



## Administrative Committee on Coordination

ACC/1996/4  
10 September 1996

ENGLISH AND FRENCH ONLY

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### SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE ON COORDINATION AT ITS FIRST REGULAR SESSION OF 1996

(United Nations Environment Programme headquarters,  
Nairobi, 28-30 April 1996)

#### SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

1. The Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) held its first regular session of 1996 at the headquarters of the United Nations Environment Programme in Nairobi from 28 to 30 April 1996, under the chairmanship of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali. The agenda for the session was as follows:

1. Adoption of the agenda.
2. United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa.
3. Coordinated follow-up to international conferences.
4. Other matters:
  - (a) Functioning of ACC and its subsidiary machinery;
  - (b) Administrative questions;
  - (c) Other matters arising from the work of the ACC machinery requiring the attention of ACC.

2. A private meeting between the Secretary-General and the executive heads of the specialized agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) who were present in Nairobi was held on 28 April 1996.

3. The present document outlines the issues raised under the agenda items and the conclusions and decisions adopted by the Committee.

4. In opening the session, the Secretary-General summarized discussions at the above-mentioned private meeting. He also drew attention to the study being conducted by Ms. Graça Machel on the impact of armed conflicts on children, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 48/157. The Secretary-General recalled

that, in the context of the study, which was supported by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in collaboration with the Centre for Human Rights of the United Nations Secretariat, regional organizations as well as United Nations system agencies were being closely consulted; the Secretary-General expressed the hope that all concerned organizations would contribute actively to the General Assembly debate on the outcome of the study, which was scheduled for November 1996.

#### I. UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM-WIDE SPECIAL INITIATIVE ON AFRICA

5. Following the launching of the United Nations System-Wide Special Initiative on Africa on 15 March 1996, ACC focused attention on arrangements that would ensure its effective and expeditious implementation. Executive heads reaffirmed their full support for the Initiative, as an integral part both of a renewed commitment by the United Nations system to African economic recovery and development and of the system's contribution to meeting the priorities of African Governments, particularly as contained in the Cairo Plan of Action adopted by African heads of State and Government in 1995. The Initiative provided a major opportunity for the organizations of the United Nations system to bring coherence and vision in support of a priority concern of the international community. There was a need to demonstrate, in a clear and transparent way, concrete progress through sustained implementation.

6. ACC was informed of the outcome of the Steering Committee's meeting held on 27 April 1996 in Nairobi, and of steps being taken to pursue the Initiative in various international forums and within individual organizations, as well as at the country and regional levels. It was noted that significant progress had already been made in respect of several components of the Initiative. In relation to other components, implementation plans were in an advanced stage. Considerable preparatory work had, in particular, been accomplished in respect of the components of the Initiative relating to water, governance, education and health. The respective roles of the lead and cooperating agencies had also been clarified and would be further elaborated in relation to each component of the Initiative. The lead and cooperating agencies were pursuing the formulation of implementation strategies in close cooperation with African Governments, at both the national and regional levels, so as to ensure that such strategies reflected their priorities and ownership of the Initiative. In a number of cases, actual programme implementation had been initiated. A number of executive heads indicated that their governing bodies had already specifically endorsed the Initiative.

7. ACC welcomed the willingness of a number of agencies to develop additional programmes that would be included in or would complement the Initiative. The importance of the population dimension and of mainstreaming gender issues was stressed. ACC requested that these cross-cutting themes be addressed in all components of the Initiative, and that reproductive health and family planning in particular be given attention within the health sector component. Recognizing the central importance of poverty eradication and food security, and the urgency of addressing, in that context, the problems of desertification and land degradation, ACC stressed the need to finalize the programme content of these components of the Initiative. The critical role of infrastructure

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development, including transport and communications, was likewise emphasized. ACC members urged that, in the formulation and implementation of programmes in all areas to be covered by the Initiative, the capacities, experience and information available within Africa be fully utilized.

8. ACC stressed the importance of effective policies, with a view, inter alia, to creating an economic environment conducive to the mobilization of private domestic and foreign investment, and to improving countries' absorptive capacities for accelerated development. It regarded capacity-building for policy formulation and for making fuller use of funding opportunities and stimulating productive activities to be a crucial aim of the Initiative.

9. ACC members recognized that the ultimate success of the Initiative would largely depend on the effectiveness of joint action at the country level, and emphasized that resident coordinators would have a key facilitating role to play in that regard. Given the responsibility of Governments to formulate, plan and implement programmes, it was vital to establish effective partnerships with national authorities. Close partnerships would also need to be strengthened between United Nations system organizations and bilateral donors, civil society and the private sector. Maximum use should be made, to this end, of existing country-level arrangements for cooperation and coordination.

