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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 32nd MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,  
on Wednesday, 13 June 1990, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. POPESCU (Romania)  
later: Mr. BABINGTON (Australia)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

OTHER FUNDS AND PROGRAMMES (agenda item 8) (continued)

(a) UNITED NATIONS VOLUNTEERS PROGRAMME (DP/1990/57 and Add.1)

1. Mr. DRAPER (Administrator, United Nations Development Programme) said that during his travels he had met many United Nations volunteers and that he admired their commitment and respected the professionalism of their contribution to UNDP's work. In the task of making technical co-operation more relevant and cost effective, UNDP's partners in both the developing countries and the United Nations system were turning more and more to UNV specialists. He urged the members of the Council to read the programme advisory note which the United Nations Volunteer programme had prepared on the appropriate use of volunteers in development. Volunteers represented about 20 per cent of the long-term expatriate technical personnel serving in the developing countries, and especially in the least developed countries. Their role might even be critical to success in the areas of agricultural development, health and education and in the process of rehabilitation in the wake of man-made crises or natural disasters.
2. UNV's working partnership with some 30 agencies of the United Nations system was exemplary. Nearly half of all the volunteers were serving in projects of the specialized agencies including FAO, ILO, UNESCO, UNIDO, UNICEF and WHO and in other organs, namely, the UNDP regional bureaux, the Project Support Services Office (OPS), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office, the United Nations Revolving Fund for Natural Resources Exploration (UNRFNRE) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). The United Nations Volunteers had also played significant roles in helping the High Commissioner for Refugees in camps from Hong Kong to Honduras, from Somalia to Thailand. He firmly believed that the United Nations system would make increasing use of the talented, experienced and committed men and women, whom UNV had shown it could deploy.
3. With 1,900 volunteers, UNV was currently one of the most substantial of UNDP's operations. The challenges it was called upon to meet were many: the extension of its participatory domestic development service programme to the Arab world and the Caribbean, recovery in Cambodia, the potential to assist the work of the Bretton Woods institutions and requests from Central and Eastern Europe to help with economic transformation.
4. Ms. MCSWEENEY (Executive Co-ordinator, United Nations Volunteers) said that, during the 1988-1989 biennium, UNV had been guided in its work by the decisions taken by the Council in 1988 following the comprehensive review in 1987. It has been asked to prepare a programme advisory note on the appropriate use of volunteers in development. It had thus held consultations with Governments, United Nations agencies and volunteer-sending organizations and what had emerged was the striking contribution of international volunteers - some 33,000 in all - to development. They were working in the front-line areas, especially in Africa. The volunteers and the programme's specialists in particular had to deal with the same resource constraints as their counterparts in the developing countries. Through consultations, there had been a better definition of the appropriate niche for UNV specialists and of the importance of complementarity with the nationals of the developing

countries, who had a key contribution to make, and other United Nations system personnel. The new requests received reaffirmed the comparative advantage of United Nations volunteers in post-crisis rehabilitation, promoting participatory approaches at the grass-roots level and providing a "safety net" of basic services during adjustment periods.

5. The overall context in which volunteer contributions to developments should be placed was that of economic recovery programmes and their social adjustment consequences. The challenge of reaching the poorest had inspired new forms and directions of development co-operation and encouraged increased trust in the private sector. That created more space for volunteer effort as a whole and would condition the demand for UNV programme services during the next cycle.

6. The profiles of volunteer specialists sought by Governments and by the United Nations agencies called for ever-increasing qualifications and experience. A high degree of professionalism in expatriate technical support, available at a modest cost, had led to a 36 per cent growth in the use of UNVs over the biennium. About half of the UNV specialists were working on projects executed by United Nations agencies, the three main users being FAO, ILO and the United Nations Department of Technical Co-operation for Development (DTCD). UNV specialists served in over 100 countries, 80 per cent of them in the poorest and most disadvantaged areas. Programmes had been launched the previous year in Namibia and work had just started in Central Europe.

7. A critical issue was support for volunteers in the field. Major strides had been taken in decentralizing the management of their work and more flexibility had been introduced in the administration of their entitlements. Assignment preparation and monitoring were receiving greater attention. The main instrument for strengthening programme support had been the creation of 40 programme officer posts, funded from UNDP's administrative budget since 1988. To meet growing needs, 13 additional programme officers had been fully funded by donors. Nevertheless, 20 field programme officer posts funded from the administrative budget were still required.

8. Briefing and orientation meetings had been increased, both by the programme itself and by United Nations agencies. Thus, the International Trade Centre (ITC), FAO and ILO were increasingly bringing UNV specialists to their headquarters for technical briefings. Volunteer-sending organizations such as the Peace Corps had started to include UNVs in their in-country orientation sessions.

9. Reviews and evaluations of field programmes had been intensified. In 1989 alone, seven evaluations had been undertaken which had resulted in constructive suggestions that highlighted the value of the volunteers contributions.

10. UNV financing continued to come overwhelmingly from national and regional IPFs, accounting for over 80 per cent of total activities, and that had a cyclical impact on UNV programme development and delivery. At the same time, United Nations agencies were funding more and more UNV assignments from their own resources. The programme was currently receiving support from the financial institutions, in particular the World Bank and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). Governments, in turn, were increasingly using loan funds to obtain volunteer services.

11. Countries might wish to consider tapping the special characteristics of United Nations volunteer specialists because those characteristics were critical to broad-based grass-roots work, particularly in the area of youth. Three of UNV's partner agencies in youth work - UNESCO, ILO and the United Nations - had convened a meeting for September on the participation of volunteers in work with the urban poor, especially youth and women.

12. External evaluations had been made of the participatory development programmes for strengthening domestic development services (DDS) in Asia and Africa. They highlighted the usefulness of that exchange of indigenous experience in promoting self-reliance at the community level. They emphasized the need to fund DDS activities on a more secure basis and to find special resources for that purpose. The DDS programme was growing very rapidly especially in Africa, and as a result of new requests from the Arab States, the Caribbean and Central America. It was thanks to the generous support of the Federal Republic of Germany in complementing UNDP's regional IPF, that work with the poorest in Africa had been able to continue until the end of the current cycle. The volunteers assigned to that kind of work had excellent track records in helping community groups to manage micro-projects initiated by the groups themselves. The micro-fund concept could build on the DDS experience and field network.

