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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 12th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 6 June 1989, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. PIBULSONGGRAM (Thailand)

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

UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND (continued)

(a) REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ON 1988 ACTIVITIES (continued) (DP/1989/32 (Parts I and Corr.1, II and III), and DP/1989/33 (Parts I and II))

(b) REPORT ON THE FUND'S WIDE-RANGING REVIEW AND ASSESSMENT OF ACCUMULATED POPULATION EXPERIENCE (continued) (DP/1989/37)

(c) SPECIAL REPORTS REQUESTED BY THE COUNCIL (continued) (DP/1989/36 and 38-40)

1. Mr. ALBERTS (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) commended the report on the policy implications of the findings and conclusions of UNFPA's exercise on review and assessment of population programme experience (DP/1989/37). FAO had participated in that operation from the beginning. In recent years it had noted that UNFPA's technical capacity had greatly improved, and a fruitful dialogue had begun on very technical issues, such as the correlation between population and agricultural and rural development. Thanks to UNFPA's advice, the quality of FAO's population programme had improved considerably.

2. According to the report a large majority of developing countries were concerned about problems associated with their demographic situations and a large percentage of those countries were trying to solve those problems. However, the report went on to add that, for a variety of reasons, including lack of political commitment at the national level, the majority of them had not been able to implement population policies effectively. There was an even more serious problem: a lack of perception among policy makers in certain countries of the existence of population problems and of the need for State intervention. At several high-level intergovernmental meetings and also at technical meetings in the Africa region, it had been claimed that population growth was not a problem; there was enough land to cultivate and more people were needed in order to produce more food. And yet, Africa was the only region in the world where agricultural production per capita had declined in the last 20 years, since the population was increasing faster than agricultural production. It was therefore evident that much remained to be done to create awareness among policy makers and planners in the agricultural sector.

3. Thanks to UNFPA's support, some progress had been made in that field. Land-carrying capacity and population potential studies had made it possible to provide sound policy advice to African Governments. Such studies should be systematically extended to all sub-Saharan African countries. Likewise, assistance in the use of the Computerized Systems Assistance in Population Planning and in Agriculture (CAPPA) had facilitated the training of planners and the inclusion of demographic variables in agricultural development plans. Recently FAO had undertaken, again with UNFPA assistance, a study to determine the impact of urbanization on food production and consumption. Other research was under way on the links between demographic factors (including the status of women) and rural

(Mr. Alberts, FAO)

development in Africa. However it was not enough. FAO should support a vast education campaign in Africa which would not be limited to existing agricultural extension services but would also embrace institutes of agronomy so as to train future ministers and policy makers in the sectors of agriculture and rural development. That was a medium-term goal but it was essential.

4. According to document DP/1989/37 there was little evidence to suggest that United Nations institutions were incorporating population concerns into their regular programmes. FAO had not neglected those issues but was seeking systematically to integrate population concerns into its technical services. Increasingly, technical staff were participating in activities, and missions centred on population questions. However, as those activities were integrated into technical services, it was extremely difficult to determine what percentage they represented of FAO's regular budget. For example, if a rural development expert worked part time on population projects, those services were classified under the heading "rural development". The bulk of FAO's regular budget was used to finance staff salaries, while projects were generally financed from different budgets. That being said, FAO did finance several national population projects under its own technical co-operation programme. For example, it was sponsoring 15 CAPPAs projects which had initially been drawn up with UNFPA assistance but which were currently wholly financed with FAO resources. The specialized agencies had a vital role to play, inasmuch as they must incorporate population concerns into their activities. There was no need to ask UNFPA to fund those activities. Resources could be supplied by other donors; for example, some relevant FAO projects were being financed by the Danish International Development Agency, Canada, the Netherlands or other donor countries.

5. With respect to use of resources, FAO felt that the system of establishing priority countries presented serious drawbacks. The system was based on a set of criteria, which included per capita income and various population indicators. However, it was a well known fact that per capita income gave only a very rough idea of a country's economic situation and, in particular that it did not reveal differences in economic and social development which could exist at the regional level. Some countries were not classified as priority countries for UNFPA financial assistance and yet certain regions of such countries had far more serious population problems than certain priority countries. Mexico was a case in point. Accordingly, FAO felt that the priority system should be reviewed, in particular so as to take greater account of the existence of population problems at the subnational level.

6. Document DP/1989/37 was an excellent starting point for drawing up a set of guidelines which could then be integrated into programmes of action. For example, mention could be made of the proposed studies for the promotion of information, education and communication (IEC) activities. FAO itself had noted that the failure of family planning programmes was generally attributable to lack of an adequate information campaign. UNFPA should concentrate its efforts on such activities and should draw up precise guidelines. For its part, FAO had sent UNFPA the list of its priorities for research concerning population and rural development,

(Mr. Alberts, FAO)

including IEC activities. Finally, document DP/1989/37 could serve as a basis for a review of the current strategy for sub-Saharan African countries and for drawing up similar documents for the Middle East, Latin America and Asia.

