Administrative Committee on Coordination

Report of the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions on its fourteenth session

Geneva, 10–12 March 1999

Contents

I. Introduction

1.   The Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ) held its fourteenth session at the United Nations Office at Geneva from 10 to 12 March 1999. The agenda for the session is contained in annex I, the list of participants in annex II.

II. Matters for consideration by the Administrative Committee on Coordination

A. ACC statement on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 53/192

2.   Given the importance of ensuring strong support and consistent messages by all executive heads on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 53/192, CCPOQ recommends to ACC the adoption of the above-mentioned common advocacy statement as contained in annex III.

B. ACC guidance note on the implementation of the common country assessment and United Nations Development Assistance Framework processes

3.   The Committee approved on behalf of ACC the guidance note on the implementation of the common country assessment and United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) processes (annex IV).

C. ACC guidance note on regional and subregional development cooperation

4.   The Committee approved on behalf of ACC the guidance note on regional and subregional development cooperation (annex V).

D. ACC guidance note on the partnership approach: principles underpinning the United Nations system's operational collaboration with civil society organizations

5.   The Committee approved on behalf of ACC the guidance note on the partnership approach, as contained in annex VI, as a common advocacy statement for the United Nations system's operational collaboration with civil society organizations.

E. Proposed agenda, date and venue for the next session of the Committee

6.   CCPOQ recommends to ACC that its fifteenth regular session be held in New York in the week of 20 September 1999, with the following provisional agenda:

    1.   Policy and programme matters:

        (a)   Collaboration with the business sector;

        (b)   Governance;

        (c)   Knowledge management and information technology;

        (d)   Household food security;

        (e)   Coordinated follow-up to global conferences and summits;

        (f)   Poverty eradication;

        (g)   Reports of ACC Subcommittees (on statistical activities, on nutrition, and on drug abuse control).

    2.   Operational activities for development:

        (a)   Discussions arising from the substantive session of 1999 of the Economic and Social Council;

        (b)   Role and functioning of the resident coordinator system, including programming processes;

        (c)   Operational activities training.

    3.   CCPOQ administrative issues:

        (a)   Role and functioning of ACC and its subsidiary machinery;

        (b)   Nomination of CCPOQ Secretary;

(c)   Report of the Secretary;

(d)   Future programme of work.

4.   Other matters:

JIU reports.

III. Work of CCPOQ

A. Action taken and decisions adopted

1. CCPOQ programme budget 2000–2001

7.   The Committee endorsed the CCPOQ programme budget for 2000–2001 based on prior approval by the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions (Financial and Budgetary Questions) (CCAQ (FB)) at its eighty-ninth session (Rome, 15–19 February 1999).

2. Operational activities reference manual

8.   The Committee agreed to include the final version of the documents on the partnership approach, the ACC guidance note on the common country assessment and UNDAF processes, together with the finalized common country assessment and UNDAF guidelines, and the ACC guidance note on regional and subregional development cooperation in its operational activities reference manual. References would be made in the manual to other relevant documents issued by CCPOQ containing a description of best practices, e.g., in civil society organizations capacity-building and institutional development.

3. Operational activities training

9.   CCPOQ decided — subject to the agreement of United Nations Development Group (UNDG) — to use its Working Group on Training as a task manager to carry out the former functions of its Advisory Panel, on Operational Activities Training on the understanding that for this purpose its membership would be suitably enlarged to allow for system-wide participation as well as the participation of specialists on operational issues. The Committee requested the Secretary to seek UNDG agreement to this proposal. It endorsed the arrangements for the operation of the task force, as described in paras. 44 and 45 below.

B. Summary of discussions

10.   In his introductory remarks, the Chairman, the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, noted CCPOQ's broad mandate on programmatic and operational issues and the attendant expectations from its coordination role within ACC machinery. He hoped to bring his dual capacity — as Under-Secretary-General responsible for the Economic and Social Council and as Chair of CCPOQ — to bear in generating synergies between the intergovernmental and inter-agency machinery to produce additional and new types of results.

1. Policy and programme coordination issues

(a) Coordinated follow-up to global conferences and summits

11.   In opening the debate, the Chairman observed that intergovernmental attention within the Economic and Social Council had in recent years increasingly shifted from more process-oriented issues to substantive issues, of which a major feature was the promotion of a coordinated and integrated implementation and follow-up to the major United Nations conferences around cross-cutting themes. Three interrelated issues were before the Committee for its consideration: the outcomes of conference implementation at the country level; CCPOQ's contribution to the Economic and Social Council's proposed review in the year 2000 of progress made within the United Nations in promoting coordinated follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits from an inter-agency perspective; and the compendium of networks established within the system for conference follow-up.

12.   Regarding implementation at the country level, the Associate Director of the Development Group Office said that conference follow-up had featured significantly in the work of the country teams through the activities of thematic groups and pilot UNDAFs and in the policy dialogue with Governments. On the basis of the 1998 annual reports of resident coordinators, the Office, with the support of inter-agency review groups, would be preparing an analysis of country-level implementation; a summary analysis would be circulated to CCPOQ for its comments and review by the Working Group on the Resident Coordinator System at its July 1999 meeting. The annual reports had been posted on the Office Web site, and agencies were invited to comment directly on this facility.

13.   A number of participants were concerned with how to better reflect the work of the United Nations system, especially that of non-resident agencies, in the annual reports. The ensuing discussion offered a number of different options. Following the example of the regional commissions, agencies could, upon request, take a proactive role in providing inputs prior to the drafting of such reports, as well as in commenting

on the work plans of country teams. Another opportunity was provided through their participation in the Working Group on the Resident Coordinator System, which on an annual basis developed collective guidance on the contents of the annual reports based on the Office's and CCPOQ's collective analysis of the past year's reports. It was agreed that the CCPOQ Secretary, when forwarding future requests for the preparation of annual reports to the CCPOQ focal points, should invite agencies to provide their inputs directly to resident coordinators, as appropriate. Agencies without field presence could also renegotiate their existing agreements with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to meet more fully the expectations of their executive heads concerning issues of country level representation. Additional feedback on country level activities were available through other sources, such as the minutes of country team meetings and reports on retreats and planning exercises.

14.   The representative of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs briefed the Committee on the preparations for the 1999 Economic and Social Council progress report on conference follow-up. The report would be structured in six sections, based on Council recommendations, as contained in its resolution 1998/44, i.e., recent major developments on progress around cross-cutting themes; assessment of progress in areas where the Council had a coordination and management role; a section on inter-agency coordination, followed by a discussion on country-level implementation, with a special focus on joint United Nations system initiatives; and a section on monitoring and evaluation of the integrated conference follow-up. The report would also contain a set of recommendations. The Department would largely rely on data collected by the CCPOQ Secretary under this agenda item and supplemented as required.

15.   The ensuing discussion highlighted a number of issues. The cross-cutting nature of conference agendas posed a dilemma for follow-up action by the United Nations system; this was due in part to the need to maintain the separate identity of each conference for monitoring purposes, whereas constituencies for the implementation of conference agendas were built around specific issues (e.g., women, children, human rights, environment) and government interlocutors usually operated on a sectoral basis. There were thus considerable challenges for the United Nations system in the organization of its work, including the imperatives for rationalizing and synchronizing data collection and reporting of information on thematic issues. At the country level, participants appreciated the potential of the common country assessments and UNDAF in addressing cross-cutting themes; the need to establish indicators was acknowledged.

16.   A number of proposals were put forward for the Committee's future work, i.e., compilation of an agreed list of conferences (keeping in mind the guidance notes which had already been issued on the subject) going beyond the major conferences and summits organized under United Nations auspices to include other global action plans (e.g., on ageing) with impact on the United Nations system's work; fine-tuning the ACC note on conference follow-up at the field level to inject an operational content; and re-examination of the 12 cross-cutting conference themes agreed to by the Council (see E/1995/86) with a view to singling out specific issues which would benefit from a coordinated approach, taking fully into account the respective roles and responsibilities of CCPOQ, the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development (IACSD) and the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality (IACWGE) and the need for close collaboration among these bodies.

