



**Governing Council
of the
United Nations
Development Programme**

Distr.
GENERAL

DP/1989/SR.25
26 June 1989
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

GOVERNING COUNCIL

Thirty-sixth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 25th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 16 June 1989, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. PIBULSONGGRAM (Thailand)

CONTENTS

Programme planning

- (a) Fourth programming cycle
- (iii) Questions relating to Namibia

Programme implementation

- (d) Special programmes
- (iii) Role of the United Nations Development Programme in the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development, 1986-1990

This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent within one week of the date of this document to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, Department of Conference Services, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza.

Any corrections to the records of the meetings of this session will be consolidated in a single corrigendum, to be issued shortly after the end of the session.

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

PROGRAMME PLANNING

(a) FOURTH PROGRAMMING CYCLE:

(iii) QUESTIONS RELATING TO NAMIBIA (DP/1989/53)

1. Mr. KUDRIAVTSEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the restructuring process under way in the Soviet Union was not so very different from other restructuring processes taking place all over the world: it formed part of the democratization of the entire international order and was the Soviet Union's contribution to solving closely interrelated world problems, which the international community must tackle jointly in order to survive.

2. Unfortunately, the economic crisis on the African continent remained one such problem. The pace at which the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development was being implemented was cause for concern. The Soviet Union had already stated its position on that question. The increase in the financial resources which UNDP had earmarked for African countries under the fourth programming cycle was encouraging. UNDP must strengthen its co-operation with the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and other African regional and subregional organizations in order to co-ordinate project execution.

3. The Soviet Union was contributing as best it could to the implementation of the Programme of Action. In 1986-1987, it had provided the equivalent of over \$3 billion in economic and technical assistance. It had taken various measures to ease the debt burden of many African countries. It had provided assistance to Ethiopia to help it overcome its food problems, and to Algeria, Tunisia, Burkina Faso, Mauritania and Mali for locust and grasshopper control. Human resources development was an essential aspect of its technical co-operation with African countries and the Soviet Union had helped to train over 45,000 African experts and skilled workers in their own countries in 1986-1987; 24,000 others were currently receiving training in Soviet educational establishments. In August 1987, it had ratified the agreement establishing a Common Fund for Commodities. Lastly, it had contributed the equivalent of over \$100 million to the AFRICA Fund.

4. His delegation saw a link between the reports on assistance to national liberation movements recognized in its area by the Organization of African Unity (DP/1989/21) and on questions relating to Namibia (DP/1989/53) and subscribed to the objectives of OAU. It too believed that South African policy was a source of destabilization in southern Africa. It welcomed the increase in UNDP assistance to national liberation movements recognized by OAU. The process of transferring projects for Namibians to a sovereign Namibian State must be accelerated. His delegation had no difficulty with the proposal to send a fact-finding mission to Namibia nor with the recommendation to defer the question of a definitive fourth cycle indicative planning figure (IPF) for Namibia to the thirty-seventh session of

(Mr. Kudriavtsev, USSR)

the Governing Council, subject to the approval of the African countries and the United Nations Council for Namibia.

5. The Soviet Union would continue to contribute to the economic and social development of the African countries. It was not pursuing its own interests on the African continent, any more than elsewhere, and had no intention of imposing its ideology on anyone there. The expansion of international co-operation for Africa would contribute not only to improving the socio-economic situation on that continent but also to the harmonious development of the world economy in general.

PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

(d) SPECIAL PROGRAMMES

(iii) ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR AFRICAN ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND DEVELOPMENT, 1986-1990 (DP/1989/22)

6. Mr. DAMIBA (Assistant Administrator and Regional Director, Regional Bureau for Africa), reporting on the progress made since the thirty-fourth session of the Governing Council, said that UNDP had increased the volume of resources allocated to the Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development (UNPAAERD), improved delivery of the IPF and launched an array of initiatives, all at the request of African Governments. In its decision 88/24, the Council had requested the Administrator to continue support for the initiatives of the Steering Committee of UNPAAERD to ensure the appropriate involvement of women in programmes and projects and to strengthen its ties with non-governmental organizations. Those concerns were addressed in document DP/1989/22. In addition to its support for the Steering Committee, including distribution of the publication Africa Recovery, UNDP was supporting the Interagency Task Force chaired by the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA).

7. In the same decision, the Council had welcomed the proposal to organize subregional meetings of African Ministers of Planning. Five meetings had been held, including one in which the Resident Representatives for the sub-Saharan region had participated. The Council's intention had been unequivocal: recipients should play a greater role and UNDP must concentrate on areas where it had a comparative advantage and regularly review its activities in order to respond to changing circumstances. The subregional consultations must be reinforced in future.

