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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 26th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 21 June 1988, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. MANGWAZU (Malawi)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (agenda item 4):

(c) EVALUATION (continued) (DP/1988/14)

1. The PRESIDENT announced that the Committee of the Whole, after considering the question of evaluation, recommended that the Governing Council should refer that matter to the Drafting Group for formulation of a draft decision.

2. It was so decided.

UNITED NATIONS TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION ACTIVITIES (agenda item 7) (DP/1988/45 and Add.1-3)

3. Mr. ZHONG Shukong (Director, Department of Technical Co-operation for Development - DTCD), introducing the Secretary-General's report on United Nations technical co-operation activities (DP/1988/45 and Add.1-3), indicated that, in 1987, the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development (DTCD) had managed to maintain the high implementation rate of 1986, but that expenditure under UNDP-financed projects had accounted for only 65 per cent of overall expenditure, as against 71 per cent in 1986. UNDP's own calculations confirmed that comparative drop in the allocation of IPF funds to the Department. On the other hand, the portion of the programme funded by UNFPA had increased for the first time in several years, particularly as a result of a project implementation rate of 94 per cent. Moreover, the Department had again managed to hold down its administrative costs, and its record showed that, despite staff cuts of 30 per cent, it had succeeded in maintaining its effectiveness. It was none the less hoped that the Department would be allowed to retain the services of the experts that were indispensable to the fulfilment of its mandates. Copies of the first issue of the DTCD Newsletter, a new quarterly publication, had been distributed to delegations. Any observations on it would be welcome.

4. In 1987, the Department's major operational activities had again centred on natural resources and energy, which had accounted for 44 per cent of overall expenditure, and on human resources development, including national capacity building. Those two major areas were in fact closely related, and the Department had stepped up its activities for human resources development in the areas of water and mineral resources, energy, remote sensing, cartography and infrastructure. Furthermore, investment promotion had grown in importance in the mining and water sectors; and planning software packages were being used increasingly to train specialized planners in the energy sector.

5. Development planning was the focus of the Department's second largest programme, followed by statistics, public administration and finance, and population - four areas which, again, were closely interrelated. The Department's field experience enabled it to pursue an integrated and cohesive approach in providing assistance to developing countries. That was particularly evident in the case of Africa, which accounted for nearly half the Department's programme (DP/1988/45, paras. 37-44). In that continent, the Department was emphasizing institution-building, training and economic planning and management, without losing sight of the need to take account of the

poorest and most disadvantaged population groups which it was encouraging to take part in income-generating activities in order to promote overall economic growth and improve the quality of life. In the case of some of those activities, such as the Trickle Up Programme (TUP), the Department had collaborated with non-governmental organizations in order to promote development at the grassroots level.

6. In 1987, the Department had also endeavoured to improve the quality of the services provided to developing countries, and it had been very pleased to collaborate with UNDP on the revision of the project document format which should greatly enhance project formulation. At the beginning of 1988, a Task Force on Major Projects Issues had been set up within the Department in order to ensure that substantive and administrative problems were resolved at an early stage. In addition, the Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (Operational Activities) (CCSQ) had requested the Department to undertake a study on the quality of experts, which was expected to produce a general improvement in the level of expertise provided by the United Nations system. Furthermore, on the administrative side, the Department was using more automation at Headquarters in order to accelerate programme delivery and, in the field, it authorized its officials to purchase equipment locally on their own initiative up to a value of \$US 5,000. There had in fact already been a slight increase in the percentage of equipment purchased in developing countries.

7. Acting upon the request of the Governing Council which by its decision 87/34 had asked the Department to promote technical co-operation among developing countries (TCDC), the Department had continued in 1987 to give active support to intergovernmental meetings on issues such as regional programming, or aimed at promoting the exchange of visits for training purposes and the use of twinning arrangements between training and research institutions in developing countries, a system that had proved particularly effective.

8. As far as evaluation was concerned, the Department had primarily endeavoured to ensure a feedback process whereby evaluation results could be put to good use in project formulation. The Department was closely following the work on evaluation undertaken by UNDP, and had actively participated in the inter-agency meeting organized by UNDP on that subject (DP/1988/45, paras. 28-36).

9. With regard to the promotion of the role of women in development (DP/1988/45, paras. 45-48), the Department was endeavouring to respond to UNDP's concerns, and its objective was to integrate women as participants in, and beneficiaries of economic undertakings in all sectors.

10. In conclusion, he requested the Governing Council to provide the Department with guidance regarding its programme in Africa, its activities in promoting human resources development and national capacities for economic management, its work in the exploration of natural resources and energy, and the ways in which the Department might support the new initiatives that the Governing Council was considering.

11. Mr. LI Yang (China) noted with satisfaction that the Department was endeavouring to meet the needs of the developing countries, notably by setting up infrastructure and organizing training activities, especially in the

spheres of energy and public administration. The staff cuts effected by the Department, which amounted to 30 per cent of its personnel, had not prevented it from improving its productivity, as was reflected in the quality and number of projects implemented. However, it would be inadvisable to take any more measures to that effect because further staff cuts would be detrimental to the Department's activities.

12. The project implementation rate had reached a satisfactory average of 84 per cent, and had been outstanding in Africa. China, for its part, had benefited substantially from the Department's technical co-operation in recent years. In connection with the development of natural resources, the Department had helped it, under a pilot project, to work out a heating system based on solar energy, and, in the sphere of public administration, to compile economic data bases, train personnel in the operation of those bases and set up economic information centres at various levels.

13. In 1987, the Department's expenditure on UNDP-financed projects had amounted to 65 per cent of overall expenditure, which meant that UNDP continued to occupy a very important place in the Department's work. However, that percentage was lower than the figure for 1986, and his delegation hoped that it would soon begin to increase again. For years, UNDP and the Department had complemented each other effectively, the former providing for financing, while the latter, in its capacity as executing agency, offered the developing countries particularly rich technical experience. For the Department to continue to ensure that valuable transfer of technology and expertise, it must be provided with sufficient resources and the recommendations concerning staff cuts must be applied "with flexibility", as requested by the General Assembly.

