Summary of conclusions of the Organizational Committee at its second regular session (parts I and II)

Part I (New York, 6–9 October 1998)

I. Introduction

1. The Organizational Committee (OC) of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) met at United Nations Headquarters, from 6 to 9 October 1998. OC adopted an annotated agenda for the meeting, which is contained in annex I. The list of participants is contained in annex II. The outcome of a further meeting of OC, held immediately after the second regular session of 1998 of ACC, is reflected in part II of the present summary of conclusions; the list of participants for that meeting (2 and 3 November 1998) is contained in annex III.

II. Preparations for the second regular session of ACC

A. Causes of conflict and promotion of peace and sustainable development in Africa

2. In preparing for the ACC discussion on this item, OC had before it the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/52/871–S/1998/318), as well as a note by the Office for Inter-Agency Affairs providing information on intergovernmental response and follow-up to the report within the United Nations, and identifying substantive themes and issues of system-wide concern arising from the report. In the introduction to the report, the Secretary-General states that the report is addressed not only to the Security Council but also to the General Assembly and other components of the United Nations system that have responsibilities for Africa, including the Bretton Woods institutions.

3. OC members noted that the most important contribution of the report was to offer a comprehensive approach, linking actions required of Governments and supporting measures by the United Nations system in peace, security and development areas. They agreed that there was a need for an intensive interaction among ACC members, utilizing existing mechanisms, to consider how best the report might be utilized by the organizations of the United Nations system, individually and collectively, in ensuring that their activities — both the policy advice and the programme and operational support that they provide — are mutually reinforcing and maximize their impact on peace-building and development in Africa. One practical approach would be to target issues that contribute to instability in Africa, such as poverty, lack of water resources, environmental degradation and the consequences of population shifts. Given resource constraints, a greater degree of prioritization may therefore be necessary. In this regard, it was recalled that official development assistance (ODA) flows to Africa had been declining and so had private sector financial flows.

4. It was noted that the Asian financial crisis risked contributing to diverting the attention of the international community away from the problems of Africa. The Secretary-General’s report would help keep international attention focused on Africa.

5. OC considered it important that the follow-up to the Secretary-General’s report, as outlined in the above paragraphs, should be undertaken utilizing existing inter-
agency mechanisms and should not result in a new “initiative” but should help instead to harmonize and mobilize the political will of the international community and civil society, in particular donors, in support of existing initiatives, including the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa, and the Second Tokyo International Conference on African Development.

6. Some members raised the possibility of the Secretary-General, along with a few other members of ACC, holding a press conference at the end of the ACC session, calling attention to ACC’s commitment to the follow-up to the report. Others, however, recalling the experience with the System-wide Initiative, felt that a press conference emphasizing commitment could only result in raising expectations, particularly in relation to resource mobilization, that might not materialize. OC recommended the issuance of a press statement that would be brief, stated in simple language, recognize the interlinkages between good governance, peace and security and sustainable development, reaffirm the system’s continued commitment to Africa, and emphasize the importance of maintaining the momentum for sustained political and financial support for Africa.

7. In the same context, OC identified a number of specific follow-up measures that could be recommended to ACC, including:

(a) Bringing the Secretary-General’s report to the attention of the various governing bodies of the organizations of the system;

(b) More systematic sharing, through existing mechanisms, of strategic and policy analyses among the organizations of the system on issues that are especially relevant to the peace-building and development activities set out in the Secretary-General’s report. This should include analyses on requirements, ranging from environmentally sound management of natural resources to infrastructure development, that, although not covered in detail in the Secretary-General’s report, provide important underpinning for efforts to promote durable peace and sustainable development in Africa;

(c) Directing relevant inter-agency mechanisms, including the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), both the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ) and the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development (IACSD), and Africa-related inter-agency programmes, particularly the Special Initiative on Africa, to give special attention to ways of furthering the objectives of the report within their own terms of reference, and contributing to strengthening the impact of and harmonizing Africa-related initiatives;

(d) Making full use of inter-agency mechanisms in connection with the preparation of and follow-up to international and bilateral initiatives relating to African development, such as the Second Tokyo International Conference on African Development, as well as relevant debates in United Nations system forums, with a view to highlighting their total overall impact in building the necessary political momentum at the international level and providing concrete action at the level of African countries;

(e) Bearing in mind the relevance of the process launched by ACC through the “strategic framework” approach to advancing the contribution of the system to peace-building, the selection of one or two African countries where this approach could be most effectively applied, pursued and evaluated.

B. Reform processes under way in the United Nations system

8. In preparing for the ACC discussion on the above item, OC had before it a note from the Secretary-General, and an issues paper entitled “System-wide reform: an appraisal of the current phase”, prepared by the Office for Inter-Agency Affairs on the basis of conclusions reached by the high-level Consultant, Mr. Rosenthal, whom the Secretary-General had asked to consult with ACC members to assist him in preparing for the ACC discussion and earlier contributions from ACC members.

9. In discussing implications for inter-agency cooperation, members of OC emphasized the importance of timely consultations at the phase of strategic planning and of elaborating plans and programmes. Thereafter, coordination arrangements are most effective if they are dictated by pragmatic considerations of efficient programme implementation and are focused around groups of organizations most directly concerned. Enhancing impact at the country level should be the key consideration.

10. OC identified a number of key issues to be brought to the attention of ACC, including:

(a) The turmoil in the world economy had evoked a shared sense in the international community that important gaps remain in the global response capacity, that there is, in the broadest sense, a “governance deficit” at the national and international levels that needs to be filled;
The “information gap” remains the most basic and pervasive problem. Continuous exchange and flow of information among United Nations organizations on policy and programme initiatives is a key requirement, and the work of the new Office of Inter-Agency Affairs should be focused on helping to narrow this gap;

Another important gap related to interactions among intergovernmental bodies. Executive heads, individually and collectively in ACC, had a key role to play in ensuring that the policy and programme perspectives of their governing bodies were brought to bear on the work of the central intergovernmental bodies, and in bringing system-wide considerations to bear on the deliberations of their respective governing bodies;

The concept of “partnership” had emerged as an integral part of reform efforts in almost all organizations. Cooperation at the country level, where it matters most, was also growing: the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs) were being actively pursued and were transforming the way United Nations programmes and funds worked together, with several specialized agencies participating actively in that process;

ACC was increasingly being perceived as the “symbol” and the “trustee” of the system. As such, it was uniquely placed to provide collective leadership to the system and give it a kind of “corporate” identity. This implied, in the first instance, intellectual leadership and an advocacy role, on behalf of the system, to rally public support around common priorities and goals. Through ACC, considerable progress had been made in promoting coherent approaches to cross-cutting issues emerging from global conferences. Cooperative arrangements were also multiplying to advance objectives in relation to practically every major sector of the system’s work, from health to education, from employment and sustainable livelihood to food security and water. The task ahead was to build on these achievements by (a) engaging in regular policy dialogue and consultations to develop shared policy perceptions, and (b) promoting systematic information exchange on policy and programme development.

