



## Chief Executives Board for Coordination

9 December 2002

English and French

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### Summary of the conclusions of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination at its second regular session of 2002

United Nations Headquarters, 8 and 9 November 2002

#### *Summary of conclusions requiring specific follow-up*

##### **CEB private meeting**

The United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) held a private meeting, chaired by the Secretary-General, in the afternoon of 8 November 2002.

##### **Follow-up to the Millennium Summit: “Preventing armed conflict”**

CEB addressed the follow-up to the Millennium Summit, focusing on the theme “Preventing armed conflict”, on the basis of an executive note prepared by the Department of Political Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat and finalized in the light of observations and conclusions of the High-level Committee on Programmes.

CEB welcomed the executive note prepared by the Department of Political Affairs and took note of its recommendations, as well as of the conclusions of the Committee. In the ensuing discussion, CEB members offered a number of observations relating to the conditions associated with armed conflict and the system’s response to them in terms of both conflict prevention and management.

CEB agreed that the central component of the United Nations system’s strategy on conflict prevention should be the promotion of development and the eradication of poverty. The conflict prevention and the development agendas should be mutually reinforcing. The imperative to move from a culture of reaction to a culture of prevention should be seen in this perspective and should be pursued stressing the drain in resources brought about by conflict that could otherwise be devoted to development.

An effective system-wide strategy on preventing armed conflict required a sound analytical base and a common understanding of the conditions that lead to armed conflict and, therefore, of the most effective ways by which the collective

strengths of the system — including the diverse but rich experience and capacity of United Nations agencies in conflict resolution and dialogue — could be brought to bear on conflict prevention. Not all of the elements of such a base and understanding were yet in place and this would require focused, collective attention by the system in the period ahead. The strategy should be grounded on specific situations at the country and regional level and draw systematically on both the system's early warning capabilities and its extensive field-based operational experience.

The system's strategy should be set within a clear framework of well-defined goals and priorities. The key priorities of the system at the global level were embodied in the goals and targets of the United Nations Millennium Declaration while, at the country level, the system was making headway in that regard through the common country assessment/United Nations Development Assistance Framework and poverty reduction strategy papers processes. Enhancing the contribution of these processes to conflict prevention should be given continuing attention. The system's role in supporting the development of effective regional and subregional conflict prevention strategies also requires further collective attention. Efforts to advance the status and role of women should be effectively mainstreamed in conflict prevention strategies at all levels.

CEB decided to pursue the above conclusions actively in close consultation with all relevant partners.

### **Reports of the High-level Committees**

**(a) Programme matters**

**(i) Future role of the High-level Committee on Programmes (HLCP) in follow-up to the United Nations Millennium Declaration**

CEB expressed appreciation for the valuable contributions of HLCP to its work, particularly in ensuring substantive preparations for its sessions and assisting CEB in fostering system-wide programme coordination. CEB commended the Chairman, Carlos Magariños, and Vice-Chairman, Mats Karlson, for their exemplary teamwork in leading the Committee over the past two years and urged its members to continue their support for the work of HLCP.

CEB took note of the attention given by the Committee at its last session to system-wide follow-up and monitoring of the Millennium Development Goals. It welcomed the Committee's decision to keep the implementation of the Millennium Declaration and ongoing monitoring processes under review, bearing in mind the concern of CEB to ensure mutual reinforcement between global and country monitoring activities.

**(ii) Preparations for future discussions on financing for development and strategies for sustainable development**

On the follow-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development, CEB members welcomed the establishment of an open-ended group of HLCP to give focused attention to the issue and assist HLCP in preparing further CEB discussions on the matter at its next session. They shared the group's assessment that the Johannesburg Summit had given renewed political impetus to the implementation of

commitments and agreements reached at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992, including by introducing important new goals and targets, and that it was now incumbent on the system to build on and sustain that momentum. It was necessary in that connection both to focus inter-agency cooperation for sustainable development on advancing the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and to work towards effectively integrating relevant conference follow-up processes so that they became mutually reinforcing and serve together, to maximize their impact on the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. The need, highlighted in the group's discussions, for the system to take into account ongoing intergovernmental discussions on approaches to the integrated follow-up to conferences, was reiterated.