10. While reiterating that the Initiative was conceived and must be sustained in the medium-to-long-term perspective, ACC called for the prompt implementation of a number of manageable projects and programmes that could bring early, tangible results, which would serve to overcome scepticism, since this was not the first international effort in support of African development. It would strengthen credibility with African Governments and the donor community and help promote further support for the Initiative, thus creating momentum towards its full implementation over the long term. The identification of countries in which implementation could start earliest, perhaps on a model basis, would greatly assist in that regard.

11. In the implementation of the Initiative, it was important to avoid the imposition of preconceived models of development and to be responsive to each country's priorities and particular circumstances and conditions. The key role to be played by regional intergovernmental arrangements and organizations, as well as civil society, in ensuring the effective implementation of the Initiative, was generally recognized.

12. The need to give particular attention, in the implementation of the Initiative, to the problems of failed States and the special situations facing countries affected by conflicts and other emergencies, and to overcoming, in such circumstances, the gap between emergency/humanitarian assistance and measures to meet longer-term development needs, was strongly emphasized.

13. ACC considered that while the Initiative was focused on specific projects and programmes, they should be developed and implemented keeping in view the intersectoral character of the key priorities and themes embodied in the Initiative. The need was emphasized for effective networking between on the one hand the Initiative and on the other the mechanisms put in place for the coordinated follow-up to global conferences as well as other ACC subsidiary

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bodies. Noting the steps already taken by the Steering Committee in that direction, ACC requested that such interactions be further strengthened so as to ensure complementarity of efforts, promote synergies and avoid duplication.

14. With respect to arrangements for inter-agency coordination and consultations, ACC members emphasized the need for decentralized and cost-effective approaches, and to avoid the creation of new mechanisms, while ensuring effective secretariat support for the Initiative, particularly within the region. The lead agencies were encouraged to use, as much as possible, existing machinery and flexible modalities for inter-agency consultations, drawing on modern communications technology.

15. ACC members considered that the financial aspects of the Initiative needed further clarification and elaboration. The figure of \$25 billion represented estimated resource requirements for those components of the Initiative for which such estimates had been prepared. Four components - education, health, water and governance - accounted for over 95 per cent of such external requirements. Total external resource requirements were expected to be larger, bearing in mind that there were several programmes under key components of the Initiative, such as food security, that had not yet been fully developed and therefore costed. It was also likely that as work proceeded at the country level in full partnership between Governments and donors, further adjustments in the estimated resources would be required.

16. It was noted that considerable mobilization of domestic resources would be necessary to ensure effective implementation, and that both reallocations of existing budgets and new resources would be required to fund programmes under the Initiative. The exact balance would depend upon the process of rationalization of programmes and budgets and the degree of success achieved in the mobilization of political commitment and support for the Initiative. Lead and cooperating agencies were invited to give further attention to the financial dimensions of the Initiative in the period ahead, and to quantify financial requirements in a way that was realistic and at the same time would facilitate both resource reallocation and the mobilization of additional resources.

17. Joint programming under the Initiative should lead to a better use of the existing resources of the United Nations system, which should in turn serve to attract additional financing.

18. The various components of the Initiative resulted from priorities identified by African Governments. Within such priorities, the inclusion in the Initiative of individual activities reflected the level of preparedness for implementation. Overall resource requirements for African development were obviously far greater than those specifically connected with the Initiative.

19. ACC welcomed the joint World Bank/International Monetary Fund (IMF) initiative for a proposed framework for action to resolve the debt problems of the heavily indebted poor countries, which was designed to address the totality of the debt of affected countries on a case-by-case basis with a view to restoring their debt sustainability and economic growth. ACC emphasized that the resolution of the debt problems of African countries would be a key step to

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enhancing their future development prospects and would also lead to a more effective implementation of the projects and programmes under the Initiative.

20. ACC emphasized the importance of mobilizing the full support of African Governments and the international community as a whole for the Initiative. To that end, the opportunities provided by such forums as the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Summit, the G-7 Summit, the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD/DAC), Tidewater and the second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) would need to be actively pursued in the period ahead. ACC members noted with appreciation that the Secretary-General had addressed a communication to the heads of State and Government participating in the forthcoming G-7 Summit, seeking their support for the Initiative.

21. With respect to further steps to be taken by individual organizations, ACC encouraged those executive heads who had not already done so to bring the Initiative to the attention of their governing bodies with a view to seeking their endorsement. The executive heads undertook to impress on their country and regional representatives, as well as on other concerned staff, the high priority to be given to the implementation of the Initiative.

