



United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination

11 December 2001

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

United Nations Headquarters, New York
19 and 20 October 2001

Summary of ACC conclusions requiring specific follow-up

ACC private meeting

Members of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) held a private meeting in the morning of 19 October 2001 at which they received a briefing on the latest developments in Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, Kosovo and East Timor. They had a wide-ranging discussion on the events of 11 September and their consequences and expressed their full commitment to fighting terrorism on all fronts. In that endeavour, Executive Heads shared a common vision and each organization within the system was making a contribution to the overall effort against terrorism. In addition, Executive Heads reviewed the impact of the events of 11 September on the already slowing global economy and the implications for the ability of the system to meet the targets set out in the Millennium Declaration, especially the halving of poverty by the year 2015. They also carried out an extensive review of the humanitarian challenges presented by the situation in and around Afghanistan.

System-wide support for Africa and the New African Initiative

Executive Heads considered concrete measures to operationalize the policy conclusions reached at their Nairobi session in April 2001, in the context of recent intergovernmental events on Africa and the report of the High-level Committee on Programmes.

* By its decision 2001/321 of 24 October 2001, the Economic and Social Council changed the name of the Administrative Committee on Coordination to United Nations Chief Executives Board for Coordination.

They agreed that the United Nations system, in following up on the New African Initiative and in relating to Africa's leadership, should be in a responsive rather than "activist" mode. At the same time, it should pursue a deliberate strategy to (a) engender support for the Initiative, both within Africa and in the international community, and to fight cynicism and to nurture an atmosphere of optimism and seriousness of commitment; (b) integrate the implementation of the Initiative in the broader follow-up processes of the Millennium Declaration and in the agenda and outcomes of forthcoming conferences and summits; (c) work with African countries and their regional organizations to strengthen inter-agency coordination at the regional level within the framework of the Economic Commission for Africa; (d) make full use of existing country-level mechanisms while supporting ongoing processes of review and improvement of national coordination frameworks, particularly the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, gearing those frameworks to reinforce national leadership and national capacity-building; (e) mobilize support for effective country-level implementation; and (f) set in motion a systematic process of close monitoring of United Nations system performance at the country level, against the framework of the New African Initiative. Such a process should fully engage the operational programmes, the Bretton Woods institutions and the sectoral agencies; its policy lessons should be addressed at the regional level and, through it, at the global level within individual agencies as well as collectively in ACC.

ACC endorsed the recommendations of the High-level Committee on Programmes as presented below, and requested the Committee to keep Africa on its agenda and the implementation of the New African Initiative under review, drawing on information from regional and country levels:

(a) All organizations of the system should be invited to undertake a review of their Africa-related programmes and to examine how they can respond to the priorities of the New African Initiative in their future activities;

(b) At the global level, a special effort should be made to ensure that Africa's requirements continue to be given priority and focused attention in the international agenda and international economic negotiations. As part of this effort, any plan for deliberations by the High-level Committee on Programmes and ACC on the follow-up to the Millennium Declaration, including the monitoring reports, should provide for systematic attention to both progress in the implementation of the provisions of the Declaration concerning Africa, and the implications for Africa of follow-up action in relation to all aspects of the Declaration;

(c) At the regional level, consideration should be given to ways of further reinforcing regional coordination mechanisms in line with the ACC conclusion to shift the focus of inter-agency coordination increasingly to the regional level as a means to help advance African leadership and ownership of their programmes. The specific nature of such mechanisms should be determined by the content of regional programmes. United Nations system organizations were also encouraged to participate in the inter-agency regional consultations being convened by ECA in order to determine how they would assist in the implementation of the New African Initiative;

(d) At the country level, inter-agency coordination is most meaningful since the bulk of United Nations system support to Africa is delivered there. Progress in strengthening the complementarity among the country programme frameworks currently in use within the system should be accelerated so as to, inter alia, minimize

the reporting and other transactions costs of programme countries. As part of this effort, consultations should be intensified — in the field as well as at the global level with the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development and other partners — to strengthen “harmonization and coordination of bilateral and multilateral development cooperation activities in support of national policy and programmes”, as recommended by the 2001 high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council. Recent proposals building on ongoing initiatives such as the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers and aimed at gradually ensuring that all sources of development assistance coalesce around a country’s announced development strategy are highly relevant in this regard and should be pursued, in the first instance, in the context of the financing for development process;

