



Administrative Committee on Coordination

ACC/1997/20

17 December 1997

ENGLISH AND FRENCH

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE ON COORDINATION AT ITS SECOND REGULAR SESSION OF 1997

New York, 31 October 1997

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

1. The Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) held its second regular session of 1997 at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 31 October 1997, under the chairmanship of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi A. Annan. The agenda for the session was as follows:

1. Adoption of the agenda.
2. The relationships between the United Nations system and civil society, including the private sector: handling the global agenda with non-State actors.
3. Integrated and coordinated follow-up to recent global conferences:
 - (a) Review of ad hoc inter-agency task forces;
 - (b) Preparations for the observance of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the five-year review of the Vienna Declaration and Plan of Action;
 - (c) Universal access to basic communication and information services.
4. Administrative questions: staff security.
5. Other matters:
 - (a) Follow-up to recent ACC conclusions:

- (i) Review of the functioning of ACC and its subsidiary machinery;
 - (ii) System-wide Special Initiative on Africa; peace-building; impact of armed conflict on children; UNAIDS;
- (b) Other issues.

2. A private meeting of ACC attended by all ACC members present in New York was held on the morning of 31 October 1997. Also, the Secretary-General and the executive heads of the agencies and organizations represented in ACC met in "retreat" immediately following the ACC meeting on 31 October and 1 November. The theme chosen for the retreat was the changing role of the State and its implications for the role and functioning of the United Nations system.

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

I. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

4. ACC adopted the provisional agenda for the meeting.

II. RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM AND CIVIL SOCIETY, INCLUDING THE PRIVATE SECTOR: HANDLING THE GLOBAL AGENDA WITH NON-STATE ACTORS

5. The Secretary-General opened the discussion by noting that the issue before ACC under this item was a central concern in the reform process and a key dimension of most of the major policy issues with which the United Nations system is confronted, ranging from the adaptation of the system to the changes that are taking place in the national and international environment, the democratization of the governance of international institutions and the strengthening of public support for the system to resource flows for development and new ways in which the system can enhance its impact on development. He considered that without trying to impose any artificial uniformity, it was important that the system as a whole should be guided in this area by a common culture and a common vision.

6. ACC noted that within the United Nations system, experience in developing partnerships with civil society and the private sector varied considerably and

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covered a wide spectrum, including political, legal, humanitarian, cultural, economic, social, scientific and technical questions. Some specialized agencies, for example, had regulatory or normative roles that had involved working with elements of civil society for over 50 years. Such cooperation had generally been fruitful, although it had on occasion required caution in order to avoid potential conflicts of interest.

7. It was generally felt that although the association of United Nations institutions with non-State actors is in many cases long-standing, changing times required that its pattern be further deepened and generally made more systematic and mutually beneficial. In recognition of the growing significance and impact of both the worldwide expansion of civil society's role and the increasing pre-eminence of market mechanisms, most organizations and bodies of the United Nations system had indeed been broadening and strengthening their interactions with civil society. The diverse policies, rules, directives and practices that had evolved over time to govern those relationships could be shared more widely and systematically within the system for the benefit of all.

8. The growth of new actors on the international scene should also be factored into the work of the system. The vibrant energy of civil society should be tapped by the system to build advocacy and resource mobilization constituencies for addressing global concern and in support of operational actions at the country level. At that level, community-based organizations were an increasingly important part of support structures for social cohesion and development work, even in conflict situations in which more formal political and institutional infrastructure might have eroded.

9. ACC considered that in order to extend existing relationships with non-State actors to achieve the desired objectives, optimal conditions for complementarity should be sought in all relevant areas of the United Nations system's concerns. In establishing the conditions for more effective partnerships, a series of prerequisites involving issues of legitimacy, representivity, competence, geographical balance, accountability (including financial transparency) and predictability must be addressed. It was also important to ensure that increased cooperation of the United Nations system with non-State actors at the international level did not diminish in any way interaction with Governments.