13. The last biennium had seen a sharp rise in the demand for UNV specialists by countries coping with rehabilitation and reconstruction - including Afghanistan, Angola, Namibia and Somalia. In Afghanistan, with the office of the Co-ordinator for United Nations Humanitarian and Economic Assistance Programmes relating to Afghanistan (UNOCA), and in the Hong Kong refugee camps with UNHCR, UNV had been able to respond to requests through assistance from Japan. However, whenever urgent requests had to be met, the programme was hamstrung in its action by the need first of all to find the funds. The Administrator had therefore recommended that a special contingency fund should be created which would enable a small priority group of volunteers to be dispatched and ensure that humanitarian needs were met whilst resources were being mobilized.

14. Having thanked the major contributors, particularly Switzerland, Belgium, the United States, the Netherlands and France - which was joining as a sponsor, she mentioned that a proposal had been put forward to increase the proportion - currently 15 per cent - of the fund that could be used for experimental and innovative programmes.

15. The United Nations Volunteers programme was tending towards universality. It had concluded new partnership agreements with France, Japan, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the Republic of Korea, Morocco, Egypt, Jordan and Viet Nam, and was shortly to conclude one with Brazil. In addition, new approaches had been introduced with a number of volunteer-sending organizations in industrialized countries and with some United Nations agencies. The UNV roster currently included nationals from 120 countries, compared with 106 in September 1987. The proportion of serving UNVs from the seven largest suppliers had declined from 60 per cent in 1987 to less than 50 per cent. The number of countries providing over 15 UNV specialists had risen from 23 in 1988 to a current 34. However, participation from industrialized countries was still only around 12 per cent. In order to increase it, UNV had submitted some 20 measures for consideration by the volunteer-sending organizations as

an "affirmative action plan". All the members of the Council could assist UNV to reach its goal of universal participation, especially by processing and clearing candidates more promptly.

16. Women currently constituted 18 per cent of all UNVs and the number of candidates was steadily increasing. The youthful retired, aged 55 to 65, brought a whole career of experience to UNV and were increasing in numbers on the roster.

17. In future, more volunteers were likely to be called upon to contribute to post-crisis rehabilitation, provide basic services during adjustment processes and to support rural grass-roots activities. New areas would also be opened up to them: community-based programmes with the urban poor, environmental management and population activities. If development co-operation was to focus more on human choices and needs, volunteer contributions would certainly be very much to the fore and UNV was ready to meet that challenge.

18. Prince Sadruddin AGA KHAN (Co-ordinator for United Nations Humanitarian and Economic Assistance Programmes relating to Afghanistan) said that, during the past year, United Nations assistance had reached virtually every province of Afghanistan. He paid tribute to the United Nations volunteers who, in that common endeavour, had played a valuable role, which was continuing to gain momentum.

19. Since 1989, when the Executive Co-ordinator of the United Nations Volunteer Programme and he himself had signed a Project of UNV Multisectoral Support for Relief and Rehabilitation Programmes relating to Afghanistan, 33 UNV specialists had been deployed with various United Nations bodies. Recruitment of candidates was currently under way for an additional 45 posts, and he hoped that the target of 100 volunteers would be reached by the end of the year.

20. Even though the focus of the UNV programme was economic and social development, there was no doubt that it was in times of crisis and in cases of emergency that the performance of the United Nations system was most scrutinized by donors and public alike. Afghanistan was a challenge to the notions of international solidarity and the international resolution of regional conflicts. The credibility of the system and also the future of multilateral aid depended on the success of the United Nations in that country. For those close to the actual situation in the field, it was clear that United Nations volunteers often played a vital role in the success of aid projects. While he respected the idea of "UNV specialists", he felt that it was essential for the overall impact of the programme to maintain flexibility and pragmatism in the selection of volunteers. In the field, nothing counted more than personal human qualities. For a United Nations volunteer, it was important to have an understanding of the people with whom he or she worked, of their culture and traditions, their hopes and aspirations.

21. He supported two specific recommendations by the Administrator. First, he favoured the expansion and strengthening of the UNV programme officer scheme and, secondly, the setting up of a contingency fund to assign UNVs to meet emergency requirements in cases of catastrophe or political upheaval, without waiting for the completion of a lengthy process of project formulation, recruitment of additional staff and approval of start-up funds.

22. Lastly, he wished to place on record his deep appreciation of UNDP's support for Operation Salam. A number of joint projects had been successfully initiated and more were in the pipeline. He earnestly hoped that, in the coming weeks and months, UNDP would be able to use more of its IPF funds. As Afghanistan moved gradually towards greater stability, UNDP should not only provide technical assistance, which was its traditional task, but also become a catalyst for generating more operational activity. Economic and humanitarian assistance could and should be an important factor in promoting peace in the area, encouraging the voluntary repatriation of refugees and helping the Afghans to gain a measure of self-sufficiency.

23. Mr. RASAPUTRAM (Sri Lanka) said that the UNV, which would shortly be celebrating its 20 years of service to the developing countries, had created an excellent image among the rural masses, who had come to identify it with the United Nations itself. The programme advisory note gave an excellent description of the nature of the work done by UNV and the direction that the programme should take in the future. His delegation was in broad agreement with the Executive Co-ordinator's recommendations. The future programme of UNV needed to be adjusted to the challenges and demands of the 1990s. In fact, Governments were henceforth in favour of free enterprise and the free play of market forces as instruments of development. However, that new attitude presupposed a transitional period which, to be smooth, had to be assisted. The United Nations volunteers were, therefore, the best suited to bring to the populations of the developing countries new ideas and new technology to match their expectations.

