind that the report dealt with only seven or eight countries and, while its recommendations deserved careful consideration, they could not solve all the problems facing UNDP and the United Nations development system. In general, the Nordic countries approved those recommendations while, to a certain extent, sharing the reservations expressed by the Administrator, particularly in regard to the advisability of separating the function of resident co-ordinator from that of UNDP resident representative. However, that question should be kept under review in the light of the situation in the recipient countries. On the other hand, the idea of grouping together the field offices of the various components of the United Nations development system in a single building should not be dismissed since, without such co-location, it would be difficult to improve the integration of the system. The Nordic countries hoped that the experience gained in that regard would be evaluated.

16. The statement contained in paragraph 82 (i) of the report, to the effect that the UNDP country programme had not in the past fulfilled the Governing Council's expectation of providing a frame of reference for all sources of United Nations system technical assistance, was justified. It should also be recognized that the Governments of Member States had not given sufficiently precise instructions to the various organizations within the system through their governing bodies and the latter had shown little willingness to accept the central co-ordinating role of UNDP.

17. That co-ordination should include the institutions established by the Joint Consultative Group on Policy, the specialized agencies and, as far as possible, the World Bank and regional banks which, as indicated in paragraph 82 (j), were becoming increasingly important sources of technical assistance in many countries. However, it should not be forgotten that, although the assistance provided by the latter was to some extent similar to that provided by UNDP, it was usually so closely linked to their own investment projects that an attempt to co-ordinate it with other inputs from the United Nations system would serve little purpose. In that respect, the Governing Council should be informed of the guidelines that the Director-General had issued to the various bodies within the United Nations development system regarding field co-operation and the role of the resident co-ordinator.

18. He expressed the hope that the Governing Council would have an opportunity to study the Jansson report in detail. With regard to General Assembly resolution 42/196, he hoped that, in the analysis of issues relating to the implementation of the central funding concept, which had been requested in paragraph 11, the Director-General would highlight the manner in which field activities were carried out. With reference to paragraph 24 (d) of the resolution, he noted that it was indispensable to make radical modifications to the structure of the field offices in order to make it more coherent and that the negotiation of new support cost agreements would provide an opportunity for a dialogue among the organizations concerned with a view to the closer integration of activities in the field. Finally, to achieve better co-ordination of operational activities, it would be necessary to improve the procedures for the recruitment of field staff, particularly resident co-ordinators, and to harmonize procedures at headquarters for the preparation of the reports that the various component parts of the system submitted to the Economic and Social Council.

19. Mr. OGAWA (Japan) said that, in his delegation's opinion, the "programming and co-ordination" issue (DP/1988/64, section II) comprised two main aspects: the first was the question of broadening the scope of the country programme. Although it was unlikely that anyone would be opposed to initiatives aimed at promoting joint programming, within the context of the Joint Consultative Group on Policy, for example, was it necessary to go to the extent of stipulating that the Governing Council of UNDP should approve country programmes which included the programmes of other agencies with specific resource allocations? The Governing Council of UNDP did not currently have the powers needed to take such decisions and the only United Nations organ that might be able to approve country programmes of such a global nature would be the Economic and Social Council. That was why his delegation had proposed the establishment, within the Economic and Social Council, of a new sessional committee that would deal exclusively with operational activities. His delegation hoped that the Economic and Social Council would study that proposal at its session in July 1988.

20. Another aspect of country programming merited consideration, namely whether UNDP should continue to apply a standardized approach to that form of programming. Country programmes should, rather, be formulated in a manner consistent with the planning and programming practice of each recipient country. Moreover, with regard to co-operation between UNDP and the World Bank (DP/1988/61, para. 33), the Administrator had pointed out that, if one of the purposes of the consultative groups and round tables was to bring about a closer relationship between policy decisions and the content of aid programmes, it might well be necessary to harmonize country programming more closely with that new approach. In his delegation's view, that approach was worth exploring and the Administrator should endeavour to determine the administrative and procedural implications of a country-by-country approach.