14. Mr. MONIAGA (Indonesia) said he was generally satisfied with the measures adopted by the Department to give effect to Governing Council decision 87/34. He observed that, after reaching a record high in 1986, the Department's budget had returned to a more normal level in 1987. The project implementation rate had none the less remained satisfactory and, for the second consecutive year, the Department had managed to maintain an operational surplus in its support costs ("overhead") account. He hoped that more measures could be taken to enhance its productivity further.

15. With regard to evaluation, he noted with satisfaction that the Department had devoted careful attention to UNDP's new evaluation requirements, and endeavoured to integrate the revised procedures into its operations and give greater prominence to project evaluation.

16. Considering that human resources development was a crucial aspect of the development process, his delegation welcomed the fact that the Department had intensified its efforts in that area, training managers and technical personnel in the public sector and upgrading national training institutions. It hoped that the Department would continue to work along those lines and that it would be willing to extend effective support to the implementation of the Jakarta Plan of Action on Human Resources Development in the ESCAP Region adopted recently by that Commission.

17. Turning to the Secretary-General's report on the technical co-operation activities of entities other than the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development (DP/1988/45/Add.2), his delegation noted with pleasure that the

total amount of UNCTAD's project expenditure was increasing steadily. It attached great importance to the assistance provided by UNCTAD in the area of trade policy, planning, development and projections including broader dissemination of information on the generalized system of preferences, support for the external services sector as well as assistance to the developing countries in connection with the Punta del Este multilateral trade negotiations. Furthermore, in the area of economic co-operation among developing countries, Indonesia highly appreciated the technical support provided by UNCTAD to the current negotiations on the establishment of a global system of trade preferences and the dissemination of data on trade barriers, and hoped that such activities could be further developed.

18. Mr. ZELENOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) observed that the Department had continued its efforts to increase the project implementation rate, reduce expenditure on support services and accelerate project execution in the developing countries. In addition, as a result of the measures it had been applying systematically for several years to reduce its staff and increase productivity, it had succeeded in overcoming the earlier deficit in its operational budget.

19. By and large the results achieved by the Department were satisfactory. However, the rate of budgetary resource utilization had barely changed and was still too low. The formulation of technical assistance projects still tended to be slow and their implementation was sometimes delayed. The integration of women in the development process was not systematic enough.

20. In his delegation's opinion, it was absolutely essential for the Department to take fuller account of the recommendations made at the 1986 Meeting of National Recruitment Services; more often than not, candidates for project posts tended to be selected on the spur of the moment without much effort to look further afield, thereby limiting the chances of benefiting from the services of highly qualified experts from the socialist countries. Furthermore, the Department continued to rely much more on consultants than on experts recruited for long-term assignments. He was convinced that that practice was conducive to satisfactory project implementation only in countries endowed with fairly sophisticated technical capabilities. In the other developing countries, the experts' role must be regarded differently, and in order to provide rational consultative services, they had to remain in the field. In that connection, it was gratifying to note the growing importance attached to the training of national personnel in the developing countries, as reflected in the projects carried out in Mozambique, Peru, Ghana and in Guinea to strengthen the mining industry. The Soviet delegation was convinced that once the shortcomings it had pointed out had been remedied, the Department would be in an even better position to play its important role within the technical assistance network of the United Nations system.

21. Mr. GIELING (Belgium) noted with satisfaction that in 1987 the Department had endeavoured to give special importance to human resources development, the training of senior staff in the public sector, the upgrading of national training institutions, the protection of vulnerable groups and the integration of social variables in the analysis of development planning. Furthermore, he felt that the Department's activities aimed at strengthening the capacity of the African countries, particularly for policy analysis and formulation, the

reorganization of the civil service, etc., were in line with the approaches recommended by the Governing Council, especially as far as UNDP and UNFPA were concerned.

22. It was perhaps time for the Department to define more specifically those of its activities which were financed by UNDP (and which accounted for 65 per cent of overall expenditure), those financed by UNFPA and those financed with other resources. In particular, his delegation wished to know what role UNDP intended the Department to play in the initiatives it had taken to strengthen the capacity of the African countries to manage and administer assistance. It also wished to know what was the relationship between the Department and the Office for Project Services as far as the implementation of UNDP projects was concerned.

23. Furthermore, while welcoming the strengthening of co-operation between the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development and the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs that had followed the establishment of a contact group, his delegation wished to be informed more fully on the areas covered by such co-operation. It also inquired about the procedure for co-operation with UNDP in the field of technical co-operation for development.

24. With reference to the chapter of the report on evaluation (DP/1988/45, paras. 28-36), he noted with concern that feedback had proved difficult to obtain owing to the absence of any budgetary provision for certain ex post evaluation activities (para. 31). Yet evaluation was only truly meaningful if it could be used to compile an institutional memory with a view to the formulation of new projects. The delegation of Belgium wished to know how the Department co-operated with UNDP in matters relating to evaluation.

25. Mrs. SENECA (Canada) welcomed the efforts made by the Department to carry out its strategy for the promotion of the participation of women (DP/1988/45, paras. 45-48). In particular, she commended it for ensuring that the interests of women were taken into account in project formulation, for adopting measures to increase the number of women candidates for fellowship awards, and for supporting the efforts made to compile reliable data on the situation of women for the purposes of project planning and analysis. She expressed the hope that the Department would be able to recruit more women for technical assistance (paras. 23 and 24), and asked whether it would be possible to break down by sex some of the data in document DP/1988/45/Add.3.