24. UNV combined commitment and devotion with highly sophisticated professionalism and that quality was being placed at the service of participatory development. Because they spent about two years in the same post, the volunteers were accepted by the local population into which they integrated easily and by their national counterparts with whom they worked. They were thus in a position to contribute to changing the attitudes of the people themselves and to pave the way for changes in the direction of a country's economy.

25. In the light of those factors, it was important to support the expansion and growth of UNV in many directions, as recommended by the Executive Co-ordinator. First, the programme should go beyond fielding experts and work towards a programme that was carefully designed and implemented. In that connection, joint planning and programming within the United Nations system seemed to be full of promise, as indicated in the programme advisory note. His delegation, therefore, unreservedly supported the suggestions made in the note regarding the role of the programme officers and supported an increase in their number to 60 posts. Secondly, the work of volunteers employed at the local level in the domestic development service seemed very promising. In Sri Lanka, those volunteers had played a catalytic role in rural areas. They had helped to design programmes based on the initiative of the people themselves and then had contributed to implementing and monitoring them. They had also done much to develop human resources. The participatory development programme was, in his delegation's view, one of the most valuable contributions made by UNV. Thirdly, UNV could be involved in disaster relief when co-ordination and organizational problems arose. His delegation supported the establishment of a special fund for financing the intervention of volunteers in those circumstances but did not wish such a fund to be confused with the micro-capital fund which should be used exclusively for promoting business

entrepreneurship and self-employment projects. Fourthly, UNV should encourage the fielding of volunteers to work in developed countries to create or promote a two-way exchange of experts that would lead to cross pollination and strengthen the universality of the programme. Lastly, the work of the volunteers should be assured the necessary financial support.

26. Mr. Babington (Australia) took the chair.

27. Mr. MANCZYK (Poland) said that, because UNV was the only volunteer-sending agency of the United Nations, it had a special responsibility to improve the image of volunteer specialists, their professional capacity and the cost-effectiveness of their services. He congratulated the secretariat on its very comprehensive programme advisory note concerning the appropriate use of volunteers in development, which would be most useful to Governments, UNDP and the agencies.

28. His delegation supported the proposal that the number of UNV programme officer posts should be increased to 60. The UNV should be involved in emergency-type operations because the programme was well suited to that kind of activity. In that connection, he agreed with the idea of setting up a special contingency fund and Poland was ready to provide volunteers for such operations. His delegation was also in favour of expanding support for participatory development. The participation of volunteers in the domestic development service and youth networks should be put on a more permanent basis.

29. His delegation was aware of the importance of the UNV High-Level Inter-Governmental Meeting on International Volunteerism and Development, to be held in 1991 on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the programme, at which Meeting the subject of human development and environment could be considered. The subjects mentioned in paragraph 68 of the Administrator's report should also be discussed at the Meeting.

30. His delegation was in favour of expanding the use of the Special Voluntary Fund (SVF) for financing pilot and experimental projects. It also welcomed the proposal that the programme should intervene to assist countries undertaking major socio-economic transformations. That would be an eloquent testimony of the universality, flexibility and efficiency of the programme. A project was currently being prepared to provide experts in management, marketing and other fields to assist Poland in restructuring its economy. Rapid integration into the world economy of the countries with economies in transition would increase their contribution to development assistance rendered to other regions and countries.

31. The UNV programme was growing at a satisfactory rate, but the indicators of both supply and demand showed that it had the potential to expand even further. In order to do so, it would need to be more visible and it should therefore be given every assistance in that respect. His delegation noted with satisfaction that, in order to improve the quality of services delivered by the programme, senior citizens with professional experience and competence were being recruited. It also welcomed the initiative taken to provide programme officers with training courses to improve the quality of the services delivered at the field level. He drew attention, in that connection, to a proposal for improving the recruitment strategy and overall management of the

programme. He had in mind the organization of short-term training courses for national recruitment services during which the chiefs of those services and the UNV programme officers could exchange experience and co-operate more closely.

32. He mentioned that his country had been the first in Eastern Europe to sign a co-operation agreement with UNV. Since 1984, Poland had supplied some 30 volunteers and 12 Polish specialists were currently working in developing countries, while many others were on the roster. In the current year, emphasis had been placed on recruiting doctors, the demand for which had greatly increased because of expansion of the UNV programme. In 1989, the Executive Co-ordinator had visited Poland and had held useful discussions with the Polish authorities.

33. Mr. PETTIT (United Kingdom) said he welcomed the programme advisory note prepared by UNV and hoped that it would be widely disseminated because of its very great interest for all planning chiefs both inside and outside the United Nations system. Although the note dealt with the use of volunteers for development, it should be remembered that volunteers also had an important role to play in providing assistance for refugees, in relief operations and so forth.

34. He drew attention to paragraph 13 of the Administrator's report (DP/1990/57), which referred to the desirable complementarity between international personnel on regular contracts and volunteer workers. International project teams that comprised both categories of personnel had, in fact, demonstrated their effectiveness when they had been able to exploit the synergy between the two kinds of knowledge, experience and talent. He fully endorsed that assessment. He was also pleased to note that the Administrator dealt with the role of international volunteers in development, without limiting himself to UNV. It thus appeared that the door still remained open for the involvement of volunteers from bilateral sources in projects of the United Nations system.

35. With respect to strengthening the universality of the programme, he noted with pleasure that steps had been taken to increase the number of volunteers from OECD countries. The recruitment methods would, he presumed, be adapted to the labour market in the industrialized countries, which was evolving rapidly. He also hoped that the increase in the number of volunteers from industrial countries would be reflected not only on the roster but also in the field.

36. His delegation supported the proposal for establishing 15 new programme officer posts to be funded from the administrative budget. The needs in that area were so obvious that the British Volunteers Sending Society had sent 10 of its own volunteers to perform those tasks and had financed the operation in its entirety. Nevertheless UNDP should take over the funding of such arrangements. He also thought that the activities undertaken under the youth programme should be continued. Moreover, he welcomed the retention of the acronym DDS (Domestic Development Services) as well as the term "Participatory Development Programme".