21. With regard to the question of substantive support to Governments in meeting their development planning needs (DP/1988/64, section VIII), he said that his delegation supported the recommendation of the Jansson report that the United Nations system's capacity for analytical work should be strengthened at the country level. His delegation was therefore in favour of the appointment of technical personnel to field offices, although it felt

that, for reasons of economy, it might be advisable for UNDP to avail itself of existing expertise in the macro-economic field within the United Nations system, at UNCTAD or in the United Nations Secretariat for example.

22. Finally, with regard to co-operation between UNDP and the World Bank, his delegation was satisfied, on the whole, with the explanations given on that subject (DP/1988/61), since the relationship between those two organizations did not seem detrimental to the fundamental character of UNDP. However, his delegation regretted that the Administrator had made no reference to the relationship between UNDP and the World Bank within the context of assistance for structural adjustment programmes. In view of the fact that the Administrator had proposed that the Governing Council should establish a management facility, he would appreciate further details on that point.

23. Mr. ZIELINSKI (Poland) said that General Assembly resolution 42/196 should make it possible to meet the needs of the developing countries more effectively. That decision was also extremely important for the triennial review of operational activities for development, which would be conducted in 1989 and within the context of which careful consideration would be given to the question of the role played by UNDP.

24. He reaffirmed that, on the whole, his delegation supported the conclusions and recommendations of the Jansson report. His delegation also endorsed the response of UNDP to the findings of the Jansson report, as set forth in document DP/1988/64.

25. Mr. QIAN Jiadong (China) said that the main purpose of General Assembly resolution 42/196 was to enhance the effectiveness of United Nations operational activities for development, whereas the aim of the Jansson report was essentially to make UNDP better able to meet the needs of the developing countries. During the general debate, his delegation had already declared itself in favour of some UNDP reforms to that end: simplifying the administrative procedures applied at headquarters, strengthening field offices and decentralizing decision-making. In particular, priorities should be defined much more precisely.

26. Unfortunately, it had to be admitted that, since the appearance of the Jansson report, the number of meetings and the volume of UNDP documentation had continued to increase to an extent that could not be justified by the results achieved. For example, for the thirty-fifth session of the Governing Council, the secretariat had prepared no fewer than 120 documents, and it was unlikely that they had all been read. The appeal for reason and pragmatism, which had been made before the Second Committee at the forty-second session of the General Assembly, did not seem to have been heeded.

27. The services of the resident representative remained indispensable, since UNDP had an obligation to help the recipient Governments to learn to co-ordinate external assistance. However, in view of the fact that the programming procedures of Governments and the priorities that they established differed from country to country, the proposals that had been made in favour of joint programming would be very difficult to put into practice at the present time. UNDP should therefore remain exclusively a frame of reference for the operational activities of the United Nations system.

28. With regard to the rationalization of the structure of field offices, his delegation was not convinced that the idea of co-locating the various bodies providing assistance in the field would be easy to put into effect.

29. In view of the limited resources, UNDP activities should continue to act exclusively as a catalyst, otherwise they would be doomed to failure.

30. Mr. Zielinski (Poland) took the Chair.

31. Mrs. BARRIOS BARON (Argentina) said that the fundamental principle underlying every endeavour to rationalize UNDP activities should be the need to further the interests of the developing countries by respecting their requirements and priorities; that was the corner-stone of the 1970 Consensus and also of General Assembly resolution 42/196. She shared the view of all the delegations that had already stressed the primary importance of the role played by the recipient Government.

32. On that basis, her delegation believed that the recommendations of the Jansson report, to the effect that resources should be concentrated on a few priority sectors and programmes in a smaller number of countries, would be contrary to the principle of the universality of assistance and of absolute respect for the priorities established by the Governments themselves. Moreover, the Administrator himself seemed reluctant to support that idea of concentrating resources (DP/1988/64, para. 9).

33. Her delegation was not in favour of encouraging intervention by non-governmental organizations in project programming and execution since, there again, the decision lay solely with the recipient Government in each particular case. However, her delegation was fully in favour of a greater decentralization of operational activities for development through the delegation of more powers to the resident representative of UNDP.

34. With regard to the Jansson report proposals concerning the integration and coherence of the activities of the various agencies of the United Nations system, her delegation felt obliged to draw attention to the difficulties that would inevitably arise if all the resources allocated to assistance were directed through the same channel. As several delegations had already pointed out, in view of the diversity of the situations of the developing countries, there was an evident need to adjust programming procedures and formulas.