10. In considering relationships with the private sector, ACC members recognized that such relationships should be defined by complementarities of interests. It was observed that as United Nations system organizations sought to intensify their collaboration with the private sector, a number of issues,

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including compatibility in institutional practices and cultures, the political acceptability of such collaboration in intergovernmental affairs, the possibility of undue influence of special interest groups, and relationships between profit-oriented organizations and non-profit groups in the overall context of partnerships with civil society would need to be addressed.

Conclusions/decisions

11. ACC:

(a) Acknowledged and reaffirmed the importance that the United Nations system attached to cooperation with non-State actors, and looked forward to intensifying and refining that relationship;

(b) Encouraged the secretariats of the United Nations system to enhance information exchange on the policies, directives and practices of cooperation with civil society partners so as to identify and build on best practices;

(c) Agreed that the United Nations system had an important role to play as catalyst at the national level, including in supporting Governments in the exercise of their responsibilities as prime framers of domestic policies and programmes, in dialogue with civil society and the private sector;

(d) Proposed that the United Nations system give further consideration to issues of accountability, representation and criteria to assess competence, as well as to ways of supporting, where necessary, capacity-building of civil society groups at the national and local levels that could contribute positively to national development, humanitarian assistance and peace-building;

(e) Noted that United Nations system policies for interaction with civil society varied with the nature of the partner organization and type of activity. Such policies and modalities of non-State participation in the work of the United Nations system should be the subject of intensified inter-agency exchanges of information;

(f) Reaffirmed that the participation of civil society, including non-governmental organizations in inter-agency meetings, should take place within the framework of ACC guidelines on the subject;

(g) Encouraged more systematic consultation with relevant non-State actors in the preparation of substantive as well as "coordination" reports, particularly concerning follow-up to recent global conferences;

(h) Concurred that the United Nations Staff College should be encouraged to develop specific programmes to enhance staff capacity to work with civil society, including with contribution from non-State actors, and that implications for secretariat resources should be reviewed and innovations explored, including funding by government and multilateral donors and foundations of joint United Nations system/civil society activities;

(i) Encouraged more systematic exchange of information and sharing of experience at the inter-agency level on the way in which policies and practices governing dialogue and cooperation with the business community were evolving in the various organizations of the system. Periodic assessments could be made by ACC of the evolution of those partnerships and of their implications for the system as a whole, including the feasibility of inter-agency collaborative projects;

(j) Considered that the proposal to establish an inter-agency enterprise liaison service as a common clearing house mechanism for cooperation with the business community needed further study and elaboration, and agreed to revert to that issue at a subsequent meeting;

(k) Requested further information on the "issue management system" advocated by the Secretary-General in his reform programme, which might provide a further window of opportunity for concrete collaboration with non-State partners, and considered that its implications would need to be taken into account in further discussions at the inter-agency level.

III. INTEGRATED AND COORDINATED FOLLOW-UP TO RECENT GLOBAL CONFERENCES

A. Review of the work of ad hoc inter-agency task forces

1. Introduction

12. At its second regular session of 1997, ACC undertook a review of the work of the inter-agency task forces established to promote an integrated and coordinated follow-up to conferences. It also considered further arrangements to pursue this work within the inter-agency machinery. For that review, ACC drew on the conclusions and recommendations formulated by the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ) at its eleventh session, and by the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development (IACSD) at

its tenth session, as well as on the preparatory work of its Organizational Committee.

13. In undertaking the review, ACC was aware that at its substantive session of 1997, the Economic and Social Council had decided, inter alia, to convene a special session of two or three days' duration immediately after its organizational session for 1998 to consider further the theme of integrated and coordinated implementation and follow-up of the major United Nations conferences and summits, with a view to assisting the consideration of this item at its substantive session of 1998. ACC further noted that the Council would devote special attention at this special session to considering the outcome of the comprehensive review by ACC of the work of its task forces (Council decision 1997/302).