22. ACC recognized the need for careful monitoring and evaluation of progress at the national, regional and global levels, as well as the development of performance indicators and common reporting formats. It encouraged the Steering Committee to actively pursue the objectives of the Initiative in the light of the above discussions and requested that a progress report be submitted to it at its second regular session of 1996.

## II. COORDINATED FOLLOW-UP TO INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES

23. ACC reaffirmed the emphasis it had placed, at recent sessions, on the need to approach in an integrated manner the follow-up to the recent series of global United Nations conferences. The executive heads confirmed that monitoring the follow-up to those conferences by the United Nations system would continue to be a main concern of ACC in the period ahead.

24. It was recalled that in order to contribute to a coordinated and integrated follow-up at the global level ACC had decided that it would in future, review the implementation of the results of recent global conferences on the basis of a thematic approach, drawing on the work of its standing machinery and other relevant inter-agency mechanisms.

25. As to regional arrangements, ACC had noted that the executive secretaries of the regional commissions, in consultation with the Special Coordinator for Economic and Social Development, would work with the concerned agencies and programmes, drawing on the strengthened inter-agency consultative arrangements put in place further in 1994, to develop concerted action programmes at the regional level in support of conference objectives.

26. At the second regular session of 1995 of ACC, special attention had been given to arrangements to promote coordinated national-level follow-up. Three

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ad hoc inter-agency task forces had been established to provide integrated support for country-level action around three interrelated themes: (a) The enabling environment for social and economic development, with the World Bank serving as lead agency; (b) Employment and sustainable livelihoods, with the International Labour Organization (ILO) as lead agency; and (c) Basic social services for all, with UNFPA as lead organization.

27. At its current session, ACC was informed of the work undertaken by these task forces thus far, and of the initial steps being taken at the country level to promote a coordinated approach.

28. The Task Force on Basic Social Services for All, convened in New York by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), had identified six areas of work: population, basic education, primary health care, shelter, drinking water and sanitation, and basic social services in post-crisis situations. It had agreed to constitute two working groups: one on primary health care, with the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF as lead agencies; and a second on basic education, with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as the lead agency. ACC noted that the two working groups, in carrying out their tasks, would address a number of cross-cutting issues, namely the use of indicators, financing and resource mobilization, gender perspective, targeting specific groups, policies in the social sector and the involvement of civil society. Issues relating to hunger and to the environment would also be addressed, as appropriate. It was intended that issues concerning shelter would similarly be pursued following the second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II). The Task Force agreed that it would work towards five end-products: (a) guidelines for the United Nations resident coordinator system and others; (b) indicators for social services to measure progress in implementation; (c) best practices/lessons learned; (d) the production of a pocket-card on advocacy; and (e) the production of a wall chart on country situations indicating the level of basic social services. In preparing the work of the Task Force, extensive consultations had been held with resident coordinators. Also, arrangements had been made for consultations with the chairpersons of the other two task forces. The Consultative Committee on Programmes and Operational Questions had been kept informed of the work of the Task Force; the Task Force expected to complete its work within six months.

29. The Task Force on Employment and Sustainable Livelihoods, convened by the ILO in Geneva, had agreed to prepare a synthesis report for the particular use of the resident coordinator system, analysing lessons learned and experience gained at the country level and across countries with a view to (a) suggesting ways of improving inter-agency collaboration in the future, and (b) providing a clear understanding of the different ingredients that worked for the promotion of employment and sustainable livelihoods in specific situations, and of the indicators required for monitoring progress in those areas. The synthesis report would be based on a number of country reviews - soon to be launched - that would address a variety of general and specific issues relevant to employment and sustainable livelihoods, as well as on an examination, through an appropriate mechanism, of a set of topics, such as the impact of globalization and technological change on employment and sustainable livelihoods; the clarification of the relationship between employment and sustainable

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livelihoods; and indicators for employment and sustainable livelihoods. The Task Force expected to submit its report in January 1997.

30. The Task Force on the Enabling Environment for Economic and Social Development, convened by the World Bank in Washington, D.C., had agreed to prepare a synthesis report for the particular use of the resident coordinators and other country representatives with a view to (a) providing a common framework for the efforts of the United Nations system related to the establishment of an enabling environment for economic and social development so as to enhance the capacity of the system to assist countries in carrying out their own programmes to meet their specific circumstances, and (b) supporting inter-agency collaboration at the country level on the enabling environment. The Task Force had decided to establish three subgroups on (a) the macroeconomic and social framework, dealing with economic and social policy matters, with the World Bank as lead agency; (b) capacity-building for governance, dealing with institutional capacity-building, with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as lead agency; and (c) indicators, dealing with instruments for measuring success in the implementation of economic and social policy, with the United Nations Secretariat (Department of Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis) taking the lead. The Task Force expected to complete its work within one year.