(e) In the light of the launching of the New African Initiative, the General Assembly’s final review of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s should focus on bringing out lessons that would assist African countries and their development partners in effectively pursuing the Initiative. The exercise will be a timely occasion, as stated by the Economic and Social Council, for an assessment of the role which the United Nations system and the international community have played in supporting African development, and for agreeing, in that light, on the strategic, financial and other factors that will ensure the success of the Initiative.

Administrative and other matters

Staff security and safety

ACC reaffirmed the priority it attaches to staff security and safety and expressed appreciation to the Chairman of the High-level Committee on Management for his report on the work of the Committee, particularly on cost-sharing arrangements for staff security, as well as other major activities of the Committee. ACC invited the Committee to devote special attention to this issue in its future work programme.

Dialogue with the Chairman of the International Civil Service Commission and staff representatives

ACC heard statements from the Chairman of the International Civil Service Commission and the representatives of the Coordinating Committee for International Staff Unions and Associations of the United Nations system and the Federation of International Civil Servants Associations and had an exchange of views with them on issues relating, among others, to the Commission’s review, the pay and benefits system, career planning and development in the context of a changing environment, staff security, human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome in the workplace and staff-management relations.

ACC welcomed the new initiative of the International Civil Service Commission regarding the pay and benefits system. It reaffirmed its common view on the necessity of an independent review of the Commission aimed at strengthening both the international civil service and the Commission itself and expressed the hope that the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly would take urgent action in that regard. The Committee requested the High-level Committee on Management, as part of its mandate, to help prepare a more focused and dynamic dialogue with the staff

representatives, which following the establishment of the High-level Committee on Management, would now be held once a year at its fall sessions.

Review of ACC

In carrying out its review of the subsidiary bodies in the programme area in the light of the report of the High-level Committee on Programmes, ACC concluded by endorsing the view (see para. 22) that all existing subsidiary bodies should cease to exist by the end of the year, and that the future inter-agency support requirements of the Committee would best be handled through ad hoc, time-bound, task-oriented arrangements, using a lead agency approach, or by addressing requests to existing inter-agency networks or expert groups. The Secretary-General requested the High-level Committee on Programmes to finalize expeditiously its review on that basis. In supporting the general approach to coordination favoured by the Committee, ACC reaffirmed its decision that the review of the subsidiary machinery should be zero-based. It decided 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. At the same time, ACC recognized the need for a number of inter-agency bodies to pursue their coordination work as expert bodies rather than as subsidiaries of ACC. Such expert bodies should also function on a task-oriented basis, using lead agency arrangements. It was noted that lead agency arrangements are an effective means of strengthening inter-agency consultative processes, instilling a greater sense of ownership, tapping the relevant competencies of the system, and enhancing the substantive content of inter-agency cooperation.

ACC requested the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the High-level Committee on Programmes to review the terms of reference of the Committee and its working methods, including the issues of appropriate representation, secretariat support, and its relationship to ACC, with a view to enhancing the effectiveness of the Committee, and to report to ACC at its Spring 2002 session.

Dates of next ACC session

ACC decided to hold its next session on 10 and 11 April 2002 at the headquarters of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, in Rome.

1. The Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) held its second regular session of 2001 at United Nations Headquarters on 19 and 20 October 2001, under the chairmanship of the Secretary-General of the United Nations. The agenda for the session was as follows:

1. Adoption of the agenda.
2. System-wide support for Africa and the New African Initiative.
3. Administrative and other matters:
 - (a) Staff security and safety;
 - (b) Dialogue with the Chairman of the International Civil Service Commission and staff representatives;
 - (c) Review of ACC;
 - (d) Dates of the next ACC session.

