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REPORT OF THE HIGH-LEVEL COMMITTEE ON THE REVIEW OF
TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES*

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. In accordance with recommendation 37 of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries, 1/ as endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 33/134 of 19 December 1978, a High-level Meeting of all States participating in the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) was convened at Geneva from 26 May to 2 June 1980 to carry out an overall, intergovernmental review of technical co-operation among developing countries (TCDC) within the United Nations development system. The report of the first session of the intergovernmental body 2/ was considered by the Assembly at its thirty-fifth session. In its resolution 35/202 of 16 December 1980, the Assembly decided, inter alia, to change the name of the High-level Meeting to High-level Committee on the Review of Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries and requested the Administrator of UNDP to convene the next session of the Committee under the same organizational and procedural arrangements as were made for the High-level Meeting. The second session of the High-level Committee met in New York from 1 to 8 June 1981 and its report 3/ was considered by the Assembly at its thirty-sixth session. In accordance with the agreement reached at the Committee's second session and endorsed by the Assembly at its thirty-sixth session, the structure of the third session of the High-level Committee consisted of the plenary and only one working group, and this practice has been followed in subsequent sessions.

2. The third session of the High-level Committee met in New York from 31 May to 6 June 1983 and its report 4/ was considered by the General Assembly at its thirty-eighth session.

3. The fourth session was held in New York from 28 May to 3 June 1985. Its report 5/ was considered by the General Assembly at its fortieth session.

1/ Report of the United Nations Conference on Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries, Buenos Aires, 30 August-12 September 1978 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.78.II.A.11 and corrigendum), chap. I.

2/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 39 (A/35/39 and Corr.1).

3/ Ibid., Thirty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 39 (A/36/39).

4/ Ibid., Thirty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 39 (A/38/39).

5/ Ibid., Fortieth session, Supplement No. 39 (A/40/39).

II. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

A. Date and place of the session

4. The fifth session of the High-level Committee on the Review of Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries was held in New York from 18 May to 22 May 1987. The High-level Committee held a further meeting on 27 May 1987 to consider the adoption of its report.

5. In accordance with paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 35/202 of 16 December 1980, the session was convened by the Administrator of UNDP under procedural arrangements recommended by the High-level Committee at its fourth session.

B. Attendance

6. The following 117 States participating in UNDP were represented at the session:

Algeria	Ecuador	Kuwait
Argentina	Egypt	Lao People's Democratic Republic
Austria	El Salvador	Lebanon
Bahrain	Ethiopia	Lesotho
Bangladesh	Fiji	Liberia
Barbados	Finland	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya
Belgium	France	Madagascar
Benin	Gabon	Malaysia
Bhutan	Gambia	Mali
Bolivia	German Democratic Republic	Malta
Botswana	Germany, Federal Republic of	Mauritania
Brazil	Ghana	Mauritius
Burkina Faso	Greece	Mexico
Burundi	Guatemala	Morocco
Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic	Guinea	Mozambique
Cameroon	Guinea-Bissau	Netherlands
Canada	Guyana	Nicaragua
Cape Verde	Haiti	Niger
Chad	Honduras	Nigeria
Chile	Hungary	Norway
China	India	Oman
Colombia	Indonesia	Pakistan
Comoros	Iraq	Paraguay
Congo	Italy	Peru
Cyprus	Jamaica	Philippines
Czechoslovakia	Japan	Poland
Democratic Kampuchea	Jordan	Portugal
Denmark	Kenya	Qatar
Dominican Republic		Republic of Korea

Romania	Syrian Arab Republic	United Kingdom of Great
Rwanda	Thailand	Britain and Northern
Saint Lucia	Togo	Ireland
Sierra Leone	Trinidad and Tobago	United Republic of
Somalia	Tunisia	Tanzania
Spain	Turkey	United States of America
Sri Lanka	Uganda	Uruguay
Sudan	Ukrainian Soviet	Venezuela
Suriname	Socialist Republic	Viet Nam
Swaziland	Union of Soviet	Yugoslavia
Sweden	Socialist Republics	Zambia
Switzerland	United Arab Emirates	Zimbabwe

7. Members of the following offices and departments of the United Nations Secretariat participated in the proceedings of the session:

Office of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation

Department of Technical Co-operation for Development

United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations

Regional Commissions Liaison Office

8. The following regional commissions were represented:

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

9. The following United Nations bodies were also represented:

Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator

World Food Council

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)

United Nations Fund for Population Activities

World Food Programme

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

10. Representatives of the following specialized agencies and related organizations attended the session:

International Labour Organisation

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

World Health Organization

World Bank

International Maritime Organization

United Nations Industrial Development Organization

11. The following intergovernmental organizations, which have received a standing invitation to participate in the sessions and work of the General Assembly, were represented at the session:

Commission of the European Communities

Organization of African Unity

Organization of the Islamic Conference

Palestine Liberation Organization

12. Representatives of the following intergovernmental organizations attended the session as observers:

African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States

Arab Organization for Agricultural Development

Asian and Pacific Coconut Community

Central American Bank for Economic Integration

Gulf Organization for Industrial Consulting

Intergovernmental Committee for Migration

Lake Chad Basin Commission

Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries

13. As proposed by the Administrator of UNDP in paragraph 7 of his report to the General Assembly (A/34/415), and as approved by the Assembly in its resolution 34/117 of 14 December 1979, non-governmental organizations in consultative status

with the Economic and Social Council were invited. The following were represented at the session:

AFS International/Intercultural Programs
Arab Federation for Engineering Industries
International Air Transport Association
International Alliance of Women
International Federation of University Women
International Islamic Federation of Student Organizations
International Motor Vehicle Inspection Committee
International Organization for Standardization
Rehabilitation International
Trickle Up Programme, Inc.
Union of International Technical Associations
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
World Confederation of Labour
World Federation of Trade Unions

C. Opening of the session and election of the President

(Agenda items 1 and 2)

14. The session was opened by Mr. Hamed Zeghal (Tunisia), President of the High-level Committee at its fourth session.

15. Mr. Bernardo Grinspun, Minister of State for Planning, Argentina, was elected President of the High-level Committee by acclamation.

16. In his statement upon taking office, the President emphasized that the prolonged and still deepening economic and financial crisis confronting most of the developing countries made it even more imperative than before that the mutual commitments made under the Buenos Aires Plan of Action be fulfilled. The present situation demanded a revitalization of international co-operation, and the High-level Committee should concentrate on means of improving the present slow and uneven performance of the United Nations development system in supporting TCDC.

D. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

(Agenda item 3)

17. The Committee adopted the agenda (TCDC/5/L.1) and the organization of work (TCDC/5/L.2). It was agreed that agenda items 5 and 6 would be the subjects of the general debate in the plenary. The Working Group, which began its work on 18 May, was assigned agenda items 5 and 6 for detailed review of draft decisions and recommendations.

E. Election of officers other than the President

(Agenda item 4)

18. The following officers were elected by acclamation:

Vice-President: Mr. Mohamed Benomar (Morocco)
Mr. Heinrich-Dietrich Dieckmann (Federal Republic of Germany)
Mr. Blazo Krstajic (Yugoslavia)

Rapporteur: Mr. Pavan K. Varma (India)

19. The Committee approved the President's recommendation that Mr. Krstajic should act as Chairman of the Working Group. It was subsequently agreed that the Chairman should also serve as Rapporteur of the Working Group.

III. REPORTS ON IMPLEMENTATION

A. Statement by the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme

20. The Administrator of UNDP stated that in the two years following the previous session, the principles of self-help and collective self-reliance that inspired South-South co-operation had grown in importance and many countries had undertaken TCDC programmes of their own.
21. The Administrator gave special importance to four clusters of TCDC programmes, involving 84 developing countries, which had been launched through intercountry programming exercises supported by UNDP. As a result of these four exercises, hosted by Peru, China, Turkey and Tunisia in the previous few months, over 950 new TCDC projects had been firmed up. Some were already in progress and many others shortly would be.
22. In Lima, 22 developing countries had put together nearly 250 co-operative programmes with Peru. In Beijing, 24 countries had attended what amounted to a TCDC "stock exchange", agreeing upon 207 projects with China and among themselves. After the Ankara meeting, a further 288 projects exchanged between 22 nations were now on record. In Tunis, 16 countries added another 211 projects to the count.
23. These activities had been not only productive but also extremely varied. Paraguay, for example, would supply its partners with expertise in textiles and agro-industry. Research scientists from Uruguay and Peru would work together to develop the fisheries of both countries. Argentina was helping its neighbours to manufacture and market pharmaceuticals. China was assisting Bolivia with wheat production and several Latin American and Asian countries in such areas as hydropower, biogas production and traditional medicine. China would also receive help from Bolivia, Jamaica, Mexico, Peru and the Philippines in the mining sector. A similar range of important intercountry agreements had emerged from the more recent meetings in Turkey and Tunisia.
24. UNDP had been associated with these programming activities and with the promotional events that had preceded them. The latter included a meeting of national focal points for TCDC officials from the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) region, which was held in Bangkok in 1985; an orientation seminar for Latin American countries, which took place in São Paulo in 1986; a TCDC meeting for the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, held in Barbados in the same year; a consultation between the United Nations system and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, also in 1986; and a seminar convened in Jeddah, again in 1986, for the member States of the Islamic Development Bank.
25. These meetings and seminars had helped to overcome continuing barriers to TCDC by making better known the array of professional expertise and training opportunities now available in many developing country institutions for use by other developing countries. They had also enabled countries to discuss organizational issues such as the terms and conditions of service for TCDC experts and various legal, financial and institutional arrangements governing TCDC

projects. The true test and measure of the value of these meetings, however, lay in their practical results, namely, the significant number of project agreements to which they had led.