CEB members also shared the view that strategic and programmatic frameworks to advance implementation of these outcomes and related actions in the water and sanitation, energy, health, agriculture and biodiversity areas should be flexible and action-oriented. They should contribute to enhancing coherence and impact by all concerned institutions, rather than adding to them. The need for bold approaches that give more visibility to implementation processes, particularly with respect to water and energy, was particularly stressed. Those approaches should serve not only to reinforce system-wide coherence but also fully exploit the opportunities presented by partnerships with the private sector, local authorities and civil society. The same considerations applied to follow-up actions concerning changing patterns of productions and consumption. In recognizing the importance of this objective, the World Summit on Sustainable Development had highlighted the need to work also at sectoral and enterprise levels and involving business and workers in those processes.

There was general support for the view that the main focus of inter-agency action should be at the country level, avoiding the creation of new coordination mechanisms, while building on and reinforcing existing ones.

CEB encouraged HLCP and its open-ended group to pursue their work on identifying the actions required to maximize the system's support to a sustained follow-up to the Summit, taking into account the above-mentioned considerations.

With regard to the intention of HLCP to initiate a study on the system's collaboration with civil society, CEB members welcomed the initiative, noting that it would also serve to complement, from a system-wide perspective, the Secretary-General's decision referred to in his report on United Nations reform, entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change" (A/57/387) to establish a panel of eminent personalities to review the relationship between the United Nations and civil society.

- (b) Management issues**
  - (i) Staff security and safety**
  - (ii) Reform of the pay and benefits system**
  - (iii) Information and communication technologies**

**(iv) Dialogue with the Chairman of the International Civil Service Commission and staff representatives**

CEB took note of the report of the High-level Committee on Management and expressed appreciation for the progress the Committee had achieved, especially in the areas outlined by its Chairman.

CEB reaffirmed its strong support for the proposals being put forward by the International Civil Service Commission to reform the pay and benefits system and commended the Commission for the progress made. It encouraged the Commission to play an active role in pursuing these proposals, which should be given the highest priority in the Commission's work.

**Other matters**

**Secretary-General's reform initiative**

With regard to those aspects of the initiative that are of interest to the broader United Nations system, CEB members looked forward to having the opportunity to provide inputs and exchange views, prior to the finalization of further proposals for consideration by the General Assembly.

**Dates of the CEB 2003 spring and autumn sessions**

CEB expressed appreciation to the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) for his offer to host the CEB session at UNESCO headquarters in Paris on 25 and 26 April 2003. In line with the decision that CEB had reached at its spring session concerning the timing of its future sessions, it confirmed that its autumn 2003 session would be held during the last week of October, and noted that the Secretary-General would consult with CEB members with regard to the exact dates. In that regard, the Secretary-General of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) offered to host the session at ICAO headquarters in Montreal, Canada.

## I. Introduction

1. The second regular session of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) for 2002 was held at United Nations Headquarters on 8 and 9 November 2002.
2. A private meeting of CEB members, chaired by the Secretary-General, was held in the afternoon of 8 November.
3. CEB members also held a retreat at the Greentree Foundation in Long Island, New York, from the evening of 8 November to 9 November, under the chairmanship of the Secretary-General, focusing on progress achieved in implementing the core strategy for the Millennium Development Goals and on the United Nations system's coordinated support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).
4. The present report covers the outcome of the regular session of CEB held at United Nations Headquarters.