37. An interregional high-level meeting of the UNV programme should be organized about once every 10 years and it would be appropriate to convene one in 1991 to mark the twentieth anniversary of the programme. As far as



co-operation with NGOs and grass-roots organizations was concerned, he noted with satisfaction that the opening of a window in the Special Voluntary Fund (SVF) for receiving contributions to be allocated for special purposes had encouraged donors to make contributions.

38. His Government did not object to the setting up of a contingency fund and hoped that the Special Programme Resources (SPR) would be used to assist the Participatory Development Programme within the framework of thematic allocations, the theme in question being poverty alleviation. Lastly, he hoped that, at each of its sessions held at Geneva, the Council would decide to devote one day to consideration of UNV.

39. Mr. OUANES (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) said that UNHCR particularly appreciated the contribution made by the volunteers, because they had demonstrated real competence coupled with commitment, in complete harmony with the principles and values which guided the High Commissioner's work. Their activities were diversified and affected the areas of health, readaptation, agriculture, social work and administration. UNHCR had taken part in the consultations which were held to prepare the note before the Council. It attached great importance to the future development of UNV and firmly believed in the need to intensify co-operation with it.

40. Mr. VARADACHARY (India) said that he endorsed the support for UNV expressed by the representative of Sri Lanka. He recalled that his country had suffered numerous natural disasters and that it always welcomed voluntary assistance in dealing with such situations and also in pro-development activities. Consequently, India had significantly increased its contribution to the Special Voluntary Fund and hoped to be in a position to do so again in the future.

41. India had recently increased the number of specialists allocated to the field for projects under the domestic development services programme. The only international volunteers working officially in India were United Nations Volunteers and that indicated his Government's confidence in the programme.

42. His delegation supported the recommendation that the UNV mandate for dealing with activities concerning youth should be maintained. In order to strengthen UNV during the fifth cycle, his delegation was willing to give favourable consideration to the allocation of additional budgetary resources.

43. Mr. OLOKILIKOKO (Observer for the Congo) said that unfortunately volunteers played a marginal role in development activities in his country: in fact, there were currently only five United Nations Volunteers in the Congo and seven Congolese serving in that capacity in other African countries. His Government hoped to enhance the role of UNV, in particular within the framework of the back-to-the-land programme it had launched.

44. With regard to the question of the professionalism of UNV specialists and their working conditions, he did not intend to question their competence but wished that more account were taken, when they were being assigned, of several important factors, particularly their ability to respond to the needs and situations of the countries in which they were required to work and integrate themselves. Furthermore, closer co-operation should be established between the United Nations Volunteers and national personnel. While it was sometimes difficult to find qualified local personnel capable of working with the UNV

specialists, it should, however, be possible to resolve that problem by doing more to prepare local staff, especially through training and information programmes, because only through concerted action aimed at achieving complementarity of the various partners could the hoped-for results be achieved.

45. His delegation supported the idea of expanding the financial bases of UNV's operational activities so that they would no longer depend exclusively on the IPFs. It also favoured the establishment of a special fund to assist small- and medium-sized enterprises in the developing countries.

46. Mr. SAHLMANN (Federal Republic of Germany) said that volunteers with an average age between 30 and 40 and who had therefore had good professional experience already were currently considered the most appropriate kind of personnel in an increasing number of areas, where the long-term involvement of expatriate professionals was needed. They often had the same qualifications as international experts and in most cases more enthusiasm and a higher personal commitment besides being much cheaper. In future, they should become the main source of long-term expatriate professionals used by the United Nations system for its operational activities. In other words, UNDP and the relevant agencies should use UNV specialists not only in project implementation but also in programming, planning, assessment of needs and project design. The UNV Programme was an excellent means of technical co-operation among developing countries, because the vast majority of its specialists came from developing countries. His Government thought, however, that the volunteers should be assigned to programmes, projects or posts that were truly multilateral. Another important task of the volunteers was to support countries' domestic development services.

47. He welcomed the programme advisory note which gave information and guidance as to the possible use of United Nations Volunteers. He was pleased that the management of the programme had been decentralized and that increasing support was being provided through the field offices. He was none the less concerned about the large number of early resignations. He felt that greater attention should be given to job descriptions and the training of the volunteers for the specific tasks they would have to carry out, as well as to technical support. Co-operation between UNV and the organizations using its services had greatly improved in recent years, but it could be enhanced still further.

48. His country had taken part in an external evaluation of the UNV programme in the field which, on the whole, had yielded satisfactory results. His Government had pledged its full support to the Participatory Development Programme and had therefore made available special financial resources on an exceptional basis for the current year for the DDS programme in Africa. His delegation thought that, during the fifth cycle, the Participatory Development Programme should be given a clear and secure financial basis and he proposed that it should be financed completely from the SPRs.

49. Mr. NAMFUA (Observer for Tanzania) said that the success achieved by UNV and the way it had responded to the pressing and diversified needs of the developing countries fully justified the strong support that the members of the Governing Council, beneficiaries and donors alike, had assured it. His delegation noted with special satisfaction that the programme had assigned

63 per cent of its volunteers to the least developed countries - half of them were in Africa - thus focusing its limited resources on the countries in greatest need.

50. Noting that the UNV leadership, like the users, put the quality of services and the sustainability of the assistance given as their main preoccupation, he agreed that field support structure was the key to successful management and that it was thus important to continue to improve the quality of the programmes and to finance the programme officers, like the core UNV staff, from the regular budget and the resources of the UNDP resident co-ordinators. There was a strong case for UNV sending more programme officers to a larger number of countries and it was, therefore, necessary to widen its financial base. In addition, he endorsed the proposal by the Administrator to set up a contingency fund for emergency relief following disasters.

51. He urged donor countries to follow the example of the Federal Republic of Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, and the Netherlands, which had made commendable efforts to support grass-roots activities. In the final analysis, those were income-generating activities to assist the disadvantaged rural and urban poor and would help them in their attack on poverty. In that perspective, it was important that UNV should continue its youth work, focusing its attention more on creating jobs for school-leavers.