26. The costs of formulating the more than 950 TCDC projects had been met from UNDP special programme resources. However, the intention was to encourage their implementation under indicative planning figure (IPF) financing. This, said the Administrator, was in accord with the spirit and letter of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action as well as the expressed wishes of the High-level Committee.

27. Turning to other matters, the Administrator explained that the TCDC Information Referral System (INRES), which had been set up to be a global "switchboard" to connect interested countries, had been computer-based since 1985. It now contained information on over 2,700 institutions in more than 100 developing countries.

28. Since the previous session of the High-level Committee, efforts had been made to popularize INRES by direct contact with the developing countries concerned, by discussions on INRES at various TCDC meetings, by publishing articles on the system and in other ways. Efforts had also been made to improve its data base both qualitatively and quantitatively. However, the use of INRES by developing countries concerned had not risen significantly since it had first gone into use. The Administrator urged that substantially greater use of INRES be made by planners and organizations if the effort and expense put into the system were to be justified.

29. The Administrator found encouragement in the fact that the number of Governments from which information on TCDC had been reported to UNDP for the current session marked a dramatic increase over that for the previous session. In addition, for the first time, information on the TCDC activities of 11 intergovernmental organizations has been made available. The Administrator also expressed the hope that, when resources permitted, the constraints on the staffing of the UNDP Special Unit for Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries would be addressed.

30. Finally, the Administrator remarked that there were still attitudinal barriers to TCDC to be overcome. Recent seminars and meetings of national TCDC focal points had made some very constructive recommendations to overcome these barriers and to promote and integrate TCDC in all operational activities of the system. The years that had passed had highlighted the value of co-operation among developing countries in their common endeavour for development. That co-operation had manifested itself in ways that were encouraging and heartening. Technologies and experiences were now being shared at an accelerating pace among people of different cultures, countries and continents. The intensification of these processes of sharing would help all concerned to march confidently towards a bright future. UNDP could, should and would do more to help.

B. Highlights of progress reports

31. The Administrator had submitted for consideration by the High-level Committee a series of reports regarding the role of the United Nations development system in the implementation of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action. Highlights of these reports, which became the main focus of the Committee's debate and its eventual decisions, included the following topics.

1. Action by United Nations organizations

32. Tangible progress was visible in the use of the TCDC modality in the development activities of several organizations, mostly those which had previously engaged themselves. In these cases, there remained room for more sustained efforts in arranging the placement of trainees in developing country institutions now suited to TCDC activities, and in promoting the use of experts, consultants and equipment from developing countries in project operations on a TCDC basis. In other organizations, however, the degree of progress in these directions, and also in the development of suitable internal mechanisms, had ranged from marginal to just adequate. This was due in part to continuing attitudinal problems and in part to financial or structural deficiencies or both. In general, the Administrator concluded that additional resources were still needed by the United Nations system as a whole to ensure further progress. He reported also on the convening by UNDP in 1985 of a meeting of the TCDC focal points of 25 United Nations organizations and offices concerning the application of TCDC policies and procedures to their technical co-operation activities.

2. Information from Governments

33. There had been a substantial increase in the number of Governments and intergovernmental organizations providing information on their TCDC activities. Among the Governments of developing countries, 60 had reported, compared with 19 in the previous period. Eleven intergovernmental organizations had provided information compared with 11 on the previous sessions. Four Governments of developed countries, as compared with three previously, had reported. However, the number of Governments not yet providing information was still considerable, and by and large, national focal points for TCDC appeared to be ill-equipped to carry out their functions.

3. Use of resources from developing countries

34. In the use of resources and capabilities from developing countries in the total technical co-operation activities of the United Nations organizations, attitudinal and structural problems were being steadily tackled. Considerable scope remained for improvement, but the modest increases reported in the hiring of experts from, placement of fellows in and - even if to a lesser degree - procurement of equipment and supplies from developing countries encouraged confidence that further improvement was feasible.

4. Utilization of UNDP/IPF funds

35. In spite of the sharp reductions in the illustrative IPFs, the number of countries using IPFs for TCDC activities increased from 17 in the period 1982 to 1984 to 30 in the biennium 1985-1986. Their TCDC commitments represented 3.45 per cent of their total IPF expenditure for the latter period, although this amounted to only 1.42 per cent of the IPF utilization for all countries. At the same time, 25.49 per cent of regional IPF expenditures and 5.4 per cent of interregional and global expenditures went to TCDC activities. Considerable scope and opportunity remained for expanding these uses of IPF resources.

5. Utilization of UNDP special programme resources

36. The UNDP-executed interregional project INT/83/904, for promotion of and support to action-oriented TCDC activities, had a total of \$2.288 million available from the UNDP special programme resources for expenditure in the biennium 1985-1986. Aside from catalytic assistance to a substantial number of TCDC activities world wide, the project provided support for TCDC orientation seminars and programming exercises. As described in the Administrator's address, these exercises resulted in the development of a large number of TCDC projects among a large number of countries. For 1987 and 1988, four or five similar "TCDC markets" were planned. To maintain its momentum and phase it out, the project would require approximately \$3 million for the biennium 1987-1988 from the current allocation of the Governing Council of \$5 million for TCDC from the special programme resources for the 1987-1991 IPF cycle.

6. Staffing of the Special Unit for TCDC

37. The Administrator explained that in the face of severe budgetary restraints he had been unable to maintain the staffing of the Special Unit at its planned and previously approved full strength, but had endeavoured to strengthen its capacity by the temporary assignment of other staff. He would continue this practice until the budgetary situation improved.

7. Report of the Joint Inspection Unit

38. A report submitted in 1985 by the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) on development support to TCDC (A/40/656) was made available to the Committee, together with comments on it by the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC) (A/40/656/Add.1).

IV. SUMMARY OF THE GENERAL DEBATE

A. Overview

39. The approach of the tenth anniversary of the approval of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action was viewed by most delegations as, on the one hand, an occasion for reaffirmation of the principles and commitments embodied in the Plan and, on the other hand, a milestone in the transformation of the Plan from a set of concepts to an operational reality. They shared the view of the Administrator that the pulse of TCDC activities appeared to have accelerated, and, as one delegation put it, an accelerated pulse is a sign of life.

40. Positive life signs that attracted the special attention of delegations included the following: the large volume of specific information coming to hand on TCDC activities; the extent to which TCDC principles were being used in technical co-operation programming and its modalities being used in the formulation and implementation of projects; efforts at improving the number of focal points for TCDC action in Governments and organizations; innovative mechanisms sponsored or supported by the United Nations development system for the identification and exchange of needs and capacities of the developing countries; some increase in the use of the country, regional and interregional IPFs of UNDP for TCDC projects; and evidence of continuing or increased interest of donor countries in finding ways of directly or indirectly supporting the TCDC idea in practice.

41. Virtually all delegations recognized and stressed some or all of these positive elements, but most of them emphasized also, and often more strongly, the darker aspects of the picture: the worsening of the world economic situation since the formulation of the Plan of Action; the shrinkage in the amounts and/or real values of international and bilateral aid; the consequent shortage of the financial resources that would give a real spur to TCDC; and, less serious but of great practical importance, shortcomings and delays in the gearing up of the United Nations system as a whole, as well as government mechanisms, to make TCDC a consciously and fully integrated part of technical co-operation and therefore of the development process.

