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Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 23 June 1989, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. POPESCU (Romania)

CONTENTS

Programme implementation (continued)

- (b) Implementation of decisions adopted by the Governing Council at previous sessions (continued)
- (vi) Environment

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

PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (continued)

(b) IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS ADOPTED BY THE GOVERNING COUNCIL AT PREVIOUS SESSIONS (continued)

(vi) ENVIRONMENT (DP/1989/63)

1. Mr. GUCOVSKY (Deputy Assistant Administrator, Bureau for Programme Policy and Evaluation) said that, as the report of the Administrator (DP/1989/63) indicated, UNDP was implementing a dynamic strategy based on national, subregional, regional and global priorities and had integrated environmental considerations and sustainability in all phases of its projects and in the mid-term review process.
2. The systematic integration of environmental concerns in national planning and economic management efforts would foster the achievement of development with equity and facilitate the mobilization of resources from the industrialized countries, which were largely responsible for the current state of the world environment. Sustainable development would thus contribute to the reactivation of economic growth, the alleviation of poverty and more effective management of natural resources.
3. There was a remarkable convergence between the overall policy priorities of UNEP and those of UNDP, whose 152 programmes and 112 field offices were critical operational instruments for the timely implementation of sustainable development projects and programmes. For example, UNDP was currently funding at least 402 projects relating to the environment valued at \$300 million from IPF resources alone, not counting the environmental activities of the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office (UNSO), the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), the United Nations Revolving Fund for Natural Resources Exploration (UNRFRNRE), the Division for Non-Governmental Organizations and the United Nations Volunteers programme (UNV), or the substantial environmental components of projects not directly related to the environment.
4. The environmental strategy, which constituted a direct response to General Assembly resolutions 42/186, 42/187, 43/53 and 43/196 and was formulated under the guidance of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation, entailed extensive co-ordination among the agencies of the United Nations system, especially UNEP, the multilateral financial development institutions (including the regional development banks), the regional economic commissions and the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC). Within the framework of the Joint Consultative Group on Policy, the five agencies concerned jointly programmed environmental activities designed to promote sustainable development and help alleviate critical poverty.
5. The strategy's first objective was to accelerate the transfer of cost-effective and affordable technology as well as considerable additional resources to combat environmental degradation, improve natural resource management,

(Mr. Gucovsky)

preserve biological diversity and encourage participation by the people - women and youth in particular - in those efforts and in the eradication of poverty through economic growth with equity.

6. The strategy also sought to strengthen developing countries' technical and institutional capacity to participate effectively in the international dialogue on the systems of the biosphere - including the preparations for the 1990 conference on protection of global climate and the 1992 conference on environment and development - and to undertake the collection and analysis of meteorological data as well as meteorological forecasting. Developing countries would then be able to calculate the real economic and social costs and benefits of environmental activities, particularly by quantifying "externalities" and allocating such costs in an equitable manner. To do that would require an extended economic analysis and the application of "stock" or "capital" concepts of natural resources, including the use, depletion and degradation of such resources (DP/1989/63, para. 38). In countries that requested it, experimental systems of environmental accounting would be set up in collaboration with the United Nations Statistical Office, the World Bank and other bodies.

7. Preparations for a pilot youth environmental protection corps would also be continued in two or three countries selected by the regional bureaux (DP/1989/63, paras. 34 and 35), as would measures to mobilize additional financial resources for conservation and related activities, as called for in paragraph 4 of Governing Council decision 88/57 and in paragraphs 14 and 15 of General Assembly resolution 42/187. A major feasibility study in that area was nearing completion.

8. At the meeting held in Canberra in June 1989, the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) had agreed to include forestry research in its terms of reference. UNDP would serve as chairman of an interim donor support group pending the establishment of a centre for that purpose by CGIAR.

9. In support of the recent Helsinki Declaration, a feasibility study that had been requested by a major developing country was to be carried out on the gradual phasing out of chemicals and materials which produced chlorofluorocarbons with acceptable and cost-effective substitutes. Human resources training and development activities were also being undertaken so that environmental activities could be expanded.

10. The Council's comments and policy guidance would enable the Administrator to improve the strategy and to provide comprehensive and cost-effective responses to the action taken by the General Assembly and the Council and to meet the increasing demand from Governments and intergovernmental organizations for expanded technical co-operation and pre-investment activities.

11. Mr. CZARKOWSKI (Poland) said that environmental deterioration seemed to be keeping pace with the growing awareness of the importance of environmental issues. Environmental problems could be solved only through multilateral international co-operation. Air and water - two main carriers of pollution - recognized no political frontiers.

/...

(Mr. Czarkowski, Poland)

12. Unfortunately, the plethora of international activities dealing with the environment had not managed to halt the inexorable progress of environmental degradation, which was capable of producing a global catastrophe comparable in its consequences to an all-out nuclear war. That process must be reversed, and UNDP had an important role to play in that task.

13. The state of the environment had become a universal problem affecting all countries, developed and developing alike. Irreversible damage done in one region or country would affect the inhabitants of other regions or countries. The world had grown environmentally interdependent; consequently, joint action was called for at the global level.

14. The concept of environmentally sustainable development, recognized though not yet fully defined, was valid for both developed and developing countries and had a place in the international development strategy for the fourth United Nations development decade. UNDP would play an extremely important role in the implementation of that part of the strategy.

15. Environmental issues were integrally linked to other basic priorities dictated by the world economic situation. Consequently, UNDP activities in the field of environmental protection should be synchronized with those of other United Nations agencies such as UNEP, UNESCO, WHO, UNFPA, the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development and the regional economic commissions; in addition, the concept of environmentally sustainable development should be taken into consideration in UNDP projects not directly linked to the environment.