31. ACC noted that, in pursuing its work, the Task Force on the Enabling Environment would adopt a practical approach and draw upon and test results against best practices at the country level. It would also take into account the implications for the role of the organizations of the United Nations system of the growing integration of the global economy and the changing pattern of capital flows. Given that dynamic of global integration, the Task Force had recognized that an enabling environment could no longer be designed and put in place by individual countries in isolation. Similarly, increased private capital flows would enable the United Nations system to allocate a greater proportion of multilateral resources to poverty eradication and assist in channelling some of the private investment in poverty eradication projects. The view was expressed that the Task Force should also give due attention to the microlevel enabling environment.

32. In parallel with the establishment of the task forces, resident coordinators were moving forward to promote the establishment of thematic groups or optimize the use of existing groups with a view to furthering, with the global task forces' support, the integrated implementation at the country level of the policy recommendations emanating from recent global conferences.

33. ACC welcomed the work accomplished to date by the three task forces, with the active participation of all concerned organizations. It was noted that the arrangements initiated by ACC for the integrated follow-up, at the country level, to global conferences, in particular the establishment of thematic task forces, had been well received at the intergovernmental level.

34. ACC members emphasized the importance of close substantive links between the three task forces and the standing committees of ACC in order, inter alia, to ensure continuity in inter-agency cooperation relating to conferences follow-up once the task forces had completed their work. The lead agencies

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might also be called upon to play a continuing role to that end. Meanwhile, there was also a clear need for close interactions among the task forces themselves, including through systematic consultations among their respective chairpersons. In the same context, the development of a common format for reporting to ACC was encouraged.

35. It was stressed that policy objectives, such as the advancement of women and the promotion of human rights, which had been the focus of two global conferences, as well as cross-cutting issues, such as access to communication, should be pursued by each task force in the context of the theme or themes assigned to it. The outcome of Habitat II would similarly need to be integrated into the work of the task forces. In addition, close inter-linkages should be established between the task forces and the inter-agency arrangements being put in place for the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women, as well as the Steering Committee on the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa. The Special Coordinator for Economic and Social Development had an important contribution to make in promoting an effective coordination among those processes.

36. In order to avoid duplication in the work of the three task forces, ACC invited them to consider having common working groups for similar areas of work, such as indicators for social services, and to utilize, to the maximum extent possible, ongoing work being undertaken in the ACC subsidiary machinery and elsewhere that was relevant to their respective areas of competence.

37. ACC was informed of and welcomed the specific steps already taken by a number of organizations to enhance collaboration and coordination with other parts of the system in activities relating to the follow-up to conferences, particularly at the country level. It encouraged other organizations similarly to promote collaborative actions at the country level, under the leadership of the resident coordinators. In the same context, ACC encouraged resident coordinators to keep organizations, particularly those without field representation, fully informed of relevant developments at the country level.

### III. OTHER MATTERS

#### A. Functioning of ACC and its subsidiary machinery

38. At its first regular session of 1993, ACC, in addition to agreeing to a new, streamlined structure for its subsidiary machinery, adopted a new set of principles and guidelines to govern its own functioning and methods of work.

39. At the second regular session of ACC of 1995, several related decisions were taken relevant to the functioning of the inter-agency machinery. The Organizational Committee of ACC (OC) was requested to review the programmes of work and scheduling of meetings of inter-agency bodies within the ACC machinery and to make recommendations for their streamlining. OC was further invited to strengthen its capacity to monitor and report on the follow-up to ACC decisions within ACC machinery, as well as within the individual organizations comprising the system. OC, for its part, considered that the specific tasks concerning the functioning of the ACC machinery assigned to it by ACC would best be pursued as

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part of the overall review of the experience with the 1993 reorganization of the ACC machinery, as provided for in the decisions adopted by ACC at that time.

40. There was general recognition among members of ACC that although the 1993 reorganization and the extensive streamlining of the ACC machinery it had brought about had served to significantly enhance ACC functioning and the effectiveness of its subsidiary bodies, further improvements should nevertheless be sought in relation to both the methods of work of ACC itself and the functioning of its subsidiary machinery. In respect of the latter, there was a need to further enhance the substantive capacity of subsidiary bodies, particularly the quality of the support they provided to ACC, and to promote greater cost effectiveness and selectivity so as to ensure that coordination efforts through the inter-agency machinery clearly added value and contributed to greater efficiency in service delivery and concentrated on areas that especially called for joint action. The aim should be to establish and sustain, at all levels, a consistent pattern of concrete and tangible results, in terms of policy and programme coordination and the development of joint initiatives in key areas of system-wide concern.

