



## **Administrative Committee on Coordination**

6 June 2001

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### **Summary of the conclusions of the Administrative Committee on Coordination at its first regular session of 2001**

**United Nations Environment Programme headquarters, Nairobi,  
2 and 3 April 2001**

#### *Summary of ACC conclusions requiring specific follow-up*

##### **ACC private meeting**

Previous decisions concerning the proposed new name of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) and participation in ACC and its subsidiary machinery were confirmed. In this context, and with reference to a communication sent to members of ACC by the Executive Secretary of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, it was confirmed that that organization, like other treaty bodies that are related to the United Nations, might be invited to ACC subsidiary bodies for the consideration of issues of concern to them. With regard to sessions of ACC itself, the Committee may, in the light of its agenda, invite them to participate in the discussion of a particular item when it considers that they have an especially relevant contribution to make to its consideration thereof.

##### **Response by the system to the challenges of globalization in the context of the follow-up to the Millennium Summit of the United Nations**

The Committee addressed the role of the system in the follow-up processes to the Millennium Assembly of the United Nations, in the light of the report of the first session of the High-Level Committee on Programmes.

The Chairman of the High-Level Committee on Programmes outlined the recommendations of the Committee as follows: (a) the poverty paradigm should be broadened to include social, educational, nutritional, health and cultural dimensions, as well as such qualitative aspects as empowerment; (b) organizations of the system should be invited to prepare an analysis of the contributions of their programmes to the United Nations Millennium Declaration's goal of reducing extreme poverty, and



share them as required, with their governing bodies; (c) a Global Campaign on Poverty Eradication should be mounted to mobilize world opinion and engage political leaders in achieving the Millennium Declaration poverty target; (d) the World Bank and other funding entities may be invited to collaborate on an annual review of flows of concessional funding for programme elements linked to the Global Campaign; in the same context, it was suggested that a comprehensive review be undertaken of the global funding requirements for reducing poverty by half by 2015; (e) the capacity of the system to achieve and monitor progress in poverty eradication should be strengthened through improved data as a common basis for analysis, as well as through closer interactions among officials throughout the system involved in work relevant to poverty eradication; and (f) the ACC secretariat should set in motion a system-wide electronic network of such officials open, as appropriate, to the participation of external partners.

ACC endorsed the recommendations of the High-Level Committee on Programmes and expressed appreciation for the activities being pursued by the Committee.

The importance of the Secretary-General's reporting on progress in achieving the goals and targets of the United Nations Millennium Declaration was underscored and a number of considerations were put forward relevant to both the "road map" to be presented by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session and the follow-up processes to be pursued by the system. First, in considering the feasibility of the targets set in the Millennium Declaration and the respective roles of national and international action, it should be borne in mind that the goals of the Millennium Declaration are first and foremost commitments by, and obligations on, Governments. It was essential therefore that follow-up and monitoring processes should take a broad view of required actions at all levels, rather than be restricted to the contribution — crucial but basically supportive — of the international system. This approach should not in any way detract from the system's responsibility to pursue its role in a proactive and strategic way, in relation to both its advocacy and policy development responsibilities and its operational role geared to strengthening national capacity. Cutting across these two sets of functions, there was the system's contribution to the emergence of new governance frameworks geared to the new requirements posed by globalization. The approaches that were guiding the work of the High-Level Committee on Programmes, including the Committee's recommendations on the Global Campaign on Poverty Eradication and on approaches to further inter-agency work on global public goods, were found by ACC to be very encouraging in all of these respects.

It was further noted that the broad view that should guide the follow-up processes should extend not only to national and international action, but also to the various dimensions of the United Nations Millennium Declaration and should contribute to an integrated approach to the follow-up encompassing political security as well as economic and social dimensions and highlighting interrelationships among them.

The view was expressed that an important implication of the above considerations was that, in order to achieve the necessary impact on poverty and development, new mechanisms must be found to strengthen the dialogue and interactions between the system as a whole, through ACC, and Governments. Such mechanisms should be innovative, at the policy level and geared to producing comprehensive, concrete action capable of affecting the status quo.

The Committee agreed to pursue these issues at its next session, in the light of the report of the Secretary-General on the road map towards the implementation of

the United Nations Millennium Declaration (A/56/326) and further work by the High-Level Committee on Programmes.

### **Strengthening system-wide support for the sustainable development of Africa**

ACC considered this item in the light of the recommendations of the High-Level Committee on Programmes which advocated the imperative for the system to unite in support of a single Africa-owned and Africa-led framework of action based on the rationalization and concordance of existing initiatives.