7. Mr. MOHIUDDIN (Bangladesh) said that, impressive though they were, the Fund's successes could not overshadow the size of the task that remained to be done in order to achieve a balance between population, resources, development and the environment. At the end of 1988, world population had stood at 5.2 billion and it was increasing at a rate of 88 million a year, with over 90 per cent of that increase in the developing countries. Clearly population factors exercised a decisive influence on the economic and social development of those countries. It was heartening to see that UNFPA not only recognized the right of all couples and individuals to decide freely and responsibly how many children they would have but also that it fully subscribed to the principle that States had a sovereign right to formulate and implement their own population and development policies. UNFPA assistance took into account the specific needs and cultural factors of the developing countries. The resources allocated by the Fund had increased substantially thanks to the generosity of donors, but the Fund would have to make still greater efforts to meet the future needs of developing countries. In that connection, Bangladesh wished to point out that UNFPA should continue its priority assistance to the poorest countries.

8. At its twenty-fifth session, the Population Commission had made timely reference to population trends in the least developed countries (LDCs). Those countries, particularly vulnerable economically, currently accounted for 7 per cent of world population; that figure was likely to rise to 12 per cent by 2025. Although they were doing all they could to follow sound demographic policies, they faced serious difficulties and had to rely on aid from UNFPA and the international community. He hoped that the second United Nations Conference on LDCs and the new international development strategy would put such assistance on firm foundations. His country supported the recommendation by the Population Commission for an intergovernmental conference on population in 1994.

9. The population of the Asia and Pacific region currently stood at over 3 billion. If current projections were confirmed, it would reach 4.5 billion by 2025, or more than half the world population of 8.2 billion. He noted with satisfaction efforts by UNFPA to expand its programmes in the region, strengthen family planning, village-level services, co-ordination, etc. He hoped greater attention could be devoted to the needs of the rural population and to local family planning workers, who had been rather neglected in the past. He noted with concern, however, that total average annual expenditure on the Asia and Pacific region had fallen from \$49 million to \$40.4 million between 1985 and 1988, plans to increase it to \$42 million for the period 1988-1991 notwithstanding, and that the proportion of resources allocated to the region had also been reduced in the work plan for the current year. There seemed little justification for such a reduction, and he called on the secretariat to clarify the matter.

(Mr. Mohiuddin, Bangladesh)

10. All in all, his country was in broad agreement with the priority programme areas identified in the Executive Director's report, notably UNFPA support for the integration of family planning services into maternal health programmes, and for providing people in remote rural districts and urban slums with easier access to services. More emphasis should be put on programming in order to tailor assistance more closely to the needs of developing countries and to mother and child health. UNFPA must develop a strategy for tackling the problems of women, population, poverty, development and the environment effectively.

11. He endorsed the findings presented in the Executive Director's excellent report. UNFPA was working in a very delicate area, where socio-economic, cultural and religious factors all came into play. It must be particularly sensitive to the needs of recipient countries. In recent years it had done a remarkable job. He hoped it would also rise to the challenges of the future with the help of the international community.

12. Mr. REUDA (Colombia) said that the twentieth anniversary of UNFPA was of special significance to his country since the Socio-demographic Division of the Ministry of Planning, set up the year UNFPA had been founded, had co-operated constantly and fruitfully with the Fund ever since, developing a model population policy in a pluralistic context while respecting fundamental freedoms.

13. The alarming deterioration in living standards in Latin America, where, according to the report of the Executive Director (DP/1989/32), almost 40 per cent of the population lived in poverty, and the growing social unrest stemming from the crisis, should give food for thought and prompt a review of criteria governing priorities and resource allocation at the regional level. The situation in Central American and Caribbean as well as South American countries should be evaluated in that context so as to add new names to the list of priority countries.

14. More and more countries had adopted population policies as part of their development plans or had set up services to take account of demographic phenomena in the context of national development; without doubt, that encouraging development was the result of perseverance by UNFPA. He was obliged to point out, nevertheless, that the resources devoted to promoting and expanding the process were insufficient, and in the medium- and long-term that could work against an effort which was beginning to produce results.

15. The move by UNFPA to develop and improve the evaluation element of its activities deserved praise. Evaluation was one sector that deserved high priority in the context of administrative reform. National programmes of co-operation with UNFPA did not yet include a permanent and systematic evaluation element enabling progress in projects to be followed and the effects of projects on people's living standards to be assessed. The task was arduous and complex, and would require suitably advanced information systems and lamentably rare skilled human resources, but it was one of the most urgent challenges facing UNFPA in the immediate future.

(Mr. Reuda, Colombia)

16. The family, which was where population growth began, needed to be given increased attention. Support by UNFPA for research into the relationships between family, procreation and development would be particularly welcome.

17. In view of the interest that UNFPA and Governments took in promoting greater co-operation between developing countries, he suggested that a meeting of governmental bodies responsible for demographic planning should be arranged, to give them an opportunity to pool their experiences and study the possibilities of mutually advantageous co-operation.

18. In closing, he congratulated the Fund on its efforts to decentralize the regional and local offices and give them greater autonomy. Projects in his country had languished in the face of protracted administrative formalities. He congratulated the Fund on its perception and desire to change its structure and functions in response to the increasingly important role it was called upon to play among international co-operative agencies.

19. Ms. WESTPHALEN (Finland) said that UNFPA was celebrating its twentieth anniversary at a time when many developing countries were finding themselves more and more helpless in the face of socio-economic problems and environmental challenges. The review and assessment conducted by UNFPA had revealed the adverse effects of rapid population growth on economic and social conditions in many developing countries. It was unfortunate, therefore, that the volume of assistance had not increased in real terms in recent years. As stated in document DP/1989/37, if population assistance was not increased, the implications for future investment in health, education, employment, food and environmental security, among other sectors, would be enormous. A greater effort by the international community thus seemed indispensable. Her country had been steadily increasing its contributions to UNFPA for some years, and had raised it 50 per cent in 1988.