Members of OC noted that the reform processes in the various organizations had been evolutionary. They had started at different times and for similar or somewhat different reasons. A systematic process of prior consultation among United Nations organizations on the content of those processes would have been, in the circumstances, hardly feasible. Given the complex matrix of mission statements, policies and programmes, it was also difficult to assess the potential impact of reforms in individual organizations on other parts of the system. Also, since those reform processes were at different stages of development and implementation, any overall assessment of their impact on the system as a whole was premature. ACC’s role as a “sounding board” in this respect was, however, extremely important, and should be sustained and strengthened.

In discussing approaches to inter-agency coordination, it was felt that policy dialogue and policy convergence rather than “policy integration” as such should be the main objective. The challenges before the system were so vast that no single agency could hope to be able to respond to them effectively on its own. Policy coherence was necessary in advancing a “holistic approach” to development and in addressing increasingly complex crisis situations in different parts of the world. Flexibility was, however, also essential in a rapidly changing international environment. Indeed, experience showed that the most successful examples in inter-agency cooperation had been those that had been built from the bottom up around lead agency arrangements and in response to specific requirements, particularly at the country level.

C. Culture of peace

In preparing for ACC discussion on this item, OC had before it a discussion paper prepared by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), entitled “A culture of peace”. In introducing the paper, the UNESCO representative stressed that the culture of peace was a set of values, attitudes, traditions, modes of behaviour and way of life, in short a “universal ethic”, that should be considered as a concept underpinning all aspects of United Nations system work. A draft declaration and programme of action towards those ends had now been submitted to the General Assembly, and would also be pursued at UNESCO’s Executive Board, currently in session. The draft programme did not suggest any new structure or secretariat but set out aims and strategies and identified specific actions to be taken at the national, regional and international levels.
United Nations system, the Director-General of UNESCO was inviting members of ACC to commit their organizations to further cooperation in this area.

16. OC members agreed on the importance of cooperating in the development of this project, and noted that the concept could provide an important ethical underpinning to what international cooperation should achieve. In effect, commitment to a culture of peace should be aimed at making the commitments which led to the creation of the United Nations system a reality for the twenty-first century. Many OC members noted that their organizations had already embarked on programmes towards mainstreaming the culture of peace. It was also suggested that OC might ensure that a system-wide media and public information strategy for the Year be prepared. The need for educating for peace and the need to change attitudes was highlighted.

17. On the basis of the information provided in the background document and of its discussion, OC prepared annotations for the consideration of this agenda item by ACC.

D. Follow-up to recent ACC conclusions

1. Peace-building: draft strategic framework on/or Afghanistan and generic guidelines

18. OC had before it a document entitled “Strategic framework for Afghanistan” prepared under the coordination of the Deputy Secretary-General. OC noted that the Deputy Secretary-General had finalized the document through correspondence, and that developments in Afghanistan would be followed closely to determine at a later point in time if there is a need for revision.

19. OC was informed that within CCPOQ, consultations were ongoing to further develop draft generic guidelines for a strategic framework approach for response to and recovery from crisis. It was decided that ACC should be informed of the state of play with regard to both documents. It was further suggested that the draft guidelines should be cleared through correspondence with ACC members.

2. Eradication of poverty

20. The Secretary of CCPOQ informed OC of the conclusions reached in CCPOQ concerning the document entitled “Freedom from poverty: actions and partnership: a matrix”. Some OC members expressed the view that the matrix was missing a major strategic and substantive aspect — the rural or urban location of the poor — which can be a major determinant of their livelihood, their access to social services and hence of the type of United Nations system support required. In this regard, the matrix should be refined in a timely manner. That was acknowledged, and the Secretary of CCPOQ confirmed that the refinement of the matrix would be a continuous process.

3. The continuing process of reform: a booklet

21. OC had before it a draft document entitled “The continuing process of management and administrative reform”, prepared within CCAQ and revised by the Secretary of ACC. The Committee appreciated the effort to clarify the scope and intent of the document, which was focused on administrative and management reforms, and did not cover broader programmatic and institutional dimensions of the reform processes under way in the system. It was also understood that even within those narrow parameters, the document was not intended to be comprehensive but only to provide illustrations of certain trends. Concern was nevertheless expressed that agencies’ entries were too disparate, without any apparent links between them, and that to publish the booklet in its current form would not reflect well on the system and the desired coherence of the reform processes under way. Many entries or illustrations were also out of date.

22. OC agreed that (a) members would review their individual entries and send any changes they may wish to make to the Office for Inter-Agency Affairs by the end of October 1998 and (b) the document, as revised, would not be issued as a publication, but the Office would include it within the ACC Web site, with links to the relevant Web sites of individual organizations.

4. United Nations and business

23. OC had before it a background paper which summarized responses provided by agencies on their relations with the private sector. OC members considered this document to be very helpful and also timely. Several pointed out that the issue was also on the agenda of their organizations’ governing bodies. It was noted that relations the organizations of the system had with the private sector varied from integration as an institutional partner of the organization to partnerships in operational activities, financial support or simply joint publications or workshops. The discussion stressed that modalities and types of relations varied from agency to agency, and that that diversity must be an important underlying consideration in future work on this subject.

24. It was noted that the term civil society had, at times, been used too broadly, risking to become a “catch-all” concept, and greater clarity could be helpful. While some
argued that more work could be done regarding the definition of private sector, others cautioned that too stringent a definition would add little value. There was general consensus, however, on the need to separate governmental from non-governmental and profit from non-profit organizations. The need to include small and medium-sized enterprises, and not only large companies, was also emphasized.

25. OC had an exchange of views on the need for guidelines or criteria on such issues as the use of logos and financial contributions from the private sector. It was generally felt that the diversity of basic objectives of agencies and the varied types of relations with the private sector meant that across-the-board guidelines or criteria might not be feasible. However, it was noted that a systematic exchange of information among organizations on their experience with such guidelines could be most helpful. Such an exchange would help each organization to identify what was “usable, feasible and comparable”. In cases where certain types of guidelines were seen as helpful, they could contribute to developing standards or common practices through a process of natural selection. It was felt that, at this time, there was a great need to encourage initiative, and in that context, stringent guidelines and definitions could prove restrictive. The basic principles of the Charter of the United Nations and other major international instruments should provide the necessary guidance on this matter.

26. Regarding financial and administrative procedures, several interventions noted that care should be taken not to deal with them in the abstract; rather, existing procedures should be reviewed when specific problems arose as a result of their application.