16. The synchronization to which he had referred should be reflected in the contents of inter-country projects, which should focus on: protecting the atmosphere by combating climate change and global warming, depletion of the ozone layer and transboundary air pollution; protecting fresh water, ocean, marine and coastal resources; protecting land resources by combating deforestation and desertification; and protecting human health and the quality of life. They should also deal with the environmentally sound management of hazardous wastes and toxic chemicals and the sound management of biotechnology.

17. The report of the Administrator (DP/1989/63) analysed most of those issues. Particularly important was annex II, on environmental projects, which reflected a proper balance between regional and national projects. It would be interesting to know the share of total UNDP resources devoted to environmental protection. Table 4 of annex II revealed that an astonishingly low share of expenditures went for environmental projects in the industrial sector, the main polluter of the environment, and that the share for projects in the health sector was also too low.

18. Of importance also were the new initiatives for 1989 and beyond (DP/1989/63, para. 31). It was to be hoped that the results of the 1989 meeting at Sofia of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) on the environment, the 1990 conference at Bergen and, in particular, the next United Nations conference on the environment would be utilized in that context.

(Mr. Czarkowski, Poland)

19. His delegation also attached special significance to technological issues (para. 40). During the fortieth session of the General Assembly, Poland had proposed measures to facilitate the free transfer of environmental technology which, if implemented under country and inter-country projects, would contribute to effective environmental protection and have a positive impact on commercial transfers of technology. The free transfer of technology should be an important aspect of sustainable development. As that concept was closely related to UNDP's role in the area of technical co-operation, his delegation hoped that it would be incorporated in future project proposals.

20. His delegation took note with interest of chapter IV of the report, on management, co-ordination and financial/budgetary aspects, and endorsed both the programme of activities (para. 46) and the measures proposed by the Administrator in the 1990-1991 budget submission (para. 47).

21. The pressure exerted by public opinion on Governments and international organizations to do more in the area of environmental protection would grow as environmental degradation increased throughout the world. UNDP, which had the necessary capability and infrastructure, must join in the international community's common endeavours in that field.

22. Mr. PAVLOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the question of the environment was one development problem which called for an immediate response by the international community, since man's relationship with nature had assumed an ominous character; the environmental disaster which hovered over the world would not respect borders of an ideological or any other nature. Accordingly, his delegation supported the principal conclusions and proposals of the World Commission on Environment and Development.

23. The Soviet Union had proposed that a high-level world conference should be held in 1990 and believed that the second international United Nations conference on the environment should be held no later than 1992, at which time a joint programme of action and legally binding principles and norms for environmental protection could be adopted.

24. The current world environmental situation called for a refocusing of environmental issues. No State - not even the leading international organization - could solve environmental problems single-handed; joint efforts at the national, regional and global levels were required in that field.

25. A key issue was the problem of global climate. The Soviet Union supported the proposal by several countries for the development of a strategy to tackle common climate problems so that changes in the Earth's climate could be studied, their adverse consequences forecast and mankind's survival under altered circumstances guaranteed. UNDP could help in the development of that strategy, which must be a key element of efforts to bring about international environmental security.

(Mr. Pavlov, USSR)

26. The report of the Administrator (DP/1989/63) described the activities UNDP was undertaking at the national, regional and interregional levels to meet Governments' growing needs for technical co-operation so that environmental concerns could be integrated in development plans.

27. He noted with satisfaction the priorities that had been set and the importance that was attached to projects dealing with remote sensing and cartography, deforestation and desertification control, environmental security as it pertained to agriculture and natural resources management. The reviewing of projects must be constantly improved in every phase so that their environmental impact could be determined. Such reviews could be carried out immediately with an assessment of the environmental aspects of programmed activities.

28. Of interest to his delegation were the proposals to establish a world youth environment corps and to devote special attention to the formulation of energy policies aimed at preventing atmospheric pollution and climatic disturbances. They constituted an important element of the world development strategy for the decades to come.

29. He supported UNDP efforts to improve national technical capacities by monitoring climate conditions, thereby furthering the implementation of General Assembly resolution 43/53, on protection of world climate for present and future generations. That resolution contained a reference to the support UNDP should provide to UNEP in that regard; unfortunately, however, the report made no mention of that subject.

30. He also proposed that priority should be given to investigations aimed at the development of technologies which did not pollute the environment and to the search for fuller information on environmental issues that could be used to educate the public on that subject.

31. In short, his delegation welcomed all the environmental activities of UNDP, which benefited all mankind; he also insisted that environmental aspects should be taken into consideration in any projects UNDP prepared. The Soviet Union stood ready to participate in the formulation of specific environmental projects.

32. Mr. DIAZ DE COSSIO (Observer from Mexico) said that environmental issues were fairly new; consequently there was not yet enough detailed scientific information available on which to base appropriate national and international policies and norms.

33. It was unquestionably the most advanced industrialized countries which consumed the bulk of the planet's resources. In that regard, the Brundtland report had been timely because it had generated and would continue to generate an extensive world-wide debate on those topics. From there the concept of environment and sustainable development had come into being.

(Mr. Diaz de Cossio, Observer,
Mexico)

34. His delegation agreed that development projects must be sustainable, as they were being undertaken also for future generations. At present, that concept was being cited in some documents as a prerequisite for all projects formulated by developing countries. He believed that projects relating to development and the environment were the sovereign decision of States and that resources for such projects must not be made contingent upon such an insubstantial concept.

35. Both the Brundtland report and document DP/1989/63 dealt with a narrow concept of environment, limited to natural resources and pollution and failing to take into account the interrelationship of the industrial, energy and services sectors or to consider in depth the effects of large investments by Governments, principally of the developed countries. There were many more direct cause-and-effect relationships than those which existed between poverty, population and the environment. Environmental deterioration was caused not only by the destructive action of poor people but also by major agricultural and industrial enterprises and the financial policies of creditor agencies which underwrote enormous projects.