26. Furthermore, her delegation noted with satisfaction that the Department had expanded its programme for Africa, which had accounted for 48 per cent of overall expenditure in 1987. The Department obviously had an important role to play in assisting Governments in the areas of public administration and management, and planning and policy formulation, not to mention the implementation of structural adjustment policies and the evaluation of their impact on the most vulnerable groups. In that connection, she requested further information on the Department's participation in the Special Action Programme for Administration and Management in Africa (SAPAM): how had the preparatory stage proceeded and what requirements had been identified? Considering the other activities for which the Department was responsible and the freeze on recruitment, would it be in a position to play a broader part in the Special Action Programme if necessary?

27. With regard to evaluation, she inquired about the means at the Department's disposal to take into account in future project formulation, the wealth of information it derived from evaluations and asked how it intended to overcome the problems posed by the limited usefulness of many evaluations (para. 31).

28. Referring to the triennial review of the Department mentioned in paragraphs 12 and 13 of document DP/1988/45, her delegation inquired about the actual purpose of that exercise and asked when its results would be communicated to the Governing Council. Lastly, it supported the Department's efforts to collaborate more closely with UNFPA in integrating population factors in development planning and in the formulation of sound population policies.

29. Mr. GAJENTAAN (Netherlands) inquired about the measures that the Department had taken, or intended to take, to overcome the somewhat disturbing decline in programme implementation in 1987. Turning to the Special Action Programme for Administration and Management in Africa, he asked what was the position with regard to the Department's participation in projects and their identification? According to paragraph 21 of document DP/1988/45, most of the projects had been finalized and were now awaiting approval by the funding sources, whereupon they would be executed by the Department. Was it the finalization of the projects or their approval which was causing delays, and was the Department having difficulty with the project identification stage? The delivery of quality projects must be increased.

30. With reference to evaluation, he expressed concern about the shortcomings in the feedback process mentioned in paragraph 31, especially about the fact that in one case at least the validity of the evaluation report's conclusions had been called into question and that the relevant recommendations would presumably not be implemented.

31. Lastly, he inquired about the World Bank's response to the Department's request for participation in the Advisory Committee of the World Bank project mentioned in paragraph 40.

32. Mr. PAYTON (New Zealand) regretted that among the many functions exercised by the Governing Council of UNDP, its responsibility towards the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development was sometimes neglected. That was due to the Department's rather unusual situation. It was neither a full-fledged part of the United Nations Secretariat nor a specialized agency in its own right, and therefore never came under critical scrutiny, but it did not enjoy the benefit of constructive interest either. Yet, it had been set up by the General Assembly to perform functions that were not exercised by any of the specialized agencies; the Department effectively filled a gap. It was therefore essential that the United Nations should confirm its commitment to that sector of activity and that funding should be provided to it under the regular budget. It was indeed vital that the Department should be permitted to operate effectively, especially since the 1990s looked uncertain for the specialized agencies. There was no doubt that the Department had an important role to play in the period ahead and that it would be up to assuming that responsibility, because it had demonstrated its genuine ability to respond to the technical assistance requirements of the developing countries.

33. Admittedly, the total value of the projects executed by the Department in 1987 had been slightly lower than in 1986, but that was usually the case in the first year of a new programming cycle and should therefore not give rise to concern. The Department remained one of the major executors of projects funded by UNDP, and it was therefore essential that the very best working relationship should exist between the two bodies. However, despite the statements to the Council in 1986 claiming that perfect co-operation existed, it had to be recognized that tensions had developed between the Department and some parts of UNDP, especially the Office for Project Services, and judging from the concern expressed by officials from the Department, the matter had yet to be settled. It was indeed inevitable that the importance assumed by the Office within UNDP should arouse concern among the executors of the Programme. In view of the Office's expansion, it would be advisable, as had already been suggested, for the Council to submit that body to an in-depth assessment at its 1989 session. The activities of the Office and the Department must not overlap and their work must be concerted.

34. Turning to the Department's main areas of activity as reviewed in the report of the Secretary-General (DP/1988/45/Add.1), and first to development planning, he pointed out that the developing countries must all be adequately equipped to deal with the programmes and policies set up by intergovernmental bodies such as UNDP if they were to derive maximum benefit from them. The Jansson report (A/42/326/Add.1) emphasized the need for the development planning capacities of recipient countries to be strengthened. That was particularly true of small countries whose manpower resources were limited, as was often the case in the South Pacific region. The Department's work in that field had yielded very good results. New Zealand welcomed the assistance that the Department provided in the public administration sector to countries submitting requests to that effect.

35. Referring to the programme for natural resources and energy, which had accounted for nearly half of total expenditure, he commended the director and staff of the division concerned for their highly professional approach to their work.

36. In recent years, the Department had experienced massive staff cuts and demonstrated that it could respond suitably to changes in programme budget levels. It should therefore be granted full discretion to apply judiciously and flexibly the staff cuts recommended by the Group of High-Level Intergovernmental Experts referred to in paragraph 16 of document DP/1988/45.

37. With regard to technical assistance recruitment (para. 23), he welcomed the general upgrading of the roster of international candidates for technical co-operation projects. It was important that all the countries concerned should be properly informed of the procedures governing the submission of such candidatures. Noting the efforts that had been made to recruit more women and nationals of "underutilized" countries, he stressed the need for the principle of comparative advantage to be applied in a straightforward manner. In that connection, the Department could usefully produce clear documentation and charts on its management and staffing structure in order to facilitate the task of those having to deal with it.

38. With reference to the activities of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (DP/1988/45/Add.2, para. 25 et seq.), he commended the Commission for the efforts it had made to increase support to the

ESCAP Pacific Operations Centre in Vanuatu and to reinforce its staff. He encouraged it to continue to do so in order to enable that subsidiary organ of the Commission once again to operate with the required degree of effectiveness. Lastly, he expressed unreserved support for the assistance provided by the United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations to the developing countries that had to deal with such corporations, and for the action taken by UNCTAD to assist the developing countries members of GATT in coping with the complexity of the current multilateral trade negotiations and in participating in them fully.