27. The need for forums where the United Nations system organizations, Governments, business and other groups of civil society could interact was also addressed. Several OC members informed the meeting of upcoming events they were organizing and stressed the importance for other agencies to participate. It was suggested that reports on the outcome of such meetings with the private sector could usefully be shared with the system. The need for greater and more structured exchange of information was supported by all. Such exchanges should include information regarding both failures and pitfalls, as well as successes and positive experiences. This exchange should allow organizations to learn from each other’s experience, to be kept informed about each other’s activities and to avoid duplication of efforts. The suggestion made to establish a directory of focal points and private sector offices or councils within agencies, and a network of Web sites was generally welcomed.

28. OC invited the Office for Inter-Agency Affairs to act as a clearing house of information, gathering input from agencies and making it available to all members of OC. Such information could include (a) relevant guidelines where these existed within the system; (b) information relating to different experiences encountered; (c) upcoming meetings, ongoing and planned activities; and (d) individuals dealing with this issue in the various organizations.

5. Staff security and safety

29. In preparing for the ACC discussion on this item, OC had before it an updated note prepared and introduced by the Office of the Security Coordinator regarding the implementation of the decision adopted by ACC at its spring 1998 session on the security of United Nations system staff. The representative of the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator (UNSECOORD) noted that in the months since that meeting, the security of staff members working for the United Nations system throughout the world had deteriorated considerably. Attacks and threats to United Nations personnel and premises had increased, as had casualties. For the first time, there had been more civilian than military casualties. In addition, the number of explicit threats against United Nations premises had greatly increased since August 1998.

30. Regarding the decision taken by the ACC at its last meeting, OC was informed that:

(a) Each organization was considering how best to implement the recommendation seeking to ensure that funds existed within concerned organizations for meeting security-related expenditures. UNSECOORD underlined that what was important was that these funds be readily available, not so much how this was done within individual organizations;

(b) The establishment of the Security Trust Fund had been approved by the Controller of the United Nations in June 1998. To date, contributions had been received from one country only. Another had pledged a considerable sum. There was obviously a need to encourage more donors to make contributions;

(c) Although mandatory security training for staff members in high-risk duty stations had been stymied for lack of funds, contributions to the new Trust Fund had made the first training mission possible. The intention was to extend such training programmes to all 64 high-risk duty stations;

(d) A working group meeting to review the operational capabilities of the field security officers had taken place, and while many issues had been dealt with, there were
undue delays in securing account codes for the recruitment of field officers;

(e) With regard to the institution of security measures for locally recruited staff, instructions had been issued to all designated officials, advising them and the security management team at their location that they must put in place a number of measures to ensure the security of locally recruited staff. Nevertheless, especially in large duty stations, the ability of the security management team to ensure the security of all locally recruited staff and their dependents was questionable. UNSECOORD would continue to work towards that end;

(f) With regard to strengthening of the United Nations security management system, all designated officials had been advised of the ACC decision and its implications for them. There were, however, still cases in which the United Nations system did not act in unison on issues relating to staff security which was a cause for concern.

31. The meeting was also briefed on hostage incident management training. This had proved most helpful in successfully dealing with seven hostage incidents which had occurred over the last year. It was the intention of UNSECOORD to organize a second such workshop targeted for field security officers who had not undergone training previously. The UNSECOORD representative also mentioned the intention to set up “rapid response teams” which could be called upon in various locations to assist bereaved United Nations families, as had been the case with the recent Swissair air disaster. The latter should be discussed at the ad hoc meeting on staff security in May 1999 and its financial implications by the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions (Financial and Budgetary Questions) (CCAQ(FB)) thereafter.

32. OC agreed that the security and safety of United Nations system staff was a priority to which all organizations should be committed. Recent experience had demonstrated that it was not only those in the field who were at increased risk. OC also stressed the need to convey to ACC the urgency and need for the system to act together on security and safety issues, and that in turn that message be strongly conveyed by the executive heads to all their staff.

33. OC was also informed that the safety situation in certain duty stations was deteriorating rapidly, making it very difficult to attract qualified staff and adversely affecting the staff morale. This was an issue which had to be dealt with at the political level by executive heads.

34. The importance was generally emphasized of making it clear to Governments that security and safety of staff is a non-negotiable issue, and that should decisive action to improve conditions not be taken, the United Nations system is prepared to act collectively, including withdrawing staff or suspending operations.

35. With regard to the establishment of the Security Trust Fund, OC members expressed support for the request addressed to the United Nations Controller to reduce overhead charges from 13 per cent to 3 per cent as had been done in some other cases, in view of the “humanitarian” nature of the expenditures. There was also a renewed call for CCAQ(FB) to give attention to all financial and budgetary implications of United Nations system staff security and safety decisions.

36. OC also had before it a note from the United Nations Legal Counsel on a recent meeting of legal advisers of the United Nations system in response to ACC’s decision in spring 1998 requesting that the legal aspects of staff safety be examined further. The legal advisers had recognized the efficacy of bilateral agreements in strengthening the legal protections available to staff, and had encouraged the continuation of this ad hoc approach, rather than the pursuit of a collective — and in all likelihood cumbersome — multilateral initiative. They had at the same time agreed that it would be useful to enhance the exchange of information between organizations, including in particular on instances in which legal protections have not been respected by member countries; developments in negotiations of bilateral agreements; and the implementation and application of organizational policies for dealing with cases of arrest and detention of staff. OC supported the legal advisers’ suggestion concerning strengthening of arrangements for the exchange of information among organizations on the above issues, and decided to recommend to ACC that it request the legal advisers to continue to address the linkage between physical safety of staff and the legal protections afforded by privileges and immunities.

37. OC was of the view that given the seriousness of the issues surrounding security and safety of staff, this matter should feature prominently on the ACC agenda.

38. In the light of the documentation provided, the briefing by UNSECOORD and the Committee’s discussions, OC prepared annotations for ACC consideration of this item.

6. International Civil Service Commission

39. OC was informed that in response to the Secretary-General’s recommendation in his programme for reform that the General Assembly initiate a review of ICSC, including its mandate, membership and functioning, in order to increase its effectiveness in meeting the challenges facing the United
Nations system, and in line with General Assembly resolution 52/12 B, the Secretary-General had requested that inter-agency consultations be carried out on the proposed modalities and terms of reference of such a review. These consultations were currently being carried out by the Secretary of CCAQ. An explanatory note and draft terms of reference were made available to OC.

40. Members of OC welcomed this review, recalling that in 1996, ACC had considered that it was indeed more essential than ever to have an effective and imaginative International Civil Service Commission in order to enable the organizations of the common system to keep pace with new trends in human resources management and the changing needs of individual organizations.

41. A number of suggestions were made on the manner in which executive heads and governing bodies of the organizations members of the common system would be involved in this review, on the best possible composition of the review group and also on the financial implications that such a review would have. It was also noted that the amendment of the ICSC statute proposed for the consideration of ACC by the meeting of legal advisers should not be seen as prejudging the review in any way.