I. ACC private meeting

2. A private meeting of ACC members was held in the morning of 19 October 2001. The Executive Heads received a briefing on the latest developments in Sierra Leone, Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, Kosovo and East Timor. They then had an extensive discussion on the events of 11 September and their consequences and expressed their full commitment to fighting terrorism on all fronts. In that endeavour, Executive Heads shared a common vision and each organization within the system was making a contribution to the overall effort against terrorism. In addition, Executive Heads reviewed the impact of the events of 11 September on the already slowing global economy and the implications for the ability of the system to meet the targets set out in the Millennium Declaration, especially the halving of poverty by the year 2015. They also carried out an extensive review of the humanitarian challenges presented by the situation in and around Afghanistan.

II. ACC retreat

3. At the invitation of the Secretary-General, ACC members held a retreat from the evening of Friday, 19 October, to Saturday, 20 October. The main issue at the retreat was "Follow-up by the United Nations system to

the Millennium Summit Declaration", focusing on two aspects: the monitoring and review of the implementation of the Millennium Declaration; and resource mobilization in attaining the Millennium goals at the national and international levels.

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

III. System-wide support for Africa and the New African Initiative

5. In his introduction, the Secretary-General recalled the conclusions reached at the Spring 2001 session of ACC at Nairobi and welcomed the visionary decision by the African leaders at the Lusaka Summit to launch the New African Initiative. The Initiative sets out their own strategy for economic resurgence in Africa and challenged the international community to support the African nations translate this framework into a workable plan and to assist in its effective and sustained implementation. He invited Executive Heads to focus their discussions on concrete measures to operationalize the policy conclusions they had reached at the Nairobi session, in the light of the 2001 high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council in July and other relevant developments since the Lusaka Summit.

6. In his briefing on the current situation with regard to the New African Initiative, the Executive Secretary of ECA highlighted the value added of the Initiative and outlined the reasons why the principles on which it was based and the policies and approaches which informed it, had generated such strong interest and support in the United Nations and the international community. He then outlined the immediate challenges ahead for Africa and the international community in following up on the Initiative, which included: prioritizing its objectives; translating its framework into national programmes while at the same time pursuing and fine-tuning its regional dimensions; building national and regional capacity; reinforcing African ownership of the implementation process; getting key stakeholders and constituencies in African countries to support the objectives of the Initiative; and achieving quick results in a few areas to enhance its credibility and sustain support for its long-term implementation. He also reported on important developments since the Lusaka Summit in July,

particularly the consensus reached in Addis Ababa in September 2001 to establish implementation mechanisms for the Initiative at three levels: a Heads of State Implementation Committee, a Steering Committee, and a secretariat responsible for the day-to-day running of the Initiative. He noted that G-8 countries have established their own Steering Committee of Permanent Representatives to interface with Africa's leadership on the implementation of the Initiative. The Initiative's Steering Committee will hold a meeting in Abuja, Nigeria, followed by a meeting of the Heads of State, in order to finalize decisions relating to the implementation of the Initiative. The Regional Consultation meeting to be convened in Addis Ababa at the end of November will provide an opportunity to reflect on how the United Nations system can best respond to the New African Initiative. The main focus of the meeting will be to examine the collective action that the system can take on thematic, cross-cutting issues and to review reporting arrangements that would provide a more coherent picture of what the system is doing in support of Africa's development. A regional United Nations Development Assistance Framework might be considered in that context to identify the system's priorities, rally efforts around those priorities and report on progress made. African leaders are determined to drive the New African Initiative process themselves and intend to define their own requirements for support from the system. In the meantime, the United Nations system must avoid uncoordinated approaches towards Africa's leaders, keeping also in mind the role that ECA plays in the process.

7. Reporting on the outcome of the second session of the High-level Committee on Programmes, the Chairman of the Committee noted that it had been guided in its work by three basic policy directives emanating from the ACC session in Nairobi: (a) the United Nations system should exercise the utmost restraint in launching new initiatives; (b) it should unite in support of an African-owned and African-led framework of action based on a rationalization and concordance of initiatives; and (c) the focus of inter-agency coordination must shift to the regional level to foster African leadership and ownership.

