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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 26th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 16 June 1989, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. PIBULSONGGRAM (Thailand)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

POLICY REVIEW: THE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME IN THE 1990s
(continued)

1. The PRESIDENT, endeavouring to summarize the debate on the high-level segment by focusing on a few ideas which had received wide approval, said that there had been general support for the idea that consideration of the future role of UNDP constituted a first step in a process which involved discussions in the Economic and Social Council, the General Assembly and other forums in the context of the triennial policy review. The continued validity of the Consensus of 1970 and of General Assembly resolution 3405 (XXX), as well as of the principles of universality, neutrality, flexibility, multilateralism and the grant nature of UNDP assistance, had been reaffirmed. Speakers had also agreed that the aims of capacity-building should include the improved co-ordination of external assistance, better management of development and sustained growth that took equity, poverty alleviation and environmental concerns into account.
2. Many developing countries had expressed the view that additional funding would be required in order for UNDP to maintain its central role in development co-operation. The recipient countries had strongly supported the Administrator's proposal for targets that would lead to an annual increase in funding of 16 per cent in the fifth cycle, or 10 per cent in real terms. In view of their deteriorating economic situation, developing countries had considered that much higher levels of resources for UNDP and all other funds and programmes administered by it was a matter of utmost priority. Most donor countries, however, had expressed doubts about the Administrator's target for annual increases in funding and had recommended less optimistic scenarios. Support had also been expressed for a funding strategy whose preparation would enable the Council to address the question of increased funding levels and also that of core and non-core funding.
3. Important statements had been made concerning the preparation of the fifth programming cycle, as well as on the concentration of programme resources and the weighting of IPF criteria to favour low-income, and particularly the least developed, countries.
4. The countries of one region had pointed to its increasingly serious economic and social problems caused by its external debt, stating that the criteria for allocation of UNDP resources would have to take that into account.
5. Some delegations had supported the criteria and principles laid down for the current IPF cycle and others, such as the island and land-locked developing countries, had asked that their special characteristics be borne in mind in determining the criteria for the next cycle.
6. Many speakers had stressed the responsibility of developing countries for co-ordinating development co-operation. Ideas had been put forward concerning the role of the country programming process as a frame of reference and a number of

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speakers had said that the complementarity of the mandates of UNDP and that of the multilateral financial institutions should not entail any conditionalities for the assistance provided by UNDP. All delegations had stressed the importance of co-ordinated action between all partners in the United Nations system in support of operational activities.

7. Stress had also been placed on programme and project modalities, with particular support for Government execution. Many delegations had felt that UNDP should make the technical expertise of the organizations within the United Nations system available to Governments upon request, for the formulation and implementation of projects. Widespread support had been expressed for greater use of the TCDC approach and a number of proposals had been made on how to make programme operations more flexible and more country-specific.

8. A number of ideas concerning the management of UNDP had also been put forward. Some delegations had made suggestions concerning the possibility of intersessional arrangements and the future of the Working Group of the Committee of the Whole. Several speakers had opposed the continuation of the Working Group and several had supported it.

9. On organizational issues, a number of representatives had called for greater decentralization and more delegation of authority to resident representatives. Others had dealt with the International Development Strategy and procurement from developing countries, as well as with the results of recent meetings of ministers of planning organized by UNDP. Organizations within the United Nations system had also made important statements.

PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (continued)

(d) SPECIAL PROGRAMMES (continued)

(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 (continued) (DP/1989/22)

10. Mrs. RAPOLAKI (Observer for Lesotho) said that the report of the Administrator (DP/1989/22) had failed to clarify the issue of the round-table format and had not answered questions she had raised concerning the matter of food security.

11. Mr. SAHLMANN (Federal Republic of Germany) asked the Assistant Administrator to answer the questions he had previously raised concerning local versus external expenditure.

12. Mr. DAMIBA (Assistant Administrator and Regional Director, Regional Bureau for Africa), replying to the representative of Lesotho, said that the priorities involved were the priorities of Governments themselves and that the round-table format had been agreed upon, but could be reviewed. In reply to the representative of the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany, he said that he had no

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statistics on the share of local versus external expenditures but that he would obtain them and make them available.