42. On the basis of this discussion, OC prepared annotations for ACC’s consideration of this issue.

7. Legality of decisions taken by the International Civil Service Commission

43. In preparing for the ACC discussion on this item, OC had before it a note prepared by the Legal Adviser of the United Nations forwarding a report entitled “Judicial review of decisions taken by the ICSC” prepared by the legal advisers of the United Nations system. In that note, it was recalled that the meeting of legal advisers had proposed an amendment to the statute of ICSC to allow it and participating organizations to request advisory opinions from an ad hoc panel, composed of the Presidents of the United Nations and International Labour Organization (ILO) Administrative Tribunals and a third person chosen by them. Since it had not been possible so far to obtain the views of the Presidents of the United Nations and ILO Tribunals on the proposal, it was recommended that ACC postpone final action on this matter until their views were received. The view was expressed that this matter should be allowed to move forward expeditiously without prejudice to the general review of ICSC referred to below.

8. Observance of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

44. The representative of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights briefed OC on the arrangements for the observance of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. OC was informed that General Assembly meetings on 9 December 1998 would be devoted to the commemoration of the event and a procedural resolution on recommitment to human rights imperatives would be adopted. Human rights awards would also be given during the session. With regard to the five-year review of the implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, OC was informed that the report of the High Commissioner, which is addressed specifically to Governments, was due out shortly, and that the Third Committee of the General Assembly would review it on 2 and 3 November 1998. Provision had been made for non-governmental organizations to participate in the Committee debate.

9. Follow-up to the twentieth special session of the General Assembly to counter the world drug problem

45. OC was briefed by the representative of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) on the outcome of the special session and its system-wide implications. OC was informed that the special session, which was held from 8 to 10 June 1998, adopted a political declaration — the Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction — and an omnibus resolution of measures to enhance international cooperation to counter the world drug problem, along with action plans in key areas of drug control, with clear target dates to achieve agreed objectives. The action plan on international cooperation to eradicate illicit narcotic crops and alternative development called for close coordination between agencies involved in poverty eradication and alternative development in countries affected by illicit cultivation of narcotic crops. OC was informed that for the first time, the international community had agreed on the importance of demand reduction and the necessity of adopting a balanced approach, addressing all aspects of drug control simultaneously.

46. OC, in preparing annotations on this agenda item for the consideration of ACC, indicated that the implementation of the outcome of the special session would need to be integrated in the process of coordinated follow-up to international conferences.
E. Other matters

1. Five-year review of the implementation of the International Conference on Population and Development

47. OC was briefed by the representative of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) on the ongoing preparations and plans for the five-year review of the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). The special session of the General Assembly for that review would take place from 30 June to 2 July 1999. It was stressed that the preparatory process was fully inclusive and participatory, providing opportunity for all parties to participate, including the entire United Nations system and civil society. Appreciation was conveyed for the inputs and participation of all ACC members in this process. It was noted that the Executive Director of UNFPA would brief ACC on the review under an appropriate agenda item.

2. Joint Inspection Unit review of ACC and its machinery

48. Since the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) report on the review of ACC and its machinery was not yet available, OC decided to postpone consideration of this item. It was noted that JIU draft reports dealing with system-wide issues were sent to individual members of ACC for comments before they were finalized and circulated within the system for formal ACC comments. It was felt that given the particular subject matter of this report, comments on the initial draft might also in this case be the subject of prior consultations, and should be consolidated by OC, through correspondence, for transmittal to the JIU.

III. Structure and functioning of ACC and its subsidiary machinery

49. OC welcomed the intention of the Secretary-General to set aside the entire morning of 30 October 1998 for a private meeting with the executive heads. It was suggested that this should become the pattern for the future.

50. Some OC members wondered whether, if the duration of the private meeting was lengthened, there should not be some preparation undertaken for it, including sharper definition of issues to be discussed. The desirability of working towards some specific “outcomes” from these meetings was also discussed. The general view, however, was that the value of these meetings largely rested on their informality and on the opportunity they offered for executive heads to share freely with each other their perceptions of the main challenges facing their organizations and the United Nations system as a whole. While the identification of broad themes for these discussions could be helpful, efforts to structure these exchanges too tightly in advance risked being counterproductive. Also, while the possibility of specific “outcomes” from the private meeting should obviously not be excluded, the contribution of these meetings should not be measured by the specific decisions or joint statements they might produce but by the extent to which they help to build a spirit of collegiality and mutual trust, and by what elements of the discussions the executive heads judge to be of direct relevance to the exercise of their respective policy development and management responsibilities, and therefore take back to their organizations, including possibly to their governing bodies.

51. The importance of the newly elected executive heads being given ample opportunity at ACC sessions, particularly during the private meetings, to present their plans and their “vision” to their colleagues was also emphasized.

52. It was generally felt that ACC should be seen as a “living body” which was active throughout the year rather than simply an entity that met twice a year. It should do so through a deliberate and systematic exchange of information on the long, medium and short-term perspectives of the development of organizational programmes of work at the preparatory stage, as well as the follow-up given to inter-agency decisions. It would then be possible to reduce the number of agenda items that OC/ACC had to deal with at any given meeting. This process could be greatly facilitated by the Office of Inter-Agency Affairs.

53. OC members observed that the list of items on the agenda of the Committee at the current session was rather overwhelming, and that only issues which required decisions by OC or ACC needed to be considered. It would be preferable to spend most of the time on one or two substantive issues that constituted the main theme(s) of the ACC sessions. This would also allow for substantive documents to be prepared and delivered on a timely basis, giving sufficient time for consultations with substantive colleagues within the different organizations, as well as among OC members.

54. OC was briefed on the work of the Office for Inter-Agency Affairs. Many members expressed satisfaction with the progress achieved thus far, and emphasized the importance of the role of the Office in facilitating, inter alia, the flow of information among the organizations of the system, particularly among members of OC.

55. OC agreed to pursue these issues further at its post-ACC meeting.
Part II (New York, 2 and 3 November 1998)

I. Introduction

56. OC met on 2 and 3 November 1998 at United Nations Headquarters to consider the follow-up to the decisions taken and conclusions reached by ACC at its second regular session of 1998 on 30 and 31 October 1998 (see ACC/1998/20), and to conclude the consideration of a number of issues included in the agenda of the first part of its session (see paras. 1–55 above). The list of participants at part II of the second regular session of OC is contained in annex III.

57. The Chairman pointed out that this was the first time that the private meeting had had a specific theme identified for discussion and the experiment had worked very well. At the same time, the theme was tangentially linked to issues on the agenda for the formal meeting. And that had also served ACC well.