8. Africa was a continent rich in potential, yet its economies had continued to decline throughout the 1980s. In addition to UNPAAERD, a number of other plans and programmes provided a broad framework for identifying Government priorities and channelling resources. The four cluster meetings of African Ministers of Planning and the joint meeting with Resident Representatives had provided an opportunity for a very candid dialogue in development partnership. In order to transform that opportunity into firm agreements, the recommendations of the joint meeting must be

(Mr. Damiba)

woven into its policies and procedures. The meetings had focused on issues of urgency to African Governments: critical poverty and economic management, partnership in development, structural adjustment, economic transformation, the role of the private sector and the role of emergency relief. All those questions mirrored UNDP preoccupations as it entered the 1990s. UNDP activities in Africa had been thoroughly examined, particularly the round-table process, national technical co-operation assessments and programmes (NaTCAPs), the revival of development planning and the increased use of Government execution and national consultants. The overriding goal of UNDP - to support national efforts and priorities in economic transformation so as to foster growth and development for all segments of society - had been reaffirmed.

9. UNDP must confront that awesome challenge by building on those ingredients which would ensure a more flexible and focused response. The Governing Council was well aware of Africa's special needs, which was why it had decided in 1988 to strengthen the Regional Bureau for Africa. The emphasis on strengthening the field network was reflected in the Administrator's proposal for Development Support Services.

10. The thrust to recruit more Africans was evidence of UNDP's determination to support national leadership and ultimately self-reliance. The number of Africans offered entry-level posts had doubled between 1988 and mid-1989. Africa was the best-represented continent where P-4 and P-5 posts were concerned. However, UNDP must endeavour to recruit more African women.

11. In the area of technical co-operation, UNDP had pursued and strengthened implementation of the NaTCAPs. In the period 1986-1988, 10 NaTCAPs had been launched. UNDP intended to conduct NaTCAP exercises at the rate of six to eight countries per year in 1990 and 1991. Ultimately, that process would culminate in the preparation of the following generation of country programmes. It would be closely linked to a round-table or consultative-group meeting, wherever such mechanisms existed. Government ownership, which was the first and most important feature of the NaTCAP process, must be established from the outset. Secondly, the responsibilities of the various participants must be explicitly defined at the beginning of the exercise, with a clearly enunciated schedule of activities, leading to complete internalization within Governments' development planning processes. Thirdly, the various NaTCAP outputs - a data base on past and ongoing assistance, government policy on technical co-operation, and priority programmes for future technical co-operation - must be logically sequenced. There were those who had argued that the NaTCAP process was too drawn out. Perhaps that was true, but it should not be forgotten that UNDP and Governments were breaking new ground. Moreover, all the parties concerned acknowledged that technical co-operation had become too important to be ignored or left unplanned. Guidelines had gradually been laid down and were now being applied.

12. Where the round-table process was concerned, considerable progress had been made over the past four years in the implementation of the new format. Round-table conferences now took place regularly in Geneva, and follow-up in-country meetings, as well as sectoral or thematic meetings, were routinely held. The success of

(Mr. Damiba)

round-table or consultative-group meetings should be measured on the basis of the following criteria: first, the achievement of a consensus on economic strategies and policy reforms; second, the volume of financial assistance pledged and the extent to which it met the requirements; third, follow-up arrangements to ensure that both recipients and donors honoured their commitments. With regard to the first criterion, it could be said that discussions at the round-table conferences had always been constructive, even where sensitive issues were concerned. Such discussions usually resulted in a consensus on the overall orientations of development strategies and in clear recommendations. As to the financing criterion, Governments' estimates of their requirements for the near future had been more than adequately covered. The targets indicated by donors at the eight round-table conferences held since 1987 had amounted to a total of \$1.5 billion a year. UNDP wished to thank the donor countries concerned. With regard to follow-up arrangements, measures had been adopted concerning meetings, working groups, selection of a lead agency and agreement on a tentative timetable.

13. Over the years UNDP had toiled to improve the round-table process. At the request of the Governments concerned, UNDP had provided technical assistance to the institutions in charge of preparations for and follow-up to round-table conferences. Technical co-operation issues were now routinely on the agendas of round-table conferences and the meetings of the World Bank consultative groups. UNDP supervised the preparation of papers for all the meetings in question. Owing to the importance of the private sector, particular attention was paid to its role. However, most important of all, it was active participation by recipient and donor countries that had led to the greater effectiveness of the round-table conferences. The Soviet Union was particularly noteworthy in that connection. The round-table meetings had become an extremely useful instrument for the monitoring, at the country level, of the Substantial New Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries and, also, of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development. That, of course, was not to say that further improvements could not be envisaged. In the light of the preparatory work for the forthcoming United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, UNDP wished to make two remarks, the first of which concerned the frequency of the round-table conferences. If the conferences were to monitor the implementation of a decade-long programme of action, their frequency must be increased, particularly since economic priorities and strategies had changed rapidly in Africa. UNDP would suggest an average of one round-table conference every two years for each country. However, it would be able to attain that goal only with support from both recipient and donor countries. UNDP's second remark concerned the role of round-table conferences in the context of the World Bank Special Programme of Assistance for Africa. That programme, which was a well-managed co-ordination effort, also presented UNDP with a challenge. Of the 22 countries now eligible for assistance under the Special Programme, 10 had chosen the round-table process as a mechanism for co-ordinating assistance. However, the round-table meetings might be less useful if discussions on economic policies and the mobilization of resources mostly took place in the context of the Special Programme. UNDP must therefore play a much more active role in the work of the round-table meetings with a view to

(Mr. Damiba)

assisting the countries in question in preparing their economic strategies and adjustment programmes.