13. The PRESIDENT said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Council wished to request the drafting group to prepare a decision on the subject.

14. It was so decided.

(iv) TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS DECADES (DP/1989/26)

15. Mr. DAMIBA (Assistant Administrator and Regional Director, Regional Bureau for Africa) said that UNDP had supported the Transport and Communications Decades for Africa since its inception, and had so far allocated a total of \$106.2 million for that purpose. Once the remaining pipeline projects, estimated at \$6.4 million, were approved, total allocations to the Decade would amount to \$112.8 million, representing more than 25 per cent of the total resources available for the second, third and fourth programming cycles. Of the \$106.2 million already approved, \$9 million had been allocated to co-ordination activities, especially the establishment of the Co-ordination Unit in the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), and the balance to projects executed by United Nations specialized agencies as part of the Decade. Those projects related mainly to training and manpower development, through assistance to subregional and regional training institutes, and to subregional integration, through projects aimed at developing subregional transit corridors. UNDP had also supported two major regional telecommunications projects.

16. In connection with the preparation of the Second Decade (1991-2000), \$US 2 million had been earmarked from the regional IPF to finance a new project for the period 1990-1991. It would be submitted to UNDP for processing after review by the Inter-Agency Co-ordination Committee (IACC). UNDP was an active member of IACC, which was drafting objectives and guidelines for the Second Decade. It was also part of the Resource Mobilization Committee, which, together with other major agencies and institutions, would soon meet to draw up its terms of reference and strategy for the Second Decade.

17. The Governing Council had allocated \$5 million to the Decade under Special Programme Resources (SPR), of which \$2.4 million had been allocated to a project on human resources and institutional development for the transport and communications sector in Africa, which had been approved by the Action Committee. An inter-agency meeting had been held to discuss and agree on the modality for conducting field work. United Nations agencies were expected to carry out case studies on the management and organization of selected African transport institutions and the results of those studies would be submitted to workshops for African transport managers and officials to be held in 1990.

18. The other project to benefit from that SPR allocation concerned the manufacture of transport and communications equipment in Africa. An in-depth technical appraisal of the project document had shown that further refinements were necessary and efforts were being made to speed up the process.

19. Mr. ZACHARIA (Chief, Division for the Regional Programme, Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific) said that transport had been assigned a very high priority, with projects focusing mainly on human resources development, the strengthening of institutions, training and the transfer of technology. Forty-seven projects with a budget of \$46 million, including \$6 million from SPR, were being implemented under the Decade, and 76 per cent of the activities would be completed by the end of the year. The projects were being implemented by a number of different organizations and 20 major areas of focus for the Decade had been identified.

20. Ms. HELLSTROM (Sweden), speaking also on behalf of Denmark, Finland and Norway, requested further information on progress in implementing the Decade for Africa since the Administrator's report had been issued.

21. The Nordic countries welcomed the support given by UNDP to the World Maritime University, which had proved very successful because of the high quality of its students. It deserved to be put on a sound financial basis, thus UNDP support should remain at the same level throughout the fourth cycle. Ultimately, however, it was the responsibility of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) to secure its long-term financing and UNDP should actively pursue that issue with IMO.

22. Mr. SOUTTER (Canada) endorsed her sentiments.

23. Mrs. HAMODI (Observer for Iraq), supported by Miss AL-KHALID (Observer for Kuwait), said that the countries of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) agreed that the Transport Decade was of vital importance to them in improving the transport networks they needed for their development. Such improvement required research and study and she therefore appealed to the Council to earmark 1.5 million additional dollars from SPR to help those countries implement their activities under the Decade.

24. Mr. LADJOUZI (Algeria) agreed that UNDP should maintain its level of support for the World Maritime University.

25. Mr. LUKABU KHABOUJI N'ZAJI (Zaire) observed that the overriding need was for trained managers in the transport sector. In that connection, the World Maritime University had been invaluable, and UNDP support should be maintained at the current levels.

26. Mr. AL-FAIHANI (Observer for Bahrain) said that his delegation supported the allocation of funds referred to in paragraph 32 of document DP/1989/26 and also favoured the earmarking of an additional \$1.5 million from SPR to fund ESCWA programmes and seminars.