36. The Mexican Government had recently issued its National Development Plan 1989-1994, in which environmental concerns and the critical poverty in which many of the country's inhabitants lived were identified as major priorities. Mexico had also proposed that international co-operation programmes should take into particular consideration the environment, water, critical poverty and population. Mexico hoped to enjoy the co-operation of all United Nations agencies in developing its national plan and ensuring that specific support projects emanating from national plans could be executed as efficiently as possible.

37. Mr. HARRISON (United Kingdom) recalled that, in its decision 88/57, the Governing Council had recognized that it was in the interest of all countries to pursue policies aimed at environmentally sound and sustainable development. In order to achieve that goal, the developing countries would require assistance from the international community, and UNDP had a key role to play by carrying out the activities described in document DP/1989/63. He endorsed the efforts to broaden co-operation among United Nations agencies and to strengthen the capacity of the least developed countries to address environmental issues.

38. He welcomed the establishment of a UNDP Environmental Action Team and looked forward to more information on its method of operation and effectiveness. He endorsed UNDP's future programme of activities, particularly the further development of networks and linkages among non-governmental organizations, and the five key environmental issues (para. 20).

39. While the definition of "environmental projects" (para. 9) was a useful working concept, it was important to recognize that other kinds of development projects might also enhance the natural environment if designed and implemented with due sensitivity. Conversely, some "environmental projects" might do considerable harm if they were not properly planned and executed. Care must be taken that the use of the term did not lead to a false assumption that there was less need to monitor the environmental impact of such projects.

(Mr. Harrison, United Kingdom)

40. The future of the environment was one of the most difficult and challenging problems of modern times. It was imperative to meet that challenge.

41. Mr. SOUTTER (Canada) said that his country gave high priority to the concept of environmentally sound and sustainable development, which was one of the six pillars of Canada's Official Development Assistance Charter. In practical terms, Canada had shown its support for UNDP's environmental initiatives through substantial funding for the Africa 2000 network, the International Conservation Financing Project and the Energy Sector Management Assistance Programme.

42. With regard to the building of institutional and technical capacities in developing countries, the Administrator's report (DP/1989/63) took the right approach both to the needs of those countries and to UNDP's mandate. His delegation agreed with the definition of "environmental projects" and welcomed priorities for such projects, and welcomed the report's recognition of the need to address environmental issues in order to achieve sustainable development and also of the links that existed between the environment and macro-economic issues and between the environment and women in development and the potential role of non-governmental organizations.

43. However, no mention was made of the environmental assessment of non-environmental projects, the proposed strategy had been only barely developed, and the specific resources required had not been identified. He hoped that those issues would be addressed in the UNDP environmental guidelines to be issued later in the year - oddly enough, before the issuance of the United Nations system-wide guidelines. There was also no indication of how UNDP's environmental activities would fit into the larger context of the United Nations system.

44. With respect to the new initiatives for 1989 and beyond, Canada generally supported the activities dealing with government administrative structuring and institutional support related to the environment (para. 32) and the rational use of energy and the development of alternative sources (para. 36) and would welcome further details on those proposals. With respect to activities in the area of the project identification and preparation facility for environment projects to promote sustainable development (para. 33) and the creation of a world youth environment corps (paras. 34 and 35), Canada had some reservations regarding the Programme's appropriate mandate and funding sources but, given the interesting nature of the proposals, would withhold judgement on them until further details were made available.

45. Canada recognized that UNDP required a modest strengthening of its technical capacity in environmental areas and would be prepared to consider reasonable budget submissions to that end which did not duplicate capacities available elsewhere in the United Nations system.

46. His delegation encouraged UNDP to continue its initiatives in the field of environment and sustainable development, within the context of the United Nations development system.

47. Mr. SAHLMANN (Federal Republic of Germany) expressed his satisfaction with the way in which UNDP had incorporated the environmental dimension into its overall operations, as mandated by the Governing Council. The fact that 7 per cent of UNDP-funded projects and 9 per cent of total expenditures had an environmental impact also demonstrated that developing countries were becoming increasingly aware of the priority of protecting the environment and resources. He hoped that the workshops mentioned in paragraph 30 of the Administrator's report (DP/1989/63) would contribute to the formulation of planning processes in developing countries which took due account of environmental concerns, which should be reflected in the sectoral distribution of IPFs under the fifth cycle. For purposes of comparison, in 1988 21 per cent of his country's bilateral technical co-operation projects had been environmental projects.

48. He commended UNDP's efforts to share its experience in the field of environment and development at the global level, including at the Bellagio meetings, and welcomed its leading role in the Tropical Forestry Action Plan (TFAP).

49. The report showed that UNDP was carrying out a wide range of activities to help developing countries achieve sustainable development. His country looked forward, with UNDP, to ensuring that all development co-operation ultimately contributed to that goal.

50. Mr. MOLIN (Sweden), speaking on behalf of the four Nordic countries, noted with satisfaction that members of the Governing Council were becoming increasingly concerned with issues relating to the environment and sustainable development.

51. The Administrator's report (DP/1989/63) was thorough and very informative. UNDP had carried out an impressive number of activities. As part of the strategy for responding to increasing demands from Governments for technical co-operation in integrating environmental considerations into development planning and macro-economic management, co-operation with other United Nations organizations, in particular the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), should be expanded. The Nordic countries looked forward with interest to the results of the feasibility study being carried out with the World Resources Institute on new sources and mechanisms to finance conservation activities.

52. It would be interesting to have more information on the results of the 60 workshops mentioned in paragraph 29 of the report, as well as on the response of developing countries. He asked whether any ideas of the strategy had been put into practice and what kind of problems UNDP had encountered and what kind of problems it anticipated.