20. The Finnish Government, recognizing the relationship between population and development, supported the findings in the report (DP/1989/37) calling for all parties to participate actively in the development of a framework or strategy for population assistance in order to arrive at a more efficient international assistance programme. International assistance was not enough, however. The Governments of the recipient countries had the main responsibility for mobilizing resources with the aim of establishing self-sustained sources of financing. The existence of a strong political commitment was most important of all in that respect. Given the sensitivities still surrounding population and family planning activities, that political commitment had to be translated into realistic national plans and programmes. The review and assessment exercise had unveiled weaknesses in that area. Many programmes did not succeed because they failed to take into account socio-cultural factors at the design and implementation stage. Data were lacking or inadequately utilized. In that respect, her delegation was pleased to note that the support mechanism of family planning and population programmes was to be strengthened by paying more attention to data collection, training and research.

(Ms. Westphalen, Finland)

21. Her delegation was pleased with the focus of the 1989 report on the state of the world population. If investment in women was to be made a development priority, however, a major change in attitudes to development would be required on the part of the countries directly concerned, financial institutions and donors. In recent years, many of the poorest countries had been forced to cut both health and educational spending, and the first victims of such measures were the poor, above all women. For a number of years, Finland had advocated that structural adjustment programmes should take social needs into consideration.

22. Improving the status of women and their integration in economic life were important goals in themselves, and also influenced family life, family size and demographic transition. The achievement of those objectives required political commitment and community participation. NGOs, community organizations, socio-cultural and religious groups, women's groups and influential individuals could play an important role in influencing social attitudes and behaviour. National population plans should involve such groups more fully.

23. The conclusions of the review and assessment exercise indicated that UNFPA was on the right track. The Fund should do more and at the same time try to improve its efficiency by learning from past experience. The new approach of moving away from individual projects to more comprehensive programmes was also welcome. For Finland, population questions were an integral part of the international development strategy for the 1990s.

24. Africa would continue to be the focal point for technical assistance in forthcoming years. It was the continent with the highest population growth and the highest child mortality rate. Her delegation therefore fully endorsed the priority given to Africa in the country activities for forthcoming years. The report (DP/1989/38) showed that determined efforts could be truly effective in that region.

25. Mr. DOEPEL (Australia) commended the high standard of preparation for the session. The documentation was clear, concise and informative, and helped reinforce Australia's confidence in UNFPA's capacity to take a leading role, together with national Governments, in solving the daunting problems which would continue to arise for a considerable time to come. It was especially valuable at a time when the international development strategy for the fourth development decade was being formulated.

26. The success of some Governments in reducing population growth attested to the value of past population interventions. The predictions continued to be alarming, however. The rapid increase in urban population threatened to make sustainable development an impossibility for many developing countries. Infant, child and maternal mortality rates continued to be unacceptably high. UNFPA's review had drawn attention to all these facts and to the need to strengthen population intervention. Over the past 12 months, there had been a growing awareness in Australia of the need to give population problems a central importance in efforts to assist developing countries; Australia would try to increase its support for UNFPA.

(Mr. Doepel, Australia)

27. While no-one could argue with the goals established by UNFPA for the 1990s, the challenge was how to achieve those goals. The obstacles appeared overwhelming, particularly in view of the sensitivity of such issues as family planning. The immensity of the difficulties should not deter the parties concerned - primarily Governments and international bodies - from taking responsibility. Since UNFPA was performing its role well, and particularly its co-ordinating function, his delegation regretted the decision of the United States to continue to withhold funding for UNFPA. The Executive Director's suggestion that a comprehensive international population strategy should be devised was therefore promising. UNFPA could act as the focal point in that respect. The international forum on population in the twenty-first century, to be held at Amsterdam in November 1989, could consider a strategy prepared by UNFPA and provide practical guidance.

28. He welcomed the central role accorded to the question of the relationship between women, population and development. The issue of attitudinal change was highly sensitive, and what was most needed in that area was perhaps a programme to heighten the consciousness of men as spouses, fathers or decision-makers.

29. In order to reduce maternal mortality, it would be wise to further increase the allocation in UNFPA's total budget to programmes in the area of women, population and development. The concern to ensure true participation of women must be introduced into project planning at the outset, however. It must be ensured, for example, that women in greatest poverty, who were most likely to be the target of UNFPA programmes, participated adequately in the consultative process.

30. Asia and the Pacific was still receiving the largest amount and percentage of UNFPA assistance, even though its share was slowly declining in favour of Africa. UNFPA had given greater attention to the small South Pacific and Indian Ocean island countries. Those countries, whose resources were very limited and whose populations were growing rapidly, had very special needs. Australia was keen to explore ways of co-operating with UNFPA in carrying out practical projects in the South Pacific.

31. In general, Australia supported UNFPA's budget proposals. It was concerned, however, about the risk of over-centralization of activities at headquarters at the expense of field representation. UNFPA should report back to the Governing Council on resource rationalizations which could be made to compensate, in part, for the substantial staff increases envisaged at headquarters. Moreover, that increase should be made progressively, since available resources were limited.