14. In his opening remarks, the Secretary-General noted that the innovative methods of work that had been applied in the work of ACC task forces - the designation of lead agencies, the role of country reviews, the organization of country seminars - had proved effective. With the completion of their assigned tasks, the task forces were being discontinued but had provided useful models for future inter-agency work. A key test for the outputs of the task forces would be the impact they would have on the effectiveness of the support that the system as a whole was providing to countries in implementing the policy commitments that they had made at global conferences. The Secretary-General expressed the hope that the lead agencies would remain active and that the standing machinery of ACC would be mobilized to monitor progress, particularly in utilizing the tools developed by the task forces at the country level. The Secretary-General further noted that an electronic network of visual links was being developed to promote cost-effective and efficient communications among organizations of the system, which should assist in carrying forward the process of the follow-up to conferences.

15. With regard to the follow-up to the World Food Summit, the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations briefed ACC on progress in the implementation of its decision to endorse a flexible approach based on a two-tier informal mechanism focusing on the national level. He indicated that 16 agencies had already joined the ACC Network on Rural Development and Food Security, and expressed the hope that that would create the necessary momentum for further progress. ACC welcomed the implementation of its decision on the inter-agency follow-up to the World Food Summit within the framework of coordinated follow-up to global conferences.

2. Analysis of the work of the task forces

16. In their oral reports to ACC, the Chairpersons of the three task forces from the United Nations Population Fund, the International Labour Organization and the World Bank emphasized that there was a strong sense of commitment and cooperation among the participating organizations, and that the task forces had facilitated the promotion of clearer understanding within the system on the policy framework and the development agenda at the country level, and had highlighted the need for continuing dialogue among the agencies as well as between the United Nations system and national Governments. The recommendations and outputs of the task forces were not time-bound, and needed to be disseminated and used. The follow-up to the task forces needed to be carried forward in a flexible way. They made available a common overview of lessons learned from the ACC task forces' experience and recommendations for future action.

17. ACC considered the outputs and recommendations of the task forces, which could be broadly categorized as follows: (a) identification of key elements of the national policy framework for pursuing conference goals; (b) recommendations for United Nations system programming; (c) recommendations for streamlining national reporting; (d) elaboration of statistics and indicators; (e) identification of other areas requiring attention (e.g., role of civil society, use of information technology); and (f) institutional arrangements for follow-up.

18. ACC recognized that those outputs and recommendations had emerged from an intensive process of country reviews and inter-agency consultations carried out over the past two years. While the methodologies and approaches adopted by the task forces had varied with the different themes addressed, all of those processes had converged to demonstrate that coordination, to be effective, must be underpinned by a sound policy framework. They had also shown that while differences existed concerning priorities and the sequencing of policies, there was a large degree of consensus and consistency of understanding within the system on the broader elements of such a policy framework. There was also a clearer sense of agreement between the Bretton Woods institutions and other organizations of the United Nations system on how best to support the development agenda at the country level. It was also noteworthy that issues relating to good governance had clearly emerged as a system-wide concern.

19. With regard to the need to streamline reporting in relation to both national reporting and reporting by the organizations of the system, ACC noted that the task forces, as well as IACSD and CCPOQ, had concurred on the need to

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develop modalities, such as "base reports", that could be used widely within the system to meet a variety of reporting requirements, and requested that follow-up action be taken to this end.

20. ACC further noted that the work of all three task forces had brought out the need for United Nations organizations and bodies to share and draw more systematically on "best practices" resulting from their own work, especially from countries' own experience, in promoting and achieving implementation of conference goals. It had also pointed clearly to the need for greater complementarity within the system in data collection, and for greater commonality in the indicators utilized by United Nations organizations and agencies.

21. ACC considered that on the whole, the three inter-agency task forces had constituted an unprecedented system-wide effort in providing integrated, coordinated and productive support to Governments in the follow-up to the global agenda framed by recent United Nations conferences. ACC emphasized that the outputs and modalities of the task forces, such as best practices, guidelines, country reviews and seminars, should not be considered as time-bound but should be carried forward in a flexible way in order to promote dialogue and mobilize consensus on policies and programmes at the country level, not only among the organizations of the system but also among all the development partners in the national context. The need for feedback on the use of task force outputs was emphasized. It was underscored that the goal should be to enhance the effectiveness of support for national development efforts by the system as a whole.