17.   With regard to the compendium of the networks on conference follow-up, agencies were invited to submit their contributions to allow for its completion, for eventual posting on the CCPOQ Web site.

(b) Poverty eradication: field-level coordination

18.   In opening the debate, the Chairman observed that the main challenge was to identify areas where the United Nations system could realistically expect to make an impact given its very modest resources. Issues before the Committee were the follow-up action on the decision taken by the Committee at its thirteenth session to include in the poverty matrix the different dimensions of urban and rural poverty and CCPOQ's contribution to the forthcoming discussion by the Economic and Social Council on this issue.

19.   The representative of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs briefed the Committee on the outline of a three-year work plan prepared by the Department on the assessment of the role of the United Nations system in poverty eradication (ACC/1999/POQ/CRP.2/Add.1) in preparation for the 2001 triennial comprehensive policy review. The document was intended to facilitate the Council's consideration of the issues of poverty eradication and capacity-building during its 1999 high-level operational activities segment. Committee members welcomed the action-oriented nature of the report, which provided an excellent basis for the Council's work.

20.   The subsequent discussion acknowledged the growing phenomena of increasing slippages into poverty arising from natural and man-made emergency situations, such as the impact of financial crisis and the spread of human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS). The AIDS epidemic had caused a

decline in life expectancy in some countries; the loss of main wage earners to AIDS had resulted in a drastic fall in family incomes, deepening family poverty, making young women and girls increasingly vulnerable to HIV infection. All this had heightened awareness of the downside risks of globalization; the importance of addressing, in an integrated manner, issues of debt relief, vulnerability, protection and safety nets along with those of a more endemic nature; and the importance of the role of conflict and HIV/AIDS prevention and of political considerations in poverty eradication strategies. Other issues mentioned were the growing feminization and urbanization of poverty and attendant implications for establishing partnerships with municipal authorities; the need for identification of and targeted interventions on most vulnerable groups; and the potential contribution of the private sector to poverty alleviation.

21. Poverty eradication, an overarching goal in conference agendas, would benefit from conceptual distinctions in three areas: an understanding of the phenomenon of poverty based on analytical/measurement work; poverty eradication as a developmental goal; and its delineation as a programme category involving targeted interventions. The latter area appeared to provide the most scope for the Committee's future work; one challenge was for CCPOQ to use the poverty matrix approved by ACC as a basis for developing a category for programming interventions; this would allow for an assessment of the consolidated impact of the United Nations system's work around agreed thematic areas.

22. The Committee endorsed the additions made to the poverty matrix, in the course of the meeting, to reflect, *inter alia*, key areas for collaboration on issues of urban and rural poverty. The Chairman invited members of the Committee to forward their suggestions to the Secretary for enhancing the usefulness of the matrix. A particular concern was expressed by the Chairman regarding the last column of the matrix, which should differentiate between poverty eradication as a development goal and as a programme category in order to focus on activities with a direct impact on poverty eradication.

(c) Responses to and recovery from crisis situations

23. The Chairman introduced the Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa and the accompanying note provided by the Office of Inter-agency Affairs on substantive issues of system-wide concern (ACC/1999/POQ/CRP.3 and annexes). In opening the debate, he stressed the importance attached by the General Assembly in its resolution 53/92 to the issue of harmonizing bilateral and multilateral initiatives on Africa. In recent discussions on post-conflict peace-building, the notion of the "continuum" had been questioned since the timing of relief, rehabilitation and development interventions were now understood to be overlapping; hence the importance of linkages in these actions.

24. Among issues highlighted in the ensuing debate were the importance of political will in giving priority to development; the critical importance of understanding the structural causes of Africa's problems; the relevance of taking a subregional approach and summoning political will in their resolution; the privatization of wars in Africa both in terms of their financing and the engagement of mercenaries and the fuelling of conflict through arms sales; the rapid spread of HIV/AIDS during the time of crisis; the fungibility of financial resource flows and its ramifications for the diversion of aid flows in sustaining civil conflicts; the potential of using the common country assessment and UNDAF processes in post-conflict situations given that the guidelines provided for risk assessment and contingency planning and related implications on the need to build the capacity of country teams in dealing with crisis situations. Concerning suggestions for harmonization of the different bilateral and multilateral initiatives on Africa, it was noted that such an effort would have to take into account the fact that all these initiatives did not have an equal standing with African authorities.

25. A number of tentative proposals were put forward for the Committee's future work, i.e., exploring further application of the principles established for the strategic framework; devising in collaboration with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, guidance based on experience on what should be the appropriate sequencing and timing of relief, rehabilitation and development interventions; identifying the types of economic and social "inducements" which could be valuable in serving reconciliation/peace-building objectives; reviewing the United Nations system's technical cooperation activities to delineate opportunities for using national resources, keeping in mind the conditions that might apply to non-core resources. Each agency was encouraged to assess the percentage of its development cooperation expenditure spent in Africa in the light of the 50 per cent target recommended in the Secretary-General's report, taking into account the conditions that might apply to non-core resources. The Committee noted that discussions were under way to decide on further application of the strategic framework, which could provide a basis for addressing some of the countries mentioned in the report on Africa.

26. It was also suggested that CCPOQ could work with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee in elaborating guidance to country teams on post-conflict development priorities and

related issues concerning the prioritization and sequencing of interventions, keeping in mind that the phases of relief, rehabilitation and development were generally not consecutive but often tended to overlap and occur simultaneously requiring the need to develop, through a strategic framework, a comprehensive approach to countries in crisis. The Committee requested its Chairman to write to the Chairman of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee with a view to developing a suitable work programme. It was pointed out that it would be worthwhile to request the Committee to pursue a lessons learned exercise focusing on both success and failures and to share with CCPOQ the results of relevant evaluations of past operations.

2. Operational activities for development

(a) Regional and subregional development cooperation

27.   The Secretary introduced the draft guidance note (ACC/1999/POQ/CRP.4) prepared on the basis of inter-agency consultations. With regard to the purpose and destination of the note, he noted that its intent was to generate awareness, both at headquarters and in the field, through a common advocacy statement on the importance of regional and subregional dimensions in the United Nations system's development cooperation activities. Once adopted, the note would be circulated to executive heads with a request for its transmission to their field staff and appropriate circulation within headquarters. The note would then feature in the CCPOQ's operational activities reference manual. Acknowledging the growing importance of regional and subregional dimensions in development, Committee members welcomed the draft, particularly its clarification on the respective roles and potential contribution of organizations to regional issues.

28.   The Committee approved the guidance note, on behalf of ACC, subject to the amendments made in paras. 9, 13, 16, 18 (a), 22 (b) in the course of the meeting. The Office for Project Services and the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) undertook to provide additional examples of good practices on the United Nations system's collaboration with regional and subregional organizations.

(b) 1998 triennial comprehensive policy review

29.   The Committee considered the draft ACC statement on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 53/192 on the triennial comprehensive policy review. After receiving clarification from the Secretary on a procedural issue, the Committee agreed that the adoption of ACC guidance notes/guidelines on issues within CCPOQ's competence were

within its own delegated approval authority, whereas ACC statements prepared by the Committee required formal approval from the higher body. A number of participants acknowledged the value of such statements in sending signals to such target audiences as governing bodies and the donor community, for example, on action taken in pursuit of United Nations reforms. The representative of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs recalled that a similar statement had been adopted in 1996 and that it was the United Nations Secretariat's intention to include it in the report on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 53/192 to be considered by the Economic and Social Council in 1999, along with a management process for the implementation of that resolution; the latter was the subject of extensive consultation within the system in accordance with paragraph 60 of the resolution.