These recommendations focused on ways to strengthen system-wide support for the development of such a unified framework by (a) a comprehensive review and appraisal of existing United Nations system initiatives on Africa; (b) exercising utmost restraint in launching new initiatives until the completion of the forthcoming review of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, while continuing to act to reinforce synergies among existing initiatives and enhancing their impact; (c) encouraging bilateral donors to engage in this rationalization effort and to consolidate their initiatives in existing ones; (d) lending full support to the substantive session of 2001 of the Economic and Social Council, which would be devoting its high-level segment to the theme of the role of the United Nations system in supporting the efforts of African countries to achieve sustainable development, as offering a very timely opportunity to advance consensus on such a unified framework; (e) utilizing the process of evaluation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s launched by the General Assembly as a further important occasion to promote mutually supportive actions and engagements by all parties to the comprehensive and coordinated approaches advocated in the Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/52/871-S/1998/318) and the United Nations Millennium Declaration; (f) further reinforcing collective system-wide support for capacity-building at the national level and shifting the focus of inter-agency coordination increasingly to the regional level as key means to help advance African leadership and ownership; and (g) engaging in a deliberate strategic effort to promote a better integration of the African agenda with other agendas, ranging from peace-building and poverty eradication to trade and finance, and ensuring, in particular, that forthcoming United Nations events on human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS), the least developed countries, financing for development and sustainable development maximized their support for African development.

Drawing on the lessons of the United Nations system's engagement in Africa, ACC recognized that a renewed effort in the region should build on African ownership, political commitment and leadership. The diversity of development challenges in the region should be acknowledged and countries should be given the opportunity to translate Africa-wide approaches into country-specific priorities and strategies. In addition, Africa-wide programmes should provide the framework for increased collaboration at the regional and subregional levels. The system should intensify its cooperation with and support for regional and subregional bodies in Africa, in particular the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the Organization of African Unity. In doing so, the best elements of existing initiatives on Africa should be drawn upon and effectively linked in a coherent system-wide

strategy. Reference was made in this context to ECA's Compact for Africa's Recovery under which the developed countries would invest the necessary resources through aid, debt relief and market access to accelerate Africa's economic recovery and growth. Africans, in turn, would undertake to put in place the necessary political reforms to ensure that their economies took off.

ACC welcomed and expressed strong support for the "Millennium Africa Recovery Programme" (MAP) launched by the Presidents of South Africa, Algeria and Nigeria, as a major new Africa-led initiative that could serve to provide a common framework for renewed action in support of Africa's development.

ACC decided to update its statement on the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (see annex) which it had adopted at its second regular session of 2000 to reflect relevant elements of the above discussion, and to revert to these issues, in the light, inter alia, of the outcome of the Conference and the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council devoted to the theme of the role of the United Nations system in supporting the efforts of African countries to achieve sustainable development.

### **Reports of the High-Level Committee on Programmes and the High-Level Committee on Management**

ACC expressed appreciation for the work of the High-Level Committees, welcomed the approaches they had adopted for the streamlining of the ACC subsidiary machinery, and endorsed their conclusions. It noted that existing inter-agency bodies in the programme areas would be requested to consider how the innovative and flexible approaches to coordination advocated by the High-Level Committee on Programmes could best be applied in their respective areas. Reference was made to coordination requirements in the area of sustainable development in the light of the forthcoming World Summit on Sustainable Development, and to the need for continuing coordination in the implementation of Agenda 21. In this context, attention was drawn to the mandate given by the General Assembly to ACC, through the Subcommittee on Water Resources, to plan the International Year of Freshwater in 2003 and its long-term World Water Assessment Programme, and to the importance of the work undertaken by the Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas. Reference was also made to the Subcommittee on Nutrition, wherein non-United Nations system partners participated.

The High-Level Committee on Programmes was invited to give attention to the link between humanitarian assistance, including the resettlement of refugees, and development. The provision being made by the Committee for strengthening interactions with non-United Nations system actors was welcomed.

ACC considered arrangements for the institutionalization of the United Nations System Staff College in the light of the report that the ad hoc working group on the subject had submitted to the High-Level Committee on Programmes in Vienna in February 2001. It endorsed the approaches to the functioning of the Staff College, as a system-wide demand-driven institution dedicated to innovation and reform across the United Nations system and focused on fostering a common United Nations system culture, cooperation and knowledge-sharing between agencies on managerial and strategic policy issues of common concern; its governance, based on the new ACC High-Level Committees; and funding arrangements, comprising a core budget

jointly funded by organizations, fees for its courses, and voluntary funding. It approved the convening of an inter-agency consultation of members of the High-Level Committee on Programmes and the High-Level Committee on Management to finalize a business plan and a statute for the College, the proposals for which would be submitted by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly.

### **Other matters**

ACC decided to hold its next session on Friday, 19 October, and Saturday, 20 October 2001, at United Nations Headquarters in New York.

1. The Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) held its first regular session of 2001 at United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) headquarters on 2 and 3 April 2001, under the chairmanship of the Secretary-General of the United Nations. In opening the session, the Secretary-General welcomed Mr. Lennart Båge, President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Mr. Ruud Lubbers, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and Ms. Thoraya Obaid, Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), who were attending ACC for the first time. The agenda for the session was as follows:

1. Adoption of the agenda.
2. Response by the system to the challenges of globalization in the context of the follow-up to the Millennium Summit of the United Nations.
3. Strengthening system-wide support for the sustainable development of Africa.
4. Reports of the High-Level Committee on Programmes and the High-Level Committee on Management.
5. Other matters.