52. UNV had one quality that was, perhaps, even more important than its professional skills and that was its deep commitment to the cause of development and the uplifting of the deprived. In view of the difficult conditions in which volunteers were required to work, they should be offered more flexible conditions of service, in order to deepen that commitment. The Governing Council should be able to establish the prerequisites to ensure that UNV could meet the major challenges it would face in the 1990s and to continue to adapt its services to the evolution of those needs.

53. Mr. MARX (Observer for the German Democratic Republic) said that his country's new Ministry of Economic Co-operation intended to take advantage of the under-utilized national potential to assist developing countries. It had begun to establish the necessary institutional framework for continuing co-operation for development by adapting it to the new political situation in the country. Thus the German Democratic Republic had, *inter alia*, a national volunteer recruitment service similar to those in the Western European countries. In addition to its bilateral activities, that service could be a national focal point between UNDP and experts who wished to participate in a multilateral development assistance programme. He hoped that UNV and the Ministry of Economic Co-operation of the German Democratic Republic would conclude a memorandum of understanding to that effect in the near future.

54. Mr. HEMBRECHTS (International Labour Organisation), having complimented the directors of UNV on the obvious success of their activities, particularly in the area of community development and the informal sector, said that ILO had, for its part, engaged nearly 500 volunteers who had been assigned to 64 different countries since 1972; 141 of them were currently working in ILO programmes. Those figures were proof of ILO's steadily increasing confidence in those specialists, who adapted well to the projects that they were

assisting, particularly in the fields of vocational training, co-operative development, labour-intensive special public works programmes and vocational rehabilitation of the disabled.

55. At the first annual consultative meeting between ILO and UNV in April 1990 to review programming, operational and administrative issues, ILO had noted that UNV had succeeded in simplifying its operational procedures and in decentralizing its administrative services; it had therefore decided to encourage its staff to make greater use of volunteers in project implementation. To that end, the two agencies had agreed to use them more in project identification and design; to identify jointly new areas in which technical co-operation activities could be conducted; to work more closely in recruiting well-qualified candidates; to send the recruited specialists to the field more promptly; and to ask ILO staff to hold briefing and orientation sessions for volunteers more frequently, in order to adapt the length of assignment to the needs of the projects. ILO field offices and UNDP resident representatives would be informed of the results of that meeting and of the steps to be taken in close co-operation with the new UNV programme officers.

56. Mr. HUGHES (Observer for New Zealand) said that, whereas UNDP was moving towards greater emphasis on national execution, he predicted that greater use would be made of UNV in carrying out technical co-operation activities because the cost-effectiveness of the UNV specialists and their willingness to relate to the culture of the countries in which they were engaged were important advantages. He welcomed the publication of the programme advisory note, which contained sensible guidelines on the deployment of the volunteers, and also the strenuous efforts by the programme to strengthen its universal character. It was with that in mind that the New Zealand co-operating organization, Volunteer Service Abroad, had set a target of recruiting 5 per cent of UNV specialists. That target had been achieved and it was proposed to double it, with a special commitment to providing volunteers for Namibia. Furthermore, the Service was involved in recruiting New Zealand specialists who were fully funded by UNV.

57. It was important that the programme should continue its activities for youth, particularly at the grass-roots level in countries where youth unemployment was an increasing problem on account of economic difficulties, structural adjustment and a high birth rate. Lastly, he agreed with the Administrator that the Fourth United Nations Decade for Development should explicitly recognize the role of volunteers in development.

58. Mr. DE BEER (Netherlands) said that the Netherlands volunteer-sending organization had excellent relations with UNV, which was obviously well run. He welcomed the efforts being made to broaden the recruitment base of UNV and hoped that its unique character as an organization fielding volunteers from developing countries to other developing countries would be strengthened still further. There was also a clear interest from the industrialized countries in co-operating further with the programme when the current efforts to streamline it and speed up recruitment started to pay off.

59. He supported the programme officers scheme set up in 1988 because it was making good progress. The Executive Co-ordinator should contemplate converting the programme officer posts into permanent ones, given the importance of their responsibilities.

60. He welcomed the efforts being made by UNV to evaluate its activities and then feed the results back into its orientations and projects. He also fully endorsed the comments made by the representative of the United Kingdom concerning the youth programme. In respect of the financial impact of some of the questions considered in the report, he noted that the Administrator was proposing that a contingency fund should be set up to meet Governments' requests for emergency relief assistance: in view of the constraints inherent in the international recruitment of specialists and their acceptance by the host countries, he was not fully convinced that an enhanced UNV role was appropriate. On the other hand, he had no objection in principle to the Participatory Development Programme being given additional funds provided that the financing was extrabudgetary. The Executive Co-ordinator could perhaps indicate what new sources of funding were being currently tapped. With regard to the Special Voluntary Fund (SVF), the Administrator recommended that the financing of external expenditure of volunteers from developing countries should be expanded, but gave no specific percentage. Every effort should be made to avoid straying from the main purpose of the SVF by adopting such measures. Lastly, he fully supported the proposal by the Administrator in respect of the operational costs of the programme officers.

61. He noted that UNV had heeded the recommendations of the Governing Council and had tried to apply its decisions, rather than fighting or ignoring them. Its responsiveness would certainly ensure that UNV secured the broad support it deserved.