32. Mr. DING Yuanhong (China) said that he was pleased, as the United Nations Population Fund celebrated its twentieth anniversary to note that UNFPA had, in the course of the past two decades, received contributions from a growing number of donors and seen its income grow to approximately \$200 million. UNFPA had thus become the largest international organization of its kind in the field of population and, while respecting the sovereignty of recipient countries, had made an important contribution to solving the population problem, through the stabilization of natural growth and the balancing of such growth against constraints related to the environment and the exploitation of natural resources.

(Mr. Ding Yuanhong, China)

33. As a result of international and national efforts, world population growth had slowed somewhat, but it remained too fast. The pursuit of socio-economic development and the control of population growth continued, for most developing countries, to be two very difficult tasks. Obviously, the population problem concerned all countries, and it was for that reason that joint efforts on the part of all Governments and peoples of the world were required. It was therefore to be hoped that UNFPA, as a special funding agency within the United Nations development system, would continue to provide assistance to the developing countries, and that such assistance would be provided in greater quantities and in a more flexible manner.

34. The question of women's participation in development was, rightly, a focus of attention. UNFPA had not only taken greater account of the specific needs of women in designing projects and programmes but had also increased the resources which it devoted to activities of direct benefit to women, in areas such as education, professional training and enterprise management. Women made up half the population, and many countries had taken measures to improve the political, social and economic status of women in order that they should be more actively involved in both socio-economic development and population control activities. However, considerable inequalities persisted between men and women, and his Government would actively support the efforts of UNFPA to eliminate them.

35. Maternal and child health and family planning should remain a key area of UNFPA activities. At the same time, efforts should be made to predict what new problems might occur in the field of population. Aging, for example, which was due in part to the very success of development policies and population control programmes, as well as to a decrease in both the fertility rate and the death rate, was a problem which would arise ever more frequently in a growing number of countries; research on the problem should help those countries to formulate policies for its solution.

36. As everyone was aware, China was the most populous country in the world. The population of mainland China had passed the threshold of 1.1 billion in April 1989, and a large proportion of increased national wealth was absorbed, year after year, by excessively rapid natural growth. His country's Government had therefore, in the late 1970s, formulated a policy designed to control population growth and to improve the quality of the population. It had, in particular, urged that family planning be practised on a voluntary basis. The country was now bearing the full brunt of its third "baby boom" since 1949 and, since 100 million women were currently of child-bearing age, more than 20 million births were recorded each year. It was for that reason that the Government would continue to call upon couples of child-bearing age to practise voluntary family planning in order that natural growth should be kept in line with socio-economic development and environmental resource availability.

37. During the past 10 years, UNFPA had helped China to implement more than 60 projects, and his Government was grateful to UNFPA and the donor countries. At the same time, it was ready to co-operate with other developing countries by exchanging information on their respective experiences.

38. Mr. YENEL (Turkey) noted the high quality of the documents prepared by UNFPA; the increasing demand for studies in the field of population was proof of the growing interest generated by population questions in all quarters. As a result of its acquired experience, UNFPA, which was now embarking on its third decade of activity, would move forward with new vigour.

39. It was encouraging to note that policies introduced in the past were beginning to bear fruit in many countries. However, much still remained to be done, since the major problems during the 1990s would continue to be the still excessive rate of natural growth and the rapid pace of urbanization. Those issues were directly linked to various bottle-necks in development. The developing countries were aware of the problems and were beginning to address them more energetically. One of the major difficulties to be overcome was the lack of awareness of population issues, despite the fact that they should be recognized by all segments of society. The figures alone did not mean very much; the real objective should be to ensure that every one enjoyed good health, received adequate education and had access to essential services. The removal of certain cultural barriers and the promotion of awareness of population issues among women constituted some of the most serious issues. The role of men, however, should not be overlooked. More perhaps than technical constraints, it was custom which prevented broader access to information, education and contraceptives, and the role of husbands in that context should not be underestimated. Social programmes should therefore be drawn up for the purpose of alerting young people to such problems.

40. Urbanization was a direct result of population growth. It was increasingly difficult for cities to absorb the rural exodus. Members of the rural population who came to settle in the cities brought their own cultural values. Accordingly, policies adopted in the cities could not be totally separate from those adopted in the villages and should be geared to the cultural needs of the various groups concerned.

41. Each country's population activities should involve all segments of society, including the private sector if possible. However, socio-cultural conditions varied from one country to another and UNFPA must act in a flexible and innovative manner in addressing them. Since it was now well established that population questions were an integral part of the development process, they should be included in the work programmes of all United Nations bodies.

42. He saluted President Suharto who, by means of firm political will, had ensured the success of Indonesia's population programme, with the participation of women and men from all social groups.

43. Mr. TABAH (France) deplored the fact that the late appearance of reports in French had made it impossible to do justice to their quality, which he praised.