39. Mr. EL FERJANI (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) considered that the developing countries would be in a better position to co-operate with the Department if they were provided with written information on the services it offered, their cost and how to apply for them. In that connection, he inquired about the criteria used to determine beneficiary countries, considering that, in the final analysis, almost all developing countries were in need of technical assistance. The Department should conduct many more field missions to developing countries, for they were very useful, and undertake projects involving state-of-the-art technology and its transfer to those countries. In implementing projects, the Department should as a general rule lay greater emphasis on the use of local expertise. Lastly, it would obviously be easier to evaluate the Department's activities if they were broken down by country, and not only by region, in the form of charts.

40. Mr. SAHLMANN (Federal Republic of Germany) commended the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development for its outstanding achievements in certain areas. However, as a matter of principle, his delegation again wondered whether it was the secretariat's proper role to carry out operational activities. The Federal Republic of Germany also commended the Department for the great support it provided to the least developed countries, especially in Africa, and was gratified by the special attention devoted to in-depth evaluations and the advantage derived from the lessons learnt.

41. As the time allotted to the consideration of that item of the agenda would not permit the Governing Council to conduct a detailed debate on the secretariat's co-operation programme, especially that of the Department, his delegation requested that the matter should be referred to the Working Group of the Committee of the Whole for consideration of the issues raised by Belgium, Canada and New Zealand, and those which the Federal Republic of Germany would also be raising.

42. Mr. DMOWSKI (Poland) said that the documents concerning United Nations technical co-operation activities (DP/1988/45 and its addenda) indicated that the areas of activity of the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development squared well with the requirements of the countries concerned. His delegation wished to comment on two points, namely the recruitment of national experts and consultants, and the training of managerial and technical staff from the developing countries.

43. Regarding the first point, he recalled that Poland took an active part in the implementation of technical assistance projects for developing countries, notably by sending experts to the countries concerned at the request of the specialized agencies. At the national level, it was the State Office for Scientific and Technical Progress and its Application which was responsible for co-ordinating co-operation between the specialized agencies in the

recruitment of technical assistance personnel. Poland submitted 30 to 50 new candidatures each year for inclusion in the rosters of various bodies and organizations such as UNIDO, Habitat, the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development (DTCD), the Technical Assistance Recruitment and Administration Service (TARAS) and the United Nations Volunteers. In all, the various rosters comprised some 600 Polish experts with high professional qualifications and working experience in the developing countries, and 60 to 80 of them were called upon to serve each year. That went to show that Poland had at its disposal a large pool of personnel satisfying the requirements of the countries in need, but that that pool was underutilized. Considerable progress had none the less been made in improving the procedure for recruitment and the Department should continue along those lines in order to meet the needs of the countries concerned in due course.

44. With regard to the training of technical assistance staff, Polish experts were engaged in the training of regional staff and the formulation of development projects in the various branches of the economy. During the past few years, for example, training had been provided to hundreds of foreign specialists from many countries who had attended further training courses in a number of Polish institutions at the request of UNIDO and DTCD in fields such as administration and management, smelting, environmental studies, industrial chemistry, etc.

45. Poland, however, could still offer much more than it had done in the past. It was now in a position to train approximately 500 foreign specialists in various fields each year. Proposals had already been drawn up on the basis of the country projects, centring around issues such as the improvement of milk production and quality, the liquefaction of coal and agricultural machinery. Poland could also offer to train senior staff in physical planning, precision engineering, port management, the protection of water resources, fisheries, industrial chemistry, metalworking, shipbuilding, etc. It had submitted to UNIDO a proposal aimed at organizing 10 industrial training courses. It was also endeavouring to organize more seminars, which it considered to be among the best media for teaching technical know-how, and had plans to organize seminars on population, remote sensing and water resources in the near future. In conclusion, his delegation stressed the importance of paragraph 32 (d) of document DP/1988/45.

46. Mr. PARK (Republic of Korea) commended the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development on its incessant efforts and remarkable achievements, especially its project delivery rate of 84 per cent, which was higher than that of 1986, despite the major difficulties caused by a considerable reduction of the Department's budget for 1987 as against 1986 and a complete freeze on personnel recruitment. The special effort it had made to help Africa also deserved commendation. In view of developments in the area of technical co-operation, the Government of the Republic of Korea had decided upon new directions for strengthening international technical co-operation.

47. First, its technical co-operation with advanced countries such as the United States, Japan, the United Kingdom, the Federal Republic of Germany and France was to be developed, not on a concessionary basis, but on a reciprocal one, so that it could acquire the new advanced technologies needed for its industrialization. Accordingly, it had concluded technical co-operation agreements with 42 countries and promoted institutional co-operation. A

Government-financed overseas training programme for technical personnel had also been formulated to promote the transfer of technology from the developed countries.

48. Secondly, the Republic of Korea was very interested in participating in more international co-operative programmes initiated by the United Nations and offering an opportunity to exchange ideas and new technologies on a multilateral basis, through the provision of expert services and technical training.

49. Thirdly, in the spirit of the principles of technical co-operation among developing countries (TCDC) aimed at establishing a new international economic order based on collective self-reliance among the developing countries, the Government of the Republic of Korea wished to increase its technical assistance to those countries in order to share its development experience and technology for their common prosperity. Lastly, the Republic of Korea was in favour of tripartite co-operation programmes, whereby developed countries and intermediate countries like itself could share their experiences with the participation of less advanced countries.