62. Mr. PENJO (Observer for Bhutan) said that the development process had started in Bhutan only 30 years previously and that, consequently, the country was facing a serious shortage of technical and professional manpower. His Government had used the services of UNV in an attempt to cover that shortage. Thus, 18 volunteers had initially been recruited in 1980 for projects mainly in the areas of education, health services and animal husbandry. They had provided most effective and constructive services in the framework of the development programmes. Their number had been increased to 52 after the tripartite meeting held in March 1983, attended by representatives of the Government, UNDP and UNV, to assess the situation. After an evaluation exercise in 1985, which found that the performance of the volunteers had been satisfactory, the number of volunteer posts had been increased to 100 for the period ending 1992. The members of the joint evaluation mission, held in October to November 1989, had made some useful recommendations for improving further the co-ordination and general efficiency of the volunteers' work. His Government would like to continue the UNV programme beyond 1992, because the volunteers had enabled it to meet to a certain extent the shortage of technical and professional manpower at all levels and they were adapted to the country's development needs. The volunteers had been very effective in the field and had proved that they were able to work under difficult circumstances. Furthermore, the cost of their services was much less than that of ordinary technical co-operation personnel. Unfortunately, UNV activities were financed to an extent of about 85 per cent from the IPFs and other country programme activities were competing for the same funds. Consequently, the possibility should be considered of setting up a special trust fund to make other arrangements for supporting the work of the volunteers, particularly in the least developed countries.

63. Mr. SALEEM (Pakistan) said he wished to emphasize the increasingly significant role being played by the UNV programme, the enormous diversity of the skills and experience that it could offer in the areas targeted and its capacity to reach population groups which did not have alternative possibilities of securing acutely needed assistance. It was necessary to strengthen UNV capacity to respond effectively in areas of serious concern to the developing countries. Consequently, he supported the creation of a contingency fund to enable volunteers to provide relief in the event of natural disasters, ecological catastrophes or internal strife so as to support relief operations pending the availability of longer-term support. The possibility should also be envisaged of using the fund to finance specialized support needed in cases of unforeseen change, with socio-economic repercussions. In Pakistan, the volunteers were engaged mainly in aid to Afghan refugees and had done a great deal to assist in the rehabilitation of those people.

64. Mr. OSUNA (Spain) said that his delegation fully supported UNV. The work of the volunteers in the developing countries was worthy of the highest praise. The programme should ensure the universality of recruitment of volunteers and he sincerely hoped that the UNDP field offices would co-operate to that end.

65. With respect to the orientation of its activities, the programme should take part in projects to train specialized manpower in the developing countries. Spain could make experts available for the purpose. To that end, the programme should recruit people who were able to pass on handicraft and other techniques, and it should assign experts with university training to other activities. In that way, the execution of projects by beneficiaries at all levels, whether university or lower, could be encouraged.

66. Volunteers could also be involved in the administration and management of rural and urban communities, so that a link could be established between the local power centres and the population groups most affected by poverty. Lastly, his delegation supported the Administrator's recommendations concerning the programme's resources.

67. Mr. CHAUDOUET (France) said that his delegation warmly congratulated UNV on the work it had done. It was particularly noteworthy that the programme was endeavouring to increase its activities in the least developed countries and among the most disadvantaged groups of the population: patience, the ability to listen, determination and skill were the qualities required to relate to those milieux. The UNV specialists, who were usually older and more experienced than most of the volunteers sent by the industrialized countries while being more committed and more enthusiastic than some technical assistants, could meet those demands.

68. As for France, it participated in the central fund to which it was the fourth largest contributor. His Government, which was anxious to promote volunteerism in France and to associate that operation with UNV, had signed a co-operation agreement with the programme in 1990, which was scheduled to be renewed in 1991. Furthermore, he invited UNV and the UNDP liaison services, as well as the non-governmental organizations, to attend a meeting, to be held in Paris in the autumn, with various French non-governmental organizations to discuss the role that the latter could play in UNDP activities and, more broadly, in those of the United Nations agencies. The guiding theme would

be: "The management of urban development at the grass-roots level", a topic that might well, incidentally, be taken up again at the meeting to mark the twentieth anniversary of UNV. His Government's aim was to stress that one of the major difficulties encountered by the developing countries was uncontrolled urban growth. While not denying the priority that should be accorded to the rural sector in many of those countries, it wanted to hold a joint discussion on other challenges, the effects of which were becoming increasingly difficult to assess.

69. Mr. DENU (Ghana) said that Ghana was the seventh largest contributor to UNV. It had received only eight foreign specialists in 1990 under the UNV programme, because it had abundant human resources and his Government intended to use local specialists as far as possible. However, there were also many Ghanaian specialists serving as volunteers in other countries. His Government was, therefore, well placed to know that UNV was making a valuable contribution to the development of countries and that, more than other specialists, its volunteers responded best to the needs of the developing countries. If the programme was adequately financed and its activities were properly co-ordinated, it could contribute by the transfer of specialized knowledge to the strengthening of the national capacities of those countries. In fact, rather than trying to dictate to the local authorities or Governments what they should do, United Nations volunteers identified with the national institutions and programmes: not only did they ease the Government's own manpower constraints but they helped to provide in-service training to national technical staff.

70. The eight United Nations specialists currently serving in Ghana were contributing to the economic recovery programme and participatory rural development. With their help in executing a feeder roads improvement project, his Government had been able to reduce the capital cost component by 25 per cent. The success of those volunteers in the context of development activities with rural people, who were less open to technology, was due in large part to the fact that they were prepared to live in the rural areas, identify with the villagers and learn to understand them, while sharing their knowledge with them.

71. Under those circumstances, his delegation had no difficulty in supporting the proposals put forward by the Administrator to strengthen the capacity of the programme to respond effectively to the needs of the developing countries. More specifically, it thought it advisable to increase the number of programme officer posts to 60, financed by the administrative budget, and also that a contingency fund should be established.

72. Mr. CABEIRO (Cuba) said that UNV specialists were doing excellent work in various areas and in many developing countries. The programme had responded to needs most effectively and had increased its efficiency. Furthermore, it was trying to recruit a larger number of volunteers from the developing countries in order to make it more universal.

73. Under those circumstances, the programme should be given the necessary resources to operate as effectively as possible. In view of the significant support given by the programme officers to the work of the volunteers and to the programming of their activities in the field, the number of posts should - as the Administrator had suggested - be increased. Lastly, he invited the contributing countries to increase their financial participation in UNV activities so that it could continue to be involved even more in technical

74. Mr. ZHANG Guoquan (China) said that his delegation was satisfied with the progress made by UNV. The programme supported developing countries because, in the field, the volunteers worked with personal commitment despite the often difficult conditions and poor pay. China, for its part, had excellent relations with the volunteers working there and China itself sent a number of volunteers abroad. In addition, his Government made a contribution to the programme.