41. ACC provided a unique forum to develop a shared view of the environment within which the United Nations system operated and of the collective responses required of it. ACC should thus strengthen its capacity to develop common assessments of the environment in which international cooperation and development were taking place and of the resource outlooks; of emerging developments among key constituencies and Governments; and of the expectations of member Governments and the public for the efficient and effective delivery of services, particularly at the country level, including linkages between bilateral and multilateral assistance and between emergency, post-emergency and development assistance.

42. The substantive agenda of each ACC session should be drawn up in the light of those reviews and should be organized, to the extent possible, around one or two broad themes of central concern to the system. The themes should be selected and discussions should be prepared and organized to lead to (a) common understandings to guide the system as a whole, including the substantive advice to be provided to the Economic and Social Council and other intergovernmental bodies; and (b) specific initiatives in key areas that especially lent themselves to joint action.

43. Ensuring a consistent focus on key policy issues and action-oriented outcomes would require careful in-depth preparations. Extensive preparations should, inter alia, serve to minimize the need for set statements at ACC meetings for the purposes of exchanging information and to maximize the time available for a dialogue among executive heads and the adoption of specific conclusions and decisions.

44. Efforts to promote more action-oriented outcomes would need to be accompanied by arrangements to strengthen ACC capacity to monitor and guide their effective follow-up. As a means of reinforcing current practices, a regular item should be placed on the agenda of ACC on the follow-up given to the recommendations and decisions adopted at the previous session, on the basis of information provided, through OC, by member organizations and the chairpersons

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of the consultative committees. That would not only enable executive heads to monitor progress but would also contribute elements to assist in the selection and definition of the theme or themes to be addressed at subsequent sessions. As previously agreed by ACC, the coordinated follow-up to global conferences would continue to be a main concern of ACC in the period ahead.

45. As far as the periodicity of ACC sessions was concerned, views were expressed on the respective advantages of holding one or two annual sessions. ACC concluded that the current pattern of two sessions a year - one in April/May and the other in October/November - should at least for the time being be continued. Without excluding the possibility of a member organization inviting ACC to meet at its headquarters, the first session would normally be held at the United Nations Office at Geneva, and the second at United Nations Headquarters in New York. It was agreed that a fixed periodicity should be established for both sessions so as to facilitate advance planning and ensure the participation of all executive heads. The importance of the opportunity provided by ACC for a sustained dialogue, at the executive head level, between the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization and the other organizations of the United Nations system was emphasized.

46. As to the subsidiary machinery, ACC agreed on the following considerations to guide the further review of its functioning:

The principal functions of the consultative committees should be to identify and address key policy issues; promote concrete operational and programme coordination; and facilitate the development of joint initiatives and action for consideration and decision by ACC.

The consultative committees also serve other purposes, such as the exchange of information and the joint preparation or clearance of reports to intergovernmental bodies. More effective and less costly means, other than meetings of the whole of these committees, are available for these purposes and are increasingly being utilized. The need for meetings of the whole of these committees more than once a year should be obviated by more extensive use of electronic mail (E-mail) networking and teleconferencing, including the establishment of electronic networks among focal points, better and more integrated use of the facilities of jointly financed secretariats, more frequent resort to lead agencies or task managers, and the flexible use of small working groups or task forces of concerned agencies to be established for specific purposes or tasks, which should also result in more focused and productive meetings that concentrate on key issues of policy and programme coordination.

The relationship between time-bound task forces, such as the three task forces established by ACC to support country-level follow-up to global conferences, and the standing machinery of ACC requires careful examination in order to avoid duplication and dispersal of resources. If the standing machinery progressively reorients its work to become more policy and task-oriented, the distinction between these two types of inter-agency mechanisms will tend to disappear over time. OC has a key role to play in ensuring that the activities of these two sets of bodies build on each other and are mutually supportive. There is, however, no substitute for

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direct communication and consultations, particularly between the chairpersons of the consultative committees and the task forces. In the same context, there is a need for close substantive links between the task forces and the relevant Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development (IACSD) task managers.

#### Organizational Committee

A key objective is to strengthen OC's capacity to monitor and report on developments relevant to the follow-up to ACC decisions. To this end, a more consistent and in-depth flow of information from organizations on developments relevant to the follow-up to ACC decisions and initiatives needs to be ensured, and the OC capacity to analyse and disseminate this information needs to be enhanced. OC's capacity to monitor and report on developments in the various ACC subsidiary bodies, particularly from the vantage point of the follow-up to ACC decisions, will likewise need to be strengthened, with the cooperation of the Chairpersons of the ACC consultative committees and their secretariats.