## **I. ACC private meeting**

2. A private meeting of ACC members was held in the morning of 2 April 2001, at which the Executive Heads were briefed and had an extensive exchange of views on current political developments and on the challenge of acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) in Africa and other regions.

3. A number of issues were also discussed regarding the functioning of the Committee. Previous decisions concerning the proposed new name of the Committee and participation in ACC and its subsidiary machinery were confirmed. In this context, and with reference to a communication sent to members of ACC by the Executive Secretary of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, it was confirmed that that organization, like other treaty bodies that were related to the United Nations, might be invited to ACC subsidiary bodies for the consideration of issues of concern to them. With regard to sessions of ACC itself, the Committee may, in the light of its agenda, invite them to participate in the discussion of a particular item

when it considers that they have an especially relevant contribution to make to its consideration thereof.

## **II. ACC retreat**

4. ACC members held a brief retreat in the afternoon of Tuesday, 3 April 2001. During the retreat, the United Nations Resident Coordinator for the United Republic of Tanzania and members of the United Nations country team (from the World Bank, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)) briefed ACC on progress in country-level cooperation in the United Republic of Tanzania and had an exchange of views with Executive Heads on implementing the key objectives of the United Nations Millennium Declaration,<sup>1</sup> particularly the target of halving poverty by 2015.

5. The present report covers the outcome of the discussions at the regular session of the Committee.

## **III. Response by the system to the challenges of globalization in the context of the follow-up to the Millennium Summit of the United Nations**

6. The Secretary-General recalled that over the past three years, ACC members had been engaged in a wide-ranging process of reflection on the challenges of globalization and their implications for the work of the United Nations system. As a result, the system's understanding of globalization and its impact has been advanced not only in the economic and financial fields but also in relation to its health, social and other dimensions; and steady progress is being made in putting forward coherent system-wide responses. The United Nations Millennium Declaration has greatly reinforced ACC's own conclusions as to the unique role that the United Nations system is called upon to play in helping the international community address the complex challenges posed by globalization.

7. Building on these discussions, the Director-General of the International Labour Organization (ILO) circulated a paper at the current session of ACC on an integrated approach to policy formulation focusing on

the interrelationships among the economic and social aspects of globalization. The paper, entitled “Integrated Thinking and Global Governance”, stresses the importance of integrated thinking in a period of rapidly intensifying globalization. It calls for a shift towards an analytical framework that places a premium on understanding the strategic interrelationships between economic, social, environmental and other key variables as well as on the search for integrated and coherent policy solutions. The paper proposes a research agenda for coordinated substantive work by the multilateral system in understanding and addressing the causes of, and remedies for, the uneven spread of benefits and costs of globalization between and within nations. It also underscores the need for a common overall framework within which each organization of the system could situate its work and serve to facilitate the building of partnerships both within the system and with other development actors.

8. ACC members welcomed the paper and noted that the analytical and methodological contributions it made were highly relevant not only to the capacity of the system to act on the linkages among the various dimensions of globalization, but also to organizing the system’s effort to advance the poverty eradication target contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration.

9. The Secretary-General noted that a key question on which further reflection was required not only on the part of national policy makers, but also by the system in respect of articulating mutually reinforcing policies and actions in support of the Millennium goals, was how poverty programmes, job creation and social services could be sustained in the policy environment of fiscal contraction and liberalization that characterized globalization. In turn, making globalization socially sustainable was key to addressing the growing inequalities that were emerging both nationally and internationally, and to making globalization — in the words of the United Nations Millennium Declaration — a positive force for all the world’s people. Analyses and blueprints for action being developed within the system are increasingly being guided by common approaches. Outside of the system, the white paper of the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland on “Eliminating World Poverty: Making Globalization Work for the Poor” exemplified an approach that was very much in line with that emerging within ACC. It was now incumbent on the United Nations system to join forces not only to

ensure that the momentum created by the United Nations Millennium Declaration’s target of halving the proportion of people living in extreme poverty was maintained at both the agency and inter-agency levels, but also to mount a concerted system-wide effort to challenge the international community to live up to the commitments embodied in the Millennium Declaration. It was suggested that the upcoming Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries would be a first important test case of the collective capacity of the United Nations system and the international community after the Millennium Summit to make a real difference in the development prospects of the poorest countries.

10. ACC members reiterated that, while the potential benefits of globalization were evident, its negative consequences, in terms of growing disparities and greater vulnerabilities, needed to be redressed. Managing them requires a strong sense of priority in regard to the directions of public interventions and their interrelationships. Poverty, hunger, health, education and the environment were obviously at the centre of such priorities. A great deal of emphasis was also placed on addressing rural poverty, and the role of microcredit. More generally, the need for an integrated approach to hunger and poverty and the role that the World Food Summit: Five Years Later (June 2002) could play in promoting food security and contributing to the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration were stressed. The central importance of a labour market that generated quality employment was likewise strongly emphasized. The issue of migration was also raised by many, as a dimension of globalization requiring more focused policy attention at the international level than it had so far received. Links between the migration problematique and the range of issues posed by refugees and internally displaced persons were highlighted. Strengthening national and international governance was seen as key both to spreading the benefits of globalization and to addressing negative manifestations, ranging from drug trafficking to organized crime and human trafficking.