14. International debate was currently focused on economic reform and structural adjustment. Significant progress had been made recently when a decision to meet annually on the issue of structural adjustment had been reached at a high-level inter-agency meeting chaired by the World Bank. The following meeting would take place at UNDP headquarters. At the cluster meetings of the African Ministers of Planning, three clear conclusions had been reached with regard to structural adjustment: (1) Reform programmes were necessary but must be implemented by the Governments concerned; (2) UNDP must preserve its neutrality vis-à-vis other countries and organizations, in particular the Bretton Woods institutions; (3) UNDP had a special role to play where three particular areas of structural adjustment were concerned: assisting African Governments in preparing and implementing their reform and adjustment programmes; helping to mitigate the negative impact of adjustment programmes; and revitalizing the development-planning process in order to co-ordinate short- and long-term strategies. Appropriate steps had already been taken in each of those three areas.

15. In March 1989, UNDP had approved a project entitled "Structural Adjustment Advisory Teams for Africa" (SAATA) (DP/1989/22, para. 53), which would provide training and high-level expertise to African countries, at their request. There was, of course, absolutely no conditionality attached to the services in question. The advisers would endeavour to maintain good relations with the Bretton Woods institutions but would work solely for the African Governments. Teams had already started working in three countries, and the outlook was extremely promising.

16. Along with the SAATA project, UNDP had decided to fund a study of structural adjustment in Africa, which would be executed by ECA. The purpose of the study was to define a set of alternatives to the structural reforms currently envisaged in Africa, under the guidance of an international advisory board comprising African and international experts. A useful framework to guide African countries entering into negotiations with the Bretton Woods institutions and other donors had thus been established. It was certainly a novel and crucial instrument for internalization.

17. UNDP, too, was extremely concerned about the impact of structural adjustment programmes. For that reason the project on the social dimensions of adjustment had been improved in 1987, in collaboration with a number of bilateral and multilateral institutions. The project had received the enthusiastic support of the donor community. More than 20 African countries had now requested assistance under the project. The United Republic of Tanzania had requested UNDP to perform the lead function. One of the weaknesses of the first generation of adjustment programmes had been the shortness of their time-horizons and their almost exclusive preoccupation with economic and financial equilibria. UNDP had come a long way since then, with recognition of the fact that development planning must contribute to the definition and the inclusion of the various dimensions that were necessary for an adjustment programme to be viable. Unfortunately, planning had been

(Mr. Damiba)

seriously marginalized in Africa, at times partly because of the overriding preoccupation of Governments with immediate constraints. Planning must be reactivated, and any past shortcomings should naturally be corrected. What was needed was a new approach to planning, in line with current African realities. The African Ministers of Planning had suggested that UNDP should take the lead in that connection. UNDP was already acting on that request, and further suggestions and recommendations would be put forward in the following few months.

18. Structural adjustment and planning efforts were of great import, but they required a favourable climate if they were to yield results. All too often, such efforts came to naught owing to repeated disasters, whether man-made or natural. With respect to refugees and returnees, UNDP collaborated closely with UNHCR through discussions at UNDP headquarters and through participation in joint missions and activities in the field. In that context, the revitalization of ICARA II seemed justified. UNDP had closely followed the work of the international conference on the tragic situation of refugees, returnees and displaced persons in southern Africa, and had participated in follow-up meetings for the purpose of developing a system-wide mechanism to address the problems in question. The UNDP position had recently been put forward in the context of the Inter-Agency Group. The system already had an adequate structure, under the leadership of the Resident Co-ordinator. Displaced persons were most in need of the international community's attention, since the number of displaced persons now exceeded the number of refugees. UNDP had participated in inter-agency missions in the countries affected. Since in many instances displacement occurred as a result of a man-made disaster, resources for humanitarian relief and rehabilitation were not readily forthcoming. UNDP had to take account of such factors in providing assistance.

19. The Administrator had set up a task force on refugees, returnees and displaced persons, which sought to: develop an organizational policy and strategy; ensure coherence among the different units with UNDP; and encourage field offices to establish a data base and develop a set of guidelines for resident representatives. UNDP would issue a policy document on displacement, and would request resources that could be used flexibly, in view of the difficult situation in the countries concerned.

20. Development was both a dynamic and a complex process and could not be reduced to slogans. Expanded production, increased knowledge, improved health and increases in revenue would not be brought about by words but by deeds. It was essential to be sensitive to those who were directly and daily suffering from the unjust effects of current conditions. Sound management and economic progress had meaning only if they helped to better people's lives. Men and women were the engines of development. The underlying causes of the crisis must none the less not be overlooked. Development practitioners must simultaneously act as the "trustees of the poor" and "the guardians of rationality". Neglecting one of those two issues was a recipe for disaster. What was really at issue was not adjustment "per se" (even with a human face) but, rather, the conditions required for

(Mr. Damiba)

development. It was necessary to break free from philosophical disputes on adjustment and to concentrate instead on addressing the basic facts. It was only thus that it would be possible to define appropriate action programmes combining both immediate and longer-term measures. That ambitious, complex agenda required at the same time technical measures, rational management and political decisions.

