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Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Wednesday, 30 May 1990, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. POPESCU (Romania)

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

UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND (agenda item 6) (continued)

General debate (continued)

1. Mr. KUNUGI (Deputy Executive Director, United Nations Population Fund), speaking in response to points raised by delegations on the question of allocations for priority areas, said that several representatives, including those of the Federal Republic of Germany, Mauritania and the United States, had referred to the slight decline in expenditure on maternal and child health and family planning (MCH/FP) in 1989. In reply he would like to point out that the Governing Council instruction of 1981, contained in its decision 81/7, paragraph 3, referred to the global target of resource distribution taking into account the specific socio-cultural backgrounds of developing countries. That meant that resource distribution for a particular country might not be strictly in conformity with the guidelines. It should also be mentioned that the family planning sector and the associated field of information, education and communication (IEC) had continued to receive approximately 67 per cent, or two thirds, of programme resources in 1989. That was in line with the guidance of the Council. Some factors which had possibly contributed to the slight reduction in resources allocated for those two fields could, however, be identified. One might be found in the increased resource allocations for population dynamics and basic population data collection and analysis connected with support activities for the 1990 round of censuses. The increase in resources for population dynamics in 1989 had resulted from the fact that the item included research activities related to family-planning policy formulation and to socio-cultural factors affecting fertility or family planning practices. The African strategy approved by the Council in 1987 had also emphasized the need for IEC activities in the countries of the African region. That was reflected in the increased resources allocated for that field in 1989. Lastly, as endorsed by Cuba and other members, the women in development field had received a marked increase in its resource allocation, from 2.5 per cent of total programme resources in 1988 to 3.8 per cent in 1989. That field was undoubtedly closely related to that of a family planning delivery and information service.

2. A number of delegations had endorsed the proposals to increase further the resource allocations for Africa in the forthcoming work plan period 1991-1994, although a few had expressed the view that the proposed rate of increase was not sufficiently high. UNFPA would certainly try to comply with that suggestion to the fullest extent possible. He would like, however, to draw attention to the longitudinal resource increase trend over the past several years, from \$16.6 million (23.3 per cent) of total country programme resources in 1986 to the annual average of \$47.6 million (32.8 per cent) in the 1991-1994 period.

3. As had been pointed out by the representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, UNFPA had always been concerned to ensure the optimum use of resources available for population activities from various sources, including UNFPA. The Fund had tried to maximize the complementarity of such resources, first at the country level through the country programme development procedure. And secondly, it had tried, and continued to try, to maintain consultations with concerned multilateral and bilateral population assistance agencies in order further to increase effective resource utilization.

4. The delegations of Canada and Norway had referred to the presentation of data concerning multilateral-bilateral resources. In that connection, UNFPA concurred with the suggestion by the Canadian delegation that such data should be presented separately since they were not, strictly speaking, sanctioned by the Governing Council as a whole.

5. In reply to the representative of Canada, who had drawn attention to the low resource delivery rates in some countries (only 19 per cent in one case), he would like to say that a number of common factors appeared to have contributed to those low rates. Those included internal political stability and the absence of, or delay in, the recruitment of UNFPA staff, in particular, UNFPA country directors in the Niger and Uganda. There were indications, however, that the pace of country programmes was accelerating in those two countries.

6. A number of delegations, including those of Canada, Japan and the Netherlands, had commented on the current resource distribution for priority countries. UNFPA was reasonably confident that, by 1993, it would achieve the 80 per cent level for resources to be allocated to priority countries because a large number of country programmes were to be submitted to the Council in 1991 and 1992 (25 in 1991 and 32 in 1992). A majority of such programmes would be for African countries, many of which were priority countries.

7. UNFPA shared the concern expressed by the United States delegation about contraceptive supplies for developing countries. In order to avoid unexpected disruption or shortfall of contraceptive supplies and to reduce unmet needs, UNFPA had organized an expert group meeting on the future situation. A report on that meeting would be submitted to the Council in 1991. In addition, the Fund would continue to conduct inter-agency consultations on the question, as well as consultations with bilateral donors. As increasing UNFPA resources were directed towards family-planning activities in developing countries, more contraceptives would be provided by the Fund.

8. The delegation of Canada had proposed that UNFPA should prepare a "simple" comparison of the past plan with its actual implementation. While UNFPA would like to incorporate that suggestion into the future work-plan paper, it wished to examine the usefulness and technical feasibility of such a comparison provided that it did not make the work-plan paper any more complicated than it was at present. UNFPA was not sure of the technical feasibility, mainly because the UNFPA work plan was a four-year plan on a rolling basis and depended on annual resources, unlike the fixed programme cycle of UNDP. He would welcome suggestions for improving and simplifying data presentation.

9. In connection with the annual increase in operational costs, UNFPA had managed to maintain the annual rate of 6 per cent for several years. The UNFPA rate could not be strictly compared with those of other agencies as, for example, it included agency support costs, which would be affected by the outcome of current discussions on that issue. UNFPA hoped, however, to maintain the 6 per cent rate of increase in the future.

10. The question had been raised why resource allocations for population policy formulation had been so low. That sector had traditionally included research activities on mortality and internal migration, which had increasingly been absorbed into population dynamics.

11. On the question of quality versus quantity, UNFPA had achieved a rather positive quantitative performance index, with resource utilization of 88.8 per cent in 1989. UNFPA was not complacent, however, and was certainly concerned with the quality of programme implementation, as reflected in its presentation of UNFPA evaluation activities. It would continue to improve its programme performance both quantitatively and qualitatively.

12. Most of the delegations which had referred to the request for programme expenditure authority, including those of Cuba, Japan, Mauritania and Norway, had endorsed UNFPA's request for such authority, as contained in paragraph 35 of document DP/1990/47. The Fund also welcomed the general support for the proposed resource-utilization programme for the 1991-1994 work plan as presented in that document. In particular, it had noted with appreciation that, while a number of delegations considered the proposed annual increase in income projection of 9.5 per cent to be over-optimistic, that figure had been accepted in general, subject to annual review by the Council.

13. Mr. EL FERJANI (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that his delegation had not yet received an answer to the question which it had raised earlier regarding the methods used by UNFPA to avoid duplication of costs and work in the 1991-1994 programme between the general resources of the Fund and resources provided bilaterally.

14. Mr. KUNUGI (Deputy Executive Director, United Nations Population Fund) said that, during the preparation of the country programme, an assessment mission was formed and one of its first acts was to ascertain the resources available from other agencies in the United Nations system and those available multilaterally and bilaterally. The country programme proposal was then examined at headquarters and, following approval by the Governing Council, was implemented. Implementation was closely monitored, both in the field and at headquarters, and the relevant data were closely followed so that other sources could be brought into play or the resource utilization rate modified. Where multilateral-bilateral aid was not available at the time of adoption of the country programme, UNFPA might use regular resources. The allocation was not fixed. Globally, it was the aggregate of country programme performance that determined the figure reported in the financial implementation document. At the forthcoming OECD meeting, UNFPA would continue to share its data regarding current and future resource availability from all agencies in the population field so that there would be no duplication. Complementarity would be encouraged in all possible ways.

15. The PRESIDENT announced that the Governing Council had thus concluded its deliberations on population questions.

The meeting rose at 10.40 a.m.