11. It was pointed out that improved international governance should imply, in the first instance, promoting coherence in approaches so that, for example, principles that applied to the free flow of goods, capital and services should also extend to labour. It should also promote a level playing field in areas ranging from agricultural subsidies to the opening of markets. A means to these

ends, which United Nations agencies are well suited to support, is to assist developing countries in strengthening their capacity to participate more effectively in international negotiations.

12. It was further noted that while a better integration of the economic and social agenda was of course crucial, there was a need at the same time to further integrate the economic agenda itself, including trade, investment, official development assistance (ODA), fiscal stability, fiscal rules for globalization, and responsibility of transnational corporations in host countries. There should be as well a further concerted effort to highlight the social responsibility of the business community. In the same broad context, it was recalled that creating the increased income and productive employment that were essential to attaining the poverty reduction goals set by the United Nations Millennium Declaration would require reaching economic growth targets that, at present, appeared extremely ambitious, at least for certain regions.

13. The role that information and communication technologies (ICTs) could play, particularly in linking rural areas to sources of information, and, more generally, in raising productivity and efficiency and developing countries' capacity to compete and integrate in the global economy was stressed. The renewed attention given by the Economic and Social Council to these issues was generally welcomed. Helping bridge the digital divide was among the key contributions that the United Nations system could make to spreading the benefits of globalization. This was so not only because of the technical competences available within the system and its capacity to harness the contribution of government as well as civil society and the private sector, but also because of the system's vocation of giving priority to helping meet the basic needs of the poor in relation to food, health, education, shelter etc., and therefore its capacity to gear the ICT efforts so as to maximize its impact in regard to meeting those needs.

14. Consideration of the mutually supporting roles that the organizations of the system can play in spreading the benefits of globalization and in the struggle against poverty should take fully into account the essential contribution of the transport and communication agencies to sustainable development. These agencies establish global standards and regulations to facilitate the effective functioning of transportation and communications infrastructures and thus contribute directly to poverty alleviation and job creation in developing countries.

15. Against this background, the Committee addressed more specifically the role of the system in the follow-up processes to the Millennium Assembly, in the light of the report of the first session of the High-Level Committee on Programmes. In presenting the outcome of the session, its Chairman — the Director-General of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) — noted that the initial phases of the Committee's work had confirmed the central importance that all United Nations agencies attached to the United Nations Millennium Declaration as providing a unique opportunity for the United Nations system to unite around common objectives and, in particular, to make a difference in meeting the target of halving poverty by 2015. A first basic concern was to ensure that the goals and targets of the Millennium Declaration were effectively integrated into the programmes and activities of all the organizations of the system. The inventory of agency and inter-agency initiatives relevant to the follow-up to the Millennium Declaration launched by the Committee was a key element of the action plan agreed upon by the Committee to guide its own work as well as the contribution of the system to the follow-up and monitoring processes mandated by the General Assembly (see para. 36 below).

16. The Chairman then proceeded to outline specific recommendations of the Committee as follows: (a) the poverty paradigm should be broadened to include social, educational, nutritional, health and cultural dimensions, as well as such qualitative aspects as empowerment; (b) organizations of the system should be invited to prepare an analysis of the contribution of their programmes to the United Nations Millennium Declaration's goal of reducing extreme poverty, and share them as required, with their governing bodies; (c) a Global Campaign on Poverty Eradication should be mounted to mobilize world opinion and engage political leaders in achieving the Millennium Declaration poverty target; (d) the World Bank and other funding entities might be invited to collaborate on an annual review of flows of concessional funding for programme elements linked to the Global Campaign; in the same context, it was suggested that a comprehensive review be undertaken of the global funding requirements for reducing poverty by half by 2015; (e) the capacity of the system to achieve and monitor progress in poverty eradication should be strengthened through improved data as a common basis for analysis, as well as through closer interactions



among officials throughout the system involved in work relevant to poverty eradication; and (f) the ACC secretariat should set in motion a system-wide electronic network of such officials open, as appropriate, to the participation of external partners.

17. ACC endorsed the recommendations of the High-Level Committee on Programmes and expressed appreciation for the important activities being pursued by the High-Level Committee under the leadership of its Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

18. The importance of the Secretary-General's mandate in reporting on progress in achieving the goals and targets of the United Nations Millennium Declaration was underscored and a number of considerations were put forward relevant to both the "road map" to be presented by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session and the follow-up processes to be pursued by the system. First, in considering the feasibility of the targets set in the Millennium Declaration and the respective roles of national and international action, it should be borne in mind that the goals of the Millennium Declaration are first and foremost commitments by, and obligations on, Governments. It was essential therefore that follow-up and monitoring processes should take a broad view of required actions at all levels, rather than be restricted to the contribution — crucial but basically supportive — of the international system. This approach should not in any way detract from the system's responsibility to pursue its role in a proactive and strategic way, in relation to both its advocacy and policy development responsibilities and its operational role geared to strengthening national capacity. Cutting across these two sets of functions, there was the system's contribution to the emergence of new governance frameworks geared to the new requirements posed by globalization. The approaches that were guiding the work of the High-Level Committee on Programmes, including the Committee's recommendations on the Global Campaign on Poverty Eradication and on approaches to further inter-agency work on global public goods, were found by ACC to be very encouraging in all of these respects.