30.   It endorsed the ACC statement on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 53/192 for transmission to ACC for its adoption.

(c) Operational collaboration with civil society

31.   In introducing this item, the Secretary recalled that three items were outstanding from CCPOQ's thirteenth session (September 1998): the Partnership approach, outlining general principles underpinning the United Nations system's collaboration with civil society organizations (ACC/1999/POQ/CRP.6), a system-wide survey of experience and best practices in civil society organizations capacity-building and institutional development (ACC/1999/POQ/CRP.6/Add.1), administrative and financial procedures in working with NGOs (ACC/1999/POQ/CRP.6/Add.2).

32.   With regard to the partnership approach (ACC/POQ/1999/CRP.6), he said that pursuant to the recommendation of the Organizational Committee (OC), the earlier draft transmitted for ACC adoption had been revised to take into account ACC's agreed conclusions on the subject (ACC/1997/20, para. 11) and subsequent comments provided by agencies.

33.   The Committee approved, on behalf of ACC, the text on the partnership approach subject to the following amendments: sections 1 and 2 would be combined into one section entitled "Valuing partnership with civil society"; the addition of a new paragraph 4.8 to refer to the Staff College's role, among others, in capacity-building of United Nations staff; deletion of the word "institutional" in the second bullet point in paragraph 3.2, coupled with the reflection in this paragraph of the provisions of paragraph 30 of General

Assembly resolution 53/192; and a transposition of the order of the two bullet points in paragraph 3.2.

34. With regard to the document (ACC/1999/POQ/CRP.6/Add.1) on best practices, the Committee took note of it subject to the amendments made in paragraph 28 and additional information to be provided by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on good practices of civil society organization collaboration in humanitarian situations. Concerning the document on administrative and financial practices (ACC/1999/POQ/CRP.6/Add.2), the Committee urged those agencies which had not already responded to reply as soon as possible to the questionnaire sent by the Office for Project Services (task manager) to enable the completion of the survey and its finalization by electronic mail.

35. It was agreed that the document on the partnership approach, once finalized, would be featured in the CCPOQ operational activities reference manual. Concerning future work, suggestions were made to explore the subject of partnerships with the business community and to exchange experiences on managing conflicts with civil society partners.

(d) Role and functioning of the resident coordinator system

36. The Chairman of the Working Group presented its reports for the two previous sessions (ACC/1999/POQ/CRP.7 and Add.1). In keeping with its role as an inter-sessional mechanism in linking up with United Nations reforms, a major part of its recent work had concentrated on interacting with the United Nations Development Group (UNDG)-led process of drafting guidelines for common country assessment and UNDAF; the collegiality and transparency in which the whole process had been conducted was particularly appreciated by the Working Group. The guidelines were considered as work in progress to be fine tuned based on experience gained from its implementation. The Working Group had endorsed the proposal to issue an ACC guidance note on the implementation of the common country assessment and UNDAF processes to reinforce collective ownership of the instruments while relaying a clear message to member States on the system's response to the call in General Assembly resolution 53/192 for system-wide participation in the process. This guidance note was before the Committee for its approval on behalf of ACC. He also drew attention to the Working Group's recommendation that the Chair of CCPOQ address a written request to executive heads concerning the issuance of guidance to their field representatives and relevant staff at headquarters and regional

offices on how best to participate in the common country assessment and UNDAF processes.

37. On learning issues, he transmitted the recommendations of the Working Group concerning the successor arrangements for CCPOQ's Advisory Panel on Operational Activities Training, as contained in paragraphs 17–19 of its report ACC/1999/POQ/CRP.7/Add.1.

38. With regard to measures taken in strengthening the resident coordinator system, the Working Group had expressed its satisfaction with the highly professional manner in which the competency assessment pilot had been conducted. After weighing considerations of cost and in-house capacity, the need for maintaining professionalism and impartiality, the Working Group was fully supportive of the Steering Committee's decision to outsource the competency assessment activity for the time being. There was general appreciation of the need to consider the possible system-wide application of competency-based methods of recruitment and appraisal for other senior positions.

39. On the issue of pending guidelines, there was a good prospect that the guidelines on the right to development and the guiding principles for the functioning of the resident coordinator system and on monitoring and evaluation would be brought to closure at the Working Group's July 1999 meeting. He also briefed the Committee on plans to convene, with the support of a donor Government, a workshop on capacity-building prior to the substantive session of 1999 of the Economic and Social Council to draw from the six capacity-building case studies prepared for the 1998 triennial comprehensive policy review lessons and elements for guiding principles which could be explicitly built into the design of projects and programmes to achieve capacity-building objectives.

40. The Committee expressed concern at the limited attendance at its Working Group meetings, particularly given its role in linking the system to reforms in the area of operational activities. Members were encouraged to participate actively in the Working Group and to submit suggestions on agenda items of interest to them through the CCPOQ secretariat. The Committee endorsed the proposal of the Working Group to undertake a review of its functioning to reflect the broad concerns of its membership.

41. The Committee approved, on behalf of ACC, the draft ACC guidance note on the common country assessment and UNDAF processes, subject to the amendments made at the meeting, noting its value in sending important signals to intergovernmental bodies on the United Nations system's collective commitment to the participation, as appropriate, in these processes, as called for in General Assembly

resolution 53/192. To further encourage system-wide involvement in the UNDAF process, it moreover, decided to pursue the Working Group's recommendation that the Chairman of CCPOQ write to executive heads to request the issuance of guidance to their staff as described in paragraph 36 above.

42.   The Committee took note, with appreciation, of the two reports of the Working Groups (ACC/1999/POQ/CRP.7 and Add.1, as amended). It endorsed the recommendations and work plan contained therein, including the recommendation on the follow-up to and the guidance note on the common country assessment and UNDAF processes (paras. 14–15), learning issues (paras. 17–19), job description (paras. 38–39), competency assessment (paras. 28–29) and the guidelines on the resident coordinator system (para. 41).

(e) Operational activities training

43.   The Secretary presented the report of the ad hoc task force on learning issues (ACC/POQ/CRP.8) and the conclusions contained in the report of the Working Group (see ACC/1999/POQ/CRP.7/Add.1, paras. 17–19) concerning the successor arrangements for the CCPOQ Advisory Panel on Operational Activities Training.

44.   As recommended by its Working Group on the Resident Coordinator System, the Committee decided to abolish the Advisory Panel. It endorsed the recommendations contained in paragraphs 17–19 of the report of the Working Group (ACC/1999/POQ/CRP.7/Add.1) to use the UNDG Working Group on Training — subject to the agreement of UNDG — as a task manager to carry out the former functions of its Advisory Panel on Operational Activities on the understanding that for this purpose, the membership of this task force would be enlarged to allow for system-wide participation as well as the participation of specialists on operational issues. The task force would be reporting to CCPOQ through its Working Group on the Resident Coordinator System; the latter would dedicate one full-day session per year to learning issues. As far as possible, the task force would be convened using video conferencing and electronic communications to restrict physical meetings to a minimum.

45.   With regard to the terms of reference of the task force, the Committee agreed that it would assume the former functions of the CCPOQ Advisory Panel on Operational Activities Training focused on the resident coordinator system. Concerning the issue of membership, participation would be open to all members of CCPOQ and the Staff College. Care should be taken in agency nominations to ensure an appropriate mix of expertise on learning and

operational activities. Determination of the frequency of meetings was left to the decision of the task manager.

46.   It was clarified during the meeting that on the specific issue of operational activities training related to the resident coordinator system, the above-mentioned task force would be reporting to CCPOQ through its Working Group on the Resident Coordinator System; there were no reporting obligations as such to UNDG, recognizing, however, that the Committee would need to seek the former's prior agreement to the proposed arrangements.

47.   With regard to issues on common system learning needs in the programme area, the Committee agreed that consideration of this issue should await the outcome of the experience of the arrangements proposed in paragraph 44 above and the review of the Staff College scheduled for the end of the year 2000.