42. Delegations pointed out that the Buenos Aires Plan of Action itself was adopted against the backdrop of a grim international economic situation. The current global economic situation was hardly better. Some aspects of it and some of its effects for the developing countries were in fact worse than before. The low rate of growth in industrialized economies had created the twin difficulties of restricted markets in developed countries for the produce of developing countries and the shrinking of external resources for helping to finance their development. Commercial lending and private capital flows to developing countries had been stagnating. The need in these circumstances for developing countries to increase their collective self-reliance through greater economic and technical co-operation among themselves, to utilize the untapped potential for it that undoubtedly exists and to expand the area of co-operation among themselves was greater than ever before.

43. It was also pointed out that the world was going through a technological revolution of enormous magnitude. It was imperative that the rapid pace of advances in microbiology, communications and informatics, metallurgy and new materials, to name only a few areas, bring about radical changes in production and consumption patterns that would in turn change existing trade patterns. These changes would no doubt benefit mankind, but unless managed well, their side effects risked aggravating the difficulties of the developing countries. Their problems of access to the developed markets and of finding resources for development might well increase. The point was also made that excessively optimistic expectations of the results of TCDC could cause some to lose sight of the fact that, for the time being, most exchanges of resources among developing countries had to be at a relatively low or at least conventional level of technology. Since the industrialized countries were meanwhile constantly renewing and expanding their technologies, the effect could be to leave most of the developing countries lagging further and further behind. Collective self-reliance and co-operation among themselves for exchanging experiences and helping each other in the field of new technologies offered at least one way out of this dilemma.

44. Most delegations regarded the report of the Joint Inspection Unit as a fair and useful evaluation of the implementation thus far of the Plan of Action and generally endorsed its recommendations. An assessment of the progress that was shared by most delegations was that it was encouraging but still very far from being satisfactory, considering its potential from the standpoint of the developing countries themselves as well as from the requisite goodwill of their development partners. There was overriding evidence that TCDC had grown from conceptualization to concretization; this could be seen in the number of projects at national, subregional, regional and interregional levels. At the same time, however, there was an overwhelming perception that a major constraint in the enhancement of TCDC programmes and activities was the deficiency of financial resources to support them. It was recognized that this constraint was mainly a result of the global economic crisis and the lack of responsiveness of the present world economic system - in the absence of a new economic order - to the changing needs. Initiatives aimed at overcoming this overriding constraint were urgently needed. To this end, the co-operation of developing countries themselves (individually and collectively), UNDP, the United Nations development system, multilateral development institutions and bilateral donors was imperative. It had to be strengthened both qualitatively and quantitatively. The developing countries possessed a great treasury of resources, human and technological, which had to be utilized, but the proper exploitation of these resources depended upon greater availability of financial resources.

45. At the same time, some delegations stressed that further progress depended not only on finance but also, and more importantly in many cases, on political will and priorities. In several developing countries (and in some organizations) there could be perceived a kind of mental lethargy that inhibited a departure from conventional forms of technical co-operation. Many countries were accustomed to playing the role of recipient rather than that of co-operating partners, much less that of donor. Both structural and attitudinal barriers, while being steadily tackled, were still formidable and were inhibiting TCDC activities. Providing senior professionals and qualified technicians, especially for long assignments

abroad, was often beyond the capacity of many developing countries. The procurement of supplies and equipment from other developing countries was also often a very difficult matter, and preference for seeking experts from and sending their trainees to the developed countries was still very strong. Other obstacles mentioned included the lack of absorptive capacity in some countries for long-term planning and the implementation of long-term programmes and projects; limited international job opportunities and financial motivation; and inadequate contribution by the private sector to TCDC programmes and projects. Lack of awareness of existing potentials for co-operation in some cases and the weakness of national focal points had also limited possibilities for co-operation. In spite of these difficulties and problems, however, the similarity of social and economic problems in almost all developing countries, the continued worsening of those problems and the similarity of the external pressures to which they were being subjected now made co-operation within the TCDC framework more relevant than ever before.

46. Many delegations, in effect, saw the logic of TCDC as indisputable. It helped developing countries foster collective self-reliance, it promoted trade among participants, it diffused more widely the earlier benefits of more traditional forms of economic co-operation and it could be a cost-effective alternative to these traditional forms. Several of these delegations viewed TCDC as constituting voluntary exchanges between developing countries, funded principally by themselves, but they also acknowledged the importance of externally assisted catalytic and promotional activities.

47. Many delegations emphasized that the volume and scope of TCDC activities - or at least of activities having some of the characteristics of TCDC operations - had been considerably greater than indicated by the formal reports. From developed and developing countries, from United Nations agencies and programmes and other intergovernmental institutions, delegations gave details of a large number of exchanges or inputs - especially of training facilities and advisory services - involving technical co-operation among developing countries. Many of these derived from bilateral arrangements, others from the support of regional banks and other organizations, others from regular programmes of specialized agencies, and an increasing number from third-country arrangements, by which nationals from developing countries were enabled to undergo training in other developing countries at the expense of donor countries.

48. Some delegations stressed the importance of ensuring the participation of women in the TCDC programming exercises and, more importantly, that projects undertaken enable full participation of and benefit for women. It was also suggested that an important area for future TCDC action was the exploration of new and innovative ways to cope with population problems such as the fast rate of urbanization, most of which was occurring in developing countries that did not have the economic capacities to cope with such a vast demographic inversion.

49. Some delegations considered that the regional framework was emerging as the preferred area of expansion of TCDC. The similarity of attitudes and needs within a given region, often joined by a complementarity of resources, could produce the maximum benefits of economic and technical co-operation.

50. Most delegations felt able to view TCDC as neither an end in itself nor a substitute for technical co-operation with developed countries. In this spirit, TCDC was perceived as part and parcel of the development process and in need of being treated as such. Many delegations from developing countries had indicated their readiness to assume responsibility for TCDC and their willingness to implement TCDC activities under financing received under their IPFs. To some delegations from developed countries, this reflected the sensible approach to TCDC: full integration within regular development activities. TCDC could only work, in their view, if it was considered an important, effective and efficient means of project execution. Planners and decision makers in Governments and development organizations should therefore insist and ensure that maximum use was made of TCDC in the formulation and execution of development activities if and when this was felt to be feasible. Where developing countries failed to take this approach, TCDC remained isolated, with small-scale and somewhat unrelated activities, most of which took place only if extra money was found. The philosophy of TCDC and its positive potential would best be served if it were made an integrated part of all technical assistance programmes. Unless this was done, TCDC would remain a programme of low priority and low visibility.

51. Following this point of view, and considering also that TCDC had now gone beyond conceptions and into practical application, the representatives of some developed countries suggested that the time had come to move TCDC policy from the periphery to the centre of organs with policy responsibility. They suggested that the UNDP Governing Council provided a suitable forum to monitor TCDC activities, a forum which could be bolstered by periodic review in the Economic and Social Council and, if necessary, in the General Assembly to ensure system-wide co-ordination and policy oversight.

52. Most delegations, however, preferred to discuss this question in the framework of agenda item 8 (Review of the functioning of the High-level Committee: submission to be made to the Special Commission of the Economic and Social Council) (see annex II below).

B. Actions of Governments

53. As the primary responsibility of the developing countries themselves for the initiation, organization, management, financing and project inputs of TCDC activities had long since been established (and in fact incorporated in the basic guidelines laid down by the High-level Committee in decision 2/9), 6/ delegations gave their attention mainly to the practical achievements and problems of the countries in respect of these matters. A number of them have been discussed in general terms above.

6/ See Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 39 (A/36/39), annex I.

54. The need for adequate political will, for development priorities and for resource allocations to be made available in order to make full use of the TCDC potential was emphasized over and over again. The potential itself needed to be defined more actively and precisely so that a clear conception of both needs and capacities was always available. For this purpose, there was a widespread need to ensure that the focal points for TCDC were established at an adequate level of authority in the processes of development planning and of resource allocation and were staffed with properly trained professional officers. Full advantage should be taken of the training and advisory services available within the United Nations development system.

55. Some delegations recommended that developing countries should examine in a systematic fashion all projects either in formulation or under review for the possibility of obtaining inputs such as expert and training services, supplies and equipment, from other developing countries, which could be highly cost-effective.

56. A number of delegations attached particular importance to action by Governments to bring the private sector (enterprises and other institutions) as fully as possible into the identification and implementation of TCDC activities. They perceived a special need for this in the industrial sector, where "technological packages" consistent with the co-operating countries' stage of development had already proved feasible and valuable. It was recognized that South-South co-operation in this area could not be sufficient in most cases to bring the countries concerned into the technological age and to start narrowing the gap between them and the industrialized countries. However, it was considered highly desirable for technological components to be included in TCDC arrangements in view of the imperative facing many countries of making new products and finding markets for them.