8. On that basis, the High-level Committee on Programmes had put forward the following recommendations for follow-up action:

(a) All organizations of the system should be invited to undertake a review of their Africa-related programmes and to examine how they can respond to the priorities of the New African Initiative in their future activities;

(b) At the global level, a special effort should be made to ensure that Africa's requirements continue to be given priority and focused attention in the international agenda and international economic negotiations. As part of this effort, any plan for deliberations by the High-level Committee on Programmes and ACC on the follow-up to the Millennium Declaration, including the monitoring reports, should provide for systematic attention to both progress in the implementation of the provisions of the Declaration concerning Africa, and the implications for Africa of follow-up action in relation to all aspects of the Declaration;

(c) At the regional level, consideration should be given to ways of further reinforcing regional coordination mechanisms in line with the ACC conclusion to shift the focus of inter-agency coordination increasingly to the regional level as a means to help advance African leadership and ownership of their programmes. The specific nature of such mechanisms should be determined by the content of regional programmes. United Nations system organizations were also encouraged to participate in the inter-agency regional consultations being convened by ECA in order to determine how they would assist in the implementation of the New African Initiative;

(d) At the country level, inter-agency coordination is most meaningful since the bulk of United Nations system support to Africa is delivered there. Progress in strengthening the complementarity among the country programme frameworks currently in use within the system should be accelerated, so as to, inter alia, minimize the reporting and other transactions costs of programme countries. As part of this effort, consultations should be intensified — in the field as well as at the global level with the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development and other partners — to strengthen "harmonization and coordination of bilateral and multilateral development cooperation activities in support of national policy and programmes", as recommended by the 2001 high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council. Recent proposals building on ongoing initiatives such as the

Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers and aimed at gradually ensuring that all sources of development assistance coalesce around a country's announced development strategy are highly relevant in this regard and should be pursued, in the first instance, in the context of the financing for development process;

(e) In the light of the launching of the New African Initiative, the General Assembly's final review of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s should focus on bringing out lessons that would assist African countries and their development partners in effectively pursuing the Initiative. The exercise will be a timely occasion, as stated by the Economic and Social Council, for an assessment of the role which the United Nations system and the international community have played in supporting African development, and for agreeing, in that light, on the strategic, financial and other factors that will ensure the success of the Initiative.

9. The general sense of the discussion in ACC was that the system, in following up on the New African Initiative and in relating to Africa's leadership, should be in a responsive rather than "activist" mode. At the same time, it should pursue a deliberate strategy to (a) engender support for the Initiative, both within Africa and in the international community, and to fight cynicism and to nurture an atmosphere of optimism and seriousness of commitment; (b) integrate the implementation of the Initiative in the broader follow-up processes of the Millennium Declaration and in the agenda and outcomes of forthcoming conferences and summits; (c) work with African countries and their regional organizations to strengthen inter-agency coordination at the regional level within the framework of ECA; (d) make full use of existing country-level mechanisms while supporting ongoing processes of review and improvement of national coordination frameworks, particularly the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, gearing those frameworks to reinforce national leadership and national capacity-building; (e) mobilize support for effective country-level implementation; and (f) set in motion a systematic process of close monitoring of the United Nations system performance at the country level, against the framework of the New African Initiative. Such a process should fully engage the operational programmes, the Bretton Woods institutions and the sectoral agencies; its policy lessons should be addressed at the regional level and, through it, at the

global level within individual agencies as well as collectively in ACC. Specifically, ACC concluded that:

(a) Africa is and should remain a major arena for the political, development and humanitarian work of the system. In the aftermath of 11 September, there is a risk that Africa may receive less attention precisely at a time when Africa is getting its act together as reflected in the New African Initiative. It is therefore essential for organizations of the system to continue to emphasize the African dimension in their global work and provide visible and vocal support to the Initiative;