48.   Committee members welcomed the above successor arrangements which would lead to further streamlining of its machinery and reduce physical meetings while creating innovative linkages with UNDG machinery. This provided an interesting model for potential replication for the United Nations system's work in other areas. The Secretary was requested to approach the Chair of the UNDG Sub-Group on Personnel and Training to formally seek its endorsement of the proposed arrangements. Should their agreement be forthcoming, the Secretary would then proceed to invite United Nations system organizations and the Staff College to nominate focal points to the task force. He was asked to report to the Working Group at its meeting in July 1999.

3. CCPOQ administrative issues

(a) Role and functioning of ACC and its subsidiary machinery

49.   The Secretary presented the draft JIU report (ACC/1999/POQ/CRP.12), and solicited the Committee's collective comments on the sections pertaining directly to CCPOQ and the bodies reporting through it, noting that at this stage observations should be focused on factual errors. With regard to paragraph 61, the Secretary was requested to draw JIU's attention to the following factual corrections, i.e., that CCPOQ through its Working Group on the Resident Coordinator System was interacting on an ongoing basis with UNDG on issues of reforms in operational activities. In the elaboration of the generic guidelines for the strategic framework for response to and recovery from crisis situations, it was noteworthy that the Committee had, moreover, collaborated very closely with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs. With respect to the JIU recommendation to abolish

the Advisory Panel on Training, it was noted that the Committee had taken this decision at its current session.

50.   The Committee considered the proposal tabled by IACSD in its report on its thirteenth session (New York, 8 and 9 March 1999) to convene a small joint working group meeting of designated members of IACSD and CCPOQ to explore specific proposals for using the task manager approach for substantive coordination in thematic areas, as well as to ensure a clearer division of labour between the three standing committees of IACSD, IACWGE and CCPOQ.

51.   It endorsed the proposal to set up a joint group to identify potential areas for task force activities both on programmatic thematic issues as well as in support, *inter alia*, of country-level work. The Committee requested the CCPOQ Secretary to take the initiative of convening the meeting during the substantive session of 1999 of the Economic and Social Council.

(b) Report of CCPOQ Secretary

52.   The Secretary reported on his activities since the thirteenth session, including his participation in a Princeton workshop on the assessment of the UNDAF pilot phase, a needs assessment workshop at the United Nations Staff College, a workshop in Guatemala to assess the experience of two country teams (Guatemala and Zimbabwe) in reforms, in the pilot competency assessment initiative and in the first regional coordination meeting chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General in the European region. He said that the preparation of the ACC report on programme and resources, which had been suspended for some years, was now being resumed in cooperation with CCAQ. The Committee was briefed on the design and current status of the development of the CCPOQ Web site.

(c) Future programme of work

53.   In considering its future programme of work, the Committee put forward a number of proposals in the programmatic area. Members noted that some issues were predetermined, for example, by CCPOQ's mandate, as in the case of integrated follow-up to conferences or by topical issues emanating from the debate in intergovernmental bodies, such as the Economic and Social Council (e.g., poverty eradication, which was a main theme of its 1999 substantive segment) or within ACC, with implications for follow-up by the subsidiary machinery. Closer collaboration with other coordinating bodies, such as IACSD and IACWGE, was expected to lead to the identification of specific issues in the context of the work of these bodies that might benefit from consideration by CCPOQ. A number of

suggestions were offered for the work programme in the period ahead: relationship with the business sector (Department of Economic and Social Affairs); governance (World Bank/UNDP); knowledge management and information technology (World Bank); household food security (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, International Fund for Agricultural Development); over the longer term, the Committee agreed to consider the issue of human rights (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights) and the impact of HIV/ AIDS (Joint and Co-sponsored United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS). The Committee agreed to adopt a task manager approach in carrying out the preparatory work to capitalize on ongoing work within the system. A number of agencies were identified as task managers as indicated above. The aim would be to arrive at a common definition and understanding of relevant concepts and issues with a view to developing suitable guidance to foster common approaches and enhanced collaboration, including at the field level.

54.   Regarding operational activities, the Committee agreed that among the issues it would have to consider at its next session, were those emanating from the substantive session of 1999 of the Council, as well as matters of system-wide relevance related to the further application of the common country assessment and UNDAF processes.

55.   In concluding its consideration of the future programme of work, the Committee stressed that in order to allow for consultation within each agency especially with regard to programmatic issues relevant documentation should be circulated well in advance of the meeting.

(d) Proposed programme budget 2000–2001

56.   The Committee reviewed and endorsed the CCPOQ programme budget for 2000–2001 based on prior approval by CCAQ(FB) at its eighty-ninth session (Rome, 15–19 February 1999). It welcomed the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank confirmation of their continued financial support.

4. Other matters

(a) JIU report (JIU/REP/1998/5)

57.   The Committee was informed by the Secretary that due to the limited number of comments received, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs had not been in a position to prepare consolidated draft ACC comments on the JIU report on the Office for Project Services entitled "Broader engagement with United Nations system organizations" for consideration by CCPOQ. Members were therefore requested to provide comments to the Department by 15 March 1999.

(b) ACC guidance note on volunteers and volunteer contributions

58.   The Secretary informed the Committee that the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) had requested the deferral of the consideration of the draft ACC guidance note to its fall 1999 session. Members were invited to provide any comments on the draft through the CCPOQ secretariat.

Annex I

Agenda

1. Adoption of the agenda.

2. Policy and programme coordination issues:

    (a) Coordinated follow-up to global conferences and summits;

    (b) Poverty eradication;

    (c) Responses to and recovery from crisis situations.

3. Operational activities for development:

    (a) Regional and subregional development cooperation;

    (b) 1998 triennial comprehensive policy review;

    (c) Operational collaboration with civil society;

    (d) Role and functioning of the resident coordinator system;

    (e) Operational activities training.

4. CCPOQ administrative issues:

    (a) Role and functioning of ACC and its subsidiary machinery;

    (b) Report of the Secretary;

    (c) Future programme of work;

    (d) Proposed programme budget 2000–2001.

5. Other matters:

    (a) JIU reports;

    (b) ACC guidance note on volunteers and volunteer contributions.

Annex II

List of participants

Chairman: Nitin Desai (United Nations)
Secretary: Eckhard W. Hein (CCPOQ)
Technical Secretary: Susan Toh (CCPOQ)

United Nations, its entities and programmes

United Nations

Department of Economic and Social Affairs	Alfred Haemmerli Monica Nogara
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights	Sylvie Saddier
United Nations Centre for Human Settlements	Lars Ludvigsen
United Nations Economic Commission for Europe	Susan Bartolo Parisudhi Kalampasut
United Nations Office for Project Services	Christophe Bouvier Hans-Ulrich Ugo
United Nations Staff College	John Machin

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development	Marcial Plehn-Mejia Andrew Whitley M.-S. Yeterian-Parisi Jo Butler
United Nations Development Programme	Nikhil Chandavarkar Evlogui Bonev
United Nations Development Group Office	Ameerah Haq Gro Skaaren-Fystro
United Nations Volunteers Programme	Trisha Riedy
United Nations Population Fund	Sjaak Bavelaar Daniel Periotti
United Nations Children's Fund	Ado Vaher Nora Galer
World Food Programme	Scott Green
United Nations International Drug Control Programme	Mathieu Mounikou
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	Pablo Mateu Gesche Karrenbrock

International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO	Pierre Jouvenat
Joint and Co-sponsored United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS	Renu Chahil-Graf

Specialized agencies and International Atomic Energy Agency

International Labour Organization	Adam Simbeye
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	Basharat Ali
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	Baudouin Duvieusart
World Health Organization	Ferdinand Littaua Lars Tillfors Jean-Paul Menu Roberta Ritson
World Bank	Clare Fleming
International Monetary Fund	Justin Zulu
Universal Postal Union	Khalil Samawi
International Telecommunication Union	William J. Kirsch Venen Paratian
International Fund for Agricultural Development	V. P. Weill-Halle
United Nations Industrial Development Organization	Elisabeth Merz

Annex III

ACC statement on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 53/192

1.   ACC notes the progress made in strengthening the role of the United Nations system in providing support to national efforts of recipient countries through more effective development cooperation, greater efficiency and impact. This progress, enhanced by the implementation of the Secretary-General's reform initiatives and the reforms undertaken by other organizations of the United Nations system, is noted by the General Assembly in its resolution 53/192 on the triennial comprehensive policy review and the related report of the Secretary-General, which was fully endorsed in that resolution.