C. Support by the United Nations system

57. The importance of continued and strengthened support and assistance by the United Nations development system, as one of the main pillars of technical co-operation among developing countries, was again emphasized by all delegations. Several paid tribute in particular to the Development of Technical Co-operation for Development of the Secretariat, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Industrial Development (UNIDO), the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), the United Nations Conference for Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the regional commissions, as well as to UNDP, for their consistent efforts in supporting the promotional activities of TCDC and to an increasing extent the operational activities.

58. They found it disappointing, however, that many other organizations of the United Nations system had played only a marginal role, if any, so far in the promotional activities, let alone the establishment of TCDC focal points or special units for TCDC in their respective organizations. Virtually all the governing bodies of the specialized agencies had endorsed the Buenos Aires Plan of Action and urged its application in the agencies' sectors of competence. Despite this broad

system-wide acceptance of the Plan of Action as a binding legislative framework for support of the United Nations system for TCDC, it was regrettable that many organizations have lent only lip-service support to TCDC without attempting to incorporate it in their mainstream activities. Not only were additional resources needed to optimize the role of TCDC in developmental efforts in the United Nations system, but equally needed were the necessary enthusiasm and an adequate response on the part of the organizations concerned.

59. The result was that in too many of the organizations TCDC has remained more of a peripheral activity, had not been accorded due priority and, more importantly, had not been made to permeate the technical co-operation mechanisms and procedures (and the attitudes of the professional staffs concerned) and therefore to become thoroughly and consciously integrated into the whole of their actions. Not only financial but also structural and attitudinal obstacles still had to be overcome. There was seen to be need for more sustained effort on the part of these organizations in providing not in conceptual but in practical terms the necessary impetus and direction so that the concerns and possibilities of co-operation among developing countries should be entered deliberately and continuously and even automatically into all relevant actions and provide common ground for their co-operation with UNDP and all other organizations.

60. Many delegations also felt disheartened to note that the organizations and agencies of the United Nations system had not yet made sufficient progress in regard to the hiring of experts and consultants from developing countries or in the procurement of equipment and supplies of developing country origins. That problem pervaded all operational activities, and not only those of a true TCDC character. While some genuine practical difficulties could be understood, it was felt that here again attitudes were partly to blame - attitudes that leaned towards relying on known and traditional sources of project inputs.

61. Beyond these aspects, furthermore, it was stated by some delegations that TCDC still did not feel the impact of a concerted and innovative international economic co-operative effort. As a result, TCDC had remained a peripheral and somewhat obscure option for technical co-operation among countries instead of being actively pursued as an alternate, more cost-effective modality of technical co-operation better suited to the needs of many developing countries. A sharper focus on TCDC should be supported by a more innovative and meaningful interpretation of the promotional and supportive role given by the United Nations development system. TCDC was a multi-dimensional process. It could be bilateral or multilateral in scope and subregional, regional or interregional in nature. This allowed for a versatility in interpretation that could lead to the creation of more flexible, inventive mechanisms in support of TCDC projects. With due credit to the valuable contribution so far made by UNDP and a number of specialized agencies, this was a challenge still daunting the United Nations development system and one which the donor community had largely ignored.

62. Meetings of the organizations' focal points such as that convened by the Administrator of UNDP in 1986 could be a suitable place for continuing the quest for innovative approaches, in the view of some delegations. It was suggested that these meetings could usefully include some representation of the focal points of

the developing countries themselves. The meetings should be put on a regular basis, and their recommendations, together with reports on follow-up action, should continue to be put before the High-level Committee.

63. Representatives of a number of the agencies and organizations of the United Nations system, including UNCTAD, UNIDO, the Economic Commission for Latin American and the Caribbean (ECLAC), UNFPA, the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, FAO, the World Food Council (WFC), WHO, ILO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO) made statements elaborating on their commitment to TCDC, their internal arrangements for supporting it, and the project formulation and operations in which they had been involved. The representative of the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development mentioned the recent establishment of a focal point in that Department for TCDC activities and the launching of a modest but significant programme for TCDC under the United Nations Regular Programme of Technical Co-operation. The Department had also been active in the preparations for and the conduct of the intercountry programming exercises. The representative of UNESCO declared that a TCDC focal point had now been established in the organization and that funds had been earmarked exclusively for TCDC activities in the 1986-1987 budget. UNESCO had completed an internal study in 1987 of its TCDC activities and was providing support for seven regional and interregional studies.

64. The representative of UNCTAD introduced the report of a study (Technical co-operation among developing countries: co-operative exchange of skills among developing countries (TD/B/1128)), which had been requested of his organization by the High-level Committee (decision 4/2).

65. A number of international organizations outside the United Nations system also made statements.

D. Role of the United Nations Development Programme

66. Virtually all delegations praised UNDP for continuing and expanding the central and stimulating role it was playing in the framework of support by the United Nations development system of TCDC activities. The Administrator had said that UNDP could, should and would do more; some delegations, recalling this promise, wanted to see further action taken in a number of aspects.

67. There was widespread interest in and enthusiasm for the catalytic and supportive role of UNDP in initiating the subregional intercountry TCDC programming exercises, of which four had been held and several more were already planned. Some delegations suggested that these exercises should be put on a regular basis and that, with the agreement of the countries concerned, other relevant organizations of the United Nations system should play a part. Prior work in establishing catalogues of needs and capacities was recommended; the suggestion was also made that a collation of needs and capacities that could not be matched by the developing countries concerned could be a useful input into programming in other regions or into the considerations of bilateral donors.

68. Some delegations pointed out the encouragement and support by UNDP of these programming exercises had the potential for drawing more countries into TCDC. At the same time, the object must be to develop projects that did in fact get implemented. It would not be helpful to generate lists of projects that were bottle-necked owing to a lack of resources. If United Nations resources were to be solicited, the exercises should to the extent possible focus on projects that fitted within country programmes so that they could be funded from IPFs.

69. Across the whole range of UNDP responsibilities and actions, in the view of some delegations, further attention should be paid to scrutinizing projects in formulation or under operational review for opportunities for TCDC and for the maximum possible opportunities of giving developing countries the means of participating in projects in general, whether by the provision of experts, training facilities and equipment or by the award to them of contracts.

70. Some delegations felt that UNDP could engage itself more fully in the field. One delegation remarked that a number of UNDP officials themselves were not convinced of the general philosophy of TCDC, and some might not even be aware of the fundamental concepts. UNDP staff in the field should be advocates of the practice itself and should try to consult with Governments on how best to initiate TCDC at the field level.

71. Appreciation was widely expressed of the improved quality and innovative work of the UNDP Special Unit for TCDC, including its role in the intercountry programming exercise, its initiatives in co-operating with the other organizations of the United Nations system and its support of assistance to developing countries' focal points. Some delegations considered that the Unit should be strengthened in its present role by being more adequately staffed and equipped. Some others considered that, as TCDC itself became progressively integrated into the mainstream of UNDP activities, the staff of the Unit should be increasingly used to assist the regional bureaux in designing or redesigning projects to fit the TCDC mold. Many delegations supported the view that UNDP should make extra efforts to support those developing countries which were in great need of strengthening their TCDC focal points in order to enable them to participate in TCDC activities.

72. Delegations welcomed the enlargement and modernization of the Information Referral System (INRES) as an important step in establishing a systemized method for matching needs and available capacities among developing countries. Since it was essential to increase the flow of information for TCDC, INRES should be further expanded and updated on a regular basis, and linkages should be established with other information systems in the United Nations development system.

73. Questions raised about the use of UNDP resources for TCDC projects are included in the following section.

E. Financing of TCDC

74. Having respect for principles embodied in the Buenos Aires Plan of Action, the delegations agreed that the financing of TCDC activities was primarily the responsibility of the developing countries themselves. Multilateral and bilateral external aid was to be regarded as complementary to the efforts of those countries.

75. Most delegations, however, pointed to the dilemma inherent in the application of these principles. The hard fact of the matter was that, on the one hand, most of the developing countries did not have the resources to enter into more than a small fraction of potential TCDC activities and, on the other hand, external assistance was not forthcoming in sufficient "complementary" quantity.

76. There were further appeals to developed countries and aid-giving organizations for additional resources. Appreciation was expressed of evidence of increased interest in TCDC and in a few cases of increased financing on the part of these external sources. But it was generally agreed that the gap between needs and resources was still wide and growing wider.

77. The retiring President of the Committee had suggested in opening the meeting that the choices faced were either to keep asking for resources compatible with needs, which was obviously unrealistic, or to leave things as they were, which was dangerous, or to use all available resources to carry out a larger number of projects, reducing the cost of technical co-operation by increasing the use of TCDC inputs and United Nations volunteers.