### Agenda

5. The agenda of the second regular session of CEB of 2002 was as follows:
  1. Adoption of the agenda.
  2. Follow-up to the Millennium Summit: "Preventing armed conflict".
  3. Reports of the High-level Committees:
    - (a) Programme matters:
      - (i) Future role of the High-level Committee on Programmes in follow-up to the United Nations Millennium Declaration;
      - (ii) Preparations for future discussions on "financing for development"; and "strategies for sustainable development";
    - (b) Management issues:
      - (i) Staff security and safety;
      - (ii) Reform of the pay and benefits system;
      - (iii) Information and communication technologies;
      - (iv) Dialogue with the Chairman of the International Civil Service Commission and staff representatives.
  4. Other matters:
    - (i) Update on the World Summit on the Information Society;
    - (ii) Briefings on the Secretary-General's reform initiative (strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for change (A/57/387) and on the United Nations System Staff College;
    - (iii) Dates of the CEB 2003 spring and autumn sessions.
6. The Secretary-General welcomed the new Director-General of the World Trade Organization, Supachai Panitchpakdi, the new Executive Director of the United

Nations International Drug Control Programme, Antonio María Costa, the new United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Sergio Vieira De Mello, all of whom were attending CEB for the first time.

## **II. Follow-up to the Millennium Summit: “Preventing armed conflict”**

7. In his introduction, the Secretary-General recalled that, in his report to the General Assembly in 2001 on the prevention of armed conflict (A/55/985-S/2001/574) as well as in his current report on the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration (A/57/270 and Corr.1), he had stressed that international conflict management required significant investments in building up capacities for structural and operational prevention at all levels, and that this task must be a top priority for the international community.

8. The Secretary-General noted that, in order to develop a coherent strategy for conflict prevention, the United Nations system needed to deepen its understanding of the causes of tensions within societies and among nations and of the links between peace and development. In so doing, the system would be able to build on growing experience in integrating a prevention perspective in its development programmes and in its planning processes at the country level.

9. The Assistant Secretary-General from the Department of Political Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat introduced the executive note before CEB on preventing armed conflict. He took stock of the current situation, outlining the system’s achievements and the challenges before it in preventing armed conflict, and presented the recommendations contained in the note. These included: (a) the proposed establishment of focal points in organizations of system to follow-up the recommendations in the Secretary-General’s report on the prevention of armed conflict; (b) the development by the Interdepartmental Resource Group on Prevention (now renamed Inter-agency Resource Group) of a detailed plan for the implementation of the Secretary-General’s report; (c) mainstreaming conflict prevention in common country assessment and United Nations Development Assistance Framework processes; (d) considering ways for the Bretton Woods institutions to further complement and support other partners in the United Nations system on conflict prevention; (e) building the capacity of the United Nations and relevant agencies to analyse and address potential threats of conflict emanating from international natural resource disparities; (f) launching a campaign to promote greater awareness among the public of the role of the United Nations system in armed conflict prevention; (g) encouraging civil society and non-governmental organizations to join the United Nations in developing and implementing conflict prevention and recovery strategies; (h) further encouraging the private sector to embrace and enact good practices in conflict areas; and (i) reporting on progress made in implementing CEB conclusions prior to the next meeting of the High-level Committee on Programmes (HLCP).

10. The Chairman of HLCP highlighted the major conclusions reached by the Committee in the light of a draft of the executive note. Firstly, HLCP members confirmed strong system-wide support for the Secretary-General’s integrated approach to conflict prevention and stressed the importance of building structured links between political and socio-economic strategies in a way that makes the best

use of the different experiences and capacities in the system. Secondly, the Committee stressed that the focus of system-wide coordination in conflict prevention must remain at the country and subregional level to reinforce country and regional ownership of strategies for the prevention of armed conflict. Thirdly, particular attention should be given to environmental degradation and natural resource depletion as potential sources of conflict, as well as to refugees, arms trafficking, and drugs and crime in post-conflict situations, so as to avoid the re-emergence of conflict. Finally, the Committee highlighted the importance of drawing public attention to the system's success stories in conflict prevention and of conveying the message that conflict prevention was not only a moral choice but also a less costly option than dealing with conflicts once they occurred.

11. CEB welcomed the executive note prepared by the Department of Political Affairs and took note of the recommendations contained therein, as well as of the conclusions of HLCP. In the ensuing discussion, CEB members offered a number of observations relating to the conditions associated with armed conflict and the system's response to them in terms of both conflict prevention and management.