50. Although purchases of equipment from developing countries for the purpose of strengthening TCDC within the Department had increased significantly, they had still not reached a satisfactory level. All the parties involved in TCDC, namely, the Department, the executing organizations and the developing countries themselves, must therefore redouble their efforts.

51. Mr. KATES (United States of America) said his delegation had noted the Department's involvement in economic recovery efforts, particularly in Africa; its promotion of grassroots participation in the development process, particularly through the integration of women in economic activities and the role of the non-governmental organizations; and, lastly, its support for TCDC.

52. Paragraph 38 of document DP/1988/45 confirmed the consistency between the Department's areas of expertise and the priority needs of the African countries. In that connection, his delegation was pleased to note that a project undertaken by the Department at headquarters already provided assistance to several African countries confronting pressing development problems, and that the Department was also planning to provide further advisory services to assist Governments in introducing adjustments that would make the development process more responsive and dynamic.

53. While commending the Department for its efforts to strengthen co-operation with UNDP, notably in the framework of the National Technical Co-operation Assessment Programmes (NaTCAPs), round tables and the Special Action Programme for Administration and Management in Africa (SAPAM), the United States was concerned about the considerable overlap between the operational areas of UNDP and the Department. In view of the appeal made by the General Assembly in resolution 42/196 for greater integration and harmonization of the development activities of the United Nations system, for adequate and decentralized management and for the strengthening of the capacity of the United Nations for in-depth sectoral analysis at the country level, the Governing Council should play a more active part in providing the Department with general policy guidance and directions.

54. His delegation suggested that measures should be taken to strengthen the complementarity of UNDP and the Department. It supported the proposal made by the Federal Republic of Germany to refer to the Working Group matters such as the degree of convergence between the Department and UNDP in respect of the development of the capacity of recipient countries for planning and management, public sector administration and civil service reform, investment promotion and human resources development. Furthermore, UNDP should examine what the Department had done that was analogous to the proposed management facility. Such a study would determine the extent to which the Department could be responsive to such initiatives from UNDP, for instance by acting as the instrumentation of that mechanism.

55. His delegation commended the Department's intention to improve the quality of the services provided to developing countries, notably through improved identification of their needs, the assessment of progress achieved, the reduction of programmes if necessary, networking, the sharing of resources, and evaluation. Like the delegations of Finland, Belgium and Canada, it considered that the feedback from evaluations should systematically be put to better use in the design and formulation of the Department's projects.

56. Lastly, his delegation noted with interest the Department's co-operation with the Trickle Up Programme, a United States non-governmental organization which financed microprojects aimed at helping the poorest of the poor, who had little access to conventional channels of credit, to start their own small-scale enterprises.

57. Mr. ALOM (Observer for Bangladesh) drew attention to chapter V of document DP/1988/45, concerning evaluation, and commended UNDP for the new approaches and directions it had adopted in that respect. Considering that evaluation was an important management tool that helped to improve the project planning and implementation process, his delegation urged the secretariat to take account of the findings of the 22 in-depth project evaluations conducted in 1987, which would help it to tackle problems and formulate recommendations on the basis of the situation at the grassroots level. It was also important to conduct ex post evaluations of the main programmes to assess the impact of the projects on the development process and that of recommendations based on earlier evaluations. Admittedly, the report indicated that such evaluations would be difficult to undertake because of the current budgetary constraints, but his delegation none the less requested that budgetary appropriations should be set aside for that purpose if they had not been provided for in the project document.

58. He urged all the parties concerned, Governments, and funding and executing agencies to take careful note of the findings of the evaluations conducted in 1987, which were reported in paragraph 32 of document DP/1988/45, especially in subparagraphs (a), (c), (e) and (d), and in paragraphs 34 and 35. Judging from its own experience, Bangladesh felt that the tripartite project reviews should be streamlined to serve as a basis for in-depth project evaluation, and that the recipient Governments should play a more prominent role in the process. Since the tripartite review was part of the evaluation process, it often amounted to no more than a routine procedure, when it should be an integral part of project implementation.

59. Mr. DAH (Burkina Faso) observed that the Secretary-General's report on technical co-operation activities clearly outlined the areas of activity that the recipient countries regarded as priorities. His delegation, for its part, stressed the importance of activities that produced spin-offs in terms of development, namely, those concerned with water resources, because they helped to overcome the problem of supplying water to the population of rural areas, and those concerned with infrastructure such as cartography, remote sensing and public works, because they helped countries to collect the data they needed to map their natural resources, whose exploitation could enhance their capacity for involvement in their own development. Those examples illustrated what the Department could do to meet the needs of the recipient countries. His delegation considered that the Department's activities fitted in well with UNDP's sphere of activity, and co-operation between the two entities clearly indicated that they were complementary rather than competing against each other. Burkina Faso supported the Department's efforts to help the least developed countries.

60. Mr. ZHONG Shukong (Director, Department of Technical Co-operation for Development) said he would try to answer some of the questions asked by delegations, on the understanding that a number of other issues raised in the course of the debate could be examined in greater depth by an informal working group. In reply to the delegation of Indonesia which had drawn attention to the Jakarta Declaration concerning human resources development, he pointed out that the Department had circulated the text of the Declaration to its various services and to the development planning experts for consideration in connection with the advisory services that were currently being provided. Indeed, the Declaration highlighted the quality of life as one of the factors to be taken into account in evaluating human resources development. That concern was akin to the Department's, which despite its modest budget of \$US 136 million was endeavouring to ensure that those funds produced a multiplier effect by concentrating their allocation on human resources development. It was a secret to no one that the best way of helping a hungry person was not to supply him with fish, but to teach him how to catch it himself. The Department's financial resources were admittedly not very substantial, but by working in close co-operation with the Government it offered the developing countries the benefit of its expertise, and its approach was therefore already in line with the principles of the Jakarta Declaration.