53. With regard to the creation of a world youth environment corps (paras. 34 and 35), he said that, while it was worthwhile to involve young people in environment and development work, he wondered whether that initiative could not be incorporated into the existing and proven United Nations Volunteers programme.

(Mr. Molin, Sweden)

54. The Nordic countries expected that the new environmental strategy would lead to a substantial increase in UNDP activities in that area and that the Programme would have a substantial input into the conference on environment and development planned for 1992.

55. Mr. WILENSKI (Australia), speaking also on behalf of New Zealand, said that the Council should devote adequate time to discussing environmental issues in view of the increased prominence which the United Nations system and other international forums were giving to such issues and the growing international awareness of environmental problems. That trend was reflected in a number of initiatives taken in 1988, as well as in the Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, which underscored the impact of the environment on all aspects of social, political and economic activity.

56. Although the incorporation of environmental considerations into national planning entailed additional costs, development undertaken at the cost of environmental degradation could create problems whose solution would require far greater expenditures and would set back the development process far more than the original impetus provided.

57. The concept of sustainable development meant that all countries must accept the need to change their existing policies and practices. Australia and New Zealand were already doing so, but they recognized that that could present short-term difficulties for some developing countries in the midst of economic expansion. It was there that the international community, bilateral and multilateral, must provide assistance.

58. There was a need for greater co-ordination of the various environmental initiatives and activities. It was important for the United Nations development system to contribute to environmental activities within the United Nations system, as well as those of other multilateral forums. As the central co-ordinating body for technical assistance within the United Nations system and with its extensive network of field offices, UNDP could and should play a key role in that area. Australia and New Zealand expected the Programme to participate fully in preparations for the conference on environment and development, proposed for 1992, to which they attached great importance.

59. The Administrator's report (DP/1989/63) reflected the valuable work done by UNDP in relation to the environment, in particular, the strategy which it had developed at the country, regional and interregional levels and the role that it had played in the formulation and implementation of the Tropical Forestry Action Plan (TFAP), in whose implementation Australia and New Zealand were playing an active role. Those countries had also followed with interest the Programme's activities in the area of pollution and waste management in urban areas and commended UNDP for its assistance to Bangladesh in preparing a flood policy.

60. UNDP should co-operate more closely with UNEP. Furthermore, adequate direction and resources must be allocated to enable it to address the environment component of development seriously and consistently.

(Mr. Wilenski, Australia)

61. The publication of the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific entitled Environmental Concerns in the Asia/Pacific Region and a Compendium of Related Projects was excellent and demonstrated that the concerns expressed by the Governing Council in recent decisions had been heeded. The compendium of projects being executed in the region which had an environmental aspect provided information which could be used by other United Nations and multilateral organizations, as well as by Australia and New Zealand, to better co-ordinate inputs in that field. The South Pacific region faced particular environmental difficulties such as those relating to the preservation of atoll ecology and the potentially damaging consequences of rising sea levels. The two delegations would therefore like to be kept informed of the Programme's activities in responding to the environmental concerns of island developing countries in the region.

62. Mr. OMER (Sudan) said that his country supported UNDP's efforts at the country and regional levels to incorporate environmental considerations into the development process. Improving the environment promoted rural and urban development and helped to strike a balance between social and economic activities and between the various economic sectors, for example, transport, agriculture and industry. The Sudan supported all efforts to protect the environment and achieve sustainable development, particularly the work of grass-roots organizations. It also supported all the efforts of the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office (UNSO) to combat drought and desertification in the region, and the efforts on behalf of development programmes in rural areas to improve the environment. It hoped that everyone would participate in that process in order to increase agricultural output.

63. The natural disasters in the Sudan, particularly desertification and the drought in 1985 and 1986, had reduced its agricultural output. The effects of both disasters were still being felt and had been compounded by floods which had destroyed homes and harvests and displaced many of the country's inhabitants. That had had a major impact on the region's demographic structure and had given rise to many difficulties in obtaining statistics. The Sudan, whose main aim was to provide food and rehabilitation, was grateful to all the countries and all the organizations which had provided assistance, particularly UNEP.

64. Mr. KAGAMI (Japan), focusing on the role of UNDP in the area of the environment, said that its activities should always be relevant to current development issues and that, since protection of the environment had become a global concern calling for stepped-up international efforts, UNDP was expected to make a major contribution in that field as a universal organization engaged in technical co-operation.

65. Japan appreciated the efforts made by UNDP in the environmental field and its intention to step up such efforts in the years to come, as indicated in the Administrator's report (DP/1989/63). For instance, Japan valued highly the work initiated by the Bellagio meeting of world leaders to review the global deforestation problem (para. 24). That was an excellent illustration of co-operation among the relevant organizations in addressing one of the critical issues confronting the contemporary world.

(Mr. Kagami, Japan)

66. Nevertheless, the Administrator's report tended to be merely a catalogue of activities and, as a result, failed to present a clear picture of the basic role of UNDP as a technical co-operation agency in the environment field vis-à-vis other relevant organizations or in the context of overall international co-operation. Moreover, the report did not define clearly the areas of activity, in which the Programme was expected to work, given its comparative advantage and experience.

67. UNDP should give priority attention to two major areas in the field of environmental activities: technical co-operation related to integrating environmental considerations into development planning and macro-economic management, referred to briefly in paragraph 2 of the report, and assistance to developing countries in human resources development in the field of environmental protection, for instance, the training of experts and engineers in environment-related technologies. Such experts and engineers would then become the core group for the formulation and implementation of environmental protection measures and environmental management policies. UNDP had much to contribute in that regard, in co-operation with other international organizations.