12. Executive Heads shared the view that, while armed conflict stemmed from a variety of conditions and circumstances, chief among them remained the prevalence of poverty and inequality. Poverty itself did not automatically lead to armed conflict. It is, however, a key factor in exacerbating social, economic and cultural tensions that could lead to violence and conflict. Advancing implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, in particular poverty eradication, was thus essential to eliminating the potential causes of armed conflict.

13. It was observed that lack of decent work, in particular, created a sense of despair and hopelessness that contributed to increased criminality, social tensions and violence. Education and training and job creation were thus crucial means for promoting conditions of social harmony and peace.

14. Environmental degradation, natural resource depletion and competition over access to scarce natural resources were cited as other major sources of tension and, thus, major risk factors in triggering armed conflict. Helping to address these issues, including through natural disaster prevention and mitigation, proper management of water resources and rational use, protection and conservation of natural resources and the environment, as well as capacity-building through education and training in a timely, focused and coordinated manner, would constitute, in many instances, an important contribution by the system to conflict prevention.

15. Refugee situations were referred to as potential breeding grounds for terrorism and recruitment of child soldiers that could help to fuel armed conflict. Durable solutions for refugees, through enhanced legal protection and programmes deliberately aimed at addressing refugees as potential agents of development, should thus be sought in their own merit but also as integral components of system-wide approaches to conflict prevention. Beyond that, successful repatriation and local integration served to prevent new conflicts and were key to durable solutions.

16. It was noted that studies showed that conflicts tended to repeat themselves, were deep-rooted and displayed warning signals. These observations apply particularly to organized crime and corruption, which undermined the fabric of society, perpetuated and exacerbated crisis situations and sometimes turned local issues into international conflicts.

17. The point was also emphasized that, in addressing conflict situations, external economic and financial support should be accompanied by serious efforts at transparency and accountability in achieving political solutions to conflicts. The United Nations system itself should be proactive in bringing to light all relevant factors and pointing the way to durable solutions that effectively engage the responsibility of all concerned parties.

18. CEB agreed that the central component of the United Nations system's strategy on conflict prevention should be the promotion of development and the eradication of poverty. The conflict prevention and the development agendas should be mutually reinforcing. The imperative to move from a culture of reaction to a culture of prevention should be seen in that perspective and should be pursued stressing the drain in resources brought about by conflict that could otherwise be devoted to development.

19. An effective system-wide strategy on preventing armed conflict required a sound analytical base and a common understanding of the conditions that lead to armed conflict and was therefore, one of the most effective ways by which the collective strengths of the system — including the diverse but rich experience and capacity of United Nations agencies in conflict resolution and dialogue — could be brought to bear on conflict prevention. Not all of the elements of such a base and understanding were yet in place and this would require focused, collective attention by the system in the period ahead. The strategy should be grounded on specific situations at the country and regional levels, and draw systematically on both the system's early warning capabilities and its extensive field-based operational experience.

20. The system's strategy should be set within a clear framework of well-defined goals and priorities. The key priorities of the system at the global level were embodied in the goals and targets of the Millennium Declaration while, at the country level, the system was making headway in that regard through the common country assessment/United Nations Development Assistance Framework and poverty reduction strategy paper processes. Continuing attention should be given to enhancing the contribution of those processes to conflict prevention. The system's role in supporting the development of effective regional and subregional conflict prevention strategies also required further collective attention. Efforts to advance the status and role of women should be effectively mainstreamed in conflict-prevention strategies at all levels.

21. CEB decided to pursue the above conclusions actively in close consultation with all relevant partners.

### **III. Reports of the High-level Committees**

#### **A. Programme matters**

##### **1. Future role of the High-level Committee on Programmes in follow-up to the United Nations Millennium Declaration**

22. Under this item, CEB was invited to address the focus of future HLCP work, particularly with regard to the overall follow-up to the Millennium Declaration and the coordination of the efforts currently under way to strengthen monitoring of the



Millennium Development Goals at the global and country levels. Executive Heads were also invited to give guidance to the work of the open-ended group established by HLCP on the follow-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg, as well as to provide orientations to the preparations for CEB discussions in 2003 on the follow-up to both the International Conference on Financing for Development, held in Monterrey, Mexico, and the Johannesburg Summit and on how best the two follow-up processes should be linked to the United Nations system's overall effort to advance the Millennium Development Goals.

23. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of HLCP briefed CEB on the outcome of the Committee's deliberations on the above-mentioned issues, including the preliminary findings of the open-ended group referred to above. The Chairman also reported on progress in the Committee's deliberations on the system's interactions with civil society, support for NEPAD, trade facilitation and inter-agency collaboration in the evaluation of global programmes. Noting that his mandate as Chairman of HLCP was coming to an end, he expressed appreciation to the Secretary-General and members of CEB for the opportunity to contribute, in that capacity, to policy coherence and programme coordination in the United Nations system. He recounted the contributions of the Committee to the work of CEB over the first two years of its operations and outlined the challenges in the years ahead. He referred, in this context, to the need to clarify further the division of labour between the United Nations Development Group and the Committee, keep under review its terms of reference and actively pursue the implementation of the revised working methods it had adopted.

24. CEB expressed appreciation for the valuable contributions of HLCP to its work, particularly in ensuring substantive preparations for its sessions and assisting CEB in fostering system-wide programme coordination. CEB commended the Chairman, Carlos Magariños, and Vice-Chairman, Mats Karlson, for their exemplary teamwork in leading the Committee over the past two years and urged its members to continue their support for the work of HLCP.

25. CEB took note of the attention given by the Committee at its last session to system-wide follow-up and monitoring of the Millennium Development Goals. It welcomed the Committee's decision to keep the implementation of the Millennium Declaration and ongoing monitoring processes under review, bearing in mind the concern of CEB to ensure mutual reinforcement between global and country monitoring activities.

26. With regard to the various components of the Millennium Development Goals strategy, the need to avoid duplication of existing mechanisms and to contain the number of task forces and related United Nations Development Group arrangements and the transaction costs associated with them was stressed. In response, it was pointed out that the Millennium Development Goals core strategy was a means for the system to raise public awareness, measure progress, review approaches and maintain pressure towards the attainment of the goals and targets of the Millennium Declaration, which should serve to reinforce, rather than replace or add to, existing coordinating mechanisms.

27. The Goals were seen as the organizing concept of the current global development agenda, as they incorporated many of the targets agreed upon by the United Nations system conferences and summits of the 1990s and their five-year and ten-year follow-up conferences, and/or translated into time-bound quantitative goals

many of the commitments and policy directions adopted during this conference process, culminating in the Millennium Declaration and followed by the Fourth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization, held in Doha, the International Conference on Financing for Development, held in Monterrey, Mexico and the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg, South Africa. These global goals would, in turn, need to be distilled into country-owned strategies, based on national priorities and country-specific situations. At the same time, the commitments and policy directives emanating from the global conferences would need to continue to be followed up at all levels, as means to achieve these goals as well as in their own merit.

28. With regard, specifically, to the Millennium Project within the Millennium Development Goals core strategy, the view was expressed that care should be taken to avoid a disconnection between activities under the Project and ongoing work by organizations of the system on the follow-up to the various conferences and summits of the 1990s, which had adopted the time-bound, quantitative goals that were later embodied in the Millennium Development Goals. It was, at the same time, recognized that linkages among the Goals had important implications for their achievement and that the United Nations had a key role to play in helping the system focus on these linkages.

29. The need to embed inter-agency work in the real world was highlighted. It was noted that principles such as good governance, democracy and human rights, sound economic policy and trade liberalization were fundamentally important but that the system should feel collectively responsible not only for advocating them, but also for promoting their application so that they actually helped to improve human lives. Inter-agency coordination should be responsive to differing country needs and situations, and be geared towards maximizing the positive impact of these principles on people's lives. In the same sense, the system should focus its work on selected priorities where it can make a real difference.