A second key objective should be to enhance OC's capacity to organize and finalize preparations for ACC sessions, drawing on contributions throughout the inter-agency machinery. This should be achieved without additional meetings by holding its sessions in preparation for ACC about six weeks before ACC sessions, and adjusting accordingly the schedule of meetings of the consultative committees.

Cutting across these two dimensions of OC's work, the categories of issues and decisions in relation to which OC has authority to act on behalf of ACC will need to be further clarified. This is particularly relevant to OC's effectiveness in assisting ACC to oversee the overall functioning of the ACC machinery so as to further policy coherence, avoid duplication and proliferation, and promote cost effectiveness.

#### Consultative Committee on Operational Questions

Further improvements should be sought in enhancing the policy relevance of the work programme of CCPOQ, particularly vis-à-vis the work of ACC itself, and in ensuring that each session has clearly established purposes and results in concrete outcomes, in relation not only to the strengthening of collaboration at the country level but also the promotion of improved coordination with regard to research and analysis.

The wide scope of the mandate of CCPOQ, encompassing both operational and analytical work, while creating some organizational difficulties, also points to a unique role for CCPOQ in the task of promoting better feedback between these two sets of activities system-wide. CCPOQ should be asked to consider further how its agenda and methods of work could be adapted with a view to a more effective performance of this key role, while reducing the overall number of meetings. CCPOQ should also be asked to explore whether some of the subcommittees reporting to it might be replaced by ad hoc subject-oriented meetings, to be held only when required, or merged within the terms of reference of other subcommittees.

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Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development

IACSD has been undertaking a three-phased review of its functioning that is expected to lead to a full assessment of the United Nation system's response to Agenda 21 in time for the special session of the General Assembly to be held in 1997.

As a result of the 1997 special session of the General Assembly, the work programme of IACSD will need to be further adjusted. This will provide a further opportunity for IACSD to respond to ACC concerns that the time devoted by IACSD to reporting to the Commission on Sustainable Development has not enabled it to sufficiently focus its work programme on the provision of policy advice to ACC and the joint programming of activities for implementation at the country level.

Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions

The 1993 reorganization of the ACC machinery provided for meetings of CCAQ as a whole. At a time of growing financial difficulties and organizational reform throughout most of the system, the need has increased for exchanges of views and experience on overall management issues that cut across financial and personnel policy areas. There was one meeting of CCAQ as a whole in 1995. This practice should be resumed.

Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions (Personnel Questions)

CCAQ(PER) undertook, in April last year, an initial review of its functioning. CCAQ(PER) agreed that, as a preliminary step, its efficiency could be maximized by relying more on its secretariat so that the frequency and length of meetings might be reduced. In the same context, CCAQ(PER), inter alia, agreed that efforts should be made to develop further a lead agency approach to major issues; lead agencies would work closely with the secretariat to develop position papers for CCAQ(PER) consideration and prepare discussions in CCAQ(PER) itself. These efforts should be further pursued.

In 1996, CCAQ(PER) would hold a single annual session in July, with consultations during the course of the ICSC spring session.

Related issues requiring further consideration are the streamlining of arrangements for the representation of organizations at meetings of ICSC and the possibility of further reductions in the number of inter-sessional meetings.

Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions (Financial and Budgetary Questions)

CCAQ(FB) reviewed at its last session issues relating to its methods of work and functioning, as a contribution to the ACC discussions on the functioning of ACC machinery. CCAQ(FB) recalled that it had taken steps to concentrate on major management and policy issues, eliminating from its

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agendas matters that could be dealt with on an inter-sessional basis by correspondence, by the greater use of electronic communication methods, such as the distribution of documentation for CCAQ(PER) sessions and the clearance of reports, or by the use of lead agency arrangements to allocate responsibility for certain issues such as negotiation of system-wide standard agreements with a particular donor or group of donors.

#### Reporting

The annual overview report of ACC, as currently conceived, was mostly a vehicle for conveying information on developments in the work of ACC machinery during the previous year, and does not, as such, readily lend itself to serving as a vehicle for an effective policy dialogue between ACC and the Economic and Social Council. ACC also adopts statements mostly but not exclusively in the administrative area, addressed to specific issues on the intergovernmental agenda. A new and more effective pattern of reporting should be developed, more directly geared to supporting and affecting the results of discussions in the Council and other relevant intergovernmental bodies.