27. Mr. PETTITT (United Kingdom) asked for more details on UNDP plans for allocations to the University. It would be unfortunate if the UNDP contribution tapered off too early, since the University was as yet unable to stand alone. The allocation should therefore be kept at the current level, and there should also be a contribution for an advertising campaign targeted at the private sector.

28. Ms. COLLOTON (United States of America) said that her Government supported the objectives of the Decade in both regions. Regarding the World Maritime University, it urged that funding be maintained at the current level for that unique and successful IMO programme.

29. Mr. GOPINATHAN (India) said that it should be heartening to both donors and recipient countries that most of the funds for the Transport and Communications Decade for Asia and the Pacific had already been utilized at the mid-point of the Decade and that almost 75 per cent of project activities had been implemented.

30. It was not clear to him whether the new projects that had not yet been implemented for lack of funds were included in the 47 projects mentioned in paragraph 50 of document DP/1989/26. In any case it was obvious that more funds were needed for a number of activities and he asked donors to keep that in mind.

31. ESCAP was about to undertake a mid-term review, and UNDP should co-operate with it.

32. Mr. SAHLMANN (Federal Republic of Germany) asked what UNDP financing was guaranteed for the World Maritime University and what prospects there were for funds from other sources. A solution must be found to maintain the University, to which his Government had for years been contributing scholarships.

33. Mr. KUFUOR (Ghana) said that Africa required UNDP's help in building up the needed transport infrastructures in getting access to technical expertise and in acquiring equipment.

34. The Group of African States, on whose behalf he spoke, was not entirely convinced that the allocation of \$2.5 million for the case studies referred to in paragraph 23 of document DP/1989/26 was the best use to which that portion of SPR could be put. It had similar concerns regarding the study on the development of the manufacture of transport and communications equipment in Africa, the cost of which seemed too high. It wondered if both had been discussed with ECA.

35. Ghana itself had had at least 15 specialized personnel trained by the World Maritime University, and supported continued assistance to it.

36. Mr. FERNANDEZ (Liberia) endorsed the comments made by the representative of Ghana.

37. Mr. MISSARY (Observer for Democratic Yemen) said that in implementing the objectives of the Transport and Communications Decade for Asia and the Pacific, the needs of the least developed, land-locked and island countries must be given special consideration, as must the improvement of the infrastructure in the ESCWA countries. His delegation endorsed the proposed allocations of \$6 million and \$1.5 million for the Decade.

38. Mr. CZARKOWSKI (Poland), expressing support for both Decades, suggested that a number of regional projects in Europe might serve as models for UNDP. For instance, transport projects in Africa could be patterned on the North-South European Motorway project.

39. Mr. DAMIBA (Assistant Administrator and Regional Director, Regional Bureau for Africa), replying to delegations, said that the Regional Bureau for Africa had earmarked over \$1 million to support the World Maritime University and was considering adding \$500,000 for 1990-1991 to keep the University in operation through the end of the cycle. Since the Maritime Academies of Accra and Abidjan had organic links with the University, there was no problem in making such an allocation.

40. Regarding the planned case studies whose value had been questioned by the representative of Ghana on behalf of the African Group, he pointed out that it had been decided to undertake them on the basis of a 1984 Economic and Social Council resolution. ECA had been asked to do a study, as a result of which human resources development had been selected as a priority. In 1986, all the agencies involved, including ECA, the World Bank, IMO and UNCTAD, had met to discuss the matter, and the consensus had been to do case studies on transport management and organization in selected African countries, the results of which would then be circulated to specialized workshops and to managers of transport and communications enterprises.

41. Mr. ZACHARIA (Chief, Division for the Regional Programme, Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific) said that the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific had also made provisions to support the University until the end of the cycle, through an agreement between UNDP and the University. The Bureau was also supporting two branches, one in China and one in India, and was negotiating with IMO to support a third in Bangladesh.

42. Regarding UNDP co-operation with the ESCAP mid-term review, UNDP planned to fund it because SPR had been used up. It would also be providing consultants, and ensuring the involvement of the other specialized agencies concerned.