58. OC members noted the ACC agreement that the outcomes of its discussions, as applicable, should take the form of communiqués. These should be presented in language understandable to people outside immediate United Nations circles. To ensure common ownership of the outcomes of ACC sessions, the importance of executive heads being present throughout the session was underlined by the Chairman. It was felt that to achieve this, the ACC agenda should be prepared extremely carefully and through consultations so that issues that are included in it are of interest to all ACC members. Some OC members also expressed the view that ACC discussions should, to the extent possible, have specific outputs, while others underlined that executive heads seemed to prefer informal, off-the-record discussions in the private meeting. Both matters would need to be pursued with executive heads.

59. In the same context, the Chairman recalled the communication circulated to ACC members by the Director-General of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), which had emphasized the need for ACC to develop a collective vision; collectively design, through extensive consultations, its agenda to ensure that the outcomes of discussions would be given serious consideration by the governing bodies of the system; and associate the work of the United Nations system more closely with civil society. It was also pointed out that the development by ACC of a “collective vision” for the system should not be limited to economic and social policies but should also include conceptualizing common values to which all organizations of the system could be seen to be contributing in different ways. As the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and others had recalled during the ACC discussions, the promotion of human rights was one such value which should not be seen in legal and political terms only: United Nations system programmes should see themselves as contributing to it, whether through activities that resulted in improving labour conditions, or were aimed at raising family incomes or providing public health services, or addressing specific technical aspects of sustainable economic and social development.

60. OC was informed that the positive and forthcoming atmosphere at the ACC meeting was exemplified by the fact that executive heads had emphasized that not enough was being done by ACC to project itself. They also had focused on how to share information on best practices at both the programmatic and management level — from work to address the social impact of globalization to internal personnel management practices. OC members also recalled as very positive the Secretary-General’s recent address to the Economic and Social Council on ACC issues, which had resulted in the Council giving renewed attention to what it could do to strengthen interaction with ACC. Some OC members felt that the Council might wish to review the arrangements for its high-level segment so as to engage three or four agencies at a time in a more substantive exchange of views, possibly through panel discussions. The preparatory process for such dialogue would be undertaken with the participation of and inputs from all the concerned agencies, well ahead of Council sessions.

II. Conclusions of the second regular session of ACC

A. Causes of conflict and the promotion of peace and sustainable development in Africa

61. At the request of ACC, OC reverted to this item and finalized, on behalf of ACC, a press statement on its consideration of the report of the Secretary-General (see ACC/1998/20, annex I).
B. Other matters

1. Staff security and safety

62. At the request of ACC, OC reverted to this item and finalized, on behalf of ACC, a joint statement on security and safety of staff of the United Nations system (see ACC/1998/20, annex II).

III. Structure and functioning of ACC and its subsidiary machinery

63. OC members agreed that future ACC agenda should have one, or at most, two, item(s), and that they should be topics that would elicit substantive discussions beyond sharing of information on relevant agencies activities and lead to practical actions to which executive heads could commit themselves and which could also be pursued by the governing bodies of the system. If two items were selected, there should be balance between macro- and micro-themes. It was also proposed that the agenda should be set in such a way that the first and second regular sessions of ACC could be approached as two parts of one whole. OC members recognized that 1999, the eve of the new millennium, offered a most valuable opportunity for the United Nations system to reflect on its experience, its achievements and the challenges it faced as a basis for developing a common vision for the future. The view was expressed that the theme(s) selected for ACC sessions in 1999 should provide a bridge for United Nations system work into the Millennium Assembly.

64. Several proposals on possible themes for the next ACC session were made, including:

   (a) Macro-themes:
       (i) Public policy (in the context of interface with the private sector);
       (ii) Globalization versus localization (political, economic, social and cultural dimensions);
       (iii) United Nations system relations with private and public sectors (in a world dominated by market forces);
       (iv) Social policy: a follow-up to United Nations international conferences;
       (v) Multilateralism (also a possible theme for the retreat);

   (b) Micro-themes:
       (i) Respective roles of executive heads and Member States in personnel management within the United Nations system;
       (ii) Redressing gender imbalance in the United Nations system.

65. OC members agreed that the executive information network, as well as the ACC dedicated information system, should be put in place as soon as possible. It was observed that Web sites did indeed exist for some ACC subsidiary bodies with no mention of or links with ACC, creating some confusion among those accessing such sites about their role vis-à-vis ACC. OC members stressed the need for a coherent, comprehensive and up-to-date Web site for ACC and its subsidiary machinery.

IV. Work of ACC Consultative Committees and other inter-agency bodies

A. Work of ACC Consultative Committees


66. The Secretary of CCPOQ briefed OC on the work of the thirteenth session of the Committee, held at United Nations Headquarters from 21 to 25 September 1998, and drew attention to those aspects of the Committee’s work and recommendations requiring ACC’s attention. In addition to
the nomination of its Chairman for the period from November 1998 through October 2000 (see para. 69 below), they related to generic guidelines for a strategic framework approach for response to and recovery from crisis situations (see paras. 18 and 19 above), job description for resident coordinators’ positions, collaboration with civil society organizations, freedom from poverty: a matrix (see para. 20 above), and second guidance note on the integrated follow-up by the United Nations system to major United Nations conferences. These issues were reflected in the annotations to the relevant items on the ACC agenda.

67. OC welcomed CCPOQ work relating to the job description for resident coordinators’ positions. One member observed that very few people outside the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) were being appointed resident coordinators, and expressed the hope that the meeting of chiefs of personnel, in December 1998, would look into this issue. It was observed by the representative of UNDP that in July 1993 there were 112 resident coordinators, of whom one was from outside UNDP and 12 were women. Today, 21 were from outside UNDP and 31 were women. There had thus been progress in the last five years. With regard to collaboration with civil society organizations, OC members recalled that ACC had had a full discussion on the issue of United Nations system relations with civil society, including field-level cooperation, and considered that ACC agreed conclusions on the subject should be explicitly drawn upon by ACC subsidiary bodies as the main basis of their ongoing and future work on the subject. OC took note of the second guidance note on the integrated follow-up by the United Nations system to major United Nations conferences.


68. Special attention was drawn to the recommendation of the twelfth meeting of IACSD concerning the expansion of the task manager system to include relevant thematic outcomes of other global conferences so as to avoid having multiple mechanisms at a global level for policy coordination in any given thematic area. This recommendation had been reflected in the annotations to the relevant item on the ACC agenda and noted by ACC. It should be drawn to the attention of all relevant parts of the ACC machinery.

69. In the exercise of its functions for the preparation of ACC sessions and monitoring the functioning of the ACC machinery, OC took note of the reports of CCAQ(FB), the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions (Personnel Questions) (CCAQ(PER)), IACSD and CCPOQ. New appointments in the ACC machinery recommended by the relevant subsidiary bodies and submitted by OC for ACC’s endorsement were:

(a) The appointment of Nitin Desai, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, as Chairman of CCPOQ for the two-year period from November 1998 through October 2000;

(b) The appointment of Abraham Espino (International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)) as Chairman and Gary Eidet (World Food Programme (WFP)) as Vice-Chairman of CCAQ(FB) for a two-year period commencing with the Committee’s next session, in 1999.