2.   ACC will continue to take the necessary steps to provide all recipient countries effective development support through full coordination at the global, regional and country levels. ACC will ensure that this support achieves optimal results at the country level, particularly in the eradication of poverty. The system will continue its support to national efforts in the implementation of globally agreed goals and targets, in accordance with national plans and priorities.

3.   ACC will implement the relevant provisions of resolution 53/192 in a fully coordinated manner, as outlined in the management process prepared in accordance with paragraph 60 of the resolution, and which will be considered by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1999. ACC notes the request made by the General Assembly to relevant governing bodies of the United Nations system to take appropriate action for the full implementation of the resolution in a complementary and coherent fashion. The outcome of these bodies will be taken fully into account in the implementation of the resolution over the next three years.

4.   In order to give full effect to the relevant provisions of the resolution dealing with the resident coordinator system, ACC's Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ) and its Working Group on the Resident Coordinator System will prepare relevant guidance and guidelines on the strengthening of country-level cooperation through the resident coordinator system. Appropriate supportive steps, including the simplification and harmonization of programming processes and procedures, wherever necessary, will be taken by the relevant members of ACC. Particular attention will be paid to the full and effective participation of the organizations of the United Nations system in the preparation of common country assessments and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). Cooperation among all relevant partners of the United Nations development system, including the Bretton Woods institutions, will be ensured according to their respective mandates. The guidelines for the common country assessments and UNDAF explicitly provide for effective cooperation to this end. ACC welcomes the progress achieved so far on strengthening the resident coordinator system and on increasing ownership of it by the system as a whole.

5.   ACC notes with concern the continuing decline in core resources for development cooperation, and looks forward to the successful conclusion of the negotiations on funding strategies foreseen in paragraph 16 of resolution 53/192. It notes with pleasure the provisions of paragraph 11, which welcomes the steps taken by the system in achieving overall improvement in the efficiency, effectiveness and impact of the United Nations system in delivering development assistance.

6.   ACC will undertake the required steps to give full effect to the relevant provisions of the resolution dealing with the coordinated follow-up to global conferences, gender in

development, technical cooperation among developing countries, capacity-building, cooperation with civil society, supporting countries involved in various stages of relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development, regional dimensions of development, national execution and monitoring and evaluation.

Annex IV

ACC guidance note on the implementation of the common country assessment and United Nations Development Assistance Framework processes

1.	There is a need for ensuring a system-wide approach during the preparation of the common country assessment and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) processes. The involvement of all partners within the United Nations system in the UNDAF pilot phase and its assessment has been an essential step in this direction.

2.	Within the framework of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC), the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ), through its Working Group on the Resident Coordinator System, is facilitating the required system-wide consultation and collaboration.

3.	ACC welcomes the transparent process of consultations in the preparation of the revised draft guidelines on common country assessments and UNDAF, underlining that this process has taken into account the major comments and concerns of the system. The approach taken was seen to fully reflect the participatory nature of the process followed throughout.

4.	Based on this positive experience, ACC is confident that the further application and scaling-up of the preparation of common country assessments and UNDAFs will be conducted in a fully collaborative manner.

5.	Common country assessments as a country-based process for reviewing and analysing the development situation and identifying key issues are recognized as a basis for advocacy, policy dialogue and the preparation of UNDAFs. The flexibility of the common country assessments may also prove useful in the preparation of other similar planning frameworks of the United Nations system, particularly those applied to countries in special circumstances. The common country assessments process provides an excellent opportunity to bring to bear the United Nations system organizations' combined knowledge in a fully participatory manner for the benefit of member countries. Regarding United Nations system organizations without field presence, the resident coordinator would implement procedure and modalities for including their inputs into the common country assessments process.

6.	UNDAF as a strategic instrument for the development operations of the United Nations system lays a foundation for enhanced cooperation among United Nations system, government and other development partners. As specifically called for in General Assembly resolution 53/192, there is a need for ensuring the full and active participation of the funds and programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system. There is, furthermore, a need to lighten the burden on national authorities and United Nations system staff of multiple and complex programming processes. Members of the United Nations system should therefore consider using UNDAFs and common country assessments as a basis for simplifying and harmonizing their own procedures, where necessary, as called for in General Assembly resolution 53/192.

7.	The successful implementation of the common country assessments and UNDAF processes on a broader scale requires appropriate support at all levels and locations, particularly at the country level through the resident coordinator system. Simple and cost-effective support should be provided to assist country teams with UNDAFs in a flexible manner on a global basis. It will therefore be important to ensure that such support is provided by each United Nations system organization in accordance with its mandate, *inter alia*, through the dissemination of the guidelines to the concerned officials at Headquarters as well

as at the field level, and appropriate briefing and training. Members of the system should provide consistent advice from headquarters to country teams.

8.   ACC, through CCPOQ, will continue to monitor the experience with the implementation of the common country assessments and UNDAF processes, with particular emphasis on aspects of system-wide relevance.

Annex V

ACC guidance note on regional and subregional development cooperation

I. Introduction

1. The Economic and Social Council and the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) have emphasized for several years the importance of regional and subregional dimension of development cooperation, the potential for greater synergy with country-level activities and the need for a concerted approach to enhance the system's efforts in this regard.[1] Most recently, the General Assembly "stressed the growing need for incorporating the regional and subregional dimension in United Nations operational activities for development".[2]

2. Recent developments at the regional and subregional level have contributed significantly to the broadening and deepening of multilateral cooperation. First, the number of non-United Nations intergovernmental bodies at the regional and subregional levels has increased. Second, their activities have expanded into new sectors and development themes. Third, growing interdependence among countries has been effectively demonstrated through:

(a) Consensus-building on political, security and humanitarian issues;

(b) Reaching common positions on questions dealing with international trade, investment and finance;

(c) Developing mutually acceptable strategies on major development issues, e.g. environment, gender, population, poverty, social development etc.

Thus, regionalism and subregionalism have become important building blocks in multilateral cooperation.

3. These developments present the United Nations system with many challenges of: further strengthening multilateralism; improving links between regional and subregional agendas and priorities and global commitments on the one hand, and country-level priorities and strategies on the other; bringing regional and subregional concerns more fully into the system's work; and enhancing the relevance of the system's operational activities to regional and subregional bodies.

4. The comparative advantage of the United Nations system regional and subregional development cooperation is based on several factors. The United Nations system has a long history of active engagement at the regional and subregional levels. This has been accompanied by programmes of regionalization and decentralization of the system's structures; provision of technical advisory capacity and decentralization of management, technical and financial support to operational activities; and establishment of several institutions for research, training and capacity-building. Thus, the availability of technical and operational expertise and services at the regional and subregional levels has expanded in many subject areas.

5. The system's operational activities have traditionally covered a wide range of development issues which derive from its mandate and competence. At present, there are four major streams of United Nations system development cooperation at the regional and

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[1] See, for example, Council resolutions 1996/41 and 1998/46; General Assembly resolutions 50/120 and 50/227; ACC/1997/POQ/CRP.26; and ACC/1998/7 of 19 May 1998, sect. II.C, paras. 72–75.