19. It was further noted that the broad view that should guide the follow-up processes should extend not only to national and international action, but also to the various dimensions of the United Nations Millennium Declaration and should contribute to an integrated approach to the follow-up encompassing political

security as well as economic and social dimensions and highlighting interrelationships among them.

20. The view was expressed that an important implication of the above considerations was that, in order to achieve the necessary impact on poverty and development, new mechanisms must be found to strengthen the dialogue and interactions between the system as a whole, through ACC, and Governments. Such mechanisms should be innovative, at the policy level and geared to producing comprehensive, concrete action capable of affecting the status quo.

21. Finally, taking the broad view should not detract from, but contribute to, prioritization and specificity. This was the challenge, for example, in relation to the follow-up to the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries which should encompass national mechanisms — including country-level action, as well as international support — as well as global mechanisms, and should be guided by considerations of needs rather than primarily global numerical targets.

22. The Committee agreed to pursue these issues at its next session, in the light of the report of the Secretary-General on the road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration (A/56/326) and further work by the High-Level Committee on Programmes.

#### **IV. Strengthening system-wide support for the sustainable development of Africa**

23. In introducing the item, the Secretary-General recalled that issues of security and development in Africa had been high on the ACC agenda and in the work of member organizations for many years. The challenges facing Africa remained daunting. Long-standing problems of endemic poverty and economic marginalization — for which, in spite of a multitude of international initiatives, lasting solutions remained to be found — were being compounded by new scourges such as human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS). Pursuant to the challenge of world leaders at the Millennium Summit, the General Assembly, in its resolution 55/162 of 14 December 2000, had requested the United Nations system to strengthen the broad range of its engagement in Africa with a view to intensifying support for poverty eradication and sustainable

development, for combating diseases and pandemics and for the process of conflict prevention and consolidation of democracy (para. 8). This was not only a call for renewed action but also a guide to addressing peace, democracy and development in Africa not as separate issues but in an integrated and mutually reinforcing way. Many African Governments were now making a real effort to harmonize and integrate their actions and to assert ownership of their development processes. There was also renewed emphasis on accountability, and a new candour among African leaders in analysing the region's problems. This made it imperative for the international community, in turn, to take an open and self-critical view of its initiatives in Africa and their impact, re-examine their directions and the extent to which they had been mutually reinforcing, and reflect on lessons learned. It was particularly important to analyse whether the multiplicity of such initiatives was actually diminishing their impact, through duplication and unnecessary competition, including competition for resources.

24. The Secretary-General noted that the actions of the United Nations system were increasingly guided by common approaches, not the least among them being the objective of reinforcing African ownership of programmes and projects. A greater, deliberate effort was also being made by United Nations organizations to build on each other's work. A case in point was the partnership between FAO, the World Bank and other organizations for the follow-up to the findings of the FAO-led Task Force on the United Nations Response to Long-term Food Security, Agricultural Development and Related Aspects in the Horn of Africa. Still, the unique potential that the system possessed to bring together the various components that made for a comprehensive, holistic approach to peace-building and development in Africa was yet to be realized.

25. In presenting relevant recommendations of the High-Level Committee on Programmes, its Chairman, the Director-General of UNIDO, highlighted the concern over the proliferation of multilateral initiatives in the region that had characterized the Committee's discussions. African countries were increasingly weary of such initiatives, and concerned that the reporting and coordination requirements they carried often outweighed their potential impact. The High-Level Committee on Programme's conclusions thus strongly advocated the imperative for the system to unite in support of a single Africa-owned and Africa-led framework of action based

on the rationalization and concordance of existing initiatives. Such a unified framework would enable the system to utilize scarce resources in the most effective way possible; would facilitate monitoring of the system's own performance in support of priorities established by Africans themselves; and should encourage donor countries to meet their commitments to Africa. In this connection, the need to reverse the decline in resource flows to Africa was especially emphasized.

26. The recommendations of the High-Level Committee on Programmes thus focused on ways to strengthen system-wide support for the development of such a unified framework by (a) a comprehensive review and appraisal of existing United Nations system initiatives on Africa; (b) exercising utmost restraint in launching new initiatives until the completion of the forthcoming review of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s,<sup>2</sup> while continuing to act to reinforce synergies among existing initiatives and enhancing their impact; (c) encouraging bilateral donors to engage in this rationalization effort and to consolidate their initiatives in existing ones; (d) lending full support to the substantive session of 2001 of the Economic and Social Council which would be devoting its high-level segment to the theme of the role of the United Nations system in supporting the efforts of African countries to achieve sustainable development as providing a very timely opportunity to advance consensus on such unified framework; (e) utilizing the process of evaluation of the United Nations New Agenda launched by the General Assembly as a further important occasion to promote mutually supportive actions and engagements by all parties to the comprehensive and coordinated approaches advocated in the Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/52/871-S/1998/318) and the United Nations Millennium Declaration; (f) further reinforcing collective system-wide support for capacity-building at the national level and shifting the focus of inter-agency coordination increasingly to the regional level as key means to help advance African leadership and ownership; and (g) engaging in a deliberate strategic effort to promote a better integration of the African agenda with other agendas, ranging from peace-building and poverty eradication to trade and finance, and ensuring, in particular, that forthcoming United Nations events on HIV/AIDS, the least developed countries, financing for development and sustainable development maximize their support for African development.