78. Some delegations urged that innovative approaches to the financing problem should be vigorously sought. One delegation described as a success story the establishment by a major developing country in Asia in co-operation with ESCAP of a "co-operation fund" for TCDC with both convertible and non-convertible currency. There had also been some progress in enterprise-to-enterprise co-operation and the setting up of multinational production enterprises. Other delegations suggested seeking more triangular co-operation arrangements - the third party being a developed country - and greater co-operation from the technical assistance programmes of lending institutions, especially in financing consultants and contractors from developing countries.

79. As regards financing with the United Nations development system, a group of delegations recommended that the organizations other than UNDP should set aside 10 per cent of their technical assistance resources for TCDC activities, that UNDP should remove its limit of 10 per cent on the proportion of country IPFs to be used for such activities, and that additional IPF resources should be made available for TCDC at the regional, interregional and global project levels.

80. Some other delegations, however, argued that what TCDC needed for success was a greater priority in the development plans of the developing countries and in their own use of fundings such as the IPFs. Its success could not be dependent upon increasing the level of special funding from within UNDP resources, the input of which was, and should remain, for promotional activities. UNDP funds needed for implementation, as opposed to promotion, should be through IPF financing. Specific

earmarking within multilateral development funds for implementation of TCDC would set aside and reduce resources that should be an integral part of normal development activities. IPF financing gave full recognition to the priorities set by the countries themselves as well as to the integration of TCDC activities in the development process.

81. Several delegations remarked on the fact that an increasing number of countries were indeed giving higher priority to TCDC components in projects funded by IPFs. This trend could be expected to continue; in many of the country programmes presented to the UNDP Governing Council for approval in 1987, the TCDC aspect was becoming more prominent. Also to be welcomed was an increase in the demand for and use of United Nations volunteers. Another delegation considered that changes in procedures allowing for financing of local costs and for reimbursement of TCDC expenditures in foreign currency would go a long way towards greater and more purposeful utilization of IPFs for TCDC.

82. Attention was drawn to financial problems that could arise from recently initiated intercountry programming exercises. Experience had already shown that follow-up to many TCDC promotional efforts had significant financial implications which not all developing countries could afford. The role of the United Nations development system might need to be redefined during the process of implementation of measures agreed upon in TCDC exercises.

V. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

A. Report of the Chairman of the Working Group to the plenary

83. At its 7th meeting, on 27 May 1987, the Committee considered the report of the Chairman of the Working Group to the plenary as contained in document TCDC/5/L.24 and Add.1 and 2.

84. In this report the Working Group recommended the adoption of 10 draft decisions. The Committee adopted the draft decisions without a vote. The texts of the decisions are reproduced in annex I as decisions 5/1 through 5/10.

85. The Working Group also recommended the adoption of the text, based on a draft that had been presented by the President, of a statement to be submitted to the Special Commission of the Economic and Social Council in accordance with Council resolution 1987/112. The Committee adopted this text without a vote (see annex II).

B. Views expressed by delegations following the adoption of the decisions

86. Concerning the submission to be made to the Special Commission of the Economic and Social Council (see annex II), the delegation of Norway wished to reserve the position of its Government as to the interpretation to be given to the last sentence of paragraph 5. The delegation of Norway was joined in this reservation by the delegations of Denmark, Sweden, Finland, the Federal Republic of Germany, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, France and Canada. These delegations stressed that their views in no way represented a weakening of their support for TCDC and their acceptance of its Buenos Aires Plan of Action. They recognized that it would rest with the Special Commission of the Economic and Social Council to recommend whatever changes, if any, might be appropriate.

87. The delegations of Argentina, Egypt, Brazil, China, Mauritania and Guatemala wished to record their concern at what they perceived was an implied regression from previous commitments by developed countries to support for TCDC. They also felt that any attempt to question the role and status of the High-level Committee would be tantamount to questioning the validity of the Plan of Action. These delegations, however, expressed appreciation of the support and contributions of the developed countries to TCDC in the past and welcomed the reassurances of their continuing support. The view was also expressed that in the area of TCDC co-operation, action spoke louder than words, and the progress reports to be made at the sixth session in 1989 would illuminate the meaning of the assurances that had been given.

88. The delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany, referring to the decision adopted in regard to the report of the Joint Inspection Unit, also reserved the right to make its views on this matter known in the Economic and Social Council.

89. Several delegations paid tribute to the contributions made to the session by the President, the Vice-Presidents, the Rapporteur, the Administrator of UNDP and his staff, and the representatives of the other organizations.

C. Schedule and organization of work for the sixth session of the High-level Committee

90. The Committee adopted the draft provisional agenda for its sixth session as contained in document TCDC/5/L.24/Add.2. The provisional agenda is reproduced in annex III.

D. Report on credentials

91. At the 7th meeting, the President reported that, in accordance with rule 8 of the High-level Committee's rules of procedure, the Bureau had examined the credentials of delegations and had found them to be in order. The Committee approved the oral report of the President.

E. Draft report of the plenary

92. The Committee authorized its Rapporteur to complete its report, taking into account any amendments or comments received from delegations, and to present the report to the Governing Council of UNDP at its thirty-fourth session.

VI. CLOSURE OF THE SESSION

A. Closing statement by the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme

93. In a closing statement, the Administrator of UNDP assured the Committee that full and careful consideration would be given to those decisions that were directed to the Administrator of UNDP and all others that had a bearing on his responsibilities. He would act promptly, and he was sure that the Governing Council would do the same, to take the steps that were feasible and useful to the further development of TCDC.

94. The Associate Administrator noted that some of the decisions tended to increase the workload of fact-gathering, analysis, assessment and reporting that would fall upon the Special Unit at the very time when its road was open to a burgeoning of activity in programming and training in the field. Until the financial situation improved, difficult choices would have to be made in the use of the time and manpower that would be available.

95. Concerning the extent of application of the 10 per cent limit on the use for TCDC of the country indicative planning figures, he pointed out that there was no limit on the proportion of the IPFs that a country might devote to the costs, in foreign currencies and in many cases in local currencies, of projects that served its own national development objectives. Once a project met the basic requirements of any UNDP-assisted project, a choice among several modalities of implementation had to be made. Inputs could be drawn from world-wide sources of experts, management, equipment, training facilities and so on, but they could also be obtained, and in many cases at lower cost, from another specified developing country, subject to UNDP financial regulations and rules. The 10 per cent limitation on the country's IPFs applied only to expenditures that would be borne by one of the participating countries from its own IPFs for the benefit of the other country.

96. The Associate Administrator said that, unavoidably, it had taken time to spread understanding of TCDC, to assess the resources available in the developing countries to generate the will of the countries - and the will of the United Nations development system - to take advantage of those resources. It had taken time also to gear up both the Governments and the organizations to make deliberate and systematic use of those resources. Forces of habit, traditional and conventional attitudes towards project design and execution, resistance to change and reliance on the presumed higher competences of the industrialized countries could not be made to disappear all at once. There were still points of resistance and reluctance and even of ignorance to be cleared out, in UNDP staff at Headquarters and in the field, in its sister organizations in the United Nations system and also in some of the Governments themselves.

97. However, the record showed that progress was being made all the time. The gains in experience and quality of the work of the Special Unit; UNDP actions in support of the development of focal points at country level; its meetings with the focal points of the specialized agencies and other organizations; the inter-country

programming TCDC exercises that it had helped and would continue to help to organize - all these were evidence of the commitment of UNDP to TCDC. There was one great limitation that neither UNDP, nor the other organizations in the United Nations system, nor their partners in the non-governmental world, nor many of the developed and developing countries alike could overcome by rhetoric or resolutions, let alone by some sudden change of heart and fortune. That limitation was the shortage of financial resources. The Administrator had not lost confidence that there were additional resources that could be directed to development assistance without pain to their suppliers but with benefit to the developing countries and the world as a whole.

98. The Associate Administrator declared that UNDP sought constantly to bring about a dynamic growth in the IPFs and complementary funds and the resources thus available for country, regional, interregional and global technical co-operation, including TCDC as an integral and growing part of all these. It wanted to be able also to strengthen the Special Unit so that its weight and experience could be used to penetrate the TCDC modality into the mentality, the planning and the action of every relevant UNDP unit at headquarters and in the field and into those of the partner organizations and Governments. UNDP looked to the day when TCDC, with the innovation, appropriateness and cost-effectiveness that went with it, became part and parcel of all its actions, and when the use of TCDC became second nature to everybody involved in technical co-operation.

B. Closing statement by the Acting President

99. On behalf of the President, the Vice-President and Chairman of the Working Group congratulated the delegations and the secretariat on the results that had been achieved at the fifth session. He noted that the number of delegations of Governments attending had increased considerably (from 89 to 131) since the previous session. A total of 39 as compared with 30 Governments had sent delegates from their capitals. More should do so, since the direct representation of actions at the grass-roots level was a primary necessity.