22. Building on innovative practices initiated by IACSD and the task force on the follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development, the entire United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions, had come together in those task forces to develop coherent approaches to translate the normative recommendations of conferences into operational guidance for country-level action. The task forces had produced valuable outputs, covering a wide range of policy issues. Their method of work, i.e., the lead agency arrangements, the use of country reviews and the organization of country seminars, had proved successful and provided valuable guidance for future system-wide efforts.

23. ACC noted the considerable attention given to the work of the task forces by the intergovernmental bodies. The task forces were viewed as tools to improve the interaction between coordinated United Nations system efforts at headquarters and the country level, and the intergovernmental machinery. The

Economic and Social Council had strongly supported integrated and coordinated follow-up to global conferences, and ACC had expressed its commitment to pursue that goal in a systematic and coherent manner.

24. While recognizing that the focus and outputs of the three task forces were diverse and that the overall process had been rather time-consuming and financially burdensome for the lead organizations, ACC stressed the need to focus on putting to best use the lessons learned. ACC affirmed that the challenge before each organization, as well as the system as a whole, was now to maintain, in cooperation with Governments, the momentum that had been created for an integrated and coordinated follow-up to recent major conferences, and to continue to provide sustained support, including through the resident coordinator system, to countries in translating the outcomes of those conferences into concrete national policies and programmes.

Conclusions/decisions

25. ACC:

(a) Agreed that the question of conference follow-up would need to be placed in the broader context of United Nations system reform and of the system's effort to enhance its capacity to pursue the global agenda in a coherent and effective way. ACC emphasized the importance of the role of civil society in advancing the objectives of international conferences at the national and international levels, and called upon United Nations system organizations to make optimal use of the strengths, advocacy role and resources of civil society in the implementation and follow-up to the commitments entered into at recent global conferences;

(b) Stressed once again that sustainable development provided a broad framework to guide the ongoing work of the system, and called upon organizations to maintain the momentum created and to continue to provide coordinated support to Governments in adopting integrated and mutually supportive policies for implementing the goals emerging from recent global conferences, from the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development to the World Food Summit. As part of that process, ACC emphasized the importance of mainstreaming human rights, environmental, gender, population and children-related matters, as well as the use of information and communication technologies, in further normative, policy, programme and project work relating to the follow-up to recent global conferences;

(c) Stressed that the eradication of poverty, as reaffirmed by all the recent global conferences, remained a fundamental goal for the system. Sustained and coordinated efforts by all organizations of the system would be required to achieve that goal;

(d) Called upon the organizations of the United Nations system to utilize fully the various national-level mechanisms and frameworks that are in place or are currently being developed with countries, including the country strategy notes and the United Nations development assistance frameworks, to support the development of national strategies and action plans, based on national priorities, for implementing conference outcomes in an integrated manner. In so doing, maximum advantage should be taken of the results of the work of the three task forces. The ongoing work of IACSD in the area of national sustainable development strategies, as well as that of the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality (IACWGE) in the mainstreaming of gender perspective, is also highly relevant;

(e) Requested that special attention be given at the inter-agency level to reinforcing the normative, policy and programme development work of the system, which can underpin and support implementation of the goals of global conferences. The outputs of the task forces are to be widely disseminated and put to full use, particularly at the country level, including the dissemination and replication of best practices;

(f) Emphasized the importance of inter-agency collaboration in the follow-up to the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction and the implementation of the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action. In particular, ACC noted the extreme weather conditions in certain parts of the world due to the El Niño phenomenon. It also called upon the organizations and bodies of the United Nations system to contribute actively to the preparatory process for the closing events of the Decade, and to give due attention to the activities to be undertaken beyond the year 2000. It was proposed that ACC issue a statement at its next session.