75. The Administrator requested the establishment of a larger number of programme officer posts to strengthen the support system in the field. His delegation supported that request, provided that the need justified it. It hoped that, at its current session, the Council would decide to give UNV the means to intensify its work.

76. Mr. GEPP (Brazil) said he noted that the Executive Co-ordinator of the programme had endeavoured to comply with the decision adopted by the Council at its last session, particularly with regard to the encouragement of applications by women and senior citizens.

77. On the whole, his delegation agreed with most of the recommendations made in the programme advisory note, since it firmly believed that volunteers would be the real agents for technical co-operation in the 1990s. It supported the idea of recruiting an additional 20 programme officers and was in favour of the establishment of a contingency fund. It also approved the work that had been done, with UNV help, to train specialists in technical assistance in some countries, particularly in Latin America.

78. Brazil had been in touch with UNV since its inception. Two Brazilian nationals were currently serving in developing countries, while two Cuban volunteers were working in Brazil. The Brazilian co-operation agency would shortly begin acting as a recruitment centre for Brazilian candidates. Furthermore, Brazilian non-governmental organizations had acquired an experience in development which could usefully complement that of UNV.

79. Mr. FONDI (Italy) said that it was particularly useful for the developing countries to have the services of experienced specialists, who were willing to work under difficult conditions; it was appropriate that those volunteers should form an integral part of a local team in order to avoid undesirable dependency. Such technical co-operation agents were also well placed to promote the national execution of projects and that was in keeping with the principles set forth in General Assembly resolution 44/211. Moreover, in order to facilitate the integration of volunteers in the field, there should be further emphasis on pre-departure and in-country briefings as well as on workshops for the specialists.

80. His Government tried systematically to include provisions for volunteers in its major multi-bilateral technical assistance projects and urged all countries to do likewise. In collaboration with UNV, it was trying to define an institutional framework for strengthening co-operation between Italy and the programme.

81. Mr. MACDONALD (Australia) said his delegation welcomed the initiatives taken by the UNV management to widen and strengthen the programme's financial base and to review the volunteers' current role in development. To determine that role precisely, every effort should be made to ask the volunteers



It would be appropriate also to find out whether the programme was still significantly less costly than the services of experts and consultants.

82. The number of Australian candidates and of serving Australian volunteers had always been modest. His delegation recognized, however, that strong quality control of volunteer recruitment was needed in order to preserve the commitment basis of the programme. It was pleased to note that UNV was taking steps to increase the participation in the programme of candidates from industrialized countries, including Australia. The recruitment process should be speeded up, assignments better planned and closer contact maintained with the co-sponsoring organizations. It would also encourage UNV to make available pre-departure orientation courses and in-country language training.

83. His delegation was also delighted to note that over 200 United Nations volunteers were currently serving in the South Pacific, assisting with their skills the small island countries of the region, particularly with regard to the building of infrastructures.

84. Mr. PASQUIER (Switzerland) said that his Government was making a financial contribution to the UNV programme and was also very interested in taking part in the dialogue with the programme's administration. In its activities and in its relations with Governments UNV's openness was commendable.

85. Whenever United Nations volunteers were to be sent to a country, their institutional framework should be clearly defined beforehand, preferably by a national institution or by a United Nations agency.

86. His delegation still had some reservations about the establishment of a special fund, whereby UNDP would finance microprojects; it would prefer the establishment of a small fund that would enable UNV specialists to respond on the spot to requests for "support on the ground" and to carry out pilot activities.

87. Mrs. AARNIO (Finland), speaking on behalf of Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland said that the Nordic countries noted with satisfaction the dynamism developed by the UNV programme and welcomed the innovative approach adopted. In particular, they appreciated the administration's search for greater cost-effectiveness by encouraging national participation, thus responding to UNDP's concern to favour national execution of projects.

88. The Nordic countries were pleased to see that UNV was trying to improve the recruitment of volunteers from so-called under-represented donor countries and making efforts to improve the conditions of service for the volunteers. However, because the programme was a practical example of technical co-operation among developing countries, its main emphasis should be on recruitment in the developing countries themselves. It would be appropriate, as the Administrator proposed, to strengthen the field support structure and, to that end, establish a dozen more programme officer posts for assignment to UNDP field offices in countries where a substantial number of volunteers was serving.

89. On the other hand, the Nordic countries could not support the proposal to establish a contingency fund to finance rehabilitation and reconstruction programmes, since they were in principle against the establishment of new funds and favoured national execution. However, they would be able to

90. Mr. PAULINICH (Peru) said his delegation unreservedly supported the UNV programme which, within the framework of technical co-operation among developing countries, had a fundamental role to play and should be intensified. His Government attached high priority to the programme and hoped that the Council would extend its mandate unchanged. It supported all the Administrator's recommendations.
91. Mr. APUNTE FRANCO (Observer for Ecuador) said his delegation fully supported the UNV programme because it enabled UNDP resources to be employed in the most effective and economical way. The volunteers in the field displayed remarkable commitment and devotion and their direct assistance in executing development projects was all the more valuable because it was accompanied by active involvement with the local population. That work in the field was especially important, and the Council should decide to intensify it and give it the necessary resources for the purpose.
92. Mrs. SHALABY (Observer for Egypt) said that Egypt had been one of the first developing countries to benefit from the volunteer programme and to send Egyptian volunteers. It had done so in the early 1970s, the destinations being Guatemala and Honduras. Her Government continued to give its full support to the programme and was systematically encouraging direct co-operation between government services, on the one hand, and non-governmental organizations and UNV, on the other. More and more specialists should participate in the work of the programme, especially those whose skills were not usually available in the host country.
93. In order to intensify the programme's activities in Egypt, they should be given a certain amount of publicity through, for example, seminars and the publication of brochures in Arabic. Furthermore, there could be systematic recruitment of volunteers in the context of the execution in the field of projects of direct concern to national development. The conditions of recruitment should be made more flexible and the assistance of the NGOs sought, short training courses in the various areas of skills required should be held more frequently and the participation of women in the programme should be encouraged. Her delegation felt that the programme should also concern itself with developing rural areas.
94. Her delegation supported the Administrator's proposals that more resources should be allocated to the UNV programme and that new sources of financing should be sought. It also supported the idea of setting up a contingency fund.
95. Mr. ISMAIL (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that many developing countries requested UNV assistance because they wished to benefit from the volunteers' experience but also because their services were not costly. He would like to know what the annual average cost per expert was and why there was such a difference between the cost of the technical assistance provided by the international organizations and that of the United Nations volunteers and how, in executing the same project, the activities of the expert, who received a high salary, and those of the UNV specialist were co-ordinated.
96. Mr. AGUILAR (Guatemala) said that Guatemala had benefited from the active assistance of UNV in many development sectors such as nutrition, fisheries, agriculture and meteorology. Volunteers were also helping to train Guatemalan national personnel and had superintended a number of programmes to promote