61. A number of delegations had mentioned the activities carried out by the Department in connection with the NaTCAP exercises, the round tables and the Special Action Programme for Administration and Management in Africa. He had noted with satisfaction the observations made by Belgium, Canada, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the United States and others, concerning the role that the Department could play in the context of a fresh initiative such as the proposed management facility. The Department was primarily an executing agency whose resources under the regular programme were limited, and most of whose financial resources were provided by UNDP. It was indeed UNDP which financed the Department's participation in NaTCAP exercises, round tables and special action programmes, and invited it to take part in them.

62. The Department shared the view expressed by the members of the Governing Council regarding the need to strengthen the economic management capacity of Governments. At their request, the Department assisted them in institution-building and human resources development. It had contributed to

the establishment of a large number of training institutions, especially in Africa, but also elsewhere, to promote the development of a corps of administrative officials. Also at the Governments' request, it had recently helped those institutions to focus their training on management rather than administration, and to adjust their curricula accordingly, so as to help the recipient countries to develop the capacity they required by introducing the latest management methods and computerized management systems. Such activities were currently under way in the Gambia, Mali, Botswana and Pakistan, to name but a few countries.

63. However, training could not take place in a vacuum. Governments also needed assistance in planning and implementing civil service reform to ensure that their basic structures were suited to the objectives pursued and that the civil service was so organized as to be more productive at lower cost. Projects of that nature were under way in Indonesia, Bhutan, the Niger, Benin, Uganda and Zambia. Indeed, internal management issues had become both more important and more complex, and the Governments concerned must therefore strengthen their capacity for negotiating public investment schemes and endeavour to create an environment conducive to the development of both public and private enterprises. To that end, they must pursue effective budgetary and fiscal policies, and adopt accounting and auditing systems that made it possible to evaluate the performance of public enterprises.

64. In that connection, he wished to draw attention to three specific points. First, the Department was endeavouring to set up data banks to assist Governments in the conduct of their debt management programme. Secondly, it was co-operating with Governments to help them improve their project management capacity by various means, namely, cost-benefit analysis and economic management analysis, feasibility studies, investment project planning, auditing, project follow-up, and the integration of statistics in planning and management programmes. Economic and social studies and the need for access to information techniques played an important part in that respect. In the Gulf region, the Department was carrying out a project aimed at promoting the use of computers in municipal administration. The third point was related to the Department's planning activities, particularly in the areas of administration and finance, statistics and population.

65. In proposing the establishment of a management facility, the UNDP Administrator had observed that the Special Action Programme for Administration and Management in Africa (SAPAM) had led to the identification of projects for nine countries only, requiring a budget of \$US 4 million over the next three years. The Department had taken part in several of the missions responsible for formulating those projects; it was implementing the first of the nine projects approved, and intended to carry on its fruitful co-operation with UNDP. In that connection, he informed the representatives of Belgium, Canada and the Netherlands, who had raised a question on that point, that the Department was adequately staffed to continue to participate in SAPAM. In fact, it was preparing to co-operate with several missions that were to be undertaken to Cape Verde, Mali, Kenya, Malawi, Lesotho and Zimbabwe.

66. Considering that the Department was an executing agency, a number of delegations had asked why it was not executing more programmes. It was entirely prepared to do so, if it were provided with the necessary resources. He fully shared the view of the speakers who had expressed support for

complementarity between the roles of UNDP and the Department. Indeed, he considered that it was in the best interests of both entities to join forces in order to provide the best possible services to the developing countries. The Department, for its part, would continue to stand by any initiatives taken to meet the growing needs of the developing countries, in the hope that full use would be made of the expertise it could provide.

67. Mr. HIRONO (Assistant Administrator and Director, Bureau for Programme Policy and Evaluation), replying to the questions raised about relations between the Department and UNDP and prospects for improving co-operation between them, recalled that UNDP entrusted the Department with the implementation of many projects, particularly in the areas of development planning, public finance, public enterprise management, statistics, etc. In fact, the figures showed that the Department was one of the major executing agencies of the United Nations system. He was convinced that the senior UNDP staff were determined to continue their close co-operation with the Department. Some delegations, especially that, of the United States, had pointed out that, following the establishment of the proposed management facility, it should be possible to improve co-operation between UNDP and the Department, particularly in the areas of human resources development, investment promotion and public enterprise management. It was obvious that the Department, inter alia, would be playing a crucial role in that respect.

68. The PRESIDENT announced that the general debate on agenda item 7 was closed, and proposed that the Governing Council should request the drafting group to prepare a draft decision on that item.

69. It was so decided.

OTHER FUNDS AND PROGRAMMES (item 8 of the agenda):

(a) REVIEW OF THE UNITED NATIONS VOLUNTEERS (DP/1988/46 and Add.1)

70. Mr. THYNESS (Assistant Administrator and Director, Bureau for Special Activities), referring to document DP/1988/46/Add.1 concerning the review of the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme requested by the Council in its decision 87/36, first recalled the background against which the review had been conducted. Immediately after the Council's meeting in 1987, the UNDP Central Evaluation office had put together a team of four consultants representing two industrialized, volunteer-sending countries and two developing, volunteer-receiving countries. The team had started with an extensive round of interviews in New York before going to Geneva and subsequently to several capitals in industrialized countries and into the field to see the programme in action and discuss it with volunteers, host Government officials and field offices. On completing their work, the consultants had prepared a lengthy report setting forth 67 recommendations concerned mainly with problems of an administrative and procedural nature. Most of the recommendations had been accepted by the Administrator and a number of them were already being implemented. Others, however, appeared to be less realistic. Indeed, it had to be accepted that a programme recruiting volunteers in 91 countries and fielding them in 93 countries could not hope to achieve the administrative flexibility of a bilateral programme. Moreover, vast geographical coverage coupled with stringent financial constraints made it impossible, for instance, to provide the volunteers with such

pre-assignment induction as they should ideally receive. None the less, a considerable strengthening of that part of the programme was to be undertaken, as outlined in paragraphs 48-50 of the document under consideration.