43. As to the number of projects in connection with the Decade for Asia and the Pacific, \$9 million were available in addition to SPR thanks to the generosity of donors, and thus the new projects would be additional to the 47 mentioned in the report. He agreed that there was a real need for a number of activities, which would gradually be identified in the mid-term review.

44. He assured the Observer for Democratic Yemen that when the Council had discussed allocations under the \$6 million available, it had been agreed that special consideration would be given to land-locked, island and least developed countries. Nine projects at least, funded from SPR, had been earmarked mainly for such countries.

45. Mr. NOUR (Assistant Administrator and Regional Director, Regional Bureau for Arab States and Europe) reported that ESCWA had met the previous month in Baghdad with renewed vigour after long years of war in the region. He noted that when the allocations to Asia and the Pacific had been reviewed, not enough had been

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channelled to the countries of Western Asia. In view of the special circumstances that had so long afflicted that region, he asked UNDP to look again into the possibility of earmarking additional funds for it, and especially for its least developed countries.

46. Mr. PETTITT (United Kingdom) said that he was pleased to hear that the World Maritime University's future was assured; but since the information provided by the Assistant Administrators did not jibe with information he had received from another source, he wondered if it would be possible for interested delegations to have the total plans for funding in writing.

47. The PRESIDENT said that the Secretariat would certainly provide those figures. He observed that the Council's general discussion of the item was completed. He would take it, if he heard no objection that the Council wished the Drafting Group to prepare draft decisions on the Transportation and Communications Decades.

48. It was so decided.

(a) ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATOR FOR 1988 (DP/1989/13 and Add.1-5)

49. Mr. BROWN (Associate Administrator), introducing the report, said that, inasmuch as all major policy issues had been covered in document DP/1989/14, the report dealt with the highlights of UNDP activities in 1988 and with new programme emphases. UNDP continued to seek the best ways of helping Governments to overcome the constraints facing their development efforts in a more competitive world economic environment and to strengthen their managerial capacities. Greater emphasis was being placed on improved budget and debt management and on support for Governments which sought to enhance their public sector management and private sector support. With regard to critical poverty alleviation, country and regional programmes were now under way in 16 Latin American countries and a regional programme for Africa had been approved in early 1989. The special funds administered by UNDP provided special capacities to meet special needs.

50. Environmental issues were now more prominent. UNDP had taken part in the Tropical Forestry Action Plan and the Programme to Halt Desertification in Africa. Greater emphasis was being placed on development for the urban future. UNDP recognized that cities were catalysts of economic growth, and was exploring ways of meeting their expanding needs.

51. Special challenges faced by UNDP in 1988 concerned drawing up economic programmes to complement the peace process in Afghanistan and Central America. UNDP had helped Governments respond to natural disasters in Bangladesh, the Caribbean, Nepal, China and Sudan. In the area of co-operation and co-ordination, since 1985, 28 countries had participated in round-table meetings chaired by UNDP. UNDP and the World Bank had co-operated on projects in water and sanitation, energy and trade. The Office for Project Services (OPS) had expanded operations for the fourth consecutive year.

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52. Governments had demonstrated support for UNDP at the 1988 Joint Pledging Conference for Development Activities, with contributions expected to reach a new peak of \$1.3 billion.

53. Mr. HIRONO (Assistant Administrator and Director, Bureau for Programme Policy and Evaluation), introducing the report of the Administrator on the role of and need for in-house technical expertise in UNDP (DP/1989/15), said that it also addressed the question of the appropriate role of the Technical Advisory Division (TAD) in the programme project cycle, as requested by Governing Council decision 88/16.

54. TAD provided a global perspective on programme and project formulation, appraisal and implementation review. Technical specialists at the field level provided a perspective on the local context, and in particular on the appropriateness of the proposed programme and project strategies.

55. TAD now had 10 established posts in addition to the Director. Its staff members were broadly qualified to handle the range of sectors covered by the programme, with three critical exceptions - environmental technologies (for which the Norwegian Government was offering a temporary position), environmental economics and natural resources management, and trade and finance.

56. In the first four months of 1989, the Division had responded to some 400 requests for appraisals of projects, country programmes and project reports; visited 17 developing countries for project reviews and trouble-shooting missions; represented UNDP at 33 professional conferences and workshops; provided the primary inputs to five Programme Advisory Notes; continued to carry out its primary responsibility for UNDP environmental activities; and collaborated with the Division of Personnel in its recruitment and training activities.