(b) The shift from a donor-driven to an Africa-led development process will require adjustments in the focus of international support to reflect the priorities identified by African leaders. While good governance and social services remain essential, greater attention may need to be given to infrastructure development and the productive sectors of African economies. Organizations of the United Nations system would also need to examine their Africa-related initiatives and align their programmes to best meet the priorities of the New African Initiative. The importance of avoiding institutional rivalries and ensuring a coherent and coordinated response to the Initiative was considered crucial;

(c) A number of specific areas where urgent action was required in line with the priorities set out in the New African Initiative were highlighted. They included poverty eradication, particularly the nexus between poverty and employment, rural poverty, human capital, HIV/AIDS and HIV/AIDS in the workplace, small and medium enterprises, especially in agriculture, revitalizing African economies and markets, monitoring market access, infrastructure development, environment and biodiversity and support for the African Information Society Initiative. The importance of conflict prevention as key to ensuring the New African Initiative success and promoting African development was stressed. The Nile Basin Initiative was cited as a good example of efforts to prevent conflict in the region. In addition, capacity-building was emphasized as essential to achieving the goals of the New African Initiative. Tapping the productive capacity of refugees was also seen as contributing to African development. Refugees should be better integrated into regular development assistance programmes and efforts should be made to promote their integration into the local communities, or in their countries of origin upon their return;

(d) Progress towards achieving the goals set out in the New African Initiative as well as in the Millennium Declaration needs to be closely monitored. The implementation mechanisms established in the framework of the New African Initiative as well as the African peer review mechanism, whereby African countries would hold each other accountable on progress in implementing the Initiative, were key to that process. Equally essential is the joint mechanism of “mutual accountability” between donors and African countries which would monitor progress made by programme countries as well as fulfilment by donor partners of their commitments. In that context, ACC welcomed the intention of the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund to address progress regarding official development assistance in the Fund’s surveillance discussions;

(e) The United Nations system should create its own support and review mechanism prior to the next G-8 summit in the light of the outcome of the regional consultation meeting in Addis Ababa in November 2001. It should focus on the achievement of concrete results and avoid duplicative coordination mechanisms. The High-level Committee on Programmes should keep Africa on its agenda and keep the implementation of the New African Initiative under review, drawing on information from the regional and country levels. At the regional level, ECA will continue to act as the system’s key interlocutor with African countries on the Initiative. At the country level, the United Nations Development Programme should coordinate progress monitoring in implementing the Initiative;

(f) The poverty reduction strategy process was seen as a key tool for articulating the support of the United Nations system to African Governments in implementing the New African Initiative. The ongoing review and learning process on the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers was considered essential to fine tuning and improving the instrument to ensure that African countries continued to own it;

(g) Resource mobilization for the New African Initiative through increased official development assistance and foreign investments as well as improved market access for African goods is key to the implementation of the Initiative. While the focus of the next G-8 summit in Canada on Africa has implications for mobilizing the resources required for the Initiative, it is important that donors other than G-8 countries be involved in the process. The need to avoid public

promises and private pessimism towards Africa was also highlighted;

(h) ACC expressed appreciation for the report of the Chairman of the High-level Committee on Programmes on the outcome of the second session of the Committee and endorsed its recommendations.

IV. Administrative and other matters

A. Staff security and safety

10. In introducing the item, the Secretary-General observed that staff safety and security had been a major concern for ACC for many years and would, no doubt, continue to be one in the future. The United Nations system owed it to its staff in the field to provide them with the best possible protection in the very difficult environment in which they serve with dedication. He noted that a number of steps were being taken to enhance staff security. As requested by the General Assembly, the High-level Committee on Management had developed a cost-sharing mechanism for the United Nations security management system. A report on that mechanism would be presented to the Assembly, through the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions. The report would also reiterate the request for adequate financial support from Member States and the urgent need for the appointment of a full-time Security Coordinator, at the level of assistant secretary-general.