68. Japan reiterated its desire to see UNDP co-operate closely with UNEP both at headquarters and in the field in executing environmental projects and programmes.

69. Mr. CRUSE (France) said that at the recent Paris and The Hague conferences, France, together with a number of other European countries, had adopted some major initiatives. The analyses presented at those conferences called for new approaches and options, for example, with regard to the greenhouse effect, pollution, desertification and deforestation. International environmental security should be strengthened without imposing new conditions, as the Governing Council of UNEP had pointed out. Accordingly, there was a need to increase technological and financial flows to the countries most in need of them, as part of an overall environmental protection policy at the global level.

70. It was clear that UNDP had a very important role to play in that regard by drawing attention to the needs and concerns of developing countries and supporting their efforts. The Programme should strengthen its co-operation in that field with other agencies, particularly UNEP. The latter had defined the basic norms for sustainable development, which the Programme had endorsed.

71. UNDP, which helped mobilize the national institutions of developing countries in the field of environment, should support their planning and management process so that environmental concerns were integrated fully into that process. It should support projects put forward by Governments which addressed those concerns. For instance, the Africa 2000 network was perfectly in keeping with the objective of involving people in efforts to protect the environment, since people were responsible for their environment and had to be helped to protect it by providing them with technical and financial support and information. France also supported the systematic evaluation of environmental projects on which UNSO, in particular, focused. There should be close co-operation in that field between multilateral and

(Mr. Cruse, France)

bilateral agencies, in order to carry out immediate action which took account of long-term problems. It was essential to link the short term with the long term and to make sure that solutions to certain imbalances did not in turn create further imbalances in the long term.

72. Although the question of the environment must be one of the Programme's priorities, UNDP should avoid undertaking overly ambitious programmes in that field so that its activities did not overlap with those of UNEP and other agencies. Instead, it should encourage all authorities and all high-level and grass-roots participants to become aware of the problem. It must ensure that environmental concerns were integrated into all its programmes. It should also support experimental projects which might serve as a model for aid agencies in general, including those providing bilateral assistance.

73. Mr. KRSTAJIC (Yugoslavia) said that since a number of delegations had already put forward very persuasive arguments concerning various aspects of the environment, he would confine himself to stressing the importance of the Programme's role in providing technical assistance in that field. UNDP should in future increase its participation in the field of the environment and sustainable development in effective and co-ordinated co-operation with UNEP and other organizations of the United Nations system in that field. Yugoslavia therefore generally supported the future strategy of UNDP described in the report of the Administrator (DP/1989/63, part III) and the measures relating to management, co-operation and financial/budgetary aspects (part IV). It was also necessary to give greater emphasis to the field of the environment in substantive programmes and activities and stress it as an important element, direct or indirect, of all relevant programmes.

74. Since environmental protection was usually a cross-border phenomenon, UNDP activities should focus more on regional and subregional projects.

75. Yugoslavia attached increasing importance to the field of the environment and sustainable development and hoped to receive UNDP support, in particular, in order to formulate a strategy and concepts at the national level to protect the environment.

76. Mr. de CLERCK (Belgium) said that man had become the greatest enemy of the environment. Essentially, the environment must be in a state of equilibrium. Nevertheless, at the end of the twentieth century, man, through his random use of the elements, was creating a threat to the environment. The purpose of such use was, in the poor countries, to survive and, in the rich countries, to increase prosperity. Accordingly, there was a need to distinguish between the environmental problems of the developing countries and those of the industrialized countries and to bear in mind that, as the former developed, they would face new environmental problems, particularly those caused by industrial pollution. It was therefore understandable that UNDP should provide technical assistance to developing countries to help them solve their specific environmental problems without losing sight of environmental problems at the world level.

(Mr. de Clerck, Belgium)

77. It would be very useful to arrive at a definition of environmental problems, as UNDP had attempted to do. If the concept of the environment was broadly defined, any development effort could be considered an environmental project. On the other hand, a stricter definition would make it possible to focus efforts and resources on the most important problems. Belgium found it difficult to understand the definition of environmental projects set forth in paragraph 9 of document DP/1989/63 since it contained both elements of a broad notion of the environment (for example, the objective of achieving sustained development) and restrictive elements (such as the protection of natural biological diversity). It was not clear to what extent the elements of that definition had to be present simultaneously for a project to be considered environmental.

78. The description of the highlights of global and regional environment actions in the report made for a clearer idea of how UNDP assisted Governments. For example, it was commendable that the Africa 2000 network had already passed the stage of bureaucratic planning and was attempting to reach Africa's population itself, taking into account, for example, common property resource management in grass-roots communities.

79. Belgium fully supported the list of the key environmental issues which were currently of concern to UNDP (DP/1989/63, para. 20). It would be useful to select from that list, with the Governments concerned, priorities on a regional and country basis in order to help those Governments solve the most important problems.

80. Although his country supported in principle the project to establish a world youth environment corps, he would like to obtain more information and in particular wished to know if UNDP itself would have the task of establishing that body or whether, instead, it would help the Governments concerned to set up national bodies.

81. The direct link in some countries between widespread poverty and environmental degradation and in other countries between areas of extreme poverty and such degradation was well known. In helping to solve the problems of poverty, UNDP was assisting efforts to safeguard and improve the environment. The report referred to the causes of such poverty, mentioning the terms of trade (DP/1989/63, para. 6), and at a later point stated that the feasibility study to identify new sources and mechanisms to finance conservation activities included possible ways to establish a correlation between external debt and environmental degradation (para. 14). Although that study would no doubt be very useful for financial organizations and debtor or creditor Governments in dealing with the problem of external debt, the solution to the problems of poverty, and therefore to environmental problems as well, did not lie solely in improving the international economic situation. All Governments, and even all individuals, had some responsibility in that matter. UNDP, for its part, had actively assumed its responsibility, and Belgium urged it to continue its efforts in that direction.