27. Drawing on the lessons of the United Nations system's engagement in Africa, ACC recognized that a renewed effort in the region should build on African ownership, political commitment and leadership. The diversity of development challenges in the region should be acknowledged and countries should be given the opportunity to translate Africa-wide approaches into country-specific priorities and strategies. In addition, Africa-wide programmes should provide the framework for increased collaboration at the regional and subregional levels. The system should intensify its cooperation with and support for regional and subregional bodies in Africa, in particular the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the Organization of African Unity (OAU). In doing so, the best elements of existing initiatives on Africa should be drawn upon and effectively linked in a coherent system-wide strategy. Reference was made in this context to ECA's Compact for Africa's Recovery under which the developed countries would invest the necessary resources through aid, debt relief and market access to accelerate Africa's economic recovery and growth. Africans, in turn, would undertake to put in place the necessary political reforms to ensure that their economies took off. Transforming the aid relationship is an innovative and far-reaching feature of the Compact, underscoring the fact that Africa is ready for a fundamentally different aid relationship, with emphasis on African ownership, long-term predictability of assistance, mutual accountability and the recognition of Africa's diversity.

28. ACC welcomed and expressed strong support for the "Millennium Africa Recovery Programme" (MAP) launched by the Presidents of South Africa, Algeria and Nigeria, as a major new Africa-led initiative that could serve to provide a common framework for renewed action in support of Africa's development. The Programme was conceived as a partnership between Africa and the international community, involving, on the one hand, mutual commitments by the continent's leaders and, on the other, substantially increased aid and investment flows to Africa-designed programmes and projects by the international community. It exemplifies a new political vision and leadership in Africa. MAP has emerged as a pre-eminent African initiative that could provide the overarching framework for the region's economic recovery and development.

29. ACC was also briefed on the joint mission of the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund

(IMF) and President of the World Bank to Africa in February which had served to highlight the priorities as perceived by African leaders themselves, including promoting good governance and peace-building, increasing competitiveness and raising investment, promoting regional integration and cooperation, and improving investment in human capital.

30. It was generally felt that the elements of a renewed partnership between Africa and the international community — based on the commitment of African leaders to act together to move forward with effective economic and social policies, on the one hand, and stronger, faster and more comprehensive support from the international community, on the other — were emerging to tackle the challenges of the region, to which the system should lend its full support. Four key actions were singled out for focused international support: widening access of African exports to markets in developed countries; further reduction of Africa's debt burden; increased ODA; and harmonization and simplification of aid procedures to enhance the development impact and reduce the administrative burden on African countries.

31. A basic foundation for this renewed partnership should be substantially increased ODA flows to the region. It was estimated that Africa would need to grow by 7 per cent for a decade if it was to meet the United Nations Millennium Declaration target of halving its incidence of poverty by 2015. As domestic savings would be inadequate to achieve and sustain this rate of economic growth, a substantial increase in the flow of investments into the region would be essential. At present, Africa's share of total foreign direct investments (FDIs) amounts to only 1.2 per cent and most of it is concentrated on a few countries. In the circumstances, increased ODA flows were imperative to enable African countries to achieve a higher rate of economic growth, which would, in turn, serve to attract foreign investments. Along with increased ODA, it was necessary to address capacity constraints in the region, in particular with respect to governance and aid utilization. ODA must be shown to be effectively and efficiently utilized and geared to impacting the causes of poverty in the region if the prospects of increasing it are to materially improve.

32. Meeting the challenge of capacity-building in Africa must proceed in parallel with the development of comprehensive and coherent responses to crises that effectively combine peace-building, emergency assistance

and longer-term development support measures. The two-pronged approach being developed to address the drought in the Horn of Africa, involving a short-term effort to alleviate food shortage and a long-term undertaking to achieve food security, illustrates the comprehensive approaches required.

33. Challenges for the system to support African countries in addressing in a sustainable way such basic needs as water, energy and shelter were also highlighted. The role that small entrepreneurs in Africa could play in this regard, if adequately supported by the international community, particularly in rural areas, was stressed. Particular emphasis was placed on the challenge of providing adequate shelter for people in Africa which had assumed greater urgency with rapid urbanization. This trend was likely to continue into the future and required a comprehensive response by the system as a whole.

34. ACC decided to update its statement on the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (see annex), which it had adopted at its second regular session of 2000, to reflect relevant elements of the above discussion, and to revert to these issues, in the light, inter alia, of the outcome of the Conference and the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council devoted to the theme of the role of the United Nations system in supporting the efforts of African countries to achieve sustainable development.