B. Follow-up by ACC and its subsidiary machinery

1. Comprehensive review

26. ACC decided that its comprehensive review of the integrated and coordinated follow-up to recent global conferences, including the work of the inter-agency task forces established to that effect, would be based on (a) the relevant

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conclusions and recommendations of CCPOQ and IACSD formulated at their eleventh and tenth sessions, respectively, as well as those of its Organizational Committee; (b) the notes and common overview prepared by the conveners of the task forces and made available to ACC during its second regular session in 1997; (c) any additional information that participants in the task forces and other members of ACC might wish to provide. The ACC comprehensive review would be cleared by ACC members by correspondence, and would be reflected in the Secretary-General's report to the Economic and Social Council.

2. Instructions to ACC subsidiary bodies

27. ACC:

(a) Requested IACSD, CCPOQ and IACWGE to develop further and strengthen dialogue and interaction among them, bearing in mind the evolving role of CCPOQ in facilitating the coordinated follow-up to conferences, the central place of the concept of sustainable development in advancing conference objectives, and the importance of gender mainstreaming in the follow-up processes. Such interaction was considered to be particularly important in ensuring an effective implementation of the Committees' conclusions relating to the follow-up to global conferences;

(b) Called upon the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities to pursue, on a priority basis, (i) promoting greater commonality in indicators used by the system to monitor follow-up to global conferences, (ii) ensuring greater consistency between global indicators for monitoring progress and indicators for country-specific programming and monitoring, and (iii) the feasibility of using minimal national data sets. The Subcommittee should report to CCPOQ on its findings and conclusions;

(c) Endorsed the recommendation of CCPOQ that with the completion of the work of the task forces, collaboration among the organizations of the United Nations system on the range of issues addressed by the task forces should continue and be sustained through a network approach making use of task managers as well as information technology. In the same context, ACC encouraged further reflection and information-gathering within the system on issue-based management systems, and on how best to move towards developing and implementing them.

C. Preparations for the observance of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the five-year review of the Vienna Declaration and Plan of Action

28. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights provided a comprehensive briefing to ACC on the preparations for the five-year review of the implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action and the observance of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, both of which were to take place in 1998. She also outlined her vision of the role of the High Commissioner and of the Centre for Human Rights within the United Nations system. She stressed that the forthcoming commemorative events provided an important opportunity to strengthen linkages between human rights issues and other important aspects of United Nations programmes, and to stimulate and coordinate activities relating to human rights throughout the system. There was a need to go beyond organizational structures and to establish staff training to build capacity, leadership and shared values, which the system as a whole needed to promote. The High Commissioner would provide leadership in that area.

29. ACC members welcomed the new High Commissioner, and noted that many organizations were moving forward and cooperating with the High Commissioner in preparation for the 1998 events. It was emphasized that a rights-based approach to addressing economic, social and humanitarian problems in such areas as children, women and refugees was being increasingly pursued by the United Nations system organizations. Such an approach needed to be broadened and developed further.

30. ACC was briefed by the Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO) on the process of renewal of the Health for All strategy, in which United Nations organizations were already actively participating, and welcomed the progress being made in that regard. He presented a summary of the strategy for Health for All in the Twenty-first Century, on which consultations were being finalized. He pointed out that the right to health was enshrined in the WHO constitution, but that that carried with it responsibility of Governments and civil society, communities and individuals to ensure the realization of this right. New human rights policies should also embrace both rights and responsibilities.

31. ACC noted that as a result of intensive inter-agency consultations organized in 1997, coordinated plans had been developed for the five-year review of the Vienna Conference and the commemoration of the anniversary. ACC welcomed

the growing interest and response to the call of the High Commissioner inviting all sectors of the international community to organize activities and programmes to commemorate the two events, as reflected in the advanced stages of preparations for these events by Governments, academic institutions and other components of civil society.

32. ACC noted that a large number of United Nations agencies and programmes were marking the fiftieth anniversary within the scope of their respective mandates through specific programmes, publications and activities. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights was facilitating inter-agency cooperation in that regard.

33. ACC stressed the need to include human rights as an integral component of the coordinated follow-up to global conferences at the country, regional and global levels, and called upon organizations and bodies of the United Nations system to continue to collaborate actively with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in the preparations for the five-year review of the implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action and the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights.