35. Mr. PETRONE (Italy) said that, on the whole, he supported the comments that had already been made in the UNDP response to the findings of the Jansson report (DP/1988/64). In his delegation's view, General Assembly resolution 42/196 gave the United Nations system a reference programme in regard to development assistance for several years to come and his delegation would do its utmost to ensure that that resolution did not remain a dead letter.

36. He hoped that the United Nations organizations engaged in field operations would be able to participate actively in country programming, which did not always seem to be the case. He wondered whether the Administrator would be able to make the requisite change in procedural approach in order to ensure that those agencies participated in joint programming, even if only in three or four pilot countries, during the next cycle.

37. The Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation had proposed that, during the adoption of Government programming and planning cycles, the representatives of the United Nations system and the authorities of the recipient country should formulate a general declaration of intent that would serve as a programming instrument for each of the agencies concerned. The Administrator of UNDP could possibly give an informal indication of his opinion on that proposal and state whether, in his view, there was a possibility of it being approved by the Economic and Social Council at its summer session in 1988.

38. Mr. KUNUGI (Deputy Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund) said that co-ordination played a major role in the activities of the Fund which, on the whole, supported the conclusions and recommendations of the Jansson report, particularly those concerning improved integration and co-ordination of United Nations operational activities in the field, the promotion of joint programming, harmonization of procedures and increased action by the Joint Consultative Group on Policy. Moreover, the Executive Director of UNFPA had requested all his staff to ensure that such co-ordination and collaboration became integral and systematic components of all UNFPA activities.

39. The Executive Director had also initiated a series of consultations with other United Nations agencies; for example, the Fund's geographical divisions and the UNDP regional bureaux had reached agreements on ways to improve collaboration between their field offices at various stages of the programme/project cycle and on participation in each other's programme/project reviews. WHO, UNICEF and UNFPA were also holding regular tripartite meetings on policy and technical matters at the headquarters level.

40. The Fund fully concurred with the conclusion of the Jansson report to the effect that the importance of the assistance provided by the United Nations system far exceeded its value in terms of its contribution to the volume of aid flows. For its part, the Fund was endeavouring to stimulate greater awareness of the importance of population questions in both developed and developing countries, and that endeavour had been extremely successful. However, in order to continue that endeavour while, at the same time, playing its co-ordinating role, the Fund must be endowed with the requisite authority and staff.

41. In conclusion, he pointed out that there was no uniform pattern of co-ordination that could be applied to all countries, since needs varied not only from country to country but also over time. The Fund would do its utmost to maximize the effectiveness of co-ordination and would support all the steps taken by the Governing Council, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly to improve co-ordination within the United Nations system.

42. Mr. Mangwazu (Malawi) resumed the Chair.

43. Mr. EL FARGANI (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) shared the concerns that some speakers had already expressed concerning the Jansson report. If the recommendations submitted in that report contained some shortcomings, that was probably because they had been based on only eight case studies, whereas there was a total of 152 field offices. However, that did not imply that the recommendations of the Jansson report were not valid; it merely signified

that they were not applicable in all cases. In that respect, he supported the Danish delegation's proposal that a committee should be formed to study the Jansson report in detail.

44. Mr. WHALEY (Office of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation) said that the Director-General had been impressed by the serious manner in which the Council had considered the broad range of issues relating not only to the conclusions and recommendations of the Jansson report but also to the various proposals and recommendations contained in resolution 42/196. The views that had been expressed would certainly be taken into consideration by the Director-General, his staff and the UNDP Administration as a whole. The Director-General had also noted the justified reservations that had been expressed concerning the Jansson report. Furthermore, some of those reservations were also shared by the Director-General and would not come as a surprise to the authors of the report, who had acknowledged their awareness of the limits of their study.

45. The discussions on various agenda items also merited an in-depth study. The Director-General hoped that the Governing Council would provide the Economic and Social Council with a statement clearly explaining the point of view of two of the principal sources of development financing for the United Nations system and of an important executing agency, the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development. In so doing, it would be providing useful guidelines for the consideration and application of the provisions of resolution 42/196.