44. The twentieth anniversary of UNFPA was an occasion for a conscientious review of past experience and future projects. The best indicator of a fund's success was obviously the confidence donors placed in it via their financial contributions, and on that point, UNFPA was clearly successful. The success of the United Nations

(Mr. Tabah, France)

system as a whole in the population field was all the more striking in that the population movement could hardly have been expected to rally the type of support generated by the environmental movement in the wake of the Stockholm Conference on the environment. Degradation of the ecosystem could only have given rise to a genuine crusade. Population activities, on the other hand, had long been the subject of controversy, as emotional factors and the diversity of situations made it difficult to achieve a convergence of views on what had to be done. Efforts had generally been characterized by their discretion and effectiveness. Perhaps UNFPA's success lay in the fact that its activities were dealt with in the context of UNDP; that state of affairs ought to continue, first of all because the Fund's task was to make the principles and objectives of the World Population Plan of Action operational, and also because UNFPA must continue to forge closer links with the other development sectors in which UNDP was active. The population problem must be viewed in the context of subjects closely related to it. When population problems were placed in an economic, social and institutional context, their true magnitude and the modalities for their implementation became apparent.

45. He was disappointed in document DP/1989/37, not so much because it dealt with the progress achieved in sectors that were truly vital - i.e., demographic data, family planning policies, maternal and child health, and information, education and communication - but because it did not discuss the principles underlying UNFPA activities or mechanisms for intervention, execution and - last but not least - evaluating progress in those sectors. The very important issue of data was barely touched upon.

46. Nevertheless, he was satisfied with the general thrust of UNFPA activities, which emphasized, in addition to direct intervention in the short and medium terms, indirect action aimed at effecting thoroughgoing transformation of societies by changing attitudes and patterns of behaviour. While high priority should continue to be attached to family planning services, full attention should be paid to programmes aimed at modifying receptiveness to such services. However, undue emphasis on the issue of population should be avoided, as it would discourage acceptance. A balance must be struck and maintained in that regard. UNFPA was to be commended for attaching increasing priority to programmes to improve the status of women: information and education efforts should in fact be focused on women, as they were the ones who would in turn teach children, thereby reinforcing the effectiveness of such efforts. The State of World Population report, devoted in 1989 to women, was an outstanding document, a veritable model of its type.

47. UNFPA was correct in thinking that schools and the mass communication media would open people's minds to a better understanding of world phenomena, particularly demographic phenomena. Understanding the world in which future generations would live had become a requirement for survival. The complex relationships between population, resources and the environment must therefore be explored, even though progress in that area had been disappointing. Over the past 20 years, the world had seemed to grow even smaller: although the population had grown by 57 per cent, the forest cover had shrunk, deserts had spread and the ozone layer had been damaged. What would happen when the world's population reached 8 or

(Mr. Tabah, France)

even 10 billion inhabitants who sought to attain the standard of living enjoyed by those who were the source of the deterioration that was becoming apparent? UNFPA must pay greater attention to future-related problems and must participate actively in the preparations for the fourth development decade so that population questions would not be overlooked yet again.

48. While all but 1 of the 13 most heavily populated countries had entered the demographic transitional phase and the third world was undergoing a transformation and growing more diversified, a significant fraction of the world population - some 1 billion people - remained untouched by progress. It was pointless to think that those people had only to be encouraged to modify their patterns of demographic behaviour: they must be given reasons for doing so and the means to do so in the form of services and information. Fortunately, UNFPA was giving priority to those countries, particularly in Africa, where demographic disequilibria were all the more serious because they were occurring at a time when low economic growth made it very difficult to maintain living standards even at their current, drastically inadequate, levels and economies were paralysed by debt-servicing. He drew particular attention to the need to promote the activities of the Yaoundé Institute for Demographic Training and Research; the activities of the French Centre for Population and Development (CEPED), which had recently been established in Paris, would also place special emphasis on the African region. With regard to data collection and analysis and demographic research in the poorest countries, it must be recalled that those countries would benefit fully from UNFPA programmes only if they had more reliable data at their disposal. Policies not based on scientific analyses would be irrevocably doomed to failure, particularly since the severe population crisis in Africa touched the very foundations of African society. Censuses and surveys implied sacrifices for countries whose economies were paralysed by the collapse of commodity prices and in which the collection and analysis of demographic data had to be abandoned in favour of more pressing priorities. Consequently, the data furnished by such censuses and surveys must be analysed immediately so that every possible advantage could be drawn from such major investments.

49. UNFPA was right to tackle the AIDS problem seriously, given its foreseeable magnitude, since the campaign against that disease could help to save between 4 and 8 million lives, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. There was little doubt that the pandemic was associated in the third world with many behaviours that influenced other factors related to population and underdevelopment. The AIDS problem must therefore be viewed in the context of factors affecting demographic behaviours. Some issues, such as international migration, aging in developing countries (where persons over 60 constituted the largest growing age group and the complementary roles of the family and other basic institutions, might be of vital importance as the new millenium dawned: the world could not wait until they had become particularly pressing to deal with them.

50. He suggested that several Fund publications, particularly the inventory of projects and country needs assessment reports, all of which constituted a body of knowledge that would facilitate exchanges of experiences and information on policy,

(Mr. Tabah, France)

especially among French-speaking countries, should be translated into the various official languages, particularly French.

51. Mr. ZUNNI (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that world population growth threatened to aggravate the food and health situation as well as the environmental problems. The international community therefore had to take concerted action to develop a short- and long-term strategy that would be an appropriate response to the most pressing population problems and create a balance between resources and population. His delegation endorsed the conclusions of the studies emphasizing the significance of population data and population planning in formulating consistent goals that were achievable in the coming decade. It underscored the importance of population change on the environment, the crucial role played by women in the economic and social development process, and the need to generate greater public awareness of population problems and their effects on the economy and society.