D. Universal access to basic communication and information services

34. ACC recalled that at its first regular session of 1996, it had launched an inter-agency project on universal access to basic communication and information services, within the framework of its efforts to promote an integrated follow-up to conferences. The project was seen as supportive of the work of the three task forces established in that context by ACC, as well as other system-wide initiatives, such as the United Nations Special Initiative on Africa.

35. ACC further recalled that following the completion of the inter-agency project, ACC had adopted, at its first regular session of 1997, a statement on universal access to basic communication and information services, which formed the basis for a strategic and systematic approach to information and communication technologies and information management among the organizations of the system. In the light of the importance of the full involvement of United Nations Member States in addressing the challenges posed by that major global change, a number of executive heads, in response to the invitation of ACC, had either already submitted the ACC statement to their governing bodies or were making the necessary arrangements to do so. In addition, the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chairman of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, had

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brought the statement to the attention of the General Assembly at its fifty-second session.

36. ACC called on all organizations of the system to collaborate with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in ensuring an effective follow-up to that process, including implementation of pilot projects in the areas identified in the annex to the above-mentioned statement.

37. ACC agreed that within the framework of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, ITU, the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and other interested international organizations of the system would work cooperatively to pursue their work on the emerging concept, highlighted in the ACC statement, of the right to communicate in the context of universal access to basic communication and information services.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE QUESTIONS: STAFF SECURITY

38. In its consideration of this agenda item, ACC focused on the issue of staff security in crisis situations. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees initiated discussion on the issue by informing ACC that the Executive Committee of the Office had called on her to continue to bring the matter to the attention of ACC. She expressed grave concern over the increasing number of security incidents that the staff of humanitarian organizations had been experiencing in the field, and informed ACC that she had established within her organization a committee on staff security to address the issue. She further informed ACC of the initiative taken within her organization to offer termination packages to United Nations local staff to assist them in relocation in crisis situations, and recommended it for consideration by other organizations of the system. She felt that the situation had now reached crisis proportions, and that it was necessary for ACC to give the highest priority to addressing the issue and to deciding on a course of future action.

39. ACC members considered that in the light of the increasing gravity of the situation, the issue should be addressed on an urgent basis.

40. ACC was also briefed by the United Nations Security Coordinator on a number of issues concerning the security and safety of United Nations system staff in the field. ACC members emphasized the need to improve communications in the field, particularly during crisis situations, including communications with

non-governmental organizations on security matters, and to review the current regulations regarding relocation of United Nations field national personnel.

41. ACC members pointed to the need for Governments to be made fully aware of United Nations security policies in order to enlist their support for the implementation of such policies at the highest political level. The United Nations resident coordinator and designated security official would have an important role to play in that regard.

42. The financial and budgetary implications of security operations were raised. It was noted that the fact that those costs were in many cases not specifically provided for in relevant budgets not only affected the degree of protection afforded to staff but also eroded the funds available for substantive activities. It was emphasized that urgent consideration should be given to ways of reflecting operational aspects of security in a separate line in the budgets of United Nations organizations (both for the regular assessed and voluntary budgets), including provision of the necessary funding for training on security matters, procurement of equipment and services, and evacuation and relocation, when required. Similarly, ways should be found to include security-related costs in consolidated inter-agency appeals.

Conclusion

43. ACC requested its Organizational Committee, at its post-ACC meeting on 3 November 1997, to examine these issues with a view to facilitating and expediting follow-up action, including by the high-level Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions, as well as by the Ad Hoc Inter-Agency Meeting on Security, and to report thereon to ACC at its first regular session of 1998.

44. ACC adopted a statement on staff security, which is contained in annex I.

45. ACC heard short statements by the Chairman of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) and the representatives of the Coordinating Committee for Independent Staff Unions and Associations (CCISUA) and the Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations (FICSA).¹ The Chairman of ICSC underscored the technical role of ICSC and the ways in which the members of the Commission had been working to enhance that role.