46. Three important aspects had been somewhat overlooked, certainly by accident. The first concerned the role of information as a tool for technical co-operation. Information played a useful role in organizing the transfer and exchange of technology and experience, in strengthening the national capability to assess co-operation needs and in programming and administering the requisite inputs. Paragraph 37 of the document containing the UNDP response to the findings and recommendations of the Jansson report (DP/1988/64) did not really tackle the problem described in paragraphs 77-80 of that report. The Governing Council would do well to consider that clearly stated objective of the use of information systems. In Algeria, where he had been the resident representative of UNDP, he had fully realized the usefulness of data banks and information systems for the programming of technical co-operation.

47. With regard to the arrangements concerning agency support costs, there seemed to be a need to refocus the debate on that issue, which had an impact on the whole concept of the tripartite relationship that had been developed and confirmed in the 1970 Consensus. Account should be taken of the changing modalities of technical co-operation and of the initial objective of ensuring the full involvement of the specialized agencies in the co-operation process.

48. The time had possibly come to consider the role of United Nations agencies in the 1990s, as opposed to that of UNDP alone. The preparation of the Fourth International Development Strategy would provide a useful framework for a joint study on the collective future of the various agencies, viewed in the light of different possible scenarios. The Director-General held the opinion that such an approach could facilitate the quest for solutions to some of the more complicated operational questions posed in resolution 42/196.

49. Mr. KUMURALASINGHE (International Labour Organisation), replying to the representative of Italy, pointed out that it was the Administrator who, during the high-level debate, had declared that the most successful programmes had been those executed in close partnership with the specialized agencies. The ILO remained committed to the principle of country programming, the application of which naturally depended on the extent of governmental involvement and full utilization of agency expertise.

50. In reply to another question raised by the Italian delegation on the subject of the joint or co-ordinated programming of the resources allocated to operational activities, he pointed out that the Office of the Director-General and UNDP had undertaken an important study on country programming. The consultant commissioned to carry out that study had held extensive consultations with the specialized agencies and it might be preferable to await the conclusions and recommendations of that study before replying to the question raised by the Italian delegation. In conclusion, he recalled one of the conclusions of the Jansson report, to the effect that the importance that Governments attached to assistance from the United Nations system far exceeded its monetary value and was due primarily to its non-political character, its adaptability to governmental plans and priorities, and the accumulated knowledge and experience of the United Nations system.

51. Mr. KRSTAJIC (Yugoslavia), commenting on the UNDP response to the findings of the Jansson report (DP/1988/64), declared his strong support for the views that had been expressed on the subject of the co-ordination of programming, the role of the resident co-ordinator, the role of UNDP as a central funding agency and the decentralization of the Programme. A number of commendable innovative steps had already been taken, which had greatly increased the effectiveness of UNDP programming. Yugoslavia would welcome any further endeavour to that end.

52. Mrs. DUDIK-GAYOSO (United States of America) noted that the Jansson report had shown that most of the operational activities of the United Nations system suffered from a lack of coherence, which created problems for the national authorities responsible for development activities. Her delegation believed that the current arrangements between UNDP and the specialized agencies were undermining the effectiveness of United Nations operational activities for development, since the specialized agencies were being encouraged to maximize the number of UNDP funded-projects at the expense of project quality. The roles had been reversed: UNDP was increasingly becoming an executing agency, while the financing function of the specialized agencies was being developed. The Programme had never made full use of its potential as the co-ordinator of United Nations assistance. Although the practice of having projects executed by Governments was increasing, its nature was changing. The relationship between UNDP and the other organizations in the United Nations system was being modified, and that change should be reflected in the new arrangements concerning the reimbursement of the project execution costs incurred by the specialized agencies. Accordingly, the proposals that the Budgetary and Finance Committee was considering in regard to support costs arrangements were political rather than financial decisions and should reflect the changes that had taken place.

53. As suggested in paragraphs 3 to 11 of document DP/1988/64, it might be wondered whether the project approach itself required further examination.