11. The Chairman of the High-level Committee on Management reported that, following inter-agency consultations, the Committee had decided at its second session, in September 2001, to adopt a cost-sharing formula for staff security based on agreements reached at a Task Force meeting held in July 2001 in respect of a total budget of \$53.2 million for the biennium 2002-2003. Under that cost-sharing arrangement, the United Nations would bear the costs of executive direction and management, amounting to \$4.2 million. Field-related expenditures would be shared among all agencies on the basis of an agreed formula whereby organizations with less than 0.5 per cent of the total field workforce would pay a flat rate of \$25,000 for the biennium; organizations with between 0.5 per cent and 1 per cent of the total field workforce would pay a flat rate of \$100,000 for the biennium; and the remaining costs would be borne by all other organizations on the

proportional basis of their overall field presence. In that context, the Chairman of the High-level Committee on Management highlighted the fact that the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund had also joined the cost-sharing arrangement. The High-level Committee on Management had also considered measures to strengthen the management of the security system and requested a task force led by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to review the relevant proposals. It took up as part of its work programme the following: capitalizing on technology, simplification of procedures, processes and entitlements, sustainable employability and dialogue with staff representatives.

12. ACC reaffirmed the priority it attaches to staff security and safety and expressed appreciation to the Chairman of the High-level Committee on Management for his report on the work of the Committee, particularly on cost-sharing arrangements for staff security, as well as other major activities of the Committee. ACC invited the High-level Committee on Management to devote special attention to staff security in its future work programme. In the light of recent security concerns, ACC also encouraged the High-level Committee on Management to look into the possibility of developing a common United Nations system approach for addressing the risks associated with the handling of mail contaminated with anthrax.

B. Dialogue with the Chairman of the International Civil Service Commission and staff representatives

13. ACC heard statements from the Chairman of the International Civil Service Commission and the representatives of the Coordinating Committee for International Staff Unions and Associations of the United Nations system (CCISUA) and the Federation of International Civil Servants Associations (FICSA) and had an exchange of views with them on issues relating, among others, to the ICSC review, the pay and benefits system, career planning and development in the context of a changing environment, staff security, HIV/AIDS in the workplace and staff-management relations.

14. The Chairman of ICSC presented the main issues that are being closely followed by all organizations of the system in the context of forthcoming review by the

General Assembly of its twenty-seventh annual report (A/56/30). This includes the review of the pay and benefits system, and the revision of the 1954 standards of conduct for the international civil service. The analysis undertaken by ICSC on those issues brought to light the changing nature of the work brought about by new information and communication technologies, and the need to consider more modern human resources management approaches, such as broadbanded pay systems, performance pay and bonuses, the creation of a senior executive cadre and the use of flexible contracts. The recent place-to-place surveys for headquarters duty stations, Berne and Washington, D.C. (which showed an increased post adjustment for all locations), the General Service salary survey for Rome, the surveys of best prevailing conditions of employment for the trades and crafts and language teacher categories in New York, and the impact of the introduction of the euro on certain common system emoluments (such as education grant level, children's and secondary dependant's allowance, General Service salary scales for Vienna, Rome and Paris, and daily subsistence allowance rates in the national currencies of the euro-zone countries) were also taken into account. The underlying purpose was to try to ensure that the pay system and the management of staff compensation are directly linked to the achievement of organizational objectives, and are sufficiently flexible as to be responsive to the strategic goals and changing practices of United Nations system organizations.

15. The President of CCISUA put forth several issues of interest to the system but focused primarily on issues of staff security in the workplace and in remote locations, especially in view of the tragedy of 11 September; sustainability in the context of hiring, retaining and motivating staff, delegation of authority to managers and the need to put appropriate accountability mechanisms in place, assessment of the required managerial and supervisory skills of managers, staff mobility and promotions and career development. CCISUA is ready to make innovative and constructive proposals on these issues for the benefit of the staff and in the interest of all organizations of the system. The representative of FICSA presented to ACC, for its consideration, eight issues covering the following: United Nations security policies and related emergency measures; policy on HIV/AIDS in the United Nations workplace; freedom of association, negotiation and the role of staff representation; reform of the administration of justice in the United Nations;

guiding principles for reform of human resources management in United Nations system organizations; the position of FICSA concerning the recommendations of ICSC contained in its report to the General Assembly for the year 2001 (A/56/30); strengthening ICSC; and funding to restore the competitiveness of salaries of the staff of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. In addition, FICSA requested ACC to reiterate its support for a review of the composition, mandate and functioning of ICSC, and to establish avenues for dialogue and exchange of views in the framework of the High-level Committee on Management. FICSA also requested ACC members to strengthen their support for FICSA through the provision of facilities in-kind and funding of staff costs and called attention to a number of reported incidents resulting from insufficient checks and balances on the authority delegated to high officials in country offices and in decentralized units.