46. In their statements, the Presidents of CCISUA and FICSA referred to the following issues: the need for improved security, including the need for staff to be equal partners in all bodies dealing with staff security; organizational reform, including their desire for full participation of the staff in all phases

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of the implementation of the United Nations Secretary-General's reform package; conditions of service, including the continuing erosion of Professional and General Service staff salaries, the post adjustment in Geneva, and mobility and hardship allowances; the need for improved management of the human resources of the organizations of the United Nations system; gratis personnel; the need for reform of ICSC in order to restore its technical integrity; the United Nations Code of Conduct; and the issue of term limits on representatives of staff associations. Both CCISUA and FICSA expressed their agreement to participate in the working group on the ICSC consultative process.

47. In response to questions from members of ACC with respect to the Code of Conduct, the Under-Secretary-General for Administration of the United Nations Secretariat reiterated that the Code represented amendments to the United Nations Staff Regulations and Rules, and was binding on the United Nations only. It did not affect the 1954 report on standards of conduct in the international civil service, which had system-wide application. The Secretary-General noted, however, that it was possible that Member States might in the future consider applying provisions of the Code in the other organizations of the system.

V. OTHER MATTERS

A. Follow-up to recent ACC conclusions

48. In introducing this item, the Secretary-General stated that the item on the follow-up to recent ACC conclusions had been included in the agenda for information rather than for any specific discussions or decisions at the present session of the Committee. The item covered a progress report by the Organizational Committee on the review of the functioning of ACC and its subsidiary machinery, the System-wide Special Initiative on Africa, the impact of armed conflict on children, the Joint and Co-sponsored United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), and some administrative matters relating to the meetings of and appointments in the ACC subsidiary bodies.

Review of the functioning of ACC and its subsidiary machinery; System-wide Special Initiative on Africa; peace-building; impact of armed conflict on children; UNAIDS

49. It was noted that the question of the role and functioning of ACC would be further addressed at the "retreat". ACC would revert to the issue at its next session.

50. With respect to the System-wide Special Initiative on Africa, the documentation before ACC noted that although there had been some progress in a number of substantive areas of the Initiative, there appeared to be some loss in momentum in the attention being given by the various lead agencies to coordinating activities in their respective sectors. ACC noted that progress in linking the Special Initiative and the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF) had been achieved, with the Initiative being recognized as the implementation arm of UN-NADAF. ACC decided that it would review progress being made in the implementation of the Special Initiative at its next session of ACC in the light also of the results of the work of the Steering Committee. The report should also clarify the nature of the role of the Special Initiative in the implementation of UN-NADAF.

51. A joint statement on HIV/AIDS adopted at the tenth meeting of the UNAIDS Committee of Co-sponsoring Organizations, held on 30 October 1997, in which the Secretary-General had participated, was brought to the attention of ACC. The representative of the World Bank, as the Chairman of that Committee, urged all members of ACC to extend their support to system-wide efforts in the fight against HIV/AIDS. The Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) expressed his great concern that the high cost of drugs for the treatment of HIV/AIDS was precluding their use by the vast majority of those affected, especially in developing countries. The donor and scientific communities should be mobilized to provide more financial resources and undertake research that would help to lower the cost of treatment. Others concurred with that view, and also expressed concern that sufficient resources were still not available to enable Governments and the organizations of the United Nations system to respond comprehensively and effectively to the epidemic. The Executive Director of UNAIDS informed ACC that those issues would be addressed by UNAIDS and its Committee of Co-sponsoring Organizations at its future meetings. ACC members took note of the joint statement.

52. ACC welcomed the recent appointment of Mr. Olara Otunnu as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict.

B. Other issues

Appointments in ACC subsidiary bodies

53. ACC noted and endorsed the following appointments in the ACC subsidiary bodies:

(a) The appointment of Mr. Dieter Goethel of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) as Chairman of the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions (Personnel Questions) for a two-year period 1997-1999, starting from its first regular session of 1997, and the appointment of Ms. Jan Beagle of the United Nations and Ms. Haruko Hirose of UNESCO as Vice-Chairpersons for the same period;

(b) The appointment of Mr. Eckhard Hein of FAO as Secretary of CCPOQ for the two-year period from 1 January 1998 to 31 December 1999;

(c) The extension of the appointment of Mr. Peter Leslie of the United Nations Development Programme as Secretary of the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions (Financial and Budgetary Questions) for a further period of two years, from 1 January 1998 to 31 December 1999.