was also currently contemplating sending volunteers to Guatemala to participate in the execution of the PRODERE project to which the Government of Italy was making a major financial contribution.

97. His Government and the UNDP field office were collaborating in the launching of a series of integrated development activities in the rural areas, with UNV assistance. In the poverty alleviation, employment and labour protection, environmental protection and business management sectors, the UNV programme was providing assistance which had become indispensable.

98. Mr. EL GHAOUTH (Mauritania) said his delegation endorsed the aims of the UNV programme which gave priority to the African continent and, in particular, to the least developed countries. The programme should be extended to all areas of technical co-operation, because it had proved to be extremely dynamic and to have reached even the most inaccessible regions. His delegation was particularly impressed by the neutrality of the programme and its voluntary character.

99. Ms. MWANGA-BUGONZI (Observer for Uganda) said that Uganda was both a beneficiary of UNV services and a sender of volunteers to third countries. In both capacities, it supported all the Administrator's recommendations. The expansion of the programme would respond to the need recognized by the Council to promote national execution and would help to stem the brain drain.

100. Recruitment procedures should offer beneficiaries a wide range of alternatives from which to choose. In particular, volunteers must be flexible and willing to adapt to local situations. To ensure those qualities, the UNV programme should be regularly monitored and evaluated.

101. The PRESIDENT invited delegations, as an exceptional measure, to submit to the Secretariat for insertion in the summary record the texts of the statements they had prepared, instead of delivering them, so as to expedite the work of the Council.

102. Mr. BOGNER (Austria), Mr. BACAR (Mozambique), Mr. SEJENAMANE (Observer for Lesotho) and Mr. HONG (Observer for the Republic of Korea), responding to the President's suggestion, requested that the summaries of their statements be included in the summary record.

103. The PRESIDENT assured the representatives of Austria and Mozambique and the observers for Lesotho and the Republic of Korea that their requests would be taken into consideration. \*/

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.

Annex

(Statements by the representatives of Austria and Mozambique and by the observers for Lesotho and the Republic of Korea which were not read out at the meeting)

1. Mr. BOGNER (Austria) held the view that UNV was a model of a United Nations body doing a fine job at low cost. Austria had substantially increased its financial contribution to UNV in 1990 and would shortly be holding discussions with the UNV administration as to ways of intensifying its co-operation with the volunteers. His delegation also welcomed the recent shift in the volunteer concept towards greater professionalism, which augured well for the future performance of UNV.

2. Mr. BACAR (Mozambique) mentioned that, during the years following Mozambique's accession to independence, UNV had provided the country with significant assistance in the priority areas of the time, particularly health. The UNV specialists currently serving in Mozambique were executing a multisectoral project aimed at economic recovery and strengthening management skills. The country programme, which had been completed in 1989, recommended that greater use should be made of UNV specialists, because they could usefully complement the technical assistance provided by UNDP.

3. Given the key role played in Mozambique by the two programme officers appointed to co-ordinate the activities for which various institutions and the Government itself were responsible, his delegation supported the Administrator's proposal that additional programme officer posts should be established. It also endorsed the idea that a contingency fund be set up to enable UNV to respond promptly to appeals for emergency assistance.

4. Mr. SEJANAMANE (Observer for Lesotho) informed the Council that his country's experience with UNV over the last 20 years had been extremely positive. UNV had always upheld the basic tenets of the programme: it responded exclusively to the needs defined by the authorities of the beneficiary country, reacted in a timely fashion to its requests, participated in the collective reviews intended to improve the management of its activities in the country and ensured the country a supply of talented individuals from all parts of the world. The tenets in question had been established by the Maseru Declaration, adopted at the second High-Level Inter-Governmental Meeting on International Volunteerism and Development, 1986. Subsequent to that Meeting, incidentally, UNV had improved the organization of its work in the field. His delegation unhesitatingly supported all the recommendations made by the Administrator to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the programme.

5. Mr. HONG (Observer for the Republic of Korea) recalled that, during the high-level segment of the general debate, his delegation had stated that, for the first time in 1990, the Korea Youth Volunteers would participate in the UNV programme. His Government felt that the management of the programme should do its best to recruit a larger number of volunteers because they represented too small a proportion of the total expatriate technical personnel serving in the developing countries. In the view of his delegation, the integration of volunteers was indispensable to the success of their work in the field. In addition to language training and in-country orientation, interaction between the volunteers and national experts should be

systematically planned. The recipient country, in close co-operation with the UNV, must play a central role in planning, executing and evaluating the work of volunteers by providing national counterparts in the area where specialist work was necessary.

6. Governments, UNV and UNDP should concert their efforts to facilitate the reintegration of volunteers after their term of service. The Governments of the sending countries should make greater use of secondment arrangements and UNDP could offer volunteers vacant posts in its field offices, or at least give them preferential consideration when they applied for such posts.

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