21. A certain amount of "fatigue" was currently being witnessed in the area of co-operation for development. However, despite that discouragement, the progress made in recent years in some African countries must not be overlooked. Many African countries had begun to prove that change was possible. It was to be hoped that there was now a large consensus that policy reforms must be relevant to specific country situations, and that the countries in question must be given control of the reforms. The consensus was also that the process of gaining public acceptance of the need for adjustment measures and economic transformation should be as broad-based as possible in the countries concerned. All that was encouraging. It was now known what development called for: broad-based growth in a competitive world economy. Sustained broad-based growth called for investing in human capital. The shortage of technical skills and weak institutions were major impediments to Africa's growth and development. Priority should therefore be given to human-resources development and national capacity-building for self-reliance.

22. Mr. CHAUDOUET (France) said that French views on Africa's future could be summarized in the form of the following question: how was a balance to be struck between adjustments designed to restore overall equilibria and the continuation of a productive investment endeavour with a view to ensuring renewed growth and development as soon as possible?

23. Where structural adjustment was concerned, France was very interested in the endeavour to promote far-reaching adjustment policies developed by Africans that would be better geared to the situation in the African countries and that would maintain a proper balance between political and social factors. France wished to see an in-depth dialogue on such issues established with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, and believed that UNDP could do much to facilitate such a dialogue and that it could provide technical assistance in preparing the programmes in question.

24. Where the medium and long term were concerned, although each individual country must strike a balance among the various sectors of its economy (whether public, semi-public, private, co-operative or informal), place greater emphasis on private initiative and reduce State controls, planning was none the less essential, since the laissez-faire jungle could cause considerable harm in sub-Saharan Africa.

25. As to the overall long-term emphasis in sectors directly connected with human resources, education systems must in future concentrate on training producers of goods and services rather than civil servants. In agriculture, priority should by no means be given to the dissemination of technological progress; it was more important to ensure that small-scale African farmers could produce enough to feed the population in areas where there were food deficits, such as the towns.

(Mr. Chaudouet, France)

Non-governmental organizations could make a very useful contribution in that area. On the other hand, large-scale importation of heavily subsidized grains could ruin sub-Saharan agriculture for a long time to come.

26. The underlying causes of the African countries' debt problems, particularly the issue of foreign exchange earned primarily as a result of the export of primary products, must be subjected to closer scrutiny. France took a keen interest, in that connection, in the work of the United Nations group of experts meeting in the framework of UNCTAD.

27. All of that demonstrated the importance that France attached to the dialogue between African and donor States, particularly within the framework of the World Bank consultative groups and the UNDP round tables. His delegation attached equal importance to the three phases of the round-table process: the round table itself, the expanded conference and follow-up meetings. While it fully agreed with the NaTCAP principle, it emphasized the need for a dialogue with each donor.

28. France had decided to establish a dialogue with UNDP on all areas of African development, particularly on support for the management of public finances and support for the private sector. UNDP was welcome to draw on the African expertise of French experts. In conclusion, his delegation commended Mr. Damiba for the action which he and his team were taking in Africa.

29. Ms. KORHONEN (Finland), speaking on behalf of the four Nordic countries, said that speeding up the project approval process and identifying innovative approaches to assistance were the most challenging tasks facing UNDP.

30. The Nordic countries would welcome specific information from the UNDP secretariat on what proportion of the figures given for assistance to sub-Saharan Africa represented additional resources and what proportion represented assistance on which the Governing Council had actually requested it to report. They had noted with satisfaction that the approval rate for regional project funds had increased but would appreciate some information on the speed at which funds were being disbursed. It would also be useful if future reports showed how regional programmes complemented country-specific activities.

31. It would be helpful to the Council if future reports contained an assessment of how such mechanisms as NaTCAPs round tables and the Structural Adjustment Advisory Teams for Africa (SAATA) had fulfilled their respective functions. Lastly, with respect to the participation of women in development, the Nordic countries had carefully studied the new project review format and looked forward with considerable interest to hearing the results of its application and seeing how co-operation with UNIFEM functioned in the context of UNPAAERD.

32. Mr. KUFUOR (Ghana), speaking on behalf of the African States members of the Governing Council noted the continuing deterioration in the economic situation in Africa, which UNDP now acknowledged. The African countries needed additional assistance in order to strengthen their national capacities to manage their own

(Mr. Kufuor, Ghana)

development. It was therefore regrettable that UNDP had not mobilized any additional resources for Africa in response to Governing Council decision 88/24, as it had done for Central America. The \$187,550,000 increase in IPF allocations to Africa (DP/1989/22, para. 10) was in response to Council decision 88/31; it was not an additional resource mobilized in response to decision 88/24. In future reports, a distinction should be made between resources that would normally have accrued to the region and additional resources. The Group of African States appealed to the Council to earmark additional resources for Africa at the earliest opportunity, within the framework of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development.