With regard to the timing of the meetings of these subsidiary bodies, it was agreed that dates would be finalized in accordance with the final dates of the first regular session of ACC in 1999, as well as those of its Organizational Committee. In this regard, the Office of Inter-Agency Affairs was requested to inform the Secretaries of these Committees of the approved dates of their meetings.

B. Reports of bodies reporting to OC


70. The Chairman welcomed the Secretary of the Joint United Nations Information Committee (JUNIC) to the meeting. OC requested that JUNIC limit the items forwarded for its and ACC’s consideration to major policy or management issues, in accordance with the effort to decentralize decision-making processes within the ACC subsidiary machinery. It was also emphasized that recommendations should be accompanied by specific proposals for OC’s consideration. With regard to JUNIC efforts to develop system-wide guidelines for posting of information on the Internet, OC requested that this work be pursued in close consultation with the Information Systems Coordination Committee (ISCC), in the light of that Committee’s mandate to coordinate system-wide activities on information technology-related issues. In response to a question on the state of JUNIC work on the revision of ACC guidelines for participation of the United Nations system in international expositions, the Secretary of JUNIC informed OC that the draft currently under preparation would be reviewed by the Office of Legal Affairs and thereafter submitted to JUNIC members for comments. It would then be acted on by JUNIC.
71. OC members shared the view of JUNIC that the financial situation of the Non-Governmental Liaison Service (NGLS) is precarious. The Secretary of JUNIC recalled that the only predictable regular contribution to NGLS core budget came from the Department of Economic and Social Affairs; in addition, the Department of Public Information, in the light of availability of funds, provided small amounts for specific activities, and additional contributions came from members of the Sponsors Group. The Chairman stressed the importance of ensuring that NGLS would have an adequate and secure core budget through predictable contributions from ACC members that reflected the importance that all concerned organizations appeared to attach to NGLS work and their appreciation of the quality and impact of its contribution. The Secretary of JUNIC observed that JUNIC had endorsed the proposal that through the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), NGLS approach the United Nations Foundation for support for its information outreach and communication programme. The Chairman pointed out, however, that this would only be a stop-gap solution. What was required was a long-term, hopefully permanent solution to the problem. OC requested the NGLS Sponsors Group, chaired currently by UNICEF, to prepare a detailed proposal for its consideration and transmittal to ACC.

72. In response to questions concerning the implications of the new nomenclature adopted to refer to NGLS as a “programme” rather than a “project”, the Chairman explained that the new nomenclature was not intended to affect the status of NGLS within the system or the nature of the activities and its relationship with JUNIC. It was simply intended to recognize the continuing and established nature of the activity (the word “project” suggesting instead an activity of an ad hoc nature) as well as the continuing and growing support it enjoyed within the system.

V. Other matters

A. Future sessions of OC and ACC

73. In the light of previous ACC decisions concerning the timing of its sessions and taking into account the dates of other intergovernmental and other meetings already scheduled within the United Nations system, OC agreed to propose to ACC that the next ACC session be scheduled for 9 and 10 April 1999, including a possible ACC retreat. OC reiterated its appreciation to the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) for hosting the session. It was agreed that OC session would be held during the week of 15 March, also at WMO headquarters. The exact dates and duration will be finalized by correspondence. The Chairman noted that depending on progress made in preparing for the ACC session through correspondence among OC members, utilizing the facilities of the Office of Inter-Agency Affairs it might be possible to shorten considerably the pre-ACC OC session. A longer OC session after ACC, however, might be required to enable OC to carry out adequately the broader responsibility devolving on it from the operational plan for organizing the follow-up to ACC decisions and overseeing the work of the ACC machinery.

Upcoming events and meetings

74. The representative of WHO referred to the intention to establish an inter-agency task force on tobacco with WHO as task manager. All interested agencies were welcome to join.

75. The representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) also informed OC that FAO and the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries of the Netherlands were organizing a conference on the multifunctional character of agriculture and land at Maastricht, the Netherlands, from 13 to 17 September 1999. All ACC members were invited to participate.
Annex I

Annotated agenda

1. Adoption of the agenda

2. Preparations for the second regular session of ACC

In his letter of 14 July 1998 to members of ACC, the Secretary-General proposed that:

“as the main substantive theme for the ACC this Fall (30–31 October), we take up issues of
inter-agency concern raised in my report ‘The causes of conflict and the promotion of peace
and sustainable development in Africa’ (A/52/871–S/1998/318). I hope that these discussions
will help us identify new immediate actions we can take together, and at the same time, clarify
the longer-term contribution that the system as a whole can make to peace building and
development in Africa.”

In the same letter, he further stated that:

“In addition, we should pursue at the session our discussion on the reform processes
under way in the system.”

Executive heads who replied as of the time of the finalization of these annotations concurred
with these proposals. The present draft agenda has, accordingly, been prepared on that basis.

(a) Causes of conflict and the promotion of peace and sustainable development in
Africa

The Security Council ministerial-level meeting of 25 September 1997 requested the Secretary-
General to provide an analysis of the sources of conflict in Africa, and make recommendations
on ways and means to address them and on laying the foundation for durable peace and
economic growth in the continent. The resulting report of the Secretary-General
(A/52/871–S/1998/318) was considered by the Security Council on 24 April 1998. The
Council, in its resolution 1170 (1998) of 28 May 1998, commended the Secretary-
General, including for the steps taken to reinforce the role of the United Nations system, and decided
inter alia:

(a) To establish an ad hoc working group to review all recommendations in the report
related to international peace and security, to prepare a framework for the implementation
of recommendations, and to submit specific proposals for concrete action for consideration
by the Council by September 1998;

(b) Expressed its intention to convene at the ministerial level on a biennial basis,
beginning September 1998, to consider this matter;

(c) Stressed that the challenges in Africa demand a comprehensive response, and
expressed the hope that the United Nations system, other relevant organizations and Member
States would consider the report and its recommendations and take action as they deem
appropriate.

The report was also before the Economic and Social Council, and will be considered further
at the current session of the General Assembly.

A note for consideration by ACC, outlining follow-up activities within the United Nations
and analysing system-wide implications of the Secretary-General’s proposals, will be
available prior to the OC session.
Reform processes under way in the United Nations system

At the spring 1998 session of ACC, the Secretary-General stated that he regarded the discussion at the session as the beginning of a new phase, in which the system as a whole would carry out an in-depth assessment of the impact that the reform processes under way in the various organizations were having on each other and on the coherence and effectiveness of the system as a whole. Such an assessment should include the identification of further measures that needed to be taken individually and collectively. It should show Member States that not just the individual organizations but the system as a whole was undergoing significant reforms, and stood ready to address effectively the new challenges before the international community.