57. Wherever possible, TAD relied on short-term consultants to complement the core staff; the roster of consultants was being expanded.

58. In relation to the technical capacity of UNDP, the report which was before the Council made the following main points: (a) UNDP technical expertise was complementary to that of the specialized agencies, providing a broad-based and independent standard of quality; (b) UNDP in-house expertise was intended to provide an overview of technical concerns to enable the Administrator to form independent judgements and to steer programme staff in appropriate directions; (c) effective and targeted UNDP expertise facilitated cost-effective and timely access to the specialized agencies' know-how; (d) UNDP operations relied on a minimum of technical personnel to carry out their functions. The Programme's role was primarily that of a broker, matching developing country needs with the best available technical solutions.

59. Mr. BROWN (Associate Administrator), replying to a question from Mr. SAHLMANN (Federal Republic of Germany), said that the Administration did not expect any decisions to arise from the report, as it was mainly a historical overview.

60. Mr. PETTITT (United Kingdom) said that members of the Council had specifically requested that the annual report of the Administrator should be a separate agenda item so that the Council could take decisions if it so wished.

61. With regard to document DP/1989/15, he had found the reasons advanced for suggesting an improvement in the Technical Advisory Division to be convincing.

62. Mr. SOUTTER (Canada) said that document DP/1989/15 presented a reasonable case, and that the improvements suggested would enhance the functioning of UNDP.

63. Mr. MIZUKOSHI (Japan) said that he supported the strengthening of the Programme's technical expertise.

64. Ms. COLLOTON (United States of America), supported by Mr. SAHLMANN (Federal Republic of Germany), said that her delegation would like to have an opportunity to return to the item at a later meeting.

65. The PRESIDENT said that, if he heard no objections, he would take it that the Council agreed to that proposal.

66. It was so decided.

OTHER FUNDS AND PROGRAMMES

(d) UNITED NATIONS SUDANO-SAHELIAN OFFICE

(i) PLAN OF ACTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION

(ii) RECOVERY AND REHABILITATION PROGRAMME IN THE SUDANO-SAHELIAN REGION

67. Mr. BRANNER (Director, United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office) said that the report of the Administrator on the activities of the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office (DP/1989/50) provided detailed information on progress achieved by UNSO in collaboration with host and donor countries. The Office had intensified its activities in 1988 in co-operating with Governments of the Sudano-Sahelian region in planning, co-ordination and monitoring; formulating and supporting field projects and programmes; resource mobilization; facilitating international co-ordination of efforts relating to drought and desertification assistance; serving as the United Nations focal point for regional organizations; providing information and increasing public awareness and knowledge of desertification issues and their implications.

68. Assistance in strategic planning and co-ordination of drought and desertification-control efforts and support for ecological monitoring had been provided as an integral part of overall national development efforts. The successful experience of the Government of Mali in that respect was very encouraging and similar initiatives were being carried out with other countries in the region. A number of large-scale projects had been formulated or launched in 1988, bringing the total amount of resources allocated to UNSO-supported field

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activities to over \$100 million. The deliberate policy emphasis on Government execution should help strengthen institutional capacities within host countries in the management of assistance and programmes. During 1988, UNSO had mobilized additional resources in excess of \$27 million, which represented a considerable increase over 1987. The active dialogue with major and potential donors was encouraging and further increases in resources were expected in 1989.

69. The Office's close co-operation with the Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) and the Inter-Governmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD) had been further expanded and the system of regular consultations with those organizations had been institutionalized. The working relationship with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) had been significantly strengthened and discussions were under way to develop approaches for joint actions in critical programme areas such as environmental and ecological monitoring systems in the region. Collaboration with international organizations was being increased to facilitate the further harmonization of inputs and approaches in dealing with drought and desertification problems.