100. The Acting President said that the Committee had been glad to see a considerable increase in TCDC activities on the part of the developing countries, with increased help from UNDP and the United Nations development system as a whole. The principles of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action had been reaffirmed and relevant decisions had been taken which expanded the framework of the Committee's action. TCDC had so far yielded remarkable results in spite of the unfavourable economic conditions which had overtaken the world as a whole.

ANNEX I

Decisions adopted by the High-level Committee at its
fifth session

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5/1. Co-operative exchange of skills among developing countries through technical co-operation

The High-level Committee,

1. Takes note of the study by the secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development entitled "Skill exchange in technological co-operation among developing countries: some development aspects"; a/

2. Expresses its satisfaction concerning the study and the conclusions and recommendations contained therein;

3. Invites all organizations of the United Nations development system to support the implementation of an integrated approach to the co-operative exchange of skills among developing countries as spelled out in the conclusions of the above-mentioned study. b/

7th plenary meeting
27 May 1987

5/2. Measures to facilitate TCDC: Staffing of the Special Unit for Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries of the United Nations Development Programme

The High-level Committee,

Recalling its decisions 3/8 and 4/3 in which it, inter alia, called for the strengthening of the Special Unit for Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries of the United Nations Development Programme to enable it to discharge fully its functions in support of progress in technical co-operation among developing countries,

Recognizing that the Special Unit acts as the focal point for technical co-operation among developing countries within the United Nations Development Programme, which itself is the focal point of technical co-operation among developing countries for the entire United Nations development system,

Conscious that there is need for system-wide co-ordination of activities in support of technical co-operation among developing countries and that, in the absence of an adequately staffed special unit within the United Nations Development Programme, such a task will be difficult to undertake,

a/ TD/B/1128.

b/ Ibid., paras. 61-71.

1. Expresses regret at the inability of the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme to provide additional staffing for the Special Unit for Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries at this time;

2. Urges the Administrator to take into account the high priority that, in the view of the High-level Committee, should be accorded to ensure adequate staffing for the Special Unit;

3. Requests the Administrator to report to the High-level Committee at its sixth session on the ability of the Special Unit to fulfil its mandate in view of its staffing capacity at the reporting period.

7th plenary meeting
27 May 1987

5/3. Information from Governments and intergovernmental organizations on their activities in technical co-operation among developing countries

The High-level Committee,

1. Takes note of the report of the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme entitled "some information from Governments on their activities in technical co-operation among developing countries"; c/

2. Expresses satisfaction that, compared with the previous reporting period, there has been an increased number of replies received from developing countries to the request by the United Nations Development Programme for information on their activities in technical co-operation among developing countries;

3. Urges the developed countries, in the light of the limited response to the request made by the United Nations Development Programme for information on their activities in support of technical co-operation among developing countries, to make available in the future the information requested;

4. Invites the developing countries to continue to strengthen their focal points for technical co-operation among developing countries with a view to promoting their activities related to technical co-operation among developing countries at the country level;

5. Urges the Governments of developed countries to give their full support to the implementation of recommendations 35 and 36 of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries; d/

c/ TCDC/5/3 and Corr.1.

d/ Report of the United Nations Conference on Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries, Buenos Aires, 30 August-12 September 1978 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.78.II.A.11 and corrigendum).

6. Emphasizes the increasing importance for the developing countries of schemes, programmes and projects for technical co-operation among developing countries in the light of the critical economic situation affecting them and the least developed countries in particular;

7. Invites interested developing countries to promote the participation of the private sectors of their economies in activities and projects for technical co-operation among developing countries;

8. Recommends that the United Nations Development Programme and other relevant organizations of the United Nations system continue to support all co-ordinating activities for technical co-operation among developing countries carried out by developing countries among themselves, particularly the biennial meetings of the heads of national technical co-operation organs and to undertake appropriate follow-up action on the pertinent recommendations adopted at such meetings relating to the support of the United Nations system to the promotion of technical co-operation among developing countries;

9. Requests the Administrator to report to the High-level Committee at its sixth session on the progress attained by Governments in their activities in technical co-operation among developing countries.

7th plenary meeting
27 May 1987

5/4. Role of women in technical co-operation among developing countries

The High-level Committee,

Recalling paragraph 17 of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries, d/ which identifies the integration of women in development as a field of co-operation to be strengthened and supported by the recommendations of the Plan of Action,

Recalling also its decision 2/2 entitled "Promoting women's participation in development programmes through technical co-operation among developing countries" as well as its decision 3/7 entitled "Integration of women in development through technical co-operation among developing countries",

Endorsing the priority placed on technical co-operation activities by the international community in paragraphs 322 to 337 of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, e/

e/ Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Nairobi, 15-26 July 1985 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.85.IV.10), chap. I, sect. A.

Aware that the United Nations system has identified technical co-operation as a means of improving international action to integrate women in development by including a specific subprogramme titled "Technical co-operation, training and advisory services" in its system-wide medium-term plan for women and development, f/

1. Decides to monitor progress made through technical co-operation among developing countries to integrate women in development activities;
2. Requests the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme and the heads of all organs of the United Nations development system to develop comprehensive guidelines based on the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries and to implement the relevant measures of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women for the purpose of increasing the participation of women in all aspects of technical co-operation among developing countries;
3. Recommends that the Secretary-General, in formulating his proposals on technical co-operation among developing countries for the medium-term plan for the period 1990-1995, clearly specify measures to increase the participation of women in all aspects of technical co-operation among developing countries in the major programmes;
4. Further requests the Administrator to report to the High-level Committee at its sixth session and to the Governing Council at its thirty-sixth session on activities proposed and undertaken by the United Nations system to enlarge the role of women in technical co-operation among developing countries with respect to these requests.

7th plenary meeting
27 May 1987

5/5. Progress made in implementing the tasks entrusted to the United Nations development system by the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries

The High-level Committee,

Reaffirming the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries d/ and the pertinent decisions adopted at its previous meetings,

Taking note of the reports presented by the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme to the High-level Committee at its fifth session on this subject,

Emphasizing the increasing importance for the developing countries of activities, programmes and projects for technical co-operation among developing countries in the light of the critical economic situation,

Recognizing the important role that technical co-operation among developing countries can play in the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990, adopted by the General Assembly at its thirteenth special session, g/ taking note of the considerable efforts already being made in the field of technical co-operation among developing countries,

Expressing concern that the resources available for activities, programmes and projects for technical co-operation among developing countries have not met the growing requirements and needs of the developing countries,

1. Requests the organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations development system to take expeditious action within their respective fields of competence for the implementation of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries, which is a legislative framework for all activities, programmes and projects for technical co-operation among developing countries and to indicate clearly in their legislative provisions the specific tasks to be accomplished in the area of technical co-operation among developing countries;

2. Recommends that each of the bodies and organizations of the United Nations system carry out, every two years, a separate base review of its activities for technical co-operation among developing countries and report on its results to the High-level Committee;

3. Invites the organizations and the bodies of the United Nations system, by way of reaffirming their catalytic role, to establish or strengthen their focal points and/or co-ordination centres for technical co-operation among developing countries in order to disseminate the principles of technical co-operation among developing countries throughout their programmes and to assist Governments to prepare and execute specific projects for technical co-operation among developing countries;

4. Requests the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme and the organizations of the United Nations development system to systematize, unify and improve upon the methodology for presentation of the data related to activities for technical co-operation among developing countries in the reports for future sessions of the High-level Committee;

5. Urges the bodies of the United Nations system with the mandate and resources for carrying out activities for technical co-operation among developing countries to establish and maintain greater transparency as to the resources

g/ General Assembly resolution S-13/2, annex.

available for promoting and developing activities for technical co-operation among developing countries;

6. Requests the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme to ensure adequate flexibility in the Programme's rules and procedures to enable developing countries to make more effective and fuller use of the indicative planning figures for technical co-operation among developing countries;

7. Requests all organizations of the United Nations system to explore additional sources of finance for projects and activities for technical co-operation among developing countries, including those of an interregional and global nature, and to allocate an increasing proportion of their resources to activities and projects for technical co-operation among developing countries;

8. Takes note of the report of the Joint Inspection Unit h/ and the relevant comments of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination i/ and requests the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme to include in the report requested in paragraph 11 of the present decision the views of the United Nations development system on these documents and their recommendations and comments;

9. Reiterates the need to make full use of the potential of developing countries and in this context also invites the organizations and the bodies of the United Nations system to strive ever more actively to use the equipment, services, experts and consultants available in the developing countries in keeping with existing rules and regulations and in that respect to continue to review their procurement practices and policies;

10. Requests the Secretary-General and calls upon all organizations of the United Nations system to take the steps necessary, in keeping with existing rules and regulations, to increase procurement in the developing countries for the United Nations system by, inter alia, moving to overcome the lack of information about the possibilities these countries offer in the procurement area and to achieve greater dissemination of information about procurement possibilities and practices of the United Nations system;

11. Requests the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme to include in his report to the Governing Council at its thirty-fifth session an expanded version of the report called for under decision 4/1 adopted by the High-level Committee at its fourth session, the said report to be based on the experience gained in the field in implementation of paragraphs 8 and 9 of the present decision and to include progress made and difficulties and obstacles that may have been encountered;

h/ A/40/656.

i/ A/40/656/Add.1.