[2] See General Assembly resolution 53/192 of 15 December 1998, para. 41.

subregional levels: UNDP, United Nations funds and programmes, the regional commissions and the specialized agencies. Some of the smaller technical agencies have a prominent inter-country focus. Each organization or agency has its own rationale, programming and implementation modalities and funding arrangements. A critical minimum degree of convergence is required, especially on carefully selected themes and issues which lend themselves to an inter-country approach and where collaborative action will enhance the impact of United Nations system's operational activities.

II. Main objectives

6.   This guidance note has been established for this purpose as a result of system-wide consultations within the framework of CCPOQ, especially the regional commissions.

7.   The main objectives are to:

(a)   Support and encourage regional and subregional development cooperation and link it, as far as possible, to country-level priorities, on the one hand, and global conference commitments and plans of action on the other hand;

(b)   Inject a regional and subregional dimension into country-level activities;

(c)   Promote synergies between country and inter-country programmes in order to enhance the impact of the latter on the system's country-level work;

(d)   Increase coordination in the system's operational activities.

8.   With a view to furthering these objectives, several steps should be taken by the different components of the system, and more especially by the regional commissions, regional and subregional offices and bureaus of organizations and agencies, and the resident coordinator system at the country level. In all cases, headquarters offices and technical divisions should provide active support to regional and subregional technical cooperation through technical and financial resources, as required.

III. Action to be taken

9.   Organizations and agencies of the United Nations system should review their working relationships at the regional and subregional levels, especially with non-United Nations regional and subregional bodies, with a view to increased collaboration. Care should be taken to avoid establishing new layers of bureaucracy and to recognize the lead role of governments in formulating country programmes.

10.   The following broad categories, among others, provide a basis for facilitating joint and collaborative action within the system and for increasing the regional and subregional dimension in operational activities:

(a)   Issues which are of a sensitive nature or may require further advocacy or negotiation, e.g., governance, civil society and human rights;

(b)   Themes or programmes of a cross-sectoral nature where a regional or subregional scale of operations would be cost-efficient, would further complement and add value to country-level efforts, utilize national and subregional institutions and expertise, and facilitate exchange of experience and technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC) for capacity-building, e.g., population, gender, employment, poverty and environment;

(c)   Issues which are of a transboundary nature and would benefit from collaborative inter-country approach and effort, e.g., climate change, desertification, disaster management, civil conflicts, high-incidence diseases (malaria, tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS), migration, trafficking in women and children, transboundary crime and drug abuse;

(d)   Common problems which would benefit from regional or subregional analysis, strategy and programme development, e.g., globalization, international trade, investment and economic management, economic integration, food security, and utilization of water and other shared natural resources;

(e)   Development of regional norms and standards in different fields, including specific areas where further normative work, standardization or capacity-building is required, e.g., pharmaceuticals and food products.

11.   The Council, in its resolution 1998/46, welcomed the establishment of annual meetings, to be chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General, in each geographical area, among the relevant entities of the system engaged in regional and inter-country activities. The purpose of these meetings is to:

(a)   Review existing coordination mechanisms at the regional level with a view to assessing their effectiveness and adequacy;

(b)   Propose ways of improving the system's collective response and achieving greater coherence in operational activities across the components of the system;

(c)   Sharpen the policy dialogue, develop shared goals and define priority areas for joint work to respond to regional and subregional needs and challenges;

(d)   Identify ways of providing further support to the system's work at the country level.

12.   United Nations funds and programmes, including UNDP, should take the lead in promoting joint system-wide collaborative action. A number of steps should be envisaged. Among these are:

(a)   Strengthening the policy dialogue on regional policies, priorities and strategies identified by regional commissions and non-United Nations intergovernmental bodies;

(b)   Closer involvement of all United Nations system partners in regional programming;

(c)   Establishment of joint task forces to examine cross-sectoral themes.

13.   The funds and programmes, such as UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP, in developing their regional and subregional programmes, should:

(a)   Take into account the policy analysis and priority identification carried out by the regional commissions;

(b)   With a view to forming improved linkages with the system's country-level activities, regularly inform the resident coordinator system about their regional and subregional activities and their specific links with country-level action.

14.   Some of the specialized agencies have already largely regionalized and decentralized their operational activities, and established significant regional and subregional technical capacities. They are also participating in various regional coordination and information-sharing mechanisms with the regional commissions. They should:

(a)   Explore the feasibility of setting up joint teams or task forces with UNDP and the regional commissions, especially to examine cross-sectoral themes and issues, with a view to greater collaborative action;

(b)   Review the links between their regional and subregional activities (irrespective of funding source) and the system's country-level work;

(c)   Inform the resident coordinator system about any relevant global, regional or subregional exercise (research, policy analysis, programming or technical cooperation) in which the country is participating and in which specific country-level activities are envisaged.

15.   The smaller technical agencies have a prominent inter-country focus in their operational activities, and work in collaboration with regional and subregional bodies. They should keep themselves informed of regional and subregional policies and priorities in their fields of competence identified by regional commissions and non-United Nations intergovernmental bodies. At the country level, they are normally represented by the United Nations resident coordinator/UNDP resident representative; they should facilitate his/her task by providing information on the linkages between their inter-country and country-level activities.

16.   The Council, in its resolution 1998/46, reaffirmed the important role of the regional commissions in the United Nations system's global-to-regional-to-country-level continuum.[3] In the recent past, the commissions have strengthened their role in developing regional perspectives, building regional consensus on various development issues, and addressing cross-sectoral themes. Each commission operates in a different socio-economic and institutional environment. However, their main roles include:

(a)   Advocacy and consensus-building on global and regional issues within the region;

(b)   Analytical functions, including collection, analysis and dissemination of information and statistics on social and economic trends; research and analysis of economic and social policies and of cross-sectoral themes from a regional multidisciplinary perspective;

(c)   Operational activities and facilitating exchange of experience;

(d)   Dealing with a variety of subject areas, e.g., regional infrastructure, transport and communications; regional trade, technology, natural resource development, environmental issues, governance, economic integration, social development including gender etc.;

(e)   Establishing regional norms and standards.

17.   The commissions have also set up mechanisms for system-wide coordination by bringing together all the funds and programmes, agencies and departments of the system engaged in regional and inter-country activities to exchange information, promote joint action and reduce duplication. In addition, they liaise with and support, where necessary, non-United Nations intergovernmental bodies at the regional and subregional levels.

18.   In order to reinforce synergies, the regional commissions should:

(a)   Consider organizing meetings with non-United Nations regional and subregional intergovernmental bodies as the need arises;

(b)   Systematically seek a closer interaction with such bodies;

(c)   Undertake, when possible and as consistent with the overall objectives of the United Nations, joint endeavours with them, thus contributing to wider intergovernmental coordination at the regional and subregional levels.

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[3] See Council resolutions 1998/46, annex III, para. 13, and 1998/65, para. 31.

19.   Regional commissions can make a valuable contribution to these exercises by bringing to bear upon them the influence of regional perspectives; sharing experiences on regional best practices in various areas of policy-making and development; and reinforcing the system's contribution to linking national development to regional cooperation.

20.   The General Assembly, in its resolution 53/192, calls for greater involvement of regional commissions in UNDAF.[4] For this purpose, the regional commissions should interact directly with country teams within the resident coordinator system, and:

(a)   Make known to them their fields of competence in different sectors and specific expertise and capacities which can be provided to support country-level programming processes;

(b)   Communicate their programme of work, especially the issues and priorities identified at regional and subregional levels and details of country participation in different operational activities, including capacity-building.

21.   The actions envisaged above should serve to increase the synergies between the system's country-level and regional and subregional activities. This should particularly be the case where:

(a)   Regional and subregional programmes are simply a clustering of national activities for reasons of cost-effectiveness;

(b)   The use of national institutions and expertise is a major component;

(c)   TCDC is a strong element.