33. On the question of innovative approaches to assistance, the African States hoped that the NatCAP exercise would eventually be internalized in country programming. Ghana had made a beginning in that area. Round tables and consultative meetings had also been successful in mobilizing resources and UNDP assistance should go to strengthening the capacity of countries to manage those processes, even more effectively. The Administrator's intention of using more local experts and national institutions for SAATA missions was most welcome. Future reports should provide specific information on that question. UNDP's initiatives in the area of locust and grasshopper control also had the African States' full support.

34. The rate of country project approval had generally been satisfactory, but the approval of regional and subregional projects could be improved. The economic integration of Africa was crucial to the continent's development and UNDP must accord the regional projects submitted for its approval the urgent attention they deserved. In particular, approval of projects submitted under the Transport and Communications Decade should be expedited and it was the African States' expectation that UNDP would give the necessary assistance to OAU and ECA during the preparatory phase of the Second Decade. While cluster meetings had been useful, in future they should be organized on a subregional rather than a linguistic basis.

35. The African States deeply appreciated the Council's decision to strengthen the Regional Bureau for Africa. It was important to hold regular consultations in New York with the Group of African States. With respect to the staffing composition of UNDP, the African Group continued to hold the view that African participation in the decision-making process at headquarters must be reviewed with a view to ensuring that Africa's voice was heard at all levels.

36. Mr. DE BEER (Netherlands) said that many African countries would be unable to achieve a reasonable rate of growth and development until the debt problem was solved. Not so long ago, the international community had believed that it was almost impossible to overcome a debt service ratio of 20 per cent. Now, however, many African countries had to contend with debt service ratios of 40 per cent. His delegation expected that ongoing debt relief discussions would soon result in formulas suitable for alleviating the African debt burden. In that connection, the Netherlands would continue to cancel all ODA debt service payments over the whole period covered by UNPAAERD for those African low-income countries which were implementing economic adjustment programmes.

(Mr. de Beer, Netherlands)

37. Per capita food production in Africa was decreasing, with the result that one third of the continent's population was undernourished. In order to achieve agricultural development, the first step towards food security, it was essential to focus efforts on agricultural research, soil conservation and improvement, mechanization and, in some cases, irrigation and drainage. A solution also had to be found to the fact that, in many countries, the public sector had complete control of trade, the transport of grains and the setting of food prices, a situation which resulted in insufficient incentives for farmers and thus in reduced local production and the flourishing of black markets.

38. Improvement of the agricultural sector remained crucial for most sub-Saharan African countries. In recognition of the importance of food security, the Netherlands had recently financed 18 food security and market restructuring projects, totalling \$US 50 million in those countries. Consistently high population growth made the task of ensuring an adequate food supply even more difficult. The Netherlands therefore welcomed the growing importance attached by the African countries to the population issue. In that connection, the Netherlands Government had increased its contribution to UNFPA from \$18 million to \$23 million over the past three years.

39. Women played a prominent role in food production. The introduction of new agricultural technologies often threatened their traditionally strong position, however. It was therefore essential to ensure that women had access to agricultural extension, credit, land titles and new technologies. They must also be encouraged to organize themselves; in that respect, women's integration in development programmes was a sine qua non when considering the financing of such programmes.

40. Co-ordination between the different partners in development was a pre-condition for the success of development programmes and projects. It must be ensured that the limited resources available were being utilized in the most efficient manner. While commending the African countries that had taken initiatives in that regard, the Netherlands felt that there should be more co-ordination in the field between United Nations agencies, the World Bank and IMF, at the project, country and sectoral levels.

41. Mr. EL ZUBEIR (Sudan) said that the Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990 (UNPAAERD) had come at a time when the African countries, particularly the sub-Saharan countries, were experiencing structural imbalances which had been aggravated by the increasing external debt burden, the deterioration in terms of trade, protectionism by the industrialized countries and a succession of natural disasters.

42. The Programme of Action also formed part of the structural adjustment programmes which a number of African countries had undertaken to resolve their balance-of-payments difficulties. Unfortunately, those adjustment programmes, far from achieving the desired results, had had an adverse effect on the economic and social situation of low-income groups in both urban and rural areas, because of a

/...

(Mr. El Zubeir, Sudan)

number of endogenous and exogenous factors and because they had failed to take account of the social dimensions of the measures taken to restore the balance of payments. The efforts made by international agencies in that area remained extremely limited and UNDP was required to play a crucial role in helping offset the impact of such programmes by preparing projects and programmes for disadvantaged groups in such areas as drinking water supply, environmental health, primary health care and income-generating activities. In that connection, mention should also be made of the recent Khartoum Declaration.

43. Mr. FERNANDEZ (Liberia) endorsed the statement made by Ghana on behalf of the African States members of the Governing Council. Document DP/1989/22 showed clearly that UNDP was very involved in Africa, and Liberia especially welcomed the Programme's co-operation with regional economic institutions, particularly OAU. The Regional Bureau for Africa had initiated specific measures to accelerate the project formulation and approval process which should help to increase absorptive capacity. His delegation hoped that the NaTCAP exercise would be an integral part of country programmes. UNDP was to be commended for its efforts to mobilize additional resources, notably through round tables. Increasing recourse to national experts showed the importance of putting development in its proper cultural context, without which planning and development would not achieve sustainability. His delegation hoped that the Regional Bureau for Africa would be further strengthened and would move forward: what was now needed was concrete action.