One of the principal ways to increase the coherence of United Nations field activities was the country programming system which, however, had so far failed as a frame of reference for the programming of United Nations technical assistance. For it to play that role and actually become the country programming system of all the United Nations organizations, it would have to show its ability to assess technical assistance needs and to formulate strategies in that area. The United States was gratified that UNDP had taken a step in that direction. Italy's proposal concerning participation by the specialized agencies in the mid-term review also deserved support.

54. The United States endorsed the UNDP decision to help Governments by advising them on development policies and programmes. With regard to the redeployment of substantive staff from headquarters to the field offices (DP/1988/64, paras. 30-36), she did not believe that every field office should be staffed with the personnel needed to carry out all the sectoral analyses. Like the Administrator, she regarded that as a financial impossibility. However, she believed that it would be beneficial for the principal specialized agencies to deploy a limited number of high-ranking experienced professionals in UNDP field offices. She noted that the Administrator was opposed to that redeployment. Moreover, UNDP had not reacted to the suggestion that an inter-agency agreement on the future role of the resident co-ordinator, accompanied by a redeployment of staff, could lead to an amalgamation of the field offices of the various agencies, under the supervision of the resident representative.

55. She congratulated the World Commission on Environment and Development on its excellent work and shared the Commission's overall opinion that all countries should make an energetic and concerted effort to provide the goods and services needed by their population, while safeguarding the quality of the environment. The World Commission had called upon United Nations organizations to ensure that development activities were carried out in an environmentally sound manner. UNDP could be highly instrumental in promoting that approach in all the activities of the United Nations system. In that connection, she noted with satisfaction that, at its fourteenth session, the Governing Council of UNDP had adopted goals and principles of environmental impact assessment. International institutions, including the development assistance agencies and banks, should also establish procedures to promote the integration of environmental and sectoral planning.

56. Mr. MATSVAYI (Zimbabwe) said that, in general, he supported the conclusions of the Jansson report. On reading the UNDP response to those conclusions (DP/1988/64), he had gained the impression that, in the opinion of UNDP, the non-governmental organizations, being in a better financial situation, should be more involved in programming the projects that countries undertook. He expressed reservations on that subject. Moreover, he noted a contradiction between paragraphs 41 and 42 of the document in question: in the former it was recommended that the non-governmental organizations should participate in the aid co-ordination arrangements, whereas the latter stated that those organizations lacked internal co-ordinating mechanisms. He would like to have clarification on that point before adopting a position.

57. Mr. THOMPSON (Fiji) said that UNDP was possibly the principal organization providing assistance for the developing countries. The exercise

that had led to the Jansson report had been essential in order to maintain a system of effective operational activities. In general, Fiji approved the UNDP response to the Jansson report.

58. With regard to the idea of separating the function of resident representative from that of resident co-ordinator, his delegation felt that a separation between operational responsibility and control of resources would be detrimental to efficiency, even if that arrangement might possibly be the most appropriate in some cases. In the final analysis, it was the degree of efficiency at the national level that should determine the means to be employed.

59. Mr. BROWN (Associate Administrator), replying to various questions raised by delegations, said that much had been said about country programming and the report that the General Assembly had requested from the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation. For his part, he thought that, if the numerous recommendations that had been made during the last 20 years in regard to co-ordination, joint programming and the use of UNDP country programmes as a frame of reference had remained a dead letter, there was certainly a reason for it. It was possible that an impasse had been reached, in which case the time had come to adopt a radically different approach to those questions.

60. At all events, there was one fundamental and immutable principle: it was the responsibility of Governments not only to determine their priorities but also to embody those priorities in a three-year or four-year plan expressed in monetary terms with a view to the preparation of an annual budget showing the locally available resources and the requisite foreign inputs. In the light of his own experience, he felt that the sole purpose of the plan formulated within the framework of the United Nations must be to fit into the overall programme prepared by the Government. Once that had been done, co-ordination should follow automatically. It was not UNDP, but rather the Government, that was in control, since the latter was in a better position to exercise such control. However, the Government needed a technical input and not merely joint consultations.