70. The growing international awareness of threats posed to the global environment had led to a series of new initiatives by the Sudano-Sahelian countries in collaboration with donor countries and international organizations, aimed at addressing environmental problems in general and desertification in particular. Desertification had long been recognized as the most critical environmental problem in the region. Unpredictable climatic variations were characteristic of the Sudano-Sahelian region and in recent years there had been increased rainfall and better harvests. At the same time, however, in some areas the rains had led to further degradation of the already fragile soil. If the improved climatic conditions of the last several years constituted the beginning of a more favourable cycle, it was of paramount importance to seize the opportunity to ensure further regeneration of the land in order to meet minimum requirements for achieving sustainable development. That required an effective and co-ordinated campaign to improve management of soil, water and vegetation.

71. Although progress had been made in some areas, the overall efforts to prevent the degradation of the productive resource base in the region had been insufficient owing to conceptually flawed programmes, institutional or economic constraints and, particularly, undue stress on the soil and vegetation resulting from insufficient overall economic development.

72. In reviewing its activities, UNSO had given more attention to co-operation with Governments in planning, strategy formulation and the co-ordination of activities. Such planning must address both shortage situations resulting from droughts and surplus situations stemming from the resumption of normal rainfall, which caused problems of another nature.

73. The Office was engaged in a long-term process requiring not only the establishment or strengthening of infrastructures, but also a permanent dialogue designed to deliver the expertise needed for the planning, monitoring and

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assessment of the use of the productive resource base. Governments were increasingly being called upon to co-ordinate numerous major initiatives. The Office would continue its efforts to work with Governments and the regional organizations concerned in order to mobilize the necessary resources. The time was ripe to give increased attention and support to sustainable development and desertification control in the Sudano-Sahelian region.

74. Ms. HELLSTROM (Sweden), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, noted with satisfaction that UNSO was emphasizing co-operation with Governments in planning, co-ordinating and monitoring drought and desertification control efforts at the country-level as an integral part of overall economic development strategies. Agro-forestry projects should be developed in close collaboration with local communities. That required long-term, patient work with the villagers themselves. The report seemed to indicate that the Office was following that approach. The Nordic countries would like to know what mechanisms were used for feedback and dissemination of project results. Many bilateral and multilateral donors could benefit from them.

75. She noted with appreciation the increased contacts and co-operation with other international organizations, regional bodies and non-governmental organizations involved in combating desertification and with bodies established to facilitate co-ordination and a concerted approach on desertification and environmental issues.

76. It was gratifying to note the measures taken to improve the administration of UNSO, particularly the strengthening of UNDP field offices to manage UNSO-financed activities. The regional meetings with Resident Representatives convened by the Director were an excellent way to facilitate collaboration. She also expressed appreciation for the information on other UNDP activities relating to drought and desertification. The Nordic countries noted with satisfaction that UNSO had been actively pursuing resource mobilization in 1988. The total, however, was not impressive in view of the magnitude of the requirements. In that regard, she supported the Administrator's plea for more regular contributions to the Office's general resources, which were used for assistance to Governments in planning and co-ordination.

77. Mr. LADJOUZI (Observer for Algeria) said that the restructuring of UNSO should lead to greater effectiveness and increased output. He noted with satisfaction that the Office had made progress in 1988 in mobilizing resources and hoped that more regular contributions to UNSO would be made in future. Greater emphasis should be placed on measures to combat desertification, drought and deforestation. The report could have provided more information on co-ordination and joint projects between the countries of the Maghreb and the Sudano-Sahelian countries. Algeria had participated in a number of projects with countries such as Niger and Senegal in exchanging experience in the field of deforestation, desertification and sand-dune stability. In view of the close links between the two regions, it was hoped that such co-operation would be taken into account in future.

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78. Mr. AQUARONE (Netherlands) requested information on participation by the local authorities of recipient countries in activities financed by UNSO and a breakdown of resources allocated. The Netherlands supported co-operation between UNSO and non-governmental organizations to set up an information network in the Sudan and Ethiopia, the activities of the Inter-Agency Working Group on Desertification and COMIDES (Conférence ministérielle pour une politique concertée de lutte contre la désertification), which was a useful instrument for achieving UNSO objectives. Further information would also be appreciated concerning the holistic approach applied to activities and projects.