Future meetings of ACC

54. Regarding the dates of the first regular session of ACC in 1998, ACC members requested OC to carry out further consultations since the proposed dates of 15 and 16 April were not convenient for a number of members.

55. Since the terms of office of the Director-General of IAEA, the Director-General of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the Director-General of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme would be coming to an end before the next meeting of ACC, the Secretary-General thanked Mr. Blix, Mr. de Maria y Campos, Mr. Bogsch and Ms. Dowdeswell on behalf of ACC members for their valuable contribution to the work of ACC and the United Nations system in general, and conveyed to them ACC's best wishes in their future endeavours. The Secretary-General welcomed to ACC its new members - Mr. Costa Pereira of the International Civil Aviation Organization, Mr. Idris of WIPO and Mr. Arlacchi of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme - and also welcomed to the meeting Mrs. Robinson the recently appointed High United Nations Commissioner for Human Rights, and Mr. Van Ginkel, the new Rector of the United Nations University.

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Notes

¹ The texts of the prepared statements by the representatives of Staff Unions and the Chairman of ICSC were circulated beforehand to members of ACC.

Annex

ACC STATEMENT ON STAFF SECURITY

1. The organizations of the United Nations system are now working closer to the front lines of conflict or even inside conflict zones, as well as in volatile and politically complex situations. This is reflected in the casualties that the United Nations system has suffered in the last year.

2. Under these circumstances, there is an urgent need for the United Nations system and the international community to consider at what point an area or a situation has become so dangerous that United Nations system staff must be withdrawn.

3. The Ad Hoc Inter-Agency Security Meeting held in Rome on 6 and 8 May 1997 discussed and made recommendations on a wide range of issues relating to the security and safety of staff (see ACC/1997/10). ACC fully supports the recommendations of the Meeting, and wishes to highlight a number of issues which are of immediate concern to the safety and security of staff in crisis situations and which need to be jointly addressed by the United Nations system under the auspices of the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator, as follows:

(a) Security of national staff: in conflict areas in which United Nations system staff are called upon to operate, it is frequently the national staff that bear the brunt of any resentment or hostility towards the United Nations. Accordingly, the national staff, citizens of the country are frequently the first victims of retaliation; this is even more true if an evacuation of international staff is being considered or has occurred;

(b) Urgent action is required to ensure that all appropriate measures are taken to assist these staff;

(c) Coordination with peacekeeping and other field missions: frequently, United Nations system staff find themselves working alongside United Nations military and other field missions. The United Nations system needs to enhance formal mechanisms whereby all the agencies, programmes and funds can cooperate to pursue their respective objectives and mandates in coordination with each other;

(d) Training: the training package currently in use in the system has been successfully field tested over the past several years. It is under continuous review. This training package needs to be disseminated with all possible speed, in particular to managers in the field, and the necessary funds for this need to be made readily available;

(e) Stress: as a result of the functions entrusted to them, United Nations staff are subjected to increasing levels of stress. The United Nations system needs a comprehensive programme of stress relief, including training, counselling and debriefing. It is imperative that the associated administrative and financial resources be made available to implement this programme;

(f) Recognizing that the implementation of security measures will entail additional resources, ACC members will continue to give priority attention to the financing of all necessary measures to enhance staff security;

(g) ACC welcomes recent statements made by legislative bodies, including the presidential statement of 21 May 1997 of the Security Council, especially as these referred to:

- (i) The planned establishment of an international criminal court, in which the Council reminds all States and others concerned of the need to bring to justice those who violate international humanitarian law;
- (ii) The Convention on the Safety of the United Nations and Associated Personnel, in which the Council calls upon all parties concerned to ensure the safety and security of these personnel, as well as of personnel of humanitarian organizations.

4. ACC intends to follow with keen interest the implementation of the statements mentioned in paragraph 3 (g) above.