## **V. Reports of the High-Level Committee on Programmes and the High-Level Committee on Management**

35. The Secretary-General recalled that ACC, at its last session, had requested the High-Level Committee on Programmes and the High-Level Committee on Management to carry out an analysis of priority issues requiring coordination and to undertake a review of the ACC subsidiary bodies within the purview of their responsibilities.

36. In presenting the report of the High-Level Committee on Programmes, its Chairman, the Director-General of UNIDO, highlighted two principles that had guided its work: (a) a zero-based review of the subsidiary structure; and (b) the concept that substance

precedes form, that is to say, that coordination arrangements should be determined by the substantive requirements of the work programme, and not vice versa. The general approach favoured by the Committee was to move away from the concept of permanent subsidiary bodies with fixed periodicity of meetings and rigid reporting requirements and, instead, to rely increasingly on ad hoc, time-bound and task-oriented coordination arrangements. Widespread use of modern communication technology, resort to task managers/lead agencies, periodic evaluation of coordination requirements, and a strengthening of the dialogue with non-United Nations system actors underpinned this more flexible approach which the Committee was seeking to promote. In relation to its future work programme, the High-Level Committee on Programmes has decided to undertake a comprehensive inventory of agency and inter-agency initiatives under way in the system relevant to the follow-up to the United Nations Millennium Declaration, as a basis for the Committee's identifying coordination requirements and the most appropriate arrangements for responding to them in an innovative and flexible manner. In the meantime, provision has been made for transitional arrangements for existing inter-agency bodies during the course of the year. All existing bodies are being asked to consider ways in which the flexible approaches developed by the Committee could best be applied in their areas, inter alia, in providing inter-agency support to intergovernmental bodies.

37. In the absence of the Chairman of the High-Level Committee on Management, the Deputy Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), as Vice-Chairman, presented the report of the Committee. He recalled that, in the management area, the ACC subsidiary machinery consisted of a complex of standing committees dealing with personnel, finance and budget and information systems supported by different secretariats. The review exercise had taken as a starting point what needed to be done at the inter-agency level, in the field of management, rather than necessarily what was being done at present. Key objectives were improving services and productivity as well as increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the system. The High-Level Committee on Management concluded that standing committees could be dispensed with and that its work programme could best be pursued through the active involvement of its own members, greater reliance on ad hoc task forces, lead-agency arrangements, electronic exchanges etc., as well as

designated networks of specialists supported in an integrated way by the ACC secretariat. One such network of specialists, which would involve the system's directors of human resources, would prepare for and represent ACC at meetings of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC). Flexible coordination arrangements would also need to be made in the areas of procurement, travel and conference services. The High-Level Committee on Management would link its work closely with these specialist arrangements to ensure that cross-cutting issues were dealt with in a strategic and coherent manner. Under these arrangements, the High-Level Committee on Management had also identified a number of key system-wide priority issues to guide its own work programme, namely: (a) zero nominal growth; (b) capitalizing on technology; (c) simplification of procedures; (d) sustainable employment; and (e) staff security.

38. ACC expressed appreciation for the work of the High-Level Committees, welcomed the approaches they had adopted for the streamlining of the ACC subsidiary machinery, and endorsed their conclusions as outlined above. In this context, ACC recalled its decision taken at its second regular session of 2000 wherein it had "stressed that the review of the subsidiary machinery to be undertaken by the two High-Level Committees, should be zero-based, that is to say, it should take as its starting point what needs to be done, rather than what was being done at present" (see ACC/2000/20, para. 36). It had further stressed that "permanent bodies should be kept to a minimum and their retention should be based on rigorous criteria" (ibid.). ACC agreed that the current period would be regarded as a "transition period" where the main task before the existing inter-agency bodies would be to consider how the innovative and flexible approaches to coordination advocated by the High-Level Committee on Programmes could best be applied in their respective areas. Reference was made to the work undertaken to date by the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development in the area of sustainable development in the light of the forthcoming World Summit on Sustainable Development, and to the need for continuing coordination in the implementation of Agenda 21.<sup>3</sup> Attention was drawn to the mandate given by the General Assembly to ACC, through the Subcommittee on Water Resources, to plan the International Year of Freshwater in 2003 and its long-term World Water Assessment Programme, and to the importance of the work undertaken by the Subcommittee

on Oceans and Coastal Areas. Others pointed out that it was critically important to have a clear vision for the future, to avoid going back and, instead, move forward towards innovative and dynamic ways of carrying out the work of ACC, not least in view of the need to involve outside actors, particularly the private sector. Reference was also made to the Subcommittee on Nutrition, wherein non-United Nations system partners participated. ACC requested the High-Level Committee on Programmes to complete its review during the transitional period, taking into account the above-mentioned considerations, and to submit its recommendations to ACC at its second regular session of 2001.

39. The High-Level Committee on Programmes was invited to give attention to the link between humanitarian assistance, including the resettlement of refugees, and development. The provision being made by the Committee for strengthening interactions with non-United Nations system actors was welcomed.