## **2. Preparations for future discussions on financing for development and strategies for sustainable development**

30. With regard to the follow-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development, CEB members welcomed the establishment of an open-ended group of HLCP to give focused attention to the issue and assist HLCP in preparing further CEB discussions on the matter at its next session. They shared the group's assessment that the Johannesburg Summit had given renewed political impetus to the implementation of commitments and agreements reached at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992, including by introducing important new goals and targets, and that it was now incumbent on the system to build on and sustain that momentum. It was necessary in that connection both to focus inter-agency cooperation for sustainable development on advancing the implementation of the outcomes of the Summit, and to work towards effectively integrating relevant conference follow-up processes so that they became mutually reinforcing and serve together to maximize their impact on the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. The need, highlighted in the group's discussions, for the system to take into account ongoing intergovernmental discussions on approaches to the integrated follow-up to conferences, was reiterated.

31. It was pointed out that the key message to be conveyed by the system should be that of implementation, which implied acting on the whole range of commitments made, rather than the looser concept of follow-up, which too often was used to embrace conditions and selective action. In promoting a sustained implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, based on a clear division of responsibilities among United Nations organizations and agencies, the system should focus on promoting new policy orientations as well as supporting the achievement of specific goals and time-bound targets, with the Millennium Development Goals, and in particular poverty eradication, as overarching concerns.

32. CEB members also shared the view that strategic and programmatic frameworks to advance implementation of these outcomes and related actions in the water and sanitation, energy, health, agriculture and biodiversity (WEHAB) areas should be flexible and action-oriented. They should contribute to enhancing coherence and impact by all concerned institutions, rather than adding to them. The need for bold approaches that gave more visibility to implementation processes, particularly with respect to water and energy, was particularly stressed. Those approaches should serve not only to reinforce system-wide coherence but also fully exploit the opportunities presented by partnerships with the private sector, local authorities and civil society. The same considerations applied to follow-up actions concerning changing patterns of productions and consumption. In recognizing the importance of this objective, the Summit had highlighted the need to work also at sectoral and enterprise levels and involving business and workers in those processes.

33. There was general support for the view that the main focus of inter-agency action should be at the country level, avoiding the creation of new coordination mechanisms, while building on and reinforcing existing ones.

34. It was further noted that the Doha Development Round encompassed an array of trade-related actions that could substantially reinforce the follow-up to the World Summit under the overarching goal of eradicating poverty. These actions ranged from helping poor countries integrate into the world trading system to providing assistance to strengthen their productive capacity to enable them to benefit from market opening measures, and promoting government reforms, such as customs reforms. In this context, the need for coordinated actions on the part of the system in trade-related development assistance and capacity-building was emphasized.

35. CEB encouraged HLCP and its open-ended group to pursue their work on identifying the actions required to maximize the system's support to a sustained follow-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development, taking into account the above-mentioned considerations.

36. With regard to the intention of HLCP to initiate a study on the system's collaboration with civil society, CEB members welcomed the initiative, noting that it would also serve to complement, from a system-wide perspective, the Secretary-General's decision, referred to in his report on United Nations reform, entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change" (A/57/387) to establish a panel of eminent personalities to review the relationship between the United Nations and civil society.

37. It was observed that civil society organizations continued to gain in importance and influence in shaping national and international agendas. Their contribution to promoting national awareness and dialogue on social and economic issues, along

with their advocacy and implementing roles, had been pivotal in advancing international cooperation on key areas, ranging from HIV/AIDS, human rights, democracy and humanitarian issues, to the global development issues (food, gender, social development, finance for development and sustainable development) addressed at the major world conferences. It was also noted that local civil society organizations were important partners in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals at the operational or field level.

38. Reference was made to the explosive growth in the numbers of civil society actors and in the large number of non-governmental organizations that have consultative status with the Economic and Social Council or similar formal relationships with the system's agencies. That trend raised a number of issues relating to legitimacy and accountability, sources of funding and implications for the conduct of intergovernmental processes requiring urgent attention.

39. CEB was informed that, while the panel of eminent personalities to be convened by the Secretary-General would look primarily at the relationships of civil society organizations with United Nations legislative bodies, the considerable experience of the system in working with those organizations at all levels would be fully drawn upon.