82. Mr. CABEIRO QUINTANA (Cuba) said that his Government attached considerable importance to environmental conservation because it was aware of the need to preserve the environment for future generations. Accordingly, Cuba was carrying out a far-reaching plan to conserve the environment and to restore affected areas, including a number of saline rivers, bays and land areas and several forests which had been indiscriminately cut down in the nineteenth century and at the beginning of the twentieth century.

83. The report of the Administrator (DP/1989/63) was very balanced. Cuba drew attention in particular to the thorough interpretation provided by the report of Governing Council decision 88/57 and supported the strategy set forth in part IV and the activities relating to the environment and development.

84. Mr. ALOM (Observer for Bangladesh) said that many people attributed the current accelerating environmental degradation to development policies which stressed unduly quantitative growth, thus causing pollution of the soil and water resources, desertification, deforestation, land erosion, misuse of the environment and other problems. It should not be forgotten that the direct causal relationship between poverty, deteriorating economic conditions and the terms of trade was, as had long been recognized, the factor primarily responsible for growing environmental degradation, particularly in the least developed countries.

85. He called for an expansion of measures and programmes to alleviate critical poverty combined with the adoption of appropriate population policies on the part of UNDP. Thus far, achievements in that regard had not been up to expectations. Unless the basic human needs of the least privileged of the world's population were met, environmental degradation would remain a continuing process. That was, however, a complex issue involving economic decisions at the macro-economic and micro-economic levels and was multidisciplinary in nature. For that reason, the close integration of environmental factors into development planning and economic management at the national, regional and interregional levels would be a positive approach, since growth, development and environmental conservation were interrelated phenomena and many environmental problems transcended national boundaries.

86. Since General Assembly resolution 42/169 had designated the 1990s as the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, UNDP should attach even greater importance to the environment. Although the proposed programme strategies of UNDP at the country, regional and global levels were a good beginning, a great deal still needed to be done. His Government, for its part, had declared 1989 the Year of the Environment and the 1990s the Decade of the Environment.

87. Mrs. WHIST (Ecuador) said that, rather than being the exclusive task of developing countries, environmental protection was the responsibility of all. In that connection, she cited several articles in Time magazine of 5 June 1989 which underscored the fact that the industrialized nations, in order to obtain raw materials, were exploiting the natural resources of the third world for their own profit. An example of that was the destruction of the forest in Honduras.

(Mrs. Whist, Ecuador)

88. Many of the objectives outlined in the report of the Administrator (DP/1989/63), such as integrating environmental considerations into development planning and macro-economic management and environmental education, should be the responsibility of all countries, both developing and developed.

89. Over the last 200 years, the industrialized nations had developed their industries without giving thought to the environment, and had polluted the entire planet. Her own country had been taking environmental protection measures for over 50 years. Yet, such measures were useless if the industrialized countries, which were the main offenders in terms of global pollution, continued the practices which had given rise to the current situation. She did not agree with the view that developing countries caused a great deal of pollution: what they generated was refuse rather than pollution. Pollution was caused by industrialized plants, not found in poor countries.

90. Because it lacked explanations of how the objectives were to be attained and comprehensive particulars supporting the analyses carried out, the report was too general to permit any judgement on what UNDP wanted to do in the environmental field. Her delegation would appreciate information regarding the regional meeting held in Belem (Brazil) on 12 and 13 December 1988. Furthermore, reports which referred to the Amazon region should reflect the results of the meetings of Foreign Ministers and Presidents of the countries of the region regarding the protection and conservation of the Amazon River basin.

91. Mrs. BECKER (United States of America) said that environmental issues were receiving increasing attention throughout the United Nations system, corresponding to a heightened awareness of the importance of current actions for the future of the planet. UNDP should ensure that consideration was given to the environmental impact of all its activities, since the environmental consequences of each specific activity was not always evident and required thorough study to be identified. UNDP needed to find a method for keeping track of the level and type of support it provided for environmental issues; as things stood, it was difficult to provide detailed information, such as that which had been requested several months ago by the United States Congress.

92. Her delegation was particularly satisfied with the increase in projects specifically designed to achieve environmentally sound and sustainable development. Further details of the proposed world youth environment corps would be useful, for example, the criteria for project identification and the methods to be used. Perhaps it would be appropriate to undertake that project on a pilot basis. Since the project would be linked to the United Nations Volunteer programme, she wondered whether the Administrator had planned to utilize the services of the Domestic Development Service in that connection and whether links with the World Food Programme had been considered.

93. Finally, she noted that the number of potential projects mentioned in the report exceeded the available resources and, consequently, choices would have to be made concerning which project would be funded and when those funds would be provided.

94. Mr. MAJOOR (Netherlands) said that both UNDP and Governments of the developed and developing countries were demonstrating increased awareness of environmental issues. UNDP had a basic role to play in working towards the common objective of environmentally sound and sustained development. Environmental issues were of high priority to his Government, not only within the framework of international co-operation for development policies but also at the national level.

95. His delegation was satisfied with the general approach to environmental issues adopted in the Administrator's report, in particular the emphasis on atmospheric and global climatic change (para. 20). Taking a similar approach, the Netherlands, in conjunction with France and Norway, was planning the Hague conference on atmospheric pollution. At the same time, the report was only a first step towards a UNDP strategy in that area and needed more specifics. Two important aspects of that strategy were the integration of UNDP environmental activities with related activities in the other United Nations system organizations, in particular the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Bank. Another important part of its strategy should be the environmental evaluation of projects funded through UNDP.