47. ACC requested that a final report on the review of the functioning of ACC machinery be submitted to it by OC for its consideration at its next session. The report should be based on the above guidelines and considerations, and should take into account specific suggestions made by executive heads during the session. In addition, previous ACC guidelines, particularly to the effect that the establishment of new inter-agency mechanisms should not result in increases in the total number of inter-agency meetings within ACC machinery, should be taken fully into account.

48. ACC also decided to establish the Inter-Agency Committee on Women, with the responsibility of addressing, on a comprehensive, system-wide basis, all aspects of the implementation of the Platform of Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women and gender-related recommendations emanating from other recent international conferences within the purview of the system, as well as questions relating to the improvement of the status of women within the United Nations system. The Committee should interact closely with the three thematic task forces concerned with the coordinated follow-up to conferences, as well as with IACSD, CCPOQ, CCAQ and other relevant inter-agency bodies.

49. ACC considered that the draft terms of reference for the Committee, as submitted to it, needed to be further clarified and streamlined. The importance was stressed of establishing success indicators, monitoring and reporting on progress, and identifying obstacles to progress. ACC requested that a revised draft be prepared by the United Nations on the basis of inputs from organizations, and cleared by correspondence with ACC members.

50. Finally, ACC adopted the following decision on the Inter-Agency Project on Universal Access to Basic Communication and Information Services:

Bearing in mind the proposal made by the Secretary-General of ITU at the second regular session of ACC of 1995 and in the context of its consideration of improvements in the functioning of the ACC machinery,

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including the need to support the task forces established to provide coordinated follow-up to international conferences and the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa, ACC decides to endorse an inter-agency project on the theme of universal access to basic communication and information services. The project would be at the level of executive heads and senior officials and would be open to participation of all other interested members of ACC. ACC invites ITU to act as the lead agency in this project and to work in close collaboration with UNESCO and those other organizations that have contributed to the elaboration of the project. At the conclusion of the inter-agency project, within one year, a report should be submitted on its outcome to ACC.

51. It was noted that the project would have the particular merit of integrating science and technology questions with social concerns, as well as of involving the technical agencies fully in conference follow-up.

#### B. Administrative questions

52. The executive heads were briefed by the Chairman of CCAQ(PER) on current developments in the work of ICSC since the last session of ACC. The brief focused on issues relating to common system remuneration and the consultative process and functioning of ICSC.

53. As to the functioning of ICSC, ACC noted that the General Assembly, at its fiftieth session, had not acted on the ACC proposal to revise the appointment procedure for members of ICSC but had called upon Member States and the Secretary-General to ensure, through the selection process of candidates for appointment, that ICSC had the requisite technical skills and broad managerial experience among its members to enable it to carry out its mandate effectively. It also noted with concern the continuing lack of progress in ensuring the participation of staff representatives in the ICSC consultative process.

54. As to the issue of common system remuneration, ACC was informed of the current state of deliberation in ICSC. It had before it a draft statement for submission to the General Assembly, prepared by CCAQ(PER). ACC reiterated its deep concern at the declining competitiveness of United Nations staff remuneration, which made it increasingly difficult for organizations to recruit staff with the required levels of qualifications. ACC agreed that a further statement on the matter should be submitted to the General Assembly at its resumed session of June 1996, and requested the United Nations, in consultation with the Chairman of CCAQ(PER), to prepare a revised draft to be circulated to executive heads for clearance in the coming weeks. The statement should reflect executive heads' awareness of the gravity of the financial crisis, and should address conditions of service in the light of the reforms under way in many organizations, leading to more streamlined secretariats, enhanced cost effectiveness, and expanded responsibilities and heavier workloads for staff on board. The revised statement should incorporate the main points recommended by CCAQ(PER) on the urgency to adopt the recommendations of ICSC concerning current remuneration levels, and the need for a longer-term strategy for restoring competitiveness, but should be briefer and should place those points in a broader policy and managerial context.

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55. Reverting to the recommendations of CCAQ(FB), ACC agreed to convey to JIU and ICSC its expectation that those bodies would be fully responsive to the resource constraints facing the organizations that financed their activities.

56. During the discussions on the item, ACC, while fully reaffirming the importance of independent review, expressed concern at the cost effectiveness of the present JIU process, and stressed the need for JIU reports to provide clear additional value to the work of the system. ACC requested that a report be prepared for its next session on the perspective of the organizations of the system on the future role of JIU, in the light of recent developments.

57. The Secretary-General also drew attention to a report under preparation, for submission to the General Assembly, on the strengthening of internal oversight mechanisms in United Nations funds and programmes. Noting that oversight mechanisms were also under review in a number of specialized agencies, he further indicated that the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services stood ready to share relevant experience and provide advice, as required.