40. It was suggested that the HLCP study should address the democratic base of civil society organizations, including the size of their membership, as well as transparency and accountability in terms of financing, and should deal with their role not only at the global, but also at the field level, including the interface between civil society and government in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals and other global plans of action at the national and local levels. The view was also expressed that, alongside the participation of civil society organizations in intergovernmental processes, there was a need to strengthen existing modalities and mechanisms for the engagement of local authorities in those processes.

## **B. Management issues**

- 1. Staff security and safety**
- 2. Reform of the pay and benefits system**
- 3. Information and communication technologies**
- 4. Dialogue with the Chairman of the International Civil Service Commission and staff representatives**

41. The Chairman of the High-level Committee on Management (HLCM) briefed CEB on the outcome of the fourth session of the Committee and on the work being pursued by task forces led by one or another CEB member agency between sessions of the Committee. Currently, the work programme of HLCM focused on five areas, namely: (a) information and communication technologies where significant progress has been achieved; (b) the security and safety of staff, and in particular, the establishment of minimum operating security standards; (c) the impact on management and programmes of the changing relationship between regular and voluntary funding, with a view to developing common approaches to the establishment of minimum standards for the receipt and management of voluntary

funds and conditions for earmarking; (d) emergency preparedness and the development of business contingency plans, including inter-agency cooperation in the identification of collective assets, in order to maximize mutual support among United Nations organizations in the event of disasters; and (e) the reform of the pay and benefits system being pursued by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC), which had been the subject of a statement adopted by HLCM on behalf of CEB for presentation to the General Assembly.

42. CEB took note of the report of HLCM and expressed appreciation for the progress the Committee had achieved, especially in the areas outlined by its Chairman.

43. In particular, CEB underlined the importance it attached to compliance with minimum operating security standards, and with aviation safety and security standards.

44. CEB heard statements from, and exchanged views with, the Chairman of ICSC and a representative of the Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations (FICSA). It also received a written statement from the Coordinating Committee for International Staff Unions and Associations of the United Nations System.

45. CEB reaffirmed its strong support for the proposals being put forward by ICSC to reform the pay and benefits system and commended the Commission for the progress made. It encouraged the Commission to play an active role in pursuing these proposals, which should be given the highest priority in the Commission's work.

46. In relation to the statement adopted by HLCM on behalf of CEB, which the Deputy Secretary-General had delivered to the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly, CEB members expressed the hope that Member States would respond positively to the ICSC proposals to reform the pay and benefits system and to restore the margin between the United Nations remuneration and that of the comparator to its desirable midpoint.

47. CEB members also expressed appreciation to FICSA for its positive reaction to the ICSC reform proposals and concurred with the emphasis placed by the Federation on making careers in the international civil service more rewarding.

## **IV. Other matters**

### **A. Update on the World Summit on the Information Society**

48. The Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union informed CEB on the status of preparations for the Summit, including the outcomes of the first Preparatory Committee meeting and of the work of the High-level Summit Organizing Committee which he chaired, and its executive secretariat. Recalling that the second Preparatory Committee meeting would be held in Geneva from 17 to 28 February 2003, the Secretary-General noted that a number of regional conferences were also being held to provide additional inputs to the outcomes of the Summit.

49. The Secretary-General informed CEB that the main focus of the Summit would be on: (a) tackling the digital divide by providing access to information and

communication technology (ICT) for all; (b) raising awareness of ICT as a tool for economic and social development and for assisting in implementing the Millennium Development Goals; and (c) building security and confidence in the use of ICT, including the possible need for new frameworks in cyberspace. In the same context, he referred to the following three main areas where support and assistance was especially needed from the Organizing Committee members: (a) contributing to the content and output of the summit: members were invited to provide written inputs to the executive secretariat by 7 December (the Organizing Committee would meet on 4 December 2002 in Geneva and a full meeting would be held on 24 April 2003 in Paris); (b) supporting the Summit financially and in terms of human resources; and (c) helping to enhance the visibility of the Summit.