16. ACC welcomed the new initiative of ICSC regarding the pay and benefits system. It reaffirmed its common view on the necessity of an independent review of ICSC aimed at strengthening both the international civil service and the Commission itself and expressed the hope that the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly would take urgent action in that regard.

17. ACC also welcomed the opportunity to hold a dialogue with staff representatives. It requested the High-level Committee on Management, as part of its mandate, to help ACC prepare a more focused and dynamic dialogue with the staff representatives. ACC noted that, following the establishment of the High-level Committee on Management, it would now hold a dialogue with the staff once a year in the fall, instead of twice a year as in the past.

C. Review of the Administrative Committee on Coordination

18. The Secretary-General recalled that, in its previous discussions on the issue, ACC had established guidelines for the review of its subsidiary machinery in both the programme and the management areas. The High-level Committee on Management concluded its review of the subsidiary bodies within the purview of its responsibility in December 2000, and ACC endorsed its recommendations at the spring 2001

session. In the programme area, ACC agreed that 2001 would be a transitional period, during which the existing bodies would continue to function to allow time for the High-level Committee on Programmes to carry out a thorough examination of their work, and submit its conclusions to ACC at the present session.

19. In presenting the report of the High-level Committee on Programmes, its Chairman recalled the two main principles that guided the review of the subsidiary bodies in the programme area: a zero-based approach and substance should precede form. The Committee agreed that the main criterion for the retention of any subsidiary body of ACC should not be the relative importance of inter-agency coordination in any given area but its own requirements for continuing support arising from its own mandate and priorities as well as the overall coordination needs within the United Nations system. It decided to draw the attention of ACC to its conclusions as follows: (a) a generalized approach should be adopted whereby the existing subsidiary bodies may pursue coordination in their respective areas but not necessarily as standing bodies of the High-level Committee on Programmes; (b) a working group on operational activities and the functioning of the Resident Coordinator system should be established under the aegis of the High-level Committee on Programmes; (c) further consultations were required to finalize a decision on the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality, the Joint United Nations Information Committee and the Subcommittee on Statistical Activities and on the continuation, until the Johannesburg Summit, of the existing coordination arrangements in the area of sustainable development; the Chairman of the High-level Committee on Programmes would pursue such consultations with the High-level Committee on Management and heads of agencies to finalize recommendations for consideration by ACC at its spring session in 2002; (d) in the light of its intention to address, at its next session, the first four proposed priority themes of the Road Map, that is: (a) preventing armed conflict; (b) treatment and prevention of diseases, including HIV/AIDS and malaria; (c) financing for development; and (d) strategies for sustainable development, the High-level Committee on Programmes will consider appropriate time-bound arrangements to provide inputs to its first session in 2002 and will revert to its consideration of the most appropriate inter-agency coordination arrangements in the light of ACC discussions on the follow-up to the

Millennium Declaration. Maintaining that the High-level Committee on Programmes is the engine for ACC reform in the programme area, the Chairman indicated his intention to introduce a number of measures to further enhance the Committee's effectiveness. They include strengthening the consultative process for the preparation of the agenda of the Committee, timely circulation of documents to Committee members with a view to identifying concrete proposals and policy recommendations to ACC, and improving consultations on the formulation of options for decisions at meetings of the High-level Committee on Programmes. He stressed the importance of appropriate representation at Committee meetings, that is, the senior-most official dealing with programmes in their respective organizations, to enable the Committee to carry out its mandate effectively.