61. Within that context, he also suggested that, when the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation had submitted the requested report, instead of entrusting the study of those questions to outside experts who would make recommendations to the various secretariats, which would subsequently make their own recommendations to the governing bodies, it would be preferable to seek the opinion of the people concerned with planning matters on the ground. A group of national planners or high officials of the Ministries of Planning and Finance should meet to study the manner in which United Nations and all other external inputs should be integrated in the country's operational activities. In that way, it would certainly be possible to obtain a more realistic set of recommendations for the Governing Council of UNDP, the Economic and Social Council, the General Assembly and the governing bodies of the other organizations. That might also facilitate a completely new approach. No progress would be made if those questions of country programming, co-ordination and joint programming continued to be examined by the same bodies.

62. The delegation of the Netherlands had once again emphasized the need to concentrate United Nations inputs in a smaller number of sectors. UNDP and the various agencies of the United Nations system could make that suggestion to Governments. However, as the Administrator of UNDP had already indicated, the particular situation of each country must be taken into consideration. If the consulted Government stated its preference for a broader-based allocation, UNDP would have to respect the Government's sovereign decision.

63. With regard to the role of central funding agency that was being played by UNDP, it was true that only a small percentage of the total resources was channelled through UNDP. Accordingly, it was absolutely essential that UNDP should prove that it was administering technical assistance in an efficient and economical manner. However, once it had done so, the ball would be in the donors' court. All that UNDP could do was to maximize its effectiveness.

64. Several delegations had referred to the suggestion made by the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation that the recipient country and the representatives of the United Nations system should issue a declaration of intent concerning the fields in which the Governments wished to engage in joint programming. In that respect, too, it would be appropriate to await publication of the report that had been requested from the Director-General. The idea of a unified overseas development service was a recommendation that had been submitted by the Director-General for Development and International Technical Co-operation to the Joint Consultative Group on Policy and had already been considered. He proposed that a copy of the report that had been submitted to the Joint Consultative Group on Policy should be distributed to interested delegations, which would then be able to present their comments to a subsequent meeting or to the Economic and Social Council.

65. With regard to the idea of a uniform project document for the United Nations system, which had been advocated by the delegation of the Netherlands, the UNDP Administration intended to send a model to the delegations that had bilateral programmes, inquiring whether they wished to study that question with UNDP.

66. The Canadian and other delegations had referred to the question of agency support costs. On that point, he shared the views of the United States delegation; although that issue had been referred to the Budgetary and Finance Committee, it was not a purely financial question, since it concerned the collective role that the United Nations system played in operational activities. He hoped that, if the question was treated as a general policy issue, some of the arguments put forward during the debate could be studied by the Budgetary and Finance Committee.

67. The representative of Canada had suggested that UNDP should avail itself of the services of staff with more diversified qualifications and greater competence in the various fields that were gaining in importance. As could be seen from the Governing Council's deliberations in 1987 and 1988, that was one of the objectives which the UNDP Administration was seeking to achieve in its endeavours to adapt to a changing situation, without thereby duplicating the terms of reference of the system's specialized agencies.

68. In that connection, it had been suggested that UNDP could, for example, call upon the services of the economists available elsewhere in the system. However, it would be wrong to believe that the other bodies and organizations had unoccupied staff and, at all events, UNDP could not wait until someone was free to offer the advice requested of him. For his part, he had already approached all the agencies and organizations employing economists, but those representations had not produced any results.

69. The delegations of Denmark, the United States and other countries had referred to the question of the environment. UNDP was well aware of its responsibilities. In that field, as in the case of overall planning, he thought that the developing countries had a greater need for assistance to acquire the capability to make the requisite analyses than for lessons and theories on the environment. After all, a developing country was interested primarily in a project's cost-effectiveness and therefore needed to know whether the investment required to ensure environmental protection in a particular project was worth while. An organization such as UNDP could invest in education, training and research activities with a view to convincing the developing countries that it was in their interest to engage in environmental protection projects. However, it was no longer sufficient merely to advocate a cause; environmental questions must be approached from a new and more productive standpoint.

70. The Danish delegation had asked numerous questions concerning the country programming process. With regard to the technical assistance needs of country programmes, he thought that the NatCAPs showed the path to be followed, in so far as they constituted large-scale operations that made it possible to study overall technical assistance needs, including those arising from capital investment. Although the NatCAPs were costly in terms of time and money, he thought that they should be organized in still more countries.