50. The Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat informed CEB that the ICT Task Force established by the Economic and Social Council had, at its last meeting, reaffirmed its intention to contribute effectively to the Summit. It had offered the Task Force's global networks of working groups, as well as the Regional Networks operating under its aegis as platforms for the preparatory process for the Summit. He noted that the focus of the work of the Task Force, the membership of which included representatives of government, international organizations, foundations, business, and civil society organizations, was on the application of communication technology for development. Drawing on the successful experience of the Task Force, he suggested that the World Summit on the Information Society should focus on bringing together not only heads of State and Government, but also all other main players who could be influential in shaping policy in that area.

51. The Director-General of the Universal Postal Union stressed that the Summit should not exclusively focus its attention on information and communication technology, noting that there was still a role to be played by the postal services in developing communications channels worldwide and thus contributing to the narrowing of the gap in accessing information and knowledge.

**B. Briefings on the Secretary-General's reform initiative, entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change" (A/57/387), and on the United Nations System Staff College**

52. The Deputy Secretary-General noted that the Secretary-General's recent reform initiative was focused primarily on the United Nations Secretariat, and aimed at aligning the work of the Organization with the outcomes of the major conferences and the Millennium Development Goals, as well as at streamlining processes and providing better services to Member States. She noted that, notwithstanding the focus on the United Nations Secretariat, there were four aspects of the reform programme that were of broader interest to the United Nations system. These included proposals to strengthen coordination at the country level; delineate responsibilities regarding the delivery of technical assistance; facilitate mobility of staff across the United Nations system; and review the relationship with civil society organizations. Beyond those particular aspects, the Deputy Secretary-General expressed the hope that, throughout the process, the United Nations would be able to count on the experience and knowledge of the United Nations system as a whole.

53. With regard to those aspects of the initiative that were of interest to the broader United Nations system, CEB members looked forward to having the opportunity to provide inputs and exchange views, prior to the finalization of further proposals for consideration by the General Assembly.

54. In her capacity as Chairperson of the United Nations System Staff College Board of Governors, the Deputy Secretary-General expressed appreciation for the excellent support and cooperation she had received from United Nations system organizations with regard to the Staff College. She informed CEB that, on 7 November, the Board of Governors had met and had approved, on behalf of CEB, a budget of 6.2 million dollars for the Staff College for 2003. She noted that the long-term financial viability of the College remained a concern. She was, however, confident that the growing interest that the system was showing in the objectives and programmes of the College, particularly those aimed at promoting a common United Nations system culture and preparing the system's leaders of tomorrow, leading to "ownership" and full use by the system of the College's facilities, would have a positive effect among donors, and contribute to a further expansion of sources of financial support for the College.

55. The Secretary-General of the International Meteorological Organization (IMO) informed CEB of his organization's recent initiatives to deal with the threat of terrorism in the maritime sector. Following an IMO risk analysis on ships as targets and as weapons, the IMO Assembly had decided to take additional security measures relating to shipping, which included the convening of a diplomatic conference to introduce a new set of security measures, in particular an International Ship and Port Facility Security Code. IMO was also cooperating with the International Labour Organization on the issue of seafarer identification, and had signed a memorandum of understanding with the World Customs Organization, to strengthen cooperation in relation to container examination and integrity in multimodal transport and ship/port interface. Furthermore, IMO was assisting developing countries to protect shipping from terrorist attacks. In that context, three regional seminars and workshops had already been held in Mombasa (Kenya), Singapore and Sydney (Australia), to be followed by similar seminars in other regions.

### **C. Dates of the CEB 2003 spring and autumn sessions**

56. CEB expressed its appreciation to the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) for his offer to host the CEB session at UNESCO headquarters in Paris on 25 and 26 April 2003. In line with the decision that CEB had reached at its spring session concerning the timing of its future sessions, it confirmed that its autumn 2003 session would be held during the last week of October and noted that the Secretary-General would consult with CEB members with regard to the exact dates. In that regard, the Secretary-General of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) offered to host the session at ICAO headquarters in Montreal, Canada.