To promote these synergies, therefore, it is important to pool the information on regional and subregional activities and opportunities in formulating country-level programmes. Country-level programming instruments, such as the country strategy note, the common country assessment, UNDAF would benefit from an analysis of operational information on inter-country activities which relate to country priorities or sectors of emphasis. It is important to adopt a "net additionality approach" in this regard — to bring funding, higher quality and catalytic capacity-building from the regional and subregional levels — to the benefit of country-level activities.

22.   The resident coordinator system, on its part, when embarking on a programming exercise, should:

(a)   Secure greater and more active involvement of all components of the system at all stages of the process, including the country strategy note, the common country assessment and UNDAF by seeking specific inputs from them on the basis of guidance provided above;

(b)   Inject a regional and subregional dimension by linking the system's relevant regional and subregional activities to country priorities and the system's country-level activities;

(c)   In order to facilitate the above, develop at the country level, an inventory of regional and subregional activities, carried out by various parts of the system (regional commission, United Nations funds and programmes, specialized agencies) in which the country is participating, more particularly those involving policy analysis, priority identification and capacity-building, and those where the country is providing expertise, institutions or facilities;

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[4] See General Assembly resolution 53/192, para. 41.

(d)   Maintain liaison with non-United Nations intergovernmental bodies located in the country.

23.   Recognizing the importance of the regional and subregional dimension of operational activities and their direct and indirect benefit to country-level work, an agreed system-wide framework for the allocation of resources for inter-country activities should be developed. This should represent higher levels of allocation from regular budgets and extrabudgetary funds of agencies and departments of the system, and especially all United Nations funds and programmes than those currently available.

IV. Monitoring of action

24.   The regional meetings, to be chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General, will monitor the action being taken on paragraphs 12–22 within the framework of their annual programme.

25.   In addition, the monitoring of action taken by various components of the system on this guidance note will be effected in the context of system-wide reports on follow-up of global conferences and triennial policy reviews of operational activities of the United Nations system for development. Resident coordinators should report on it in their annual reports.

Appendix

Examples[5]

The examples of good practice set out below have been selected from readily available material, responses from a few organizations, and annual or biennial reports.

I. Asia

1.   An ASEAN[6] pharmaceuticals project (WHO) is a collaborative project with the ASEAN Subcommittee on Health and Nutrition with the main objective of capacity-building, standard-setting and quality control in the pharmaceutical sector. Its framework and activities are reviewed by the ASEAN Working Group on Pharmaceuticals while ASEAN country coordinators prioritize programme activities. Each participating country takes responsibility for one or more components, utilizing national institutions and expertise. For example, Malaysia has taken responsibility for quality assurance training, the Philippines for drug evaluation, Indonesia for training auditors on good manufacturing practices, Singapore and Brunei Darussalam for training in clinical pharmacy, and Thailand for training for production and utilization of regional standards. Funds for TCDC are provided in national budgets. WHO provides overall management and technical support and high-level technical inputs, as required.

2.   An assistance in agricultural project formulation, monitoring and evaluation in ASEAN (FAO) was a collaborative project with ASEAN's subsidiary body agricultural development planning centre. It aimed at capacity-building and trained a pool of agricultural personnel

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[5] To be complemented with ECE and UNOPS/UNHCR inputs.

[6] Association of South-East Asian Nations.

in the identification, formulation, monitoring and evaluation of regional technical cooperation projects in food, agriculture and forestry.

3.   The ASEAN Network for Women in Skills Training (ILO) is a similar project in collaboration with gender focal points in ASEAN countries. Its objective is to create a pool of trainers using subregional expertise and national institutions with catalytic inputs (international consultants, fellowships etc.) being provided by the ILO.

4.   An ESCAP-ASEAN project on multimodal transport development and transport of dangerous goods was organized jointly with the active participation of member countries to explore options and propose policy and programme action.

5.   An ESCAP-ASEAN joint seminar on trade and investment cooperation in South-East Asia was organized at the request of ASEAN to examine various aspects of intraregional trade and investment focusing on the accession of new member countries.

6.   A regional consultation to help identify joint strategies and serve as a basis for joint resources mobilization for response to HIV/AIDS was planned jointly by the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), the European Commission and UNAIDS in July 1997.

South Pacific

7.   A basic education and life skills project (UNESCO) was implemented in cooperation with subregional institutions; it covered 11 countries and helped strengthen the quality of literacy and primary education through training of teachers to improve classroom performance, curriculum innovations to enhance life skills, and training in educational management.

8.   An innovative regional project, the Asia Pacific Development Information Programme (APDIP), funded by UNEP and managed by UNOPS, seeks to spread the benefits of information technology in the Asian region. Under APDIP, a pilot project, "Mobile Internet unit" involving information technology education for rural schoolchildren, is being launched in Malaysia.

II.   Arab region

9.   A training workshop was covered to strengthen sustainability issues in agricultural policy analysis and planning in the Arab region (FAO). The workshop, cost-shared by the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development and the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas was held in collaboration with the Institute of National Planning at Cairo, under the aegis of the Joint Committee on Environment and Development in the Arab Region.

10.   UNDP's first regional cooperation framework for the Arab States (1997–2001) identified regional priorities on the basis of a sustained high-level dialogue with the main stakeholders and regional experts since 1996. Priority programmes include, among others, support to governance for social development; regional food security; social and economic reform; multilateral economic cooperation; sustainable management of natural resources, with special focus on water, etc.

III. Latin America

11.   A project on assessment of the impact of trade liberalization and policy implications for the agricultural sector of the Caribbean Economic Community (CARICOM) (FAO), in collaboration with the CARICOM secretariat and selected member States, analysed the impact of recent trade liberalization arrangements (North American Free Trade Association (NAFTA), Uruguay Round) on the agricultural sector, and identified policy options aimed at increasing and sustaining the competitiveness of agricultural products.

12.   A project on a tropical forestry action plan for CARICOM (FAO), in cooperation with CARICOM, assisted in the preparation of an action plan for the forestry sector in some member countries.

13.   A project on the harmonization of food standards and certification, in the framework of Economic Cooperation of Southern Cone Countries (MERCOSUR) (FAO), assisted in the comparative analysis of food standards in member countries, and drafted programmes for standardization and certification in cooperation with the national authorities.

14.   A project on the role of social actors in overcoming social exclusion in MERCOSUR (ILO), in cooperation with national institutions from Argentina and Brazil and consultants from Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay, would carry out analytical work on social exclusion. It would cooperate with ECLAC (Montevideo). Five national workshops and one subregional workshop are planned. It is expected to prepare minimum elements for a socio-economic policy to promote social integration.

IV. Africa[7]

15.   A drought monitoring centre at Harare (WMO) capacity-building project aims to train personnel of 12 member countries of the Southern African Development Committee (SADC) to provide better and more reliable services for detecting and monitoring drought and hazardous weather events.

16.   A forest industries training centre for SADC (FAO) project strengthened the subregional training centre for forest industries and carried out training of trainers.

17.   A project on a remote sensing component of the early warning system in SADC countries (FAO) was carried out in several phases, and helped establish an early warning system for agro-meteorological purposes.

18.   A Southern African TB control initiative (WHO) aims to build partnerships among the member countries to implement effective TB control programmes and integrate them into the normal health systems.

19.   An occupational health and safety programme for SADC countries (ILO) aims to reduce the existing high rates of occupational accidents and reduce occupational hazards through training of personnel in member countries.

20.   A study on textbook provision and the feasibility of cooperation among SADC countries (UNESCO) assisted seven member countries in developing appropriate policies for textbook

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[7] All programmes in the SADC subregion are prioritized by the sector coordinators and sector ministerial meetings, and are carried out in cooperation with national institutions; TCDC components are built in wherever possible.

production as part of their basic education objectives. It involved the establishment of national task forces and exchange of experience among the participating countries.