44. Mr. SOUTTER (Canada) said that if UNDP was playing a very major role in Africa, that was not only because of UNPAAERD but also and above all because Africa was in serious economic difficulties and members of the Council had made a commitment to help correct that situation. Additional financial resources, the strengthening of the Regional Bureau for Africa and other proposals presented by the Administrator were not always necessarily the direct result of the Programme of Action. The latter had been very helpful in guiding the decisions and interventions of the Council and the UNDP secretariat. His delegation wished to congratulate the secretariat, particularly the Regional Bureau for Africa, on its efforts to implement the Programme, mobilize funds and co-ordinate activities. The formulas and mechanisms developed by UNDP for Africa were very relevant. Round tables and NaTCAPs, while not a panacea, had demonstrated their usefulness and must be continued, although certain adjustments might be required. His delegation was also pleased to learn that UNDP had been working more closely with Africa's regional and subregional organizations.

45. Mr. ZUNNI (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) thanked the Regional Bureau for Africa and observed that, despite the formulation of UNPAAERD, Africa continued to face such serious problems as a drop in currency reserves, indebtedness, balance-of-payments difficulties and natural disasters such as grasshopper and locust infestation. The Council must increase its efforts to take the necessary steps to solve the African continent's economic and social problems and to reinforce structural adjustment. To that end, IPFs must be increased and regional programmes adopted under UNPAAERD. UNDP should also strengthen the Regional Bureau for Africa as part of

(Mr. Zunni, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

the structural adjustment process and increase its co-operation with regional offices and agencies.

46. Mrs. COLLOTON (United States of America) said that her country continued to follow closely UNDP's progress as it reoriented its country programmes and designed and implemented new special initiatives in direct support of UNPAAERD. It commended UNDP action to accelerate the project approval process, to recruit and deploy new field economists and more programme staff and to strengthen joint strategy development and planning sessions through cluster meetings with Ministers of Planning; all those measures were appropriate to improving the UNPAAERD process. The implementation of 10 NatCAP pilot programmes was another positive step in that valuable effort. Her country encouraged African Governments aggressively to lead the NatCAP process, establishing clear priority programmes of technical assistance requirements to which donor countries could respond.

47. Round-table meetings were now able to reach consensus on country macro-economic policy and sectoral strategies and to adapt technical co-operation efforts to meet the priority needs of recipient countries. The fact that the financial pledges of donor partners had more than met the requirements of the developing country host Government in the majority of cases was a tribute to the quality of effort that went into the organization of round tables. The United States strongly encouraged UNDP to help host Governments in following up on the action taken as a result of round tables and in strengthening the local institutions in charge of such follow up.

48. The round-table process had taken several years to mature. Her delegation hoped that the new Structural Adjustment Advisory Teams for Africa (SAATA) would become operational more quickly. The success of the many structural adjustment programmes undertaken by African Governments was the key to the ultimate success of UNPAAERD. The SAATA programme, with its goal of helping Governments internalize the structural adjustment process and involve local experts and institutions in the design and implementation of restructuring programmes, had, without doubt, a critical role to play. Her delegation encouraged UNDP to give it the highest priority.

49. Her delegation commended UNDP for formally integrating women in development (WID) guidelines and principles into all country programmes and for assessing progress in that area during periodic country reviews. It was critical to the long-term development of Africa that WID concerns be included in all projects.

50. Mr. PETTITT (United Kingdom) said that the creation of structural adjustment advisory teams for Africa (SAATA) was an excellent idea. He wished to know whether the proposals to be made in the report on displaced persons, the preparation of which had been announced by the Director of the Regional Bureau for Africa, would be funded from resources under the budget for the current cycle or from special reserves, or whether they would be considered at the thirty-seventh session or during the preparation of the fifth programming cycle.

51. Mr. LADJOUZI (Observer for Algeria) noted UNDP's sincere concern for putting the Programme of Action into effect. He fully supported the statement of the representative of Ghana on behalf of the African members of the Governing Council. UNDP should give greater attention to the African countries' capacity for absorption. The Lagos Plan was still valid and it remained the responsibility of Governments to try to implement it, but any UNDP assistance for the purpose would be welcome. UNDP was to be commended for the efforts it had made to mobilize additional resources. His delegation believed there should be greater co-ordination between the Regional Bureau for Africa and the Regional Bureau for Arab States and Europe in implementing the Programme of Action. Since several assessments of the economic situation in Africa had been made, by different bodies, and African Governments were not in unanimous agreement with the assessments, there was no question that UNDP should make its own evaluation.

52. The strengthening of staff in the Regional Bureau for Africa had been considerable but was inadequate. The strengthening, which should apply also to quality, should lead to greater African participation in decisions; the Administrator should not overlook the fact that the best experts on Africa were the Africans themselves. Lastly, UNDP should consult more frequently and more systematically with the Group of African States and include the countries of North Africa in such consultations.