71. The review report focused on the role of the programme assistants, which was indeed important. The Administrator had approved recommendation 30 proposing to change their title to "UNV Programme Officer", but considered that the financial implications of recommendations 32 and 33, proposing to increase the number of posts considerably and to upgrade them to professional status, were too heavy as they would imply the addition of more than 40 new posts. However, the Administrator intended gradually to increase the number of programme officers as funding became available, thereby contributing not only to the enhancement of the programme's administrative effectiveness, but also to the facilitation of more effective monitoring, both by the Resident Representative and by UNV headquarters, and to the strengthening of evaluation.

72. With regard to the recommendations concerning the strengthening of the role of the Resident Representative in the UNV programme, he stated that there had never been any doubt that the Resident Representative was the UNV representative in the country, with overall responsibility for programming and day-to-day monitoring. The Administrator intended to request the Resident Representative to report periodically on UNV activities to the Bureau for Special Activities, but he had doubts about the advisability of giving them an expanded discretionary role in the administration of the Volunteers, because that would add a further burden to the Resident Representative's responsibilities for personnel matters, not to mention that fundamentally similar cases would then be treated differently depending on individual considerations. Regarding the degree of rigidity with which the administrative regulations should be applied, the Administrator had always been in favour of decentralization and flexibility provided that equal treatment of equal cases was ensured.

73. That also extended to what might be termed humanitarian concerns in the administration of the UNV programme. Although many recommendations had been made in that area, some of them could unfortunately not be applied because of their cost. However, the Administrator had approved the principle of a ceiling on entitlement to dependency allowances, whereby the Volunteers would assume financial responsibility for any expenses incurred on account of the maintenance of more than three dependants, because he considered it to represent a reasonable solution to a long-standing problem. Naturally, UNV would continue, in practice, to give preference to single volunteers or volunteers with a small number of dependants. The Administrator also supported the proposal for immediate payment of the major part of the repatriation grant on the volunteer's return to the home country. The administrative instructions would be revised to that effect.

74. One of the main questions raised in the review report was that of the ways of achieving a better geographical balance in the recruitment of volunteers, particularly to include a greater number of volunteers from industrialized countries. The consultants had failed to come up with any genuinely new proposals in that connection, and simply recommended that UNV should make a greater effort to achieve that objective (recommendation 1) and that it should seek a closer relationship with bilateral organizations (recommendation 2). That was precisely what it had been doing for some years

already, and it would certainly continue to do so. The proposal calling for more use to be made of former volunteers in recruitment, particularly in the industrialized countries, would also be taken into account (recommendation 47).

75. Regarding the financing of the programme, he felt that the implementation of recommendation 50, whereby the external costs of volunteers should be covered from project funds, coupled with recommendation 13, which would open the way for the Special Voluntary Fund to be used also to cover core external costs for volunteers from the industrialized countries, should remove one of the existing financial constraints. In the case of volunteers from industrialized countries, external costs could vary and, in some cases, exceed the standard repatriation grant plus travel expenses. The authorities concerned intended to make an equal contribution towards the external costs of all volunteers, but the possibility of going beyond that and covering the full costs if they were higher than UNV standards would have to be considered on a case-by-case basis. He hoped that the Council would permit a measure of flexibility on that point.

76. The review report showed very clearly that the ratio of volunteers from industrialized countries to those from developing countries was a structural problem for which there was no simple remedy. UNDP would none the less continue to seek a satisfactory solution, and hoped that co-operating organizations would do the same. Two other factors were perceived as indirectly contributing to the imbalance between the two groups of volunteers, namely, the UNV practice of proposing, to the extent feasible, several candidates for each post, and the so-called UNV "monopoly" on placing volunteers in projects financed by the United Nations.

77. Regarding the first issue, the consultants felt unable to make a recommendation. The existing system was a reflection of two facts that characterized projects financed by the United Nations; first, under a multilateral programme, the user lacked some of the background information that determined the acceptability of volunteers, and, secondly, projects supported by the United Nations were in a sense funded from sources in whose programming the Governments concerned had a major role to play. It was therefore quite natural that they should have their say in how those funds were to be spent. In the circumstances, the Administrator felt that it would be preferable to adhere to what was the common practice of the United Nations system.

78. As to the UNV "monopoly", it was more theoretical than real, since the organizations of the United Nations system were only required to channel their requests for volunteers through UNV in order for it to co-ordinate the participation of volunteers. UNV was meant to be a control point ensuring the effectiveness, quality and relevance of the flow of aid. The "monopoly" was not really what it was perceived to be, since the volunteers provided by bilateral organizations could still be assigned to work in projects supported by the United Nations as part of the Government counterpart contribution, if the Government so wished. The volunteers were then the Government's responsibility, and UNDP certainly had no wish to challenge its right to decide how things should be done in its own country. The only point that must be made clear was that responsibility and accountability should go together. Therefore, if the Administrator was to be responsible for the volunteers, as he must be, certainly no one could object to his being given the necessary means of exercising that responsibility. Of course, that did not imply that

all volunteers had to be fielded as UNVs, although that was obviously the simplest and most straightforward way to proceed. The Administrator could retain his accountability by other means such as controlling qualifications, retaining the substantive supervision, and determining conditions of work, duties and privileges. If a bilateral organization was willing to conform with those requirements, the door was open to it as had always been the case. That was basically what was stated in the review report, and recommendation 10, therefore, was in effect a recommendation to continue the existing system.