79. Mr. EL ZUBEIR (Sudan) expressed satisfaction at the comprehensive information presented in the report on the activities of UNSO. It was gratifying to note the joint efforts undertaken by the Office and his Government in implementing a number of projects in the Sudan. In that connection, he expressed gratitude to the donor States - Sweden, Denmark, Norway and the Netherlands - and the Arab Gulf Programme for United Nations Development Organizations (AGFUND). Lastly, he stressed the need to increase the resources allocated to UNSO to enable it to conduct its activities.

80. Ms. COLLOTON (United States of America) said that UNSO had been establishing a credible record in carefully chosen projects. Its emphasis on assisting recipient countries in setting up a country-wide policy framework for combating desertification was a positive development. Success could be achieved only by integrating anti-desertification efforts into national development plans. Her delegation commended UNDP for supporting the Office. The establishment of a Technical Support Division, staffed by professionals with relevant technical expertise, would enhance the ability of UNSO to provide more effective advisory services for desertification-control operations.

81. Mr. BRANNER (Director, United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office), said that the Office sought to ensure that it profited from its own experience to improve the quality of its activities. That was the purpose of the recently established Technical Support Division. The next step was to provide information to other organizations. The Office had recently begun work on a number of technical papers concerning its experiences, which would be disseminated to other organizations.

82. UNSO had been involved in activities aimed at promoting co-operation between the countries of the Maghreb and those of the Sudano-Sahelian region. UNSO was well aware of the need to make use of the experience gained by the Maghreb countries. The Office sought to ensure the participation of local authorities so that activities could continue when UNSO withdrew its support. It was a question of promoting the involvement of the local population and ensuring the commitment of the authorities of the recipient country to provide support through personnel or financing. It was difficult to provide a detailed breakdown of resources allocated to the Office's priority activities. The major part of expenditures covered specific project activities. Only a small part was allocated as general resources for participation in co-ordination and similar activities. UNSO had only recently begun to emphasize co-operation with Governments. Activities to provide information and promote public awareness were currently receiving increased allocations.

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83. In accordance with the holistic approach, activities focused on long-term prospects for conserving productive resources. UNSO sought to ensure that everyone whose decisions or actions affected productive resources, such as herdsmen and farmers, was involved in the Office's activities.

84. The PRESIDENT said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Council wished to request the Drafting Group to prepare a decision on the agenda item under consideration.

85. It was so decided.

PROGRAMME PLANNING

(a) FOURTH PROGRAMMING CYCLE

(ii) ASSISTANCE TO LEBANON

86. Mr. GUDMUNDSSON (UNDP Representative and Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Reconstruction and Development of Lebanon), introducing the note by the Administrator on assistance to Lebanon (DP/1989/27) said that all preparatory arrangements had been made for a study to obtain the necessary statistical data to adjust Lebanon's IPF for the fourth programming cycle. Completion of the report by the target date, however, would depend on local conditions. Nevertheless, it was expected that the study would be finished on schedule. Pending the outcome of that study, the total provisional fourth cycle resources amounted to \$13.9 million, of which \$11 million was still uncommitted. New project proposals amounting to approximately \$10 million had been identified.

87. The conflicts which had raged in Lebanon over the past 15 years had reduced the economy of that once-prosperous country to a catastrophic situation whose effects were most pronounced on the most vulnerable population groups. Deprived of authority and an adequate income base, the State was unable to assist those in need. The United Nations had responded by providing extensive emergency relief assistance through 1988 and would continue to do so in the near future. UNDP played a lead role in that respect and had been instrumental in enhancing co-ordination of programmes and activities between United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and representatives of donor countries.

88. In view of the slightly improved operational conditions in certain areas of Lebanon, UNDP had decided in mid-1988 to carry out a revitalization of the programme at a measured pace. To a large extent, that had been achieved. Ongoing projects were being maintained, monitored and improved. New project proposals amounting to over \$10 million had been identified in essential areas such as primary health care, water supply and vocational training. Nevertheless, activities had not proceeded as had been expected a year earlier. Regrettably, the slight improvement in operational conditions had been short-lived. In September 1988 a political crisis leading to a constitutional impasse had revived tensions and divisions. Over the past three months, Beirut and surrounding areas

(Mr. Gudmundsson, UNDP)

had been the scene of violent armed confrontations, which had nearly paralysed public administration and economic activity, destroying much of the country's economic infrastructure. Under current security conditions, any type of United Nations operations were extremely difficult and at times highly dangerous.