21. An SADC/European Commission conference held in December 1996, with the participation of UNAIDS, focused on regional approaches to HIV/AIDS in southern Africa and proposed multisectoral initiatives to fight the epidemic in the region. As recommended by the conference, a draft code of conduct for HIV/AIDS and employment for SADC member States was issued in May 1997, with inputs from the ILO through the SADC Employment and Labour Sector.

V. Europe

22. The Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI) is a subregional framework in which countries from and around the former Yugoslavia work together, implementing specific projects to resolve technical obstacles to economic development. The Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) provides SECI with the intergovernmental forum in which all participating as well as supporting States are equal members. ECE also provides the technical support to the projects decided upon by the participating States. These projects address transboundary problems which cannot be solved at the national level.

23. Cooperation between the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and the Central European Initiative (CEI) and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), two subregional organizations, are two other examples of synergies at the regional level. The cooperation takes various forms: the sharing by ECE of its policy analysis and the instruments of integration it negotiates (conventions, norms, standards), technical advice and assistance in the preparation of projects and the organization of workshops and seminars.

VI. Other groups

24. An onchocerciasis control programme in West Africa (WHO), a major subregional project to eradicate river blindness, is a successful example of several countries joining together to deal with a common problem. In all, 11 countries have participated in it over almost 25 years with massive donor contribution. Close inter-country collaboration and progressive transfer of activities to national health systems was achieved through the establishment of a joint programme committee with the participation of recipient countries and donors, and networks of national coordinators and technical personnel engaged in the different aspects of the programme.

25. A series of African network projects (UNESCO) aim to train and research networks to facilitate capacity-building, establish priorities for research, provide a forum for cooperation and exchange of information, and contribute to indigenizing high-level research. Among these are: African Biosciences Network; African Network of Microbiological Resource Centres; and Training and Research on African Coastal Marine Systems. The projects were based on cooperation and participation by OAU and regional and subregional organizations, e.g., African Network of Scientific and Technological Institutions, West Africa Rice Development Association, Pan-African Union for Science and Technology, and Regional Coordinating Committee for the African Coastal Zone.

26. The Development Programme for Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons (PRODERE) stands out as an example of an integrated approach linking emergency relief and development on a subregional basis, involving a number of United Nations agencies

(UNOPS, UNHCR, WHO, the ILO and others). The Programme covered countries in Central America and was the major outcome of the International Conference on Central American Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons (1989).

Annex VI

ACC guidance note on the partnership approach: principles underpinning the United Nations system's operational collaboration with civil society organizations

1. Valuing partnership with civil society

1.1   The recent cycle of world conferences and the reform initiatives within the United Nations system have acknowledged that working in partnership with civil society organizations will contribute significantly to the achievement of the United Nations system objectives. The United Nations system therefore attaches great importance to cooperation with civil society organizations and looks forward to intensifying, expanding and refining that relationship.

1.2   Collaboration with civil society organizations should enable the United Nations system to *improve the nature and quality* of the work through participatory development processes at national and international levels by incorporating the perspectives and practices of civil society organizations and movements. Collaboration with civil society organizations should, accordingly, enhance the United Nations system's efforts to assist Member States in achieving economic and social progress.

1.3   The application of *the partnership approach* should enhance the fundamental value of civil society organizations that have the capacity and/or potential to act as catalysts and mobilizers for promoting people-centred sustainable development, through structural changes in policy, governance and operational practices and by fostering solidarity among people and nations.

1.4   The partnership approach implies the involvement of all parties, particularly Governments, at every stage of programme planning and implementation, from needs identification through to monitoring and evaluation.

1.5   Co-funding and contributions in kind can help ensure balanced partnerships. However, such balance can also be achieved between partners of unequal economic or political leverage provided that both sides give sufficient weight to non-monetary qualitative strengths, which should also be a criteria for selecting partners. These strengths may include local knowledge, credibility with the local community, outreach to disadvantaged or marginalized groups, or capacity to mobilize constituencies.

1.6   A balanced partnership implies two-way processes of accountability, in which *upstream accountability* — such as on the way funds are administered and used — is complemented by *downstream accountability* — for example on the way local knowledge and information are used in macro-policy formulation or programme design.

2. Creating an enabling environment: civil society organizations capacity-building and institutional development

2.1   The United Nations system should give further consideration to issues of accountability, representation and criteria to assess competence, as well as to ways of supporting, where necessary, capacity-building of civil society groups at the national and local levels that could contribute positively to national socio-economic development, humanitarian assistance and peace-building.

2.2   The partnership approach requires supporting civil society organizations at two complementary and mutually reinforcing levels:

– At the micro level, United Nations agencies should seek to strengthen the capacity of civil society organizations in such areas as technical know-how, management, accountability, advocacy and legal literacy;

– At the macro level, United Nations agencies should, with the agreement of the host country, help to foster an *enabling environment* for civil society organizations. This may include supporting Governments in the exercise of their responsibilities as prime framers of domestic policies and programmes, strengthening the links between national Governments, the United Nations development system, civil society, national non-governmental organizations and the private sector that are involved in the development process, and catalysing and facilitating the creation and consolidation of mechanisms for dialogue between Governments and civil society organizations and among civil society organizations themselves. It may also include working with Governments in developing legal frameworks that would secure the economic and political space for civil society organizations to operate and grow. Such an enabling environment may also be improved by strengthening government departments that work with civil society organizations and by informing Governments on the benefits of working with civil society organizations.

2.3   United Nations agencies should strive to ensure that sufficient budgetary resources are allocated to respond to the need of strengthening the capacity of civil society organizations.

3.   Sound institutional practice in promoting the partnership approach by the United Nations system

3.1   The partnership approach should be reflected in the institutional practice of the United Nations system's operational collaboration with civil society organizations. This requires relationships to be open and transparent, with adequate human and financial resources secured to ensure regular consultation, information flows, accountability and evaluation.

3.2   To facilitate partnership, United Nations system agencies should strive to achieve greater flexibility, user-friendliness and harmonization of their administrative and financial procedures, as well as coherence in their informal and formal (contractual) relationships with civil society organizations.

3.3   The partnerships and joint activities pursued with civil society organizations should be sustainable, gender-sensitive and culturally sensitive, and fully consistent with internationally recognized human rights principles.

3.4   The United Nations system should engage in more systematic consultation with relevant civil society organizations in the preparation of substantive as well as "coordination" reports, particularly concerning follow-up to recent global conferences.

3.5   Recognizing that United Nations system policies for interaction with civil society vary with the nature of the partner organization and the type of activity, such policies and modalities of civil society organization participation in the work of the United Nations system should be the subject of systematic, regular and intensified inter-agency exchanges of information.

3.6   ACC encourages more systematic inter-agency exchange of information and sharing of experience on the way in which policies and practices governing dialogue and cooperation with the business community are evolving in various organizations of the system. Periodic

assessments could be made by ACC of the evolution of those partnerships and of their implications for the system as a whole, including the feasibility of inter-agency collaborative projects.

3.7   The participation of civil society, including non-governmental organizations, in the meetings of ACC subsidiary bodies should take place within the framework of ACC guidelines on the subject.

3.8   ACC encourages the United Nations Staff College to develop specific programmes to enhance staff capacity to work with civil society.

4.   Managing partnerships in situations of conflict of interest

4.1   While recognizing the existence of conflicts of interest, the partnership approach should, *inter alia*, facilitate the empowerment of poorer and more marginalized segments of society. Therefore, the selection of both the types of activities and civil society organizations partners will depend on careful, case-by-case analyses of civil society dynamics and the overall political economic context.

4.2   Where needed, the United Nations system should help to minimize existing and potential social and political tensions through appropriate efforts. Particularly in unstable political contexts, United Nations system organizations should maintain the neutrality and impartiality of their collaboration with civil society organizations, and strive to secure cooperation and support from host Governments.