79. The consultants had also reviewed the Domestic Development Services (DDS) programmes, emergency assistance programmes and UNV's youth projects, showing very little enthusiasm for any of those three special activities. Concerning the DDS, it seemed that the consultants had never fully grasped the special character of that programme, nor the requirements it created. To merge it into the overall UNV programme would make very little sense, and would be bound to kill it just when the activities of non-governmental organizations, grassroots development, trickle-up programmes and other such activities were receiving renewed attention. However, it could be that the remuneration of DDS volunteers had been lagging behind, and the Administrator intended to study that matter and make adjustments as appropriate. UNV's involvement in youth programmes and projects would also be examined to consider whether UNV resources could be better used in the main programme. Lastly, the Resident Representatives had always had the authority to use volunteers as well as all other United Nations personnel as they saw fit in an emergency situation. That role could be expanded if preparatory steps were taken, but in the light of the consultants' negative response the Administrator had decided not to pursue the idea.

80. The review report itself, as well as the reactions in the Governing Council and the decisions that it was to reach, would give valuable directions for the further development of UNV. While focusing primarily on scope for improvement, as might be expected in such a report, the consultants had paid tribute to the UNV programme, which offered one of the finest examples of dynamism in the United Nations system. That was above all a tribute to the 5,369 volunteers who had served under the programme, whose skills and motivation had built up its extraordinary reputation. For the past 11 years, the main force behind the success of UNV had been Mr. Nabulsi who was due to retire in the autumn, after nearly 27 years of service to the goals of the United Nations. He wished to pay warm tribute to Mr. Nabulsi and to convey to him the gratitude of all for his extraordinary achievements. Mr. Nabulsi was to be succeeded by Mrs. McSweeney, who after a distinguished career in UNDP, would be taking over as Executive Co-ordinator.

81. Mr. NABULSI (Executive Co-ordinator, United Nations Volunteers) pointed out that over the years the UNV programme had grown steadily to become the principal operational arm of UNDP and the United Nations development system for delivering volunteer technical co-operation to developing countries. Furthermore, UNV had also succeeded in establishing its ability to mobilize young people for development. With 1,350 volunteers serving in 98 developing countries and 2,292 established posts, the programme could now boast impressive results. However, despite those results, it appeared that questions were still being raised about the very essence of the programme. As the only multilateral programme based on the principle of volunteerism, UNV had since its establishment endeavoured to harness the tremendous force of

volunteers throughout the world for the benefit of the third world, in a manner which would not only provide the assistance required, but also give full assurance to those who offered their services that they would find the fulfilment they aspired to in joining such a programme.

82. As the Council already knew, a team of external consultants had recently conducted a review of the programme. While their report would certainly help the Governing Council in its deliberations, it was unfortunate that, due to time constraints, they had been unable to examine many major issues in depth. In fact, although it contained some useful recommendations, the report was likely to have a negative impact on the programme.

83. The UNV programme was characterized by two fundamental aspects. First, it was an international programme based on the same principles as those underlying UNDP and all the other members of the family of United Nations development agencies. Secondly, from the very outset, UNV had set itself the objective of using professional talent and mobilizing goodwill in support of the developing countries. Although, in saying so, he did not intend to judge or criticize the bilateral volunteer programmes, it had to be recognized that despite their commitment to third world development, most, if not all, bilateral programmes also served the home country, which, of course, was quite legitimate. That clearly constituted a fundamental difference from the UNV programme.

84. The first problem that continued to plague the programme was the small proportion of volunteers from industrialized countries. That problem would be difficult to overcome for a variety of reasons, including structural impediments. In that connection, it must be borne in mind that the UNV accounted for only 7 per cent of all the volunteers serving throughout the world. Yet, all those serving under bilateral assistance schemes were from industrialized countries. The implication was that, in global terms, the proportion of volunteers from the developing countries was very low, since the UNV programme was the only one using their services.

85. The second problem, which was closely related to the first, was the question of whether United Nations volunteers, especially those from developing countries, were "real" volunteers. Indeed, it had sometimes been argued that, considering the financial compensation provided to them, some volunteers joined UNV mainly for the money, rather than for altruistic motivations. That criticism reflected a misunderstanding. Actually, United Nations volunteers did not receive a salary, but a monthly living allowance to allow them to live in decent but modest comfort. Moreover, it had also been asserted that many volunteers were experienced specialists who were assigned to work that was not directly related to development. As far as the assignment of volunteers was concerned, it must be remembered that the criteria applied were the same as those applied to UNDP projects. It was the Governments which decided upon the activities for which they needed volunteers, in accordance with the development priorities they had defined and in consultation with the UNV programme.

86. Yet another problem which appeared to have preoccupied the authors of the review report was that of the "monopoly" held by UNV in respect of the assignment of volunteers to the projects of the United Nations system. In that connection, he simply wished to inquire whether anyone had questioned the "monopoly" of other United Nations bodies over the recruitment of the

personnel assigned to their projects. He confessed that the logic of that criticism of the UNV programme eluded him, adding that UNV had always welcomed co-operation with volunteer agencies that wished to be more actively involved in the projects of the United Nations system.

87. Turning to the future of the UNV programme, he stated that if the programme continued on its current course, it was likely to become the main source of technical assistance personnel in the UNDP system. Indeed, it stood to reason that an organization such as UNDP, whose operations were financed entirely by voluntary contributions, should increasingly rely on volunteers in the implementation of its projects. In no way would that impair the role of the specialized agencies in their capacity as executing agencies. On the contrary, if they were relieved of the heavy burden of recruiting long-term experts throughout the world, they could concentrate on activities more specifically related to their sphere of specialization.

88. The UNV programme should not offer long-term assignments only. It should have something to offer people of all ages, in all fields of specialization, wishing to serve on volunteer terms, if only for a few weeks.

89. The PRESIDENT thanked Mr. Nabulsi and on behalf of the Governing Council, paid a tribute to him for the dedication and skill with which he had applied himself to his work as Executive Co-ordinator.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.