53. Mrs. RAPOLSKI (Observer for Lesotho), expressing appreciation for the efforts UNDP had made to mobilize additional resources for the implementation of the Programme of Action, and to organize round tables that should make it possible to identify innovative approaches to assistance. Any such approaches, however, must not, in promoting thematic modalities for socio-economic development, diverge from the Consensus of 1970 (General Assembly resolution 2688 (XXV)) which gave Governments the right to determine their own priorities in the selection of programmes and projects and the allocation of IPF resources. The Governing Council must first discuss any such innovations and monitor their implementation.

54. UNDP's conformity to the priorities set out in the Programme of Action would unquestionably help ensure its proper implementation. The major priority was agriculture, and it should not be treated as one component under the heading of management services (as in DP/1989/22, para. 12), but rather as a sector with its own needs. UNDP was actively discussing with donors the possibility of increasing the amount of funds in that sector. The issue of food security remained a very serious one nationally and subregionally, despite the priority given to it by subregional organizations like the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC). UNDP should also give special attention to the advancement of women, since they had a large role in agricultural production in Africa. It should, in particular, provide credit to women and organize training activities for them.

55. With regard to round tables, the fact that they were most often held in Geneva imposed heavy costs on the Governments concerned. Thought should be given to that problem. The Management Development Programme should follow the priority areas set

(Mrs. Rapolski, Observer, Lesotho)

out in the Programme of Action, rather than guidelines proposed in paragraph 3 of document DP/1989/59.

56. Her delegation welcomed the support UNDP was giving to African regional organizations, and it should continue to do so in order to ensure the co-ordinated implementation of the Programme of Action.

57. Mr. CHIDUMO (Mozambique) welcomed the fact that the Director of the Regional Bureau for Africa had given due attention to the problem of displaced persons. Recalling General Assembly resolution 43/116, which requested the Secretary-General to undertake studies and consultations in order to consider the need for the establishment, within the United Nations system, of a mechanism or arrangement to ensure the implementation and overall co-ordination of relief programmes to internally displaced persons, he was pleased to note that UNDP had set up a special group on refugees, returnees and displaced persons. He wondered, however, whether UNDP had been given the mandate to co-ordinate efforts by the United Nations system on behalf of displaced persons or if UNDP had simply said that it was ready to do so.

58. Mr. SAHLMANN (Federal Republic of Germany), observing that development required the active participation of all sectors of society, asked what means the Assistant Administrator thought UNDP had used to reach and mobilize the people of Africa. A better utilization of human resources and their mobilization were indeed crucial for development.

59. It was imperative to increase food production in countries with a high population growth rate. The next report should contain more specific information on the results of UNDP activities in that field.

60. While it was good that UNDP had adopted criteria for determining the usefulness of round tables, it would be useful to specify, for each project, what the contributions and the conclusions had been.

61. UNDP's active participation in assistance programmes for refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons was to be commended; however, it should ensure that close co-operation was maintained between the UNDP Resident Co-ordinator, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other United Nations institutions.

62. He would be interested in knowing the percentage of procurement contracts with Africans and procurement contracts in other countries offered in connection with the UNDP programmes for Africa.

63. Mr. HAMADZIRIPI (Zimbabwe) underscored the need to organize subregional meetings on a really subregional basis and not simply a linguistic one, as was the case of those referred to in paragraph 45 of document DP/1989/22.

64. Observing that the Programme of Action was drawing to a close, he invited UNDP to redouble its efforts, for much remained to be done.

/...

65. Mr. FRIX (Belgium) endorsed the approach favouring choice and voluntary action and the humanist conception of development presented by the Assistant Administrator. The decade coming to a conclusion was a decade of failure when it came to development aid, particularly because of the unfavourable economic conditions for raw materials, the inadequacy of external assistance, and the debt problem. Structural adjustment programmes had not always been consistent or well conceived, or suited to the different situations of the various countries. They also had the disadvantage of being imposed from the outside. The fact that austerity had not coincided with the stimulation of growth had prejudiced the success of the measures taken.

66. The need for longer-term and more flexible approaches that were better adapted to local capacities for change was therefore obvious. The social and cultural, and indeed political, dimension of adjustment problems must be taken into account. Unilateral support for the balance-of-payments component without regard for the social sector and the restoration of public services was a serious mistake that the international community would work to correct.

67. The adjustment process was more than ever a timely issue and would be a requirement for at least 10 more years. Since structural adjustment programmes had crucial implications for human resources and since their proper management was essential for their success, UNDP must play a fundamental role in that area. His delegation endorsed the initiatives taken within the framework of NaTCAPs, the Special Action Programme for Administration and Management (SAPAM), the improved round-table process, and co-operation with the World Bank's Special Programme of Assistance for Africa. If UNDP was to meet the challenges of the coming decade, intensified and co-ordinated steps must be taken to allow Governments to identify their priorities better, establish the means to achieve them, effectively mobilize their own human resources and regulate external assistance. It was imperative to strengthen UNDP's capacities for analysis and evaluation in the field and at headquarters, if it was to learn from its failures and its successes.