89. Completion of preparations for new projects would require additional international staff in the UNDP field office and the collaboration of experts from the specialized agencies. It was simply not possible or practical to bring such personnel to Lebanon and, in any case, they would be unable to carry out their duties in an effective manner owing to lack of support from the public administration.

90. Serious high-level political and diplomatic efforts were under way to find a solution to the crisis. The cessation of armed hostilities in Beirut and its surroundings were essential in order to allow UNDP to continue and expand its project operations. Under more ideal circumstances, emergency assistance and UNDP projects should go hand in hand. The Programme should support the building of bridges to allow a shift from relief work to rehabilitation work. The new project proposals aimed at strengthening and upgrading institutional structures and systems to meet different basic needs. The Administrator was committed to revitalizing and expanding UNDP activities in Lebanon at a careful and measured pace. The Programme would continue to monitor the security and operational situation in Lebanon, carry out whatever limited activities could be maintained and, when possible, make progress in revitalizing and accelerating programme activities.

91. Mr. MAHMOUD (Observer for Lebanon) said that the UNDP decision in mid-1988 to proceed with the revitalization of its programme of assistance to his country, in conformity with Governing Council decision 88/31 B of 1 July 1988, had been a positive initiative which had restored the long-standing co-operation between UNDP and Lebanon.

92. With regard to the difficulties in obtaining the necessary statistical data needed to permit adjustment of his country's interim illustrative indicative planning figure (IPF) for the fourth cycle (1987-1991), referred to in document DP/1989/27, he had now been informed by the Resident Representative in Beirut that preparatory arrangements had been made to have the requested data available by December 1989.

93. He appreciated the practical and constructive approach which UNDP, faced with a volatile operational situation, had adopted on a project-by-project basis in such vital sectors as agriculture, human resources, training and telecommunications.

94. However, the recent renewal of large-scale violence had brought all development activities to a halt. In addition to the loss of life, there had been material damages amounting to millions of dollars, and the economic infrastructure, including transportation, communications and utilities, had sustained heavy blows.

(Mr. Mahmoud, Observer, Lebanon)

95. In response to the emergency situation and the urgent needs of the population, all United Nations organizations in Lebanon had shifted their focus to relief activities. UNDP in particular had played a crucial role in co-ordinating the efforts of United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations. The United Nations presence in his country did much to alleviate suffering there; the donor community had responded generously to appeals from the Secretary-General, and, while grateful for their assistance, he stressed that new donor initiatives were urgently needed.

96. It was to be hoped that the situation would allow the implementation of the UNDP programme activities outlined for the fourth programming cycle. He expressed his appreciation to the Administrator and to all UNDP officials dealing with programme activities for Lebanon, particularly the staff of the Regional Bureau for Arab States and Europe and the Resident Representative, who had shown capability and commitment under difficult circumstances.

97. Mr. PETTITT (United Kingdom) said that he agreed with the statement in paragraph 5 of document DP/1989/27, that 1983 per capita GNP should be used as the base year data for the calculation of fourth cycle IPFs.

98. Ms. COLLOTON (United States of America) said that she appreciated the difficult and tragic circumstances under which UNDP activities were being carried out in Lebanon, and hoped that those efforts would continue, despite the security situation.

99. Mr. AQUARONE (Netherlands) said that he joined in the support being voiced for UNDP activities in Lebanon and for the Resident Co-ordinator's report.

100. Mr. AL-ZUNNI (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) stressed the importance of providing resources from IPFs and other sources to enable Lebanon to implement its development programmes in the main sectors of the economy.

101. Ms. LEE (Australia) and Mr. SAHLMANN (Federal Republic of Germany) expressed their support and encouragement for the Resident Co-ordinator and UNDP activities in Lebanon.

102. Mr. GUDMUNDSSON (UNDP Representative and Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Reconstruction and Development of Lebanon) said that he appreciated the general indications of support from the Council.

103. The PRESIDENT said that, if he heard no objections, he would take it that the Council wished to take note of document DP/1989/27 and of the statements made during the debate.

104. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.