52. The international community had an obligation to finance the important activities of the Fund. On the other hand, the Fund must take all steps required to rationalize its operational expenses. The proportion represented by operational expenses, 14.9 per cent in 1988, was too high and part of that amount could have been used to finance projects. It was also of the utmost importance that UNFPA assistance should be fairly distributed among the different regions, even while giving highest priority to the least developed countries.

53. UNFPA must work closely with the other competent United Nations bodies, provide services to the most isolated rural areas of the developing countries and give more assistance to the most affected developing countries, those in Africa. UNFPA must also adapt the activities it carried out in the developing countries to the latter's development imperatives. It could be assured of Libya's constant support.

54. Mr. ADJOYI (Observer for Togo) said that the population factor must be taken into account in economic development programmes. The economic crisis had brought clearly to the fore the link between development and population in the developing countries, and population was steadily becoming the central element among the social, cultural, technological or ecological factors that determined the nature of development policies. Development itself contributed to fertility control in so far as the quality of life it permitted was a reflection of the economic and financial means available to individuals, which in turn depended on their family size. In the African countries, the deep sense of family and the solidarity within the community often stood in the way of the implementation of development programmes. For instance, the exodus of the rural populations to rejoin their relatives in the cities partially explained the noticeable increase of the urban populations. UNFPA should therefore take part in economic development programmes in order to help create in the rural areas focal points of development equipped with the main features of urban structures.

55. A systematic policy of promoting health for all should also be formulated in the developing countries, particularly in Africa. In the African countries, given

(Mr. Adjoyi, Observer, Togo)

the underdeveloped state of medicine and the extremely high rate of infant mortality, procreation was seen as a long-term investment and a way of perpetuating the family name. The advancement of medicine would make it possible to lower the risk of infant mortality and thus help to reduce the number of births. UNFPA should therefore accentuate that aspect of its activities and, in collaboration with WHO and UNICEF, should more systematically pursue a policy of stamping out the major endemic diseases and protecting the child. Those were the reasons why his Government had emphasized primary health care, pursued a vigorous maternal and child health care policy and established the National Family Welfare Programme which had received the United Nations Population Award.

56. Thanks to such guaranteed medical care and because of the economic crisis, people have understood the necessity of reducing family size and are agreeing more readily to practise birth-spacing methods. That result had been achieved thanks only to an informational and consciousness-raising campaign, which should be aimed at men as well as at women. In order to carry out all those activities, UNFPA needed enormous resources. By way of example, while the maternal and child health needs in Togo were estimated at \$8 million per year, the proposed programme for that country amounted to only \$5 million over five years. If that sum were raised to at least \$7 million that would make it possible to expand information, education and communication activities and would go further towards meeting the needs in the area of maternal and child health and family planning.

57. His delegation expressed its gratitude to all donors, particularly the Government of the Netherlands which had agreed to host in Amsterdam, in November 1989, the International Forum on Population in the 21st Century. It hoped that UNFPA would be accorded all the human, financial and material resources it needed to carry out its programmes.

58. Mr. KUDRYAVTSEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the Soviet Union had been co-operating with UNFPA for 10 years and contributing to the Fund since 1988. Its 1989 contribution marked an 8-per-cent increase over the previous year. The Soviet Union was taking an active part in UNFPA in order to exchange data with other countries on their experience, and that was in line with the new political thinking in his country and its new awareness of the humanitarian role of the United Nations and the importance of the human factor in demographics. The population situation in the Soviet Union was currently marked by a number of contradictory and divergent population trends among the various regions of the country. The Soviet Union's average population growth rate was 1.6 per cent per year, but the rates of the different regions deviated from that average, ranging from 0.9 per cent in the European part of the Soviet Union to 2.5 per cent in the Central Asian republics. Soviet specialists were trying to deal with those problems and to put family planning in the context of a vigorous social policy of maternal and child protection. They were currently developing a new conception of the country's population development that had two goals: a sharp reduction of infant mortality and a sharp reduction of the number of abortions.

(Mr. Kudryavtsev, USSR)

59. The Soviet Union believed that family planning should not be separated from the overall population policy affecting mobility, as regarded the migrations necessary in the interest of social progress. For the last 10 years, the State University of Moscow had offered a programme of courses on population set up with United Nations co-operation for management officials from developing countries, in which 400 specialists from 70 countries had been trained. The Soviet Union wished to expand its co-operation with the Fund and other countries. It had a good opinion of UNFPA activity and believed that the Fund was contributing to the implementation of the World Population Plan of Action by funding activities in the field. Progress had been made on certain aspects of the Plan of Action, but some problems had worsened in recent years, such as the imbalance in international trade, the rise in the external debt of developing countries and other factors impeding economic and social progress and keeping the status and the employment of women from improving.