12. Urges the international community, the United Nations Development Programme and all organizations and agencies of the United Nations development system to give full support, including the allocation of sufficient resources to facilitate the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development within the framework of technical co-operation among developing countries;

13. Decides to include in the agenda of the sixth session of the High-level Committee to be held in 1989 an item entitled "Overall appraisal and assessment of the implementation by the United Nations development system of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action";

14. Requests the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme to submit to the High-level Committee at its sixth session a report on the implementation of the present decision;

15. Requests that all the reports called for by the High-level Committee be made available well in advance of the sixth session, allowing sufficient time for member States to analyse them in detail.

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5/6. National focal points and report of the meeting of TCDC focal points of organizations of the United Nations development system held in New York

The High-level Committee,

Having considered the report of the meeting of TCDC focal points of organizations of the United Nations development system, j/ held in New York on 4 and 5 March 1986,

Noting with appreciation the initiative taken by the United Nations Development Programme to convene the meeting with a view to strengthening technical co-operation among developing countries within the United Nations system,

1. Urges the organizations of the United Nations development system to adopt and implement the recommendations made at the Meeting k/ for strengthening technical co-operation among developing countries within the organizations of the United Nations development system and with respect to the procurement of goods and services from developing countries by organizations of the system;

j/ TCDC/5/INF/1.

k/ Ibid., annex, sect. E.

2. Requests the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme to convene meetings of focal points for technical co-operation among developing countries of organizations of the United Nations development system every two years, preferably immediately prior to each session of the High-level Committee, to discuss ways and means of further strengthening technical co-operation among developing countries;

3. Further requests the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme to report to the High-level Committee at its sixth session on the implementation of the present decision;

4. Invites the United Nations Development Programme, the organs and bodies of the United Nations development system and the developed countries to assist the developing countries to strengthen their focal points for technical co-operation among developing countries in order to enable them to participate effectively in activities for technical co-operation among developing countries.

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5/7. Strengthening and improving activities for technical co-operation among developing countries undertaken by the organizations of the United Nations system

The High-level Committee,

Recalling the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries d/ and the relevant United Nations resolutions,

Reaffirming the paramount importance of the urgent and complete implementation of the recommendation contained in paragraph 56 of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action,

Bearing in mind the role, functions and responsibilities assigned by the Buenos Aires Plan of Action to the United Nations Development Programme in promoting and implementing technical co-operation among developing countries,

Recognizing the need and the importance of increasing and strengthening co-ordination among the organizations of the United Nations system for carrying out activities in support of technical co-operation among developing countries,

Recalling the proposal made at the Eighth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Harare from 1 to 6 September 1986, 1/ that a representative group of non-aligned and other developing countries should hold meetings with all executing agencies of the United Nations system in order to

1/ A/41/697-S/18392, annex.

ensure the adoption of effective measures to achieve the objectives of economic and technical co-operation among developing countries,

1. Considers that the sixth session of the High-level Committee on the Review of Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries could usefully be preceded by a two-day meeting of all executing agencies of the United Nations system with the developing countries in order to ensure the adoption of effective measures to achieve the objectives of economic and technical co-operation among developing countries;

2. Invites all executing agencies of the United Nations system dealing with technical co-operation among developing countries to participate at the highest level at such a meeting and to present a comprehensive assessment and appraisal of their activities in technical co-operation among developing countries since the adoption of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries;

3. Requests the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme to take the necessary action in the light of paragraph 1 above.

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5/8. Strengthening and improving intergovernmental programming exercises for technical co-operation among developing countries

The High-level Committee,

Recalling the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries d/ and the relevant United Nations resolutions,

Reaffirming the important role of technical co-operation among developing countries in economic development as well as in the reinforcement of individual and collective self-reliance of developing countries,

Taking note with satisfaction of the results of the intergovernmental programming exercises for technical co-operation among developing countries in recent years,

Bearing in mind that these exercises should be guided by the principle of equality and mutual benefit between and among participating developing countries, ensuring the achievements of practical results and the use of technical co-operation among developing countries resources mainly for the implementation of concrete projects,

Considering that the involvement of developed countries in supporting and financing projects resulting from the intergovernmental programming exercises for

technical co-operation among developing countries would be an important element of North-South co-operation,

Considering further that the support and involvement of international financing institutions would further enhance the promotion and implementation of activities for technical co-operation among developing countries,

Recalling in this regard recommendations 35 and 36 of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action, in which, inter alia, Governments of developed countries were invited to give full support to technical co-operation among developing countries,

Recalling also recommendation 32 of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action, in which the United Nations Development Programme was given the responsibility for catalyzing and promoting technical co-operation among developing countries throughout the United Nations system,

Considering the need for further strengthening and improving intergovernmental programming exercises for technical co-operation among developing countries to meet the growing requirements of developing countries in their economic development,

1. Recognizes that intergovernmental programming exercises for technical co-operation among developing countries between and among participating countries could constitute a useful modality for promoting technical co-operation among developing countries and that such exercises require, for further strengthening and improvement, an adequate evaluation of the concrete execution of the agreed projects and activities;

2. Recognizes further that these exercises should continue to be closely linked with priorities and planning for national development objectives;

3. Invites developing countries to support and participate in the intergovernmental programming exercises for technical co-operation among developing countries and to take appropriate follow-up actions in accordance with their own capacities and requirements;

4. Requests that regional, interregional and global programming exercises, sectoral and/or comprehensive, for technical co-operation among developing countries continue to be held in accordance with the expressed needs of the developing countries and that an adequate evaluation of these exercises be made;

5. Emphasizes the importance of the catalytic and promotional role of the United Nations Development Programme in these exercises and its role in the execution of projects thereof;

6. Recommends that the implementation of projects resulting from these exercises be incorporated, whenever possible or appropriate, into the programmes, including country, regional, interregional and global programmes of the United Nations Development Programme;

7. Invites other United Nations bodies to participate, whenever appropriate, in these programming exercises for technical co-operation among developing countries and to provide financial support for the execution of projects resulting therefrom;
8. Invites developed countries to provide support and financing for projects and activities resulting from these exercises;
9. Encourages and calls upon the international and regional financing institutions to join the efforts of the organs and organizations within the United Nations system to assist developing countries in their activities for technical co-operation among developing countries;
10. Invites participating countries to share information and experience related to these exercises;
11. Requests the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme to submit to the High-level Committee at its next session an analytical report containing an evaluation of these exercises and the state of the implementation of projects resulting therefrom.

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5/9. Report of the Joint Inspection Unit on United Nations development system support to the implementation of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries

The High-level Committee,

1. Takes note of the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "United Nations development system support to the implementation of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action on technical co-operation among developing countries", h/ of the comments of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination on that report i/ and of the note by the Administrator concerning the two documents; m/
2. Supports the view of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination that the report of the Joint Inspection Unit and the discussion on its findings and recommendations should lead to a useful re-examination of the current operational policies and practices in the United Nations development system in supporting and assisting developing countries in the formulation and implementation of projects for technical co-operation among developing countries and to the improvement of those practices whenever necessary;

3. Supports the view of the Joint Inspection Unit that the Buenos Aires Plan of Action, which has been endorsed by virtually all the governing bodies of the United Nations system, should be considered a binding legislative framework of the United Nations development system support for technical co-operation among developing countries, leaving no need for a new system-wide mandate for this purpose;

4. Appreciates the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit report and believes that their implementation by the organizations of the United Nations development system should have a salutary effect upon the strengthening of technical co-operation among developing countries in the system and in particular the use of modalities for technical co-operation among developing countries and the establishment of appropriate co-ordinating units for the promotion and implementation of technical co-operation among developing countries;

5. Urges all organizations, organs and bodies of the United Nations system, in their relevant spheres of competence, to participate actively in support of the implementation of the recommendations of the above-mentioned report of the Joint Inspection Unit n/ and to inform the Special Unit for Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries of the United Nations Development Programme of their implementation so that an overall picture may be available to the High-level Committee at its sixth session on the effectiveness of the catalytic and promotional role of the United Nations development system in support of technical co-operation among developing countries;

6. Requests the Administrator to include information on the status of implementation of the report of the Joint Inspection Unit in his report to the High-level Committee at its sixth session on the progress of technical co-operation among developing countries in the United Nations development system.