96. Mr. VAN NORT (International Maritime Organization), reading a message from the Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), said that sustainable development depended on significant advances in the management of the oceans, which required in turn a global regulatory framework designed to eliminate completely intentional pollution of the marine environment and to minimize accidental pollution and mitigate its effects.

97. The world maritime community had recognized that both the disposal of wastes at sea and the release of oil and other harmful substances from ships constituted a serious source of pollution requiring global action. The IMO strategy for the protection of the marine environment from pollution had four components: effective mechanisms for technical, legal and scientific co-operation between Governments; adoption of the highest standards in matters concerning maritime safety and prevention and control of marine pollution from ships and related activities; encouragement of widespread and effective implementation of those standards at the global level; and strengthening of the capacity for national and regional action to prevent, mitigate and control marine pollution and to promote technical co-operation to that end. The co-operation of UNDP had been essential to the International Maritime Organization in all those efforts.

98. In contrast, the lack of attention devoted to maritime pollution in document DP/1989/63 was disappointing. That oversight might be a result of the definition of environmental projects: although the definition set forth in paragraph 9 could include marine pollution, under annex I, the heading "Maritime activities - basically transport systems development" was on the list of projects that were not included in the 1988 definition of environmental projects. The Secretariat might wish to study that situation, which was in contrast with other documentation prepared by the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific, containing information on marine pollution and aquatic systems in addition to a list of projects financed by UNDP resources.

(Mr. Van Nort, IMO)

99. Finally, he said that the co-operation of the United Nations Environment Programme and UNDP with the International Maritime Organization was excellent.

100. Mr. LINCOLN (World Meteorological Organization) said that, with 160 member States, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) was involved, directly or indirectly, in all aspects of meteorology, hydrology and climatology world-wide. Those sciences dealt with the highly mobile transboundary atmosphere and water and required globally agreed standards with continual updating and co-ordination. Scientific and technical co-ordination was essential for the effective international exchange of data. The direct involvement of WMO in projects in meteorology, climatology and hydrology ensured maximum continuity of projects, through affiliated national meteorological and hydrological agencies, thus ensuring effective expenditure of the limited funds available.

101. As an example of climatic change, since the passing of the Clean Air Act in the 1950s the climatology of the London area had changed substantially and fog had become less frequent.

102. WMO, whose activities involved technical areas where international co-operation was essential and continued to work well, looked forward to continued close co-operation with UNDP, UNEP and other specialized agencies, as well as with its member States, in the very important area of the environment.

103. Mrs. HAMODI (Observer for Iraq) said that her delegation associated itself with other delegations which had expressed concern at the degradation of the environment. She drew to the attention of the Governing Council the report on the seminar on environment and sustainable development organized in Malta in March 1989 by the Regional Bureau for Arab States and European Programmes. Iraq supported the important recommendations of document DP/1989/63 and noted that a highly useful seminar on the impact of the environment on development had been held at Baghdad in February 1989 with the participation of a large number of Iraqi experts. Her delegation requested UNDP to allocate funds in order for regional seminars to be held more frequently and with high-level experts; that would contribute to a better understanding of the importance of environmental protection.

104. Iraq placed great emphasis on all those issues in its development plans and was concerned at the action taken by some industrial countries in attempting to dispose of hazardous wastes by burying them in developing countries. That posed a serious threat to the present and future of mankind. Organizations such as UNDP and other competent bodies must deal with that problem effectively.

105. Mr. BORISSOV (Observer for Bulgaria) said that the whole world had become more aware of environmental problems and that UNDP's adoption of measures to solve them had been well-timed.

(Mr. Borissov, Observer,
Bulgaria)

106. Bulgaria too attached great importance to such problems and had adopted many practical measures on the occasion of the mid-term review of its programme of co-operation with UNDP. For example, it had decided to allocate the remainder of its IPF to the study of environmental problems. Bulgaria would also endeavour to further expand its co-operation with UNDP in accordance with those guidelines.

107. Environmental problems usually transcended national boundaries. The specific features of the European region offered broad scope for assistance and co-operation activities in that area. Bulgaria had allocated resources from its country IPF for such activities and believed that activities aimed at solving environmental problems should occupy a prominent place in the regional programme for Europe.

108. Mr. SAHLMANN (Federal Republic of Germany) said that the representative of Ecuador had been right in saying that the industrial countries bore major responsibility for environmental degradation and pollution. It was those countries which had developed the technology now in use and it was they that had the largest volume of industrial production, which was the principal source of environmental degradation; they also had the highest standard of living, which was another major source of pollution. At the same time, it must be acknowledged that it was those countries, particularly the Federal Republic of Germany and the European Community, which had taken important steps to prevent further pollution. The President of the United States had also taken significant action to solve that problem.

109. His delegation had not raised that issue because there were other forums within the United Nations system which dealt with pollution in the developed countries, for example, the UNEP Governing Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council.

110. Nevertheless, it was useful to remind the industrial countries of their responsibility, and UNDP had an important role to play in that respect. The developing countries must also learn how to use modern technology in such a way as to avoid further environmental pollution, so that they would not suffer the same fate as the industrial countries.

111. Mr. BORG OLIVIER (Observer for Malta) associated himself with the delegations which had supported UNDP's efforts in the environment field. In view of the obvious relationship between the development process and the environment, UNDP as the lead agency for the development activities of the United Nations system clearly had an obligation to promote the broadest possible acceptance of the concept of sustainable development and of efforts to prevent further environmental degradation.

112. Malta was proud to have hosted the seminar on environment and sustainable development and it commended the Regional Bureau for Arab States and European Programmes for having organized it. At the seminar, the Prime Minister of Malta had reaffirmed his country's commitment to do everything possible to promote acceptance of the concept of sustainable development. Malta also supported fully the final declaration adopted at the seminar.