60. The UNFPA reports did not provide sufficient analysis of those problems and, in particular, the acute social problems of Africa, where population growth was the highest. The Fund spoke only of checking such growth in the African countries, whereas it was necessary to find solutions suitable for each country, and to adopt a sensitive attitude to those problems. The demographic situation was particularly distressing in the least developed countries, where population growth was more rapid and infant mortality higher than in all the countries of the third world put together, and where those factors were aggravated by illiteracy. The international community should deal with the new population problems posed by AIDS and the trend towards the aging of the population in the developed countries. In his statement before the General Assembly in December 1988, Mikhail Gorbachev had emphasized the importance of international co-operation in solving the world's major economic, demographic and ecological problems. On the threshold of the 1990s, the international community should develop programmes for the fourth United Nations development decade and prepare the organization of a new population conference in 1994. The current situation was conducive to the creation of international mechanisms for controlling demographic processes while taking account of the new realities of world development and of demilitarization and the humanization of international relations. The Soviet Union hoped that such activities would be intensified and that co-ordination among United Nations bodies in the area of population would improve. The Soviet Union was in favour of an international dialogue, which should be as broad as possible, in order to solve the world's population problems.

61. Mrs. AL-AWADI (Observer for Kuwait) said that population growth was particularly alarming because it affected the countries least able to cope with it, namely, the developing countries. That phenomenon put a strain on natural resources as well as development budgets, thus resulting in a deteriorating economic situation, a degraded environment and social tensions. In the light of that situation, the only option for the developing countries was to over-exploit their natural resources in order to be able to service their debt and to finance new projects. Thus, the principal goal of the international community and of specialized agencies was to achieve sustainable development based on policies which

(Mr. Aguilar Hecht, Guatemala)

69. Lastly, Guatemala urged UNFPA to pursue its assessment exercise and to continue to help Governments of developing countries formulate national population plans and programmes in such a way that the objectives pursued formed part of a co-ordinated world programme which made it possible to make effective use of the limited financial resources available, and to study socio-cultural and behavioural factors as envisaged by the Executive Director in paragraph 39 of document DP/1989/37.

70. Mr. PETRONE (Italy) said that the Fund's review and assessment of accumulated experience deserved high praise because it would make it possible to place population issues in an overall framework of development co-operation. He hoped that the International Forum on Population to be held at Amsterdam in November would focus on how the findings of the review and assessment could be used to prepare specific, concrete recommendations for future UNFPA activities.

71. The review of the Fund's policies should be based on the following four priority aspects: the integration of family planning assistance with other assistance and community development; the central role of women in population programmes; projections of future demand for family planning and the cost of meeting that demand through population programmes, which had been estimated at \$8 billion by the first decade of the next century; and the relationship between population changes, environment and sustainable development.

72. His Government would extend special support to programmes aimed at increasing Governments' awareness of the linkage between population and environment, in order to enhance their political commitment to family planning programmes. Developing countries everywhere had started population programmes and Governments were seeking more and more help from UNFPA, which needed additional resources to meet the challenges.

73. At its current session, the Governing Council would approve 13 country programmes, 6 of which were to be implemented by UNFPA for the first time. His delegation supported those programmes and commended their quality. It also appreciated the efforts being made by the Executive Director of UNFPA to restructure, streamline and strengthen the Fund's secretariat. UNFPA had built an extraordinarily positive relationship with the developing countries and, with the help of non-governmental organizations, had managed to gain international support for the population efforts of those countries. Italy encouraged the Fund to pursue that approach and would try to increase its support for UNFPA further.

74. Mr. EJIOGU (Department of Technical Co-operation for Development) said that, in accordance with decision 88/37 in which the Governing Council had encouraged further utilization of the Department's expertise in population-related issues, the number of new projects which UNFPA had entrusted to DTCD had grown by 40 per cent in 1988. In dollar terms, the Department had been responsible for the largest increase in expenditures among UNFPA's executing agencies, and it was now participating more frequently in the Fund's needs assessment and project formulation missions. In view of the 1990 round of censuses, that positive trend was likely to continue.

(Mr. Ejioagu)

75. The Department's overall approach had evolved in response to the growing efforts of developing countries to achieve self-reliance in dealing with population issues. Its strategy was to work far more with national experts and consultants from government and other national institutions, to help train them in the use of micro-computers for analysis and population projects and to involve them in demographic analysis and post-census dissemination seminars. In 1988, that had led to a 37 per cent decrease in the number of experts working on country projects, while the number of fellowships had increased by 41 per cent.

76. The Department's statistics programme in 1988 had been aimed primarily at strengthening the capacity of national services to collect, process and disseminate a broad range of development-related statistics. Increased use of micro-computer systems was a major element in both statistics and population. The Department had addressed the integration of demographic data and population issues into national development plans from different angles: it had prepared a paper with the World Bank on integrating women, environment and population into development and had put together training packages involving computer games to demonstrate the impact of population issues on national development planning.

77. DTCD could assist in strengthening the Fund's research capability on the basis of its co-operation with national institutes, making the necessary services available to UNFPA. To mark the Fund's twentieth anniversary, it would be making an analysis of its experience in implementing UNFPA-funded population programmes since the Fund's establishment, in order to develop guidelines for future technical co-operation.

78. Lastly, the Department supported in principle the decision taken by the Population Commission to convene an international conference on population in 1994.

79. Mr. FAROOQ (International Labour Organisation) said that the serious economic difficulties experienced in the 1980s had taken a heavy toll in terms of social retrogression in many developing countries and that the 1990s would begin with a backlog of open unemployment, underemployment and poverty. The general economic environment was likely to remain unfavourable for employment promotion, at least during the early years of the decade, and that situation would be compounded by demographic factors.