71. The Japanese delegation had specifically indicated its approval of the content of paragraph 33 of document DP/1988/61, in which reference had been made to a modification of UNDP country programming, as currently practised. Through the round tables, the consultative groups and the NatCAPs, UNDP was endeavouring to establish a correlation between external resources, provided by the United Nations system or in the form of bilateral aid, and an integrated country programme. The Japanese delegation seemed to endorse that approach, and he hoped that all parties concerned would follow suit.

72. The Japanese delegation had inquired why document DP/1988/61 had not referred to the linkage between UNDP activities and structural adjustment programmes. He recalled that the question of structural adjustment had been regarded as so important that it had been dealt with in the annual report of the Administrator and had been discussed in detail during the high-level general debate. However, in view of its social implications, it was an issue that far transcended the question of the relationship between UNDP and the World Bank. Considerable attention had also been paid to structural adjustment in the debate on the United Nations Programme of Action for Economic Recovery and Development in Africa, 1986-1990.

73. The Italian delegation had inquired whether the specialized agencies were participating in the country programming process. In that connection, he referred to the country programming guidelines, which explicitly stated that

the resident representative must inform the Government of the studies and analyses that could be carried out by United Nations organizations within the context of the country programming process. The resident representative had to ask the Governments whether they wished to avail themselves of that type of specialized service. For its part, UNDP thought that it would be beneficial to conduct specific studies in sectors falling within the particular field of competence of a specialized agency.

74. With regard to the participation of specialized agencies in country programming, a distinction should be made between participation in the collection of programming data and participation in the implementation of the programme itself. It was evident that, once all the components of the country programme had been assembled, the total resources requested far exceeded the most optimistic assumption concerning the resources that would be provided. It was at that stage, when a balance had to be struck between the various sectors vying for priority, that the Government should take its decision. It was the Government, and not the specialized agencies or UNDP, that would decide, for example, whether priority should be accorded to education, health, communications or agriculture.

75. The representative of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation had spoken of the importance of information. Although the era of information and data processing had undoubtedly dawned, he wished to issue a warning in that respect. In view of the proliferation of data-processing projects, which were sometimes very costly, the prestige attached to the new technologies must be balanced against the usefulness of collecting an increasing amount of data. Prudence should therefore be exercised in regard to that type of project.

76. The Yugoslav delegation had wondered whether it might be too late to speak of country programming, given the fact that most of the country programmes had already been approved. In that connection, he pointed out that the mid-term review would offer an opportunity to propose new ideas and it was not too early to speak of a reform of the country programming process for the fifth programming cycle.

77. The delegation of Zimbabwe had asked a specific question concerning the reference made to the non-governmental organizations in document DP/1988/64 (paras. 41 and 42). In fact, the document was not referring to the large non-governmental organizations but merely to the small local non-governmental organizations, such as community groups in countries that formulated their national plan or programme from the grass roots upwards. In other words, instead of producing a plan that they would subsequently have to justify to the groups concerned, the Ministries of Planning collected data at the grass-roots level for subsequent use in the overall programme. Although that might not have been clearly explained in the text, it was a procedure that deserved to be applied, as the delegation of Zimbabwe would surely agree.

78. Mr. KRAMER (Canada) said that the tenor of the debate strengthened his conviction that the question of agency support costs should not be referred to the Budgetary and Finance Committee, but rather to the Drafting Group with a view to obtaining a decision concerning future arrangements.

79. Mrs. DUDIK-GAYOSO (United States of America) expressed the same view and hoped that the working group that would be called upon to consider future arrangements for the reimbursement of support costs would study the general policy questions concerning the relationship between UNDP and the specialized agencies.

80. Following an exchange of views in which Mr. KRAMER (Canada), Mr. PETTITT (United Kingdom), Mrs. BARRIOS BARON (Argentina) and Mr. SALAZAR-SANCISI (Ecuador) took part, the PRESIDENT suggested that the Chairman of the Drafting Group should be consulted with a view to determining which subsidiary body should formulate a draft decision on support costs.

81. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.