At the session, ACC members reaffirmed their collective commitment to the renewal and reform of the system as a whole, and emphasized their determination to refocus on core competencies, define common priorities, and enhance the efficiency and impact of the activities of the system. They expressed their readiness to change and adjust the system to the new realities and the complex challenges ahead.

In his letter of 14 July, the Secretary-General, after recalling ACC’s decision to pursue and deepen this new phase of reform discussions at the October session, recalled that following the April session, he had:

“... recommended, and the General Assembly agreed, that the proposal to establish a Ministerial Commission be held in abeyance for the time being, and that the Millennium Assembly itself revert to it on the basis of a report I would submit to it, drawing on the outcome of the ACC review.”

In his letter, the Secretary-General further noted that he had:

“... asked Mr. Rosenthal, former Under-Secretary-General, Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), to assist me in preparing an ‘issues paper’ which would help us focus our further discussions on the subject in October. In doing so, he will draw upon the contributions you have already provided in preparation for the last ACC session, as well as meetings with you or your senior representative. This should serve to ensure that the ‘issues paper’ reflects the perceptions of the system as a whole. I would greatly appreciate your personal assistance in this regards.”

The issues paper referred to above is currently being finalized, for consideration by ACC, and will be made available prior to the OC session. In preparing for the ACC discussion, in the light of the “issues note”, OC may wish to bring to the attention of ACC relevant elements of sub-item (d) of the present agenda item.

culture of peace

The Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Director-General of UNESCO have collaborated extensively on a project initiated by UNESCO relating to activities and a programme of action for the promotion of a culture of peace, and the celebration, in the year 2000, of the International Year for the Culture of Peace. These issues have been addressed by UNESCO’s governing bodies, by the General Assembly and by the Economic and Social Council in a number of resolutions, and are the subject of further reporting to the current session of the General Assembly. Since the issues involved are relevant to the mandates or missions of all the entities of the United Nations system, the Director-General of UNESCO consulted the Secretary-General and all other executive heads in writing earlier in 1998 for the preparation of the reports before the current Assembly session, and will be providing a
short discussion paper for consideration by ACC, which will be available prior to the OC session.

(d) Follow-up to recent ACC conclusions

(i) Peace-building: draft strategic framework on/for Afghanistan

At the spring 1998 session of ACC, the Secretary-General had, *inter alia*, observed that the testing of the strategic framework process in Afghanistan was yielding a number of valuable lessons, and was serving to elucidate the many problems that needed to be addressed by the system in acting in a concerted manner in crisis situations. He also informed ACC that he was entrusting the Deputy Secretary-General with the responsibility for the further development of the strategic framework initiative.

ACC welcomed the decision by the Secretary-General to entrust the Deputy Secretary-General with this responsibility, and noted that:

“... in that first instance, it would be necessary to ensure that the process in Afghanistan reached a successful outcome and that full benefit was derived from that experience in the interest of helping the Afghan people. ACC also noted with appreciation that the Deputy Secretary-General intended to ensure that lessons learned and the resulting generic guidelines would be widely shared and acted upon in a wholly participatory way, thus engendering genuine involvement in and ownership of the process, both within the United Nations and among its partners. In moving the process forward, the Deputy Secretary-General would consult with the members of ACC in determining the criteria for and the selection of other test case countries.”

The process of finalizing the strategic framework for Afghanistan has now been completed, and the final text has recently been circulated to ACC members by the Deputy Secretary-General. CCPOQ, at its meeting in New York (21–25 September), will take up the question of “generic guidelines”. The outcome of these discussions will be made available to OC to help prepare for ACC’s consideration of this matter.

(ii) Eradication of poverty

ACC discussed this issue at its first regular session, in March 1998, on the basis of a note entitled “Combating poverty: towards a common response”, prepared jointly by the United Nations, UNDP and the World Bank. The documentation also included a draft matrix entitled “Freedom from poverty: actions and recommendations”. Following these discussions, ACC issued a policy statement on commitment for action against poverty, to spur national and international action, and to signify the engagement of the system as a whole in support of poverty eradication. The statement was presented to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1998, and was well received. ACC also agreed that work on the matrix should be pursued in CCPOQ, taking into account comments of agencies, which focused primarily on the identification of priorities for common action, as well as appropriate distribution of responsibilities. The results of the CCPOQ discussions at its 21–25 September session, including an updated matrix by CCPOQ, will be available at the time of the OC session.

(iii) Continuing process of reform: a booklet

A revised version of the draft on the above subject, prepared by the CCAQ secretariat on the basis of contributions received from ACC members, will be circulated shortly by the Secretary of ACC.
(iv) United Nations and business

At the spring 1998 session of OC, it was agreed that a questionnaire (16 April 1998) would be sent to ACC members seeking information on the experience and existing practices within the United Nations system regarding cooperation with the private sector. On the basis of responses from ACC, a paper has been prepared and will be circulated shortly to facilitate discussion on strengthening of arrangements for the exchange of information and sharing of experience at the inter-agency level in this area.

(v) Security

ACC, at its first regular session of 1998, focused its consideration of administrative questions on the issue of security of staff. In addition to reviewing the follow-up given to its previous decisions on the subject by OC, the high-level meeting of CCAQ on security held at Geneva on 9 February 1998 and the Ad Hoc Inter-Agency Meeting on Security held at Montreal from 17 to 19 March 1998, ACC adopted a decision deploring the continued threats to the safety and the security of United Nations staff in all parts of the world, including hostage-taking, and reminded Member States of the United Nations of their obligations under international law to ensure the safety and security of its staff and to safeguard their privileges and immunities. The Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator will brief OC on developments since the last session of ACC, during which the threats to the security and safety of staff have increased, to assist in preparing for the further consideration of this matter in ACC.

(vi) Office of Legal Affairs legal advisers meeting

ACC, at its first regular session of 1998, had before it two communications emanating from the meeting of legal advisers of the United Nations system concerning the possibility of an appellate mechanism in relation to the decisions of the ILO Administrative Tribunal and the question of a judicial review of the decisions taken by ICSC. While recognizing that the meeting of legal advisers is an ad hoc informal mechanism rather than a subsidiary body of ACC, ACC decided to mandate the meeting of legal advisers to pursue actively these two issues further on its behalf, and to report thereon at an early opportunity. OC will be briefed by a representative of the Office of Legal Affairs on developments since the ACC session.