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5/10. Utilization of UNDP funds comprising the country, regional and interregional and global indicative planning figures for activities relating to technical co-operation among developing countries

The High-level Committee,

Recalling the fifth preambular paragraph and paragraph 6 of its decision 5/8,

1. Urges the United Nations Development Programme to incorporate in the implementation of its regional, interregional and global programming new activities relating to technical co-operation among developing countries;

n/ A/40/656, paras. 99-106.

2. Recommends that the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme review its decision 81/31 on indicative country planning figures for technical co-operation among developing countries;

3. Requests the United Nations Development Programme and the organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations development system to take the necessary measures to enable each developing country to have the choice of executing each project on technical co-operation totally or in part within the framework of technical co-operation among developing countries or according to the traditional method of technical assistance;

4. Invites the Administrator, in accordance with recommendation 34 of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries (art. 59, para. 9), d/ to prepare the necessary adjustments of policies and mechanisms of the United Nations Development Programme, and to assist other organizations of the United Nations system, if they so request, to achieve the objective defined in that paragraph;

5. Recommends that the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme consider the allocation of at least 25 per cent of the Programme's funds for the regional and interregional and global indicative planning figures for activities for technical co-operation among developing countries;

6. Requests the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme to incorporate in the report requested in decision 5/8 information on the implementation of the relevant provisions of the present decision.

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ANNEX II

Review of the functioning of the High-level Committee

(Submission to be made to the Special Commission of the
Economic and Social Council) a/

1. Pursuant to Economic and Social Council decision 1987/112 of 6 February 1987, the High-level Committee submits to the Special Commission of the Council its views on achieving the objectives of recommendation 8 of the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts to Review the Efficiency of the Administrative and Financial Functioning of the United Nations b/ that are applicable to the functioning of this Committee.

2. The High-level Committee emerged from recommendation 37 of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries c/ adopted by the United Nations Conference on Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries in September 1978, and endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 33/134 of 19 December 1978. The Conference demonstrated a broad political will to improve the asymmetrical structure of co-operation in international development by placing greater emphasis and reliance on the use of the increasing technical and scientific capabilities of developing countries in promoting and advancing their social and economic development (see A/40/656, para. 1). At the same time, it recognized that the existing intergovernmental machinery lacked the capability to pursue and optimize the deployment of this modality in development efforts without the support of an additional and competent legislative arm that would oversee and stimulate technical co-operation among developing countries (TCDC).

3. The High-level Committee is the sole organization entrusted with the overall intergovernmental review of TCDC within the United Nations system. Since its creation, it has in four successive sessions reviewed the progress of technical co-operation among developing countries both within and outside the United Nations development system and, through its decisions, it has sought to stimulate and maximize the impact of TCDC in development efforts. Towards this goal it has endeavoured to encourage and complement, rather than duplicate, the functions of other organs, and it has acted promptly to adjust its own structure whenever the

a/ For relevant comments of delegations in this matter, see paras. 51, 52, 86 and 87 above.

b/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-first Session, Supplement No. 49 (A/41/49).

c/ Report of the United Nations Conference on Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries, Buenos Aires, 30 August-12 September 1978 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.78.II.A.11 and corrigendum).

situation has so warranted. Thus, at its second session, in May 1981, after reviewing the role of TCDC in a number of social and economic sectors, the Committee decided henceforth to concentrate on organizational and priority issues concerning TCDC, while delegating to the governing bodies of the specialized agencies the task of reviewing TCDC in their respective sectors. This led also to the Committee's decision, at the same session, to reduce the number of its working groups from two to one, thereby minimizing conference and other costs.

4. The Committee has observed that, while there are indications of some progressive achievements in TCDC, particularly in the preceding couple of years, the advancements made thus far, especially in the United Nations system, have still left much to be desired in view of the enormous potential for this form of co-operation. This view has been shared by, among others, the Joint Inspection Unit, which stated in its 1985 report (A/40/656) that "this potential has barely begun to be tapped. Thus, seven years after the Conference, expectations are waning, and Member States, particularly the Group of 77, are increasingly becoming concerned about [the United Nations development system's] support to BAPA [the Buenos Aires Plan of Action]. Accordingly, there is much to be done to turn things around and to get efforts back on track". The Administrator, in his progress report to the Committee at its fifth session (TCDC/5/2), concluded that while there was evidence of renewed efforts in some organizations to strengthen further internal secretariat mechanisms for the introduction and adoption of TCDC modalities in programming activities, project formulation and implementation procedures, in other organizations "the degree of progress on any or all these fronts has ranged from marginal to just adequate, due in part to continuing attitudinal problems, and in part to financial and structural problems or both". Thus, the journey to the attainment of the objectives of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action is still a long one, and the Committee's work towards the fulfilment of those objectives is nowhere near completion, although the steps taken so far give cause for some optimism.

5. In an attempt to respond to Economic and Social Council resolution 1987/112 in a tangible manner, however, the Committee has endeavoured to explore various options. Some members have suggested that the High-level Committee, as it was functioning in its present configuration, might not be the most effective manner of promoting TCDC issues and TCDC operational activities in the United Nations system. It was further suggested that the Committee consider transferring TCDC operational activities under the responsibility of UNDP to the UNDP Governing Council and that the more promotional and policy aspects of TCDC would be given more importance if discussed in the Economic and Social Council or the General Assembly. Nevertheless, other members discussed the possibility of holding future sessions of the Committee at three-year intervals instead of the current two-year intervals. While some members have cited the advantages of such options, many others have found that the disadvantages far outweigh any possible gains. In their view, assumptions of the Committee's responsibilities by the UNDP Governing Council would clearly exclude activities and programmes of the organizations outside UNDP financing over which the Governing Council does not have mandated jurisdiction or responsibility. The Committee considered that the proposed transfer of responsibilities would seriously alter the mandate set forth in recommendation 37

of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action, thus exceeding the terms of reference of recommendation 8 of the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts.

6. In any event, the Governing Council already has responsibility for all UNDP-financed activities and programmes, including those implemented on a TCDC basis, and every year TCDC is an item on the Council's agenda. However, it is but one of many items receiving the Council's attention, and unless the Council's time to consider TCDC is substantially extended, transferring responsibility from the High-level Committee to the Governing Council could mean lessening attention to TCDC even under UNDP financing, and no time at all to TCDC in the United Nations system outside the sphere of UNDP financing.

7. The problem of the degree of attention to TCDC would also prevail in the Economic and Social Council and the Second Committee of the General Assembly whose respective agendas cover a wide variety of subjects to be dealt with during what might turn out to be reduced time frames.

8. The suggestion to reduce the frequency of the Committee's sessions from two-year to three-year intervals might reduce conference costs marginally, but the need to transport substantive staff from New York to Geneva, when the sessions are held in that city, would certainly increase those costs. At the same time, the stimulus to TCDC per se would be bound to be affected by lengthening the intervals for review and policy guidance, especially at a time when there is an increasing need to reinforce support to TCDC activities.

9. It was also recognized that the increased technical capabilities of developing countries cry out for a shift in their partnership role in technical co-operation.

10. Taking into account all factors, the Committee believes that, by taking such steps as it already has in rationalizing its work and in effecting economies in the costs of its sessions, it has responded to the General Assembly's concern for efficiency, prudence and economy. Moreover, it is felt that TCDC should be strengthened throughout the United Nations development system in the future.

11. Finally members are of the view that the need to provide adequate intergovernmental leadership and guidance to the activities of the United Nations in the important field of TCDC remain as valid today as it did in 1978 when the Buenos Aires Plan of Action was adopted.

ANNEX III

Provisional agenda for the sixth session of the High-level
Committee on the Review of Technical Co-operation among
Developing Countries

The High-level Committee,

Taking into account the views expressed at the fifth session of the High-level Committee,

Approves the following provisional agenda for the sixth session of the High-level Committee:

1. Opening of the session.
2. Election of the President of the session.
3. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.
4. Election of officers other than the President.
5. Overall appraisal and assessment of the implementation by the United Nations development system of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action and the decisions of the High-level Committee.
6. Organizational and supportive arrangements for technical co-operation among developing countries (such as administrative, legal and information and financial).
7. Provisional agenda for the seventh session of the High-level Committee.
8. Other matters.
9. Adoption of the report of the meeting.

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