80. The urgent need to strengthen population interventions became very clear when it was placed in the context of burgeoning employment-generation needs. For example, unless population growth rates in vulnerable countries, such as those of sub-Saharan Africa were checked, labour force growth rates would continue to increase until the year 2025, reaching a rate of 3 per cent and above for some countries. By the year 2025, the labour force in Africa would be larger than that of all the developed countries taken together. Unless their population growth rates declined significantly in the near future, the sub-Saharan African countries, which were already experiencing high levels of unemployment and underemployment (estimated to be currently two fifths or more of the labour force) would need to create 6 million new jobs every year up to the year 2000 and 10 million new jobs on

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(Mr. Farooq, ILO)

the average every year between 2000 and 2025 in order to absorb the natural growth in the labour supply. It went without saying that that would be a virtually impossible task.

81. In recognition of the consequences of such demographic scenarios, the ILO medium-term plan emphasized that in developing countries, ILO would seek to integrate its work on population change (much of it carried out with the support of UNFPA) more fully into its analysis of labour markets. In all regions, ILO would continue to promote the integration of population concerns into employment and development policies. The medium-term plan also outlined the ILO contribution to tackling problems of urbanization and the growth of large cities in developing countries, and accorded special attention to vulnerable groups in the labour market, especially women and older workers.

82. ILO's concern for the role of population in development and its commitment came out clearly in the evaluation of its population and labour programme recently carried out by an independent UNFPA team, which had noted the increase in ILO's regular budget support to population activities, both in volume and in percentage terms: expenditures had almost doubled from \$870,000 to \$1.6 million. While recognizing that further efforts were needed, he regretted the statement in paragraph 55 of document DP/1989/37 alleging that there was little evidence to suggest that other United Nations organizations were incorporating population concerns into their regular programmes.

83. ILO endorsed the suggestion made in paragraph 81 of document DP/1989/37 that UNFPA should oversee the co-ordination of population assistance and serve as a focal point for the co-ordination and overall analysis of policy and programme information.

84. In reply to the questions raised about the role and competence of UNFPA in relation to United Nations agencies which were executing UNFPA-funded projects, he said that ILO had not encountered any serious problems in its working relationship with UNFPA and that, in fact, ILO interregional and regional advisers had always been at the complete disposal of UNFPA.

85. Mrs. TIMUR (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) said that UNESCO had been concerned with population issues ever since its inception and that the creation of UNFPA and its policy of working in close co-operation with other United Nations agencies in the execution of population projects had permitted the expansion and strengthening of population activities. The Fund's contribution to UNESCO had increased from \$4 million in 1982 to \$7.8 million in 1988, enabling UNESCO currently to execute 53 national projects on population education, 31 projects on population communication and an interregional project and four regional projects to provide technical backstopping to national projects. All those projects shared the same general objective, namely, to create awareness of population issues and to enable individuals, couples and Governments to make informed decisions on those issues.

(Mrs. Timur, UNESCO)

86. With regard to population education, UNESCO was making constant efforts to improve the contents of teaching programmes in schools and to make them flexible enough to reflect the emergence of new problems and knowledge (for example, environmental problems as they related to population, AIDS, etc.).

87. As for population communication, the co-operation between UNFPA and UNESCO had permitted training at national and regional institutes and the introduction of media programmes in more than 60 countries. The use of traditional means of communication had also been encouraged.

88. The review and assessment exercise undertaken by UNFPA had enabled both it and UNESCO to identify a number of new areas for further co-operation and to redirect certain activities to make them more effective. UNESCO especially appreciated the emphasis placed on research so that the needs of target groups could be taken fully into account in the implementation of action programmes, and the identification by UNFPA of the need for multiple approaches to population communication.

89. From its very beginnings, UNESCO had been committed to equality between the sexes and to the improvement of the status of women. It greatly appreciated, therefore, the emphasis given to the role, status and participation of women in the report on the conclusions of the exercise on review and assessment of population programme experience (DP/1989/37) and in the report on the strategy to strengthen the capacity of the Fund to deal with issues concerning women, population and development (DP/1989/36). The education of women had always been a top priority and was widely accepted as the key to their full and equal participation in economic, social and cultural life. In spite of considerable efforts and adult literacy campaigns organized in many countries, nearly two thirds of the world's illiterates were women. The plan of action for the eradication of illiteracy by the year 2000, to be launched during the International Literacy Year in 1990, was expected to help achieve a massive reduction in female illiteracy.

90. UNESCO planned to devote more effort to analysing the cultural and socio-psychological factors affecting fertility rates in those countries where programme efforts to reduce fertility were important. It would also be initiating activities designed to clarify and anticipate the social and cultural consequences of the demographic transition in developing countries where it was well advanced, and particularly the consequences of aging for families and Governments. It also planned to strengthen its activities on the social and cultural consequences of urbanization and international migratory movements. The addition of those new areas of research would have a positive impact on the efficiency of projects in population education and communication. With that objective in mind, UNESCO had, with UNFPA assistance, started its own review and assessment of the population education projects which it executed, as one input for the International Conference on Education for All to take place in 1990, as well as for the Congress on Population Education scheduled for 1991. In addition, UNESCO had started to increase the number of its divisions involved in population-related activities, to strengthen co-ordination among them and to improve technical backstopping to its projects.

(Mrs. Timur, UNESCO)

91. In sum, UNFPA and UNESCO had developed a dynamic and productive relationship in the course of the past 20 years. UNESCO looked forward to continuation of that co-operation in the service of the needs of Member States

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.