(vii) Observance of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

1998 marks two important events in the field of human rights: the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the five-year review of the implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. The worldwide commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Declaration will culminate in a special meeting of the General Assembly on 10 December 1998. The initial review of the implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action was carried out by the Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-fourth session. In addition, the Economic and Social Council devoted its coordination segment of the 1998 substantive session to that topic. The final phase of the five-year review will take place during the current session of the General Assembly in November 1998 on the basis of a report, currently being finalized by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, which will be made available to ACC. OC will be briefed on the above developments and on the related inter-agency consultations that have been conducted during the course of the year, and the High Commissioner will update ACC on both the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Declaration and the five-year review.
(viii) Follow-up to the twentieth special session of the General Assembly to counter the world drug problem

The twentieth special session of the General Assembly to counter the world drug problem was held in New York from 8 to 10 June 1998. It adopted a political declaration and action plans in key areas of drug control, with clear target dates to achieve agreed objectives. The action plan on international cooperation to eradicate illicit narcotic crops and alternative development calls for close coordination between agencies involved in poverty eradication and alternative development in countries affected by illicit cultivation of narcotic crops. Follow-up to the outcome of the special session requires sustained inter-agency cooperation, and needs to be incorporated in the system’s ongoing review of the follow-up of major international conferences. A representative of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme will brief OC on the outcome of the special session and its system-wide implications.

(e) Other matters

(i) Five-year review of the implementation of the International Conference on Population and Development

It may be recalled that at the first regular session of ACC in 1998, the briefing by the Executive Director of UNFPA on the preparations for the special session of the General Assembly on a five-year review of the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, to be held from 30 June to 2 July 1999, was postponed to the second regular session. A representative of UNFPA will update OC on those preparations.

(ii) Administrative questions

Under this item, it has been the practice for ACC to hear statements from and to have an exchange of views with the Chairman of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) and representatives of the Federation of International Civil Service Associations (FICSIA) and the Coordinating Committee of Independent Staff Unions and Associations (CCISUA).

Under this item, the attention of ACC will also be drawn to any issues arising out of the reports of CCAQ(PER) and CCAQ(FB) requiring its attention (see paras. 31 and 32).

(iii) Joint Inspection Unit review of ACC and its machinery

It is expected that a draft of the JIU report on the above subject will be available to OC which may consider arrangements for organizing ACC comments on it.

3. Structure and functioning of ACC and its subsidiary machinery

(a) Implementation of the operational plan for improving the functioning of ACC

At its first regular session in March 1998, ACC had before it the elements of an operational plan for improving the functioning of ACC machinery, prepared by OC. After comments by members, ACC requested OC to revise the operational plan, taking into account the views expressed and the decisions taken at the meeting, and to proceed with its implementation. An amended version of the operational plan will be made available to OC to assist it in pursuing the implementation of this ACC request.
(b) Functioning of OC

OC has been given a leading role in the implementation of the revised operational plan for improving the functioning of ACC. The elements addressed to OC in the operational plan included:

(a) Initiating steps, with the support of the Office for Inter-Agency Affairs and in consultation with the concerned organizations, to develop an integrated capacity to monitor developments and trends in the international environment with the view to bringing to the attention of ACC topical and critical development issues that require coordinated and complementary responses by the system;

(b) Providing guidance for the development of the ACC information network in phases, using, wherever possible, existing modes and capabilities in the system, and drawing on the capacity of the Information Systems Coordination Committee;

(c) Organizing and managing the agenda of ACC within the framework of a flexible annual work programme;

(d) Coordinating, on behalf of ACC, the timing and sequencing of the meetings of ACC standing committees.

The Director of the Office for Inter-Agency Affairs will brief OC on steps taken to date to implement the relevant aspects of the operational plan.

c) Functioning of other parts of the inter-agency machinery

The operational plan requires the standing committees and their subsidiary bodies to align their working methods and meeting arrangements with those of ACC itself, to develop working arrangements that minimize the need for meetings and travel, and to use modern communication means and innovative methods for periodic consultations. Under the operational plan, the standing committees are also to have delegated authority to take decisions on behalf of ACC while submitting to ACC selected issues that require its attention. OC may wish to review developments in the concerned ACC subsidiary bodies relevant to these directives.

4. Work of ACC Consultative Committees and other inter-agency bodies

(a) Work of ACC Consultative Committees


(iii) Report of the eighty-eighth session of the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions (Financial and Budgetary Questions), New York, 31 August to 4 September 1998 (ACC/1998/6)


(b) Reports of bodies reporting to OC


5. Other matters

(a) Future sessions of OC and ACC

OC will need to make recommendations on ACC’s work programme and decide on its own programme for the first regular session in 1999.
Annex II

List of participants (part I, New York, 6–9 October 1998)

Chairman: P. Civili (United Nations)
Secretary: K. Aning (United Nations)

Office for Inter-Agency Affairs
S. Fareed
G. Gabriel
A. Boussaid
K. Gerlach

United Nations entities and programmes
United Nations
Department of Economic and Social Affairs
S. Khan
C. Hackett
E. Castellares
Regional Commissions New York Office
S. Al-Bassam
M. McCaffery
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
M. Plehn-Mejia
United Nations Children’s Fund
A. Vaher
N. Galer
United Nations Development Fund
N. Chandavakar
E. Kashambuzi
United Nations Environment Fund
A. Z. Amin
M. Jansen
United Nations Population Fund
M. Simonen
United Nations International Drug Control Programme
A. S. Noyan
World Food Programme
V. Sequeira
United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
W. Lee
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
P. Mateu

Specialized agencies, IAEA and WTO
International Labour Organization
M. A. Ducci
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
W. Mann
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
L. Schaudinn
International Civil Aviation Organization
G. Griffiths
World Health Organization
L. Tillfors
C. Rose-Oduyemi
World Bank
A. Sfeir-Younis
C. Fleming
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<th>Organization</th>
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<td>Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions</td>
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Annex III

List of participants (part II, New York, 2 and 3 November 1998)

Chairman: P. Civili (United Nations)
Secretary: K. Aning (United Nations)

United Nations entities and programmes

United Nations
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S. Fareed
G. Gabriel
K. Gerlach

Department of Economic and Social Affairs
S. Khan
C. Hackett

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
M. Plehn-Mejia

United Nations Children’s Fund
A. Vaher

United Nations Development Fund
N. Chandavakar

United Nations Population Fund
M. Simonen

United Nations International Drug Control Programme
A. S. Noyan

World Food Programme
V. Sequeira

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
P. Kourula

Specialized agencies, IAEA and WTO

International Labour Organization
M. A. Ducci

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
W. Mann

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
L. Schaudinn

International Civil Aviation Organization
G. Griffiths

World Health Organization
L. Tillfors

World Bank
A. Sfeir-Younis

International Monetary Fund
J. B. Zulu
A. F. Rubin

World Meteorological Organization
S. Chacowry
D. D. C. Don Nanjira

International Maritime Organization
F. Labastida

World Intellectual Property Organization
N. Haidar

International Fund for Agricultural Development
U. Abhyankar

United Nations Industrial Development Organization
A. O. Lacanlale

World Trade Organization
A. Frank