20. Some members of ACC referred to the decision of ACC requesting the High-level Committee on Programmes to undertake a "zero-based review" of the subsidiary machinery, and expressed the view that the proposals under consideration by the Committee, as outlined by the Chairman, were not in line with that decision, which was understood to mean that no existing subsidiary bodies would be retained as subsidiaries of the Committee. Another view expressed was that a "zero-based review", and the language of the relevant ACC decision, which referred to the need to keep permanent bodies to a minimum and to subject their retention to rigorous criteria, did not preclude the establishment of inter-agency bodies in a limited number of areas which, because of their immediate and ongoing relevance to the concerns and cross-sectoral mandate of ACC, would best be handled through a continuing subsidiary body of the High-level Committee on Programmes.

21. A number of comments were made on different existing bodies, and on the relative weight to be given to inter-agency coordination in cross sectoral (largely United Nations-led) areas, and in individual programme sectors. The need to ensure mutual reinforcement and avoid duplication between the United Nations executive committees, particularly the United Nations Development Group, and the High-level Committee on Programmes was also emphasized.

22. Several members of ACC indicated that all existing subsidiary bodies should cease to exist by the end of the year, and that the future inter-agency support requirements of the High-level Committee on

Programmes would best be handled through ad hoc, time-bound, task-oriented arrangements, using a lead agency approach, or by addressing requests to existing inter-agency networks or expert groups. The effectiveness of the functioning of the Committee itself was also raised.

23. ACC concluded by endorsing the above-mentioned view (see para. 22). The Secretary-General requested the High-level Committee on Programmes to finalize expeditiously its review on that basis. In supporting the general approach to coordination favoured by the Committee, ACC reaffirmed its decision that the review of the subsidiary machinery should be zero-based. It decided 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. At the same time, ACC recognized the need for a number of inter-agency bodies to pursue their coordination work as expert bodies rather than as subsidiaries of ACC. Such expert bodies should also function on a task-oriented basis, using lead agency arrangements. It was noted that lead agency arrangements are an effective means of strengthening inter-agency consultative processes, instilling a greater sense of ownership, tapping the relevant competencies of the system, and enhancing the substantive content of inter-agency cooperation.

24. ACC requested the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the High-level Committee on Programmes to review the terms of reference of the Committee and its working methods, including the issues of appropriate representation, secretariat support, and its relationship to ACC, with a view to enhancing the effectiveness of the Committee, and to report to ACC at its spring 2002 session.

D. Briefing on the World Summit on the Information Society

25. The Secretary-General of the Information Technology Unit briefed ACC on the preparations for the World Summit on the Information Society and reported that, following extensive consultations, agreement had been reached to hold the Summit in two phases. The first phase, which will take place in Geneva, hosted by the Government of Switzerland, from 10 to 12 December 2003, will take up all themes

related to the information society and adopt a declaration of principles and a related action plan. The second phase, which will take place in Tunis, hosted by the Government of Tunisia, in 2005, will focus on development themes, assess progress made and adopt any further action plan required. The Economic and Social Council welcomed the idea of holding the Summit at its 2001 session in Geneva and a resolution to support the Summit has been introduced in the General Assembly. The first meeting of the High-level Summit Organizing Committee, on 18 October 2001 at United Nations Headquarters in New York, had been very positive and had requested the executive secretariat of the Summit to draw up a list of relevant United Nations activities in the area of the information society to highlight the synergies and opportunities presented by the World Summit and to keep United Nations agencies informed about the Summit. It agreed that the Summit should focus on broad cross-cutting themes and issues and stressed the importance of involving the private sector and other interested entities in all phases of the Summit and its preparations. It suggested that United Nations agencies pool their efforts in organizing meetings related to information and communication so as to maximize the use of resources for the preparatory process. The High-level Summit Organizing Committee requested ACC to place the World Summit on the Information Society on the agenda of its fall 2002 or spring 2003 session.

E. Dates of the next session of the Administrative Committee on Coordination

26. ACC decided to hold its next session on 10 and 11 April 2002 at the headquarters of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, in Rome.