68. Belgium was in favour of development support services, the strengthening of management capacities and the use of local consultants. UNDP must also take into account the intersectoral dimension of many problems, for example with respect to the environment, population, urbanization, social investment and the resumption of productive investment, so as to make the best possible use of resources within the framework of mutually reinforcing sectoral approaches.

69. In conclusion, he encouraged UNDP to undertake, to complement the Toronto initiatives on debt relief, a study of mechanisms for the conversion of debt into development projects which would aim to support, for example, the informal sector, or to finance labour-intensive projects. Belgium was prepared to co-operate with UNDP in carrying out studies and had already offered its assistance for a study concerning Burundi.

70. Mr. DAMIBA (Assistant Administrator and Regional Director of the Regional Bureau for Africa) said that the United Nations Development Programme, which was small in financial terms, was not the only body seeking to meet the needs of African countries and help them achieve the objectives of UNPAAERD. The highly satisfactory rate of implementation of projects carried out in Africa clearly demonstrated the capacity of UNDP to meet priorities and needs.

71. The cultural dimension of development was essential to UNDP. Indeed, it must be taken into account in the process of assimilation of technologies, which varied from one country to another. At the request of groups of countries, UNDP was supporting a project concerning an international centre of Bantu civilization and was assisting the African Cultural Institute.

72. He expressed appreciation to the USSR for its increasingly active participation in round tables, particularly the two latest round tables, held in Guinea-Bissau and Sao Tomé and Príncipe, and for its support to the measures proposed to benefit national liberation movements, Namibia and displaced persons.

73. Referring to the support provided by France to the collective deliberations carried out in Africa to find a frame of reference for future stages of structural adjustment, he said that UNDP was prepared to strengthen the budget of the project for aid to structural adjustment so that the instruments were operational and credible. He was particularly glad that the project included an element of technical co-operation among developing countries, since a delegation of Latin American specialists was to co-operate with African economists.

74. With regard to co-ordination between African countries and UNDP, he suggested that UNDP and the African Group should hold more frequent consultations, which could take place once or even twice a month.

75. The problem of additional resources was fundamental. The report (DP/1989/22) indicated actual additional resources, but not voluntary resources, because, strictly speaking, they did not result from the implementation of UNPAAERD. In future reports, UNDP would make the breakdown requested so that the data would be more precise. However, encouraging signs could be seen in the establishment of a number of trust funds including the Netherlands Trust Fund for Public Administration and Finance, the trust funds established by France and Finland to support round tables and NatCAPs, and the assistance provided by Italy, Spain and Japan in support of the programme to strengthen administrative capacity. Even though those additional funds had not yet reached the critical level which would satisfy African countries, their qualitative aspect should be borne in mind, since they had made it possible to promote new initiatives.

76. Clearly machinery such as the NatCAPs and round tables must become an integral part of the management of the economy of African countries. As to Structural Adjustment Advisory Teams for Africa, that was an entirely new formula and additional information on its feasibility would be provided in future reports.

(Mr. Damiba)

77. The problem of economic integration had not yet been solved. However, UNDP had approved many projects in that respect, including projects worth \$7 billion, respectively, for the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference and the Preferential Trade Area for eastern and southern African States; it was expected that projects concerning the West African Economic Community, the Economic Community of Central African States, the Customs and Economic Union of Central Africa and the Economic Community of Great Lakes Countries would soon be approved.

78. As to staff, he noted that while some progress had been made, since there were 16 Africans in the Regional Bureau for Africa at New York compared to only 10 in 1983, the percentage of African staff members must nevertheless increase further; UNDP, however, would endeavour to respect the principle of universality of the United Nations system.

79. On the question of subregional consultations, he took note of the comments made by the representative of Zimbabwe and indicated that in future such consultations would not be organized solely on a linguistic basis but would involve Member States of regional co-operation bodies.

80. The problem of absorption capacity, referred to by the representative of Liberia, must be linked with that of additional resources. If resources were increased without a parallel growth in absorption capacity, they would not have the desired impact on development. It might perhaps be necessary to develop absorption capacities and demonstrate needs first before seeking to secure additional resources.

81. The advancement and integration of women, as noted by the Observer for Lesotho, were of crucial importance for the development of African agriculture: those elements would enable Africa to succeed in its development.

82. Responding to questions asked by the representatives of Mozambique and the United Kingdom, he said that UNDP would submit a detailed report on displaced persons in 1990, the year when the Council was to consider that question. It was up to Governments to determine their policies with regard to refugees; UNDP could only support their efforts. UNDP sought to improve established mechanisms, but the resident co-ordinator remained the linchpin of the co-ordination of the various operations carried out in conjunction with UNHCR, the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator and other United Nations bodies.

83. With regard to co-ordination between the Regional Bureau for Africa and the Regional Bureau for Arab States and European Programmes, referred to by the representative of Algeria, he said that the Director of the Regional Bureau for Arab States and the resident representative in Somalia had attended the meeting of African Ministers for Planning, held at Addis Ababa, and that that was a beginning. At the level of programmes, the two bureaux had a joint programme to combat locust infestation. The Regional Bureau for Africa was also participating in a programme to develop the Nile basin and in TCDC activities in Tunisia.

The meeting rose at 1.25 p.m.