C. General Assembly resolution 50/120

58. On the recommendation of CCPOQ, ACC adopted the following statement on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 50/120: 1/

ACC recognizes the crucial role that the United Nations system can play in sustaining developing countries in their efforts to take the lead in the management of their development process. All members of ACC commit their secretariats to effective cooperation among them and with their national counterparts with a view to achieving consistency and efficiency in the United Nations system response to this most pressing challenge.

In this context, ACC attaches the highest importance to the effective and coherent implementation of General Assembly resolution 50/120, which builds on Assembly resolution 47/199 and represents a further practical step in the process of reform of the operational activities for development in a number of key interrelated areas, including the effective governance of such activities, their predictable and assured funding commensurate with the increasing needs of developing countries, and the promotion of greater efficiency and coherence in their programming, delivery and management, especially at the country level.

ACC will continue to take all necessary steps to ensure that the United Nations system provides recipient countries with the best possible support in their development efforts. To this end, ACC and its member organizations mandated to undertake operational activities for development are determined to strengthen further their collaboration through the resident coordinator system, and to ensure the full and coherent implementation of all provisions of Assembly resolutions 50/120 and 47/199, particularly those that have a direct bearing on the effectiveness of United Nations system development cooperation at the country level.

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ACC will take the required steps to implement Assembly resolution 50/120 in a fully coordinated manner, as outlined in the management plan to be prepared in accordance with paragraph 52 of the resolution, which the Secretary-General will submit to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1996. In proceeding with the implementation of the resolution, account will be taken of the decisions emanating from the Council and other relevant governing bodies.

Through its Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions and other mechanisms, ACC will issue updated guidelines on the functioning of the resident coordinator system, reflecting fully the experience acquired so far and addressing all actions called for in paragraphs 36 to 43 of Assembly resolution 50/120. The members of ACC mandated to undertake operational activities for development will pursue the strengthening of this system, inter alia, through clear instructions to the country representatives and support to the coordination function at the country level. The Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chairman of ACC, will instruct resident coordinators, with the support of the Special Coordinator for Economic and Social Development, on measures to strengthen the resident coordinator system.

ACC attaches particular importance to ensuring that all parts of the United Nations system work on the basis of a mutually agreed common understanding of the principal components of Assembly resolution 50/120. To this end, a series of updated and inter-linked guidelines will be developed on the country strategy note process, programme approach, national execution and the functioning of the resident coordinator system. Moreover, the work of the ACC task forces concerned with the coordinated follow-up to international conferences will be translated into operational guidance for the resident coordinator system. In this connection, the further improvement of the country strategy note process, in line with the provisions of Assembly resolution 50/120, will be given particular attention. ACC is committed to providing full and coordinated support to the country strategy note process and to ensuring cooperation with and support to this process under the leadership of the resident coordinators.

ACC will undertake action to strengthen the monitoring and evaluation of operational activities and to achieve the impact assessment called for in paragraph 54 of Assembly resolution 50/120. Greater effort will be devoted to harmonizing various procedures and simplifying the requirements placed upon recipient countries, while at the same time strengthening accountability capacity.

In order to achieve an optimal use of available resources efforts will continue and will be enhanced towards the sharing of various services at the country level and common premises, whenever feasible and cost-effective.

59. It was agreed that members of ACC involved in operational activities for development would circulate the above statement to their own staff, including field representatives, together with a strongly supportive statement. The Secretary-General of the United Nations, in his capacity as Chairman of ACC,

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would ensure that the statement was given wide distribution and was brought to the attention of the Economic and Social Council at its upcoming substantive session.

D. Other matters

60. ACC expressed its appreciation to the Executive Director of UNFPA, Dr. Nafis Sadik, for her contribution as Chairperson of the CCPOQ over the last two years.

61. ACC also endorsed the appointment of Mrs. M. Chinery-Hesse, Deputy Director-General of the ILO, as the CCPOQ Chairman for the two-year period 1996-1998.

62. ACC noted the following programme of meetings:

IACSD	New York	10-12 July 1996
CCAQ(FB)	New York	26-30 August 1996
CCPOQ	New York	September 1996 (exact dates to be determined)

63. ACC confirmed that its second regular session of 1996 would be held at United Nations Headquarters in New York in the latter part of October 1996. The Secretary-General indicated that he would finalize the dates for the meeting, following further consultations with all organizations.

64. ACC expressed its appreciation to UNEP for the excellent arrangements made for the meeting.

Notes

1/ The text of the statement incorporates editorial amendments provided by members of ACC following the ACC session.

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