### **World Summit on the Information Society**

40. Under agenda item 4, Reports of the High-Level Committee on Programmes and the High-Level Committee on Management, the representative of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) briefed ACC on the preparations for the World Summit on the Information Society to be held in 2003. Endorsed by ACC over the past two years, the Summit would be held under the patronage of the United Nations Secretary-General with ITU playing a lead role in its organization and preparation, in cooperation with other United Nations agencies through a High-level Summit Organizing Committee. Thus far, consultations have taken place on a number of important matters, including the coordination of inputs, approval of the terms of reference of the Organizing Committee and the venue for the Summit. A meeting of members of the Organizing Committee is planned in conjunction with the second regular session of 2001 of ACC. In addition, ITU has met with representatives of the private sector and civil society to discuss the organization and preparation of the Summit.

41. The ITU representative noted that an immediate issue concerned the selection of the venue for the Summit which both Switzerland and Tunisia had offered to host. In view of the unique nature of the Summit, the extremely broad nature of its agenda, the

wide range of parties (including the private sector, civil society and non-governmental organizations) interested in participation, and the need for careful preparations, the question of selecting the right venue was crucial to the success of the Summit. Based on these and other technical considerations, the Secretary-General of ITU had indicated to the High-level Summit Organizing Committee that the advantages presented by Switzerland during the preparatory phase of the Summit would be a key factor, on a technical and organizational basis, in the choice of the venue.

### United Nations System Staff College

42. Under this item, ACC considered arrangements for the institutionalization of the United Nations System Staff College in the light of the report that the ad hoc working group on the subject had submitted to the High-Level Committee on Programmes in February 2001 in Vienna. It endorsed the approaches to the functioning of the Staff College as a system-wide demand-driven institution dedicated to innovation and reform across the United Nations system and focused on fostering a common United Nations system culture, cooperation and knowledge-sharing between agencies on managerial and strategic policy issues of common concern; its governance, based on the new ACC High-Level Committees; and funding arrangements, comprising a core budget jointly funded by organizations, fees for its courses, and voluntary funding. It approved the convening of an inter-agency consultation of members of the High-Level Committee on Programmes and the High-Level Committee on Management to finalize a business plan and a statute for the College, the proposals for which would be submitted by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly.

## VI. Other matters

43. At the request of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, ACC took up the question of the establishment of a Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in the United Nations system as mandated in Economic and Social Council resolution 2000/22 of 28 July 2000. The High Commissioner also provided ACC with an update on the preparations for the upcoming World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related

Intolerance which would take place in South Africa from 31 August to 7 September 2001.

44. The Executive Director of UNICEF briefed ACC on the preparatory process for the special session of the General Assembly on children and on HIV/AIDS.

45. Under this item, the Secretary-General also briefed ACC on two matters concerning the secretariat. He confirmed that the budgets of the New York and Geneva branches of the ACC secretariat had been kept at the maintenance level, treating the present biennium as a transitional period. The secretariat capacities have in the meantime been consolidated and once the review of the subsidiary machinery is completed, a revised structure will be prepared for the consideration of ACC. ACC was also informed that the Executive Information Network had now been set up to allow ACC members to communicate with each other directly, expeditiously and confidentially on issues that were put forward for the personal consideration of the Executive Heads. The designated ACC focal points would be briefed by the secretariat on how the Network would operate.

46. ACC decided to hold its next session on Friday, 19 October, and Saturday, 20 October 2001, at United Nations Headquarters in New York.

47. On behalf of ACC, the Secretary-General thanked the Executive Director of UNEP for hosting the first regular session of 2001 of ACC and for the excellent support provided by the staff of UNEP and the United Nations Office at Nairobi.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> See General Assembly resolution 55/2.

<sup>2</sup> General Assembly resolution 46/151, annex, sect. II.

<sup>3</sup> Report of the *United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992*, vol. I, *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex II.

## **Annex**

### **ACC updated statement on the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries**

The international community is now preparing for one of the tests of the commitments undertaken at the Millennium Summit of the United Nations: the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries to be held in Brussels in May 2001. The Conference is an opportunity for the international community to deal comprehensively, in the spirit of international solidarity, with issues that affect the least developed countries. The challenge for the 49 least developed countries, 34 of which are in Africa, is to build and strengthen their capacity, taking into account their social and cultural characteristics, and to become fully integrated into the world economy on a fair and advantageous basis.

The challenge for the international community is to assist the least developed countries in this endeavour. Actions by Governments will be fundamental for the effective implementation of the decisions of the Brussels Conference. On their part, the organizations of the United Nations system will monitor closely and on a continuing basis the contribution that the Brussels Conference makes to this process. Appropriate actions at the country level under the aegis of the United Nations Resident Coordinator System will be undertaken within the context of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), the Common Country Assessment (CCA), the Comprehensive Development Framework (CDF) and the poverty reduction strategies at the interregional, regional and subregional levels and within the context of the mandates and work programmes and prerogatives of the organizations of the United Nations system. The organizations of the United Nations system will further examine how the decisions of the Conference can best be integrated into their respective work programmes and reviewed by their intergovernmental bodies on a regular basis.

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