113. Mr. OMER (Sudan) thanked the Regional Bureau for Arab States and European Programmes for having organized the Malta seminar on environment and sustainable development. The many countries which had participated in the seminar had had an opportunity to voice their opinions on environmental problems and their possible solutions. His delegation agreed fully with the recommendations made at the seminar concerning environmental protection and natural resources conservation.

114. Mr. SOARES DE LIMA (Brazil) said that Brazil had always attached importance to the environment, which should be a matter of concern to all countries, both developed and developing. All countries must share responsibilities in that area, always bearing in mind the role and the financial burden of each country.

115. Despite its current economic difficulties, Brazil had established a National Institute for Environment and Renewable Resources and had launched a programme entitled "Our Nature". It was completely open to discussing the possibilities of bilateral or multilateral co-operation in the field of environment, provided that projects and programmes were in accordance with its national policy in that area.

116. Mr. MARTINEZ ORDÓÑEZ (Observer for Honduras) said that while he was grateful to the delegation of Ecuador for its interest in the alleged exploitation of Honduras, if that delegation had consulted the Honduran mission, it would have been able to obtain fuller information on the subject. Just because information was published in a United States magazine or came from a former representative of the United States Government, that did not mean that it was true.

117. The main cause of the destruction of forests in Honduras was the enormous number of refugees from other Central American countries who had crossed the country's borders. In any case, a national public agency CODEFOR was the only one authorized to export Honduran timber. Although the magazine to which the delegation of Ecuador had referred stated that a United States citizen was interested in exporting Honduran timber, Honduran law stipulated that only the State could do so. Accordingly, he once again urged the delegation of Ecuador to consult the Honduran mission in order to obtain more reliable information.

118. Mrs. WHIST (Ecuador), referring to the comments made by the representative of Honduras, said that she had not intended to attack anyone when she had pointed out that the current state of the environment was the result of a lack of foresight with regard to the effects of activities by industrialized countries. While she was aware that both developed and developing countries were taking corrective action, greater political commitment was needed to reverse the trend. That political commitment could not be required only of countries which were trying to achieve a minimum level of growth. She had quoted the articles from the 5 June issue of Time magazine in order to draw attention to the contradiction between stated principles and objectives and what was really happening. Education should not be directed only at the poor or the developing countries: everyone's consciousness should be raised.

119. Mr. GUCOVSKY (Deputy Assistant Administrator, Bureau for Programme Policy and Evaluation) said that the comments made by delegations would be reflected in UNDP's strategy for technical co-operation in the field of environment and sustainable development.

120. With regard to the concern expressed by several delegations, including those of Poland, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, at the transboundary nature of certain environmental issues, he said that most of the intercountry IPFs used for that type of technical co-operation in the region reflected the importance attached to the question.

121. The compendium published by the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific would be made available to delegations; it was a very valuable tool, particularly for speeding up the transfer of technology and specialized knowledge and for educating and creating awareness among developing countries. In that connection, preparations were already under way for an approximately \$10 million programme for strengthening, in the short term, the professional and technical capacities of developing countries to gather, monitor and analyse climatic and atmospheric data. Once the developing countries had their own data on the basis of which to draw conclusions and make recommendations for action, they would be able to use such data instead of depending on data provided by the developed countries. In that way, action to improve the world's environment would reflect fully the needs of developing countries and take into account the economic burden which those countries had to bear.

122. With regard to co-ordination with other agencies of the United Nations system, UNDP's strategy was, as the report indicated, based on broad co-operation. The Programme participated actively in designing inter-agency mechanisms to improve co-ordination aimed at setting priorities for action programmes in which UNDP would play a major role. It was also taking steps to mobilize the additional resources needed to carry out that task.

123. With regard to the allocation of resources, if it had been possible to set in motion fairly rapidly the workshops begun in August 1988 and so well received by Resident Representatives, that was because the Council had allocated a limited amount of SPR for such activities and the Administrator had decided to earmark a small part of them for the workshops. In order for the Administrator to be able to respond rapidly to the requests made by delegations and thus meet the needs of countries requesting assistance, the Council would simply have to decide to allocate a larger proportion of SPR in the next two years.

124. Framework environmental guidelines for the entire United Nations system were being formulated in co-ordination with the Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (Operational Activities) and the inter-agency co-ordinating committee on the environment. That work was being promoted and supervised by a group made up of representatives of three organizations, including UNDP. It was expected that the guidelines for UNDP, and perhaps also those for the entire system, would be ready before the end of 1989. UNDP had already circulated to Governments and field offices the excellent guidelines produced by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

(Mr. Gucovsky)

125. All UNDP operational units were represented on the Environmental Action Team set up under the supervision of the Administrator and with the direct support of the Assistant Administrator of the Bureau for Programme Policy and Evaluation. Its members not only exchanged views but also formulated joint action policies. Furthermore, they were able to transmit rapidly to field offices the information necessary for taking action.

126. Turning to information and the important statement made by the representative of the Soviet Union, the Administrator had taken account of the views on the environment expressed by the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of that country in the General Assembly in 1988, particularly their views on promoting the rapid transfer of technology in the environment field to developing countries at prices which those countries could afford.

127. With regard to youth, he was grateful for the suggestions made by various delegations. UNDP was moving in the direction indicated by most representatives, including the United States representative. Implementation of two or three experimental projects concerning youth would begin shortly and information would be provided thereon in due course.

128. In response to the concerns expressed about biotechnology, he said that, in one or two months, the Administrator would be issuing a note on the question which would specify very clearly elements related to the environment.

129. The report to be submitted by the Administrator in 1990 would reflect the suggestions and recommendations made by delegations at the current session.

130. The PRESIDENT said that the Council had completed its consideration of agenda item 4 (b) (vi) and suggested that it request the Drafting Group to prepare a draft decision on the item.

131. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.