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OF THE UN SYSTEM

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Boutros Boutros-Ghali

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STATEMENT TO THE
INTER-GOVERNMENTAL WORKING GROUP
ON THE
STRENGTHENING OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

NEW YORK, 11 MARCH 1996

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I greatly appreciate the opportunity to address this Working Group as part of a dialogue that I hope we will continue in the months ahead.

The task before you - and the other Working Groups of the General Assembly charged with various aspects of reform and restructuring - is a crucial one. It is, in the words of the Heads of State and Government who gathered in New York to mark the Fiftieth Anniversary, "to give to the 21st century a United Nations equipped, financed and structured to serve effectively the peoples for which it was established".

The challenge is, in the first instance, political. The process must be driven by substantive rather than procedural considerations.

For fifty years, the Peoples of the United Nations have sought progress through their world Organization. Today's United Nations is the product of generations of work by dedicated men and women.

It is the practical manifestation of a dream of universal solidarity and progress for all peoples.

Today, the process of globalization is accelerating. The forces of fragmentation are at the same time intensifying. These phenomena, and the new opportunities and new global problems they are creating, make the need for an effective United Nations greater than ever.

Our agenda - containing conflicts, redressing inequalities, combatting poverty - is crucial. The United Nations will be increasingly important in addressing this agenda. But change is needed because we have learned that:

- . we must be clear about our priorities;
- . we must shape our missions to our means;
- . we must not spread ourselves too thin; and
- . we must act not only on the symptoms but also on the root causes of problems.

Change should be perceived:

- . not as an imposition,
- . not as compromising Charter objectives,
- . not as affecting basic directions,

but as adapting structures and methods to the new global environment we have helped bring about, and in light of the lessons we have learned in the process.

To be effective, reform must be rooted in consensus on the role of the Organization and its priorities in this new global environment. I believe such a consensus is beginning to emerge.

In the political and security area, the process of reflection, to which I sought to contribute through an Agenda for Peace, and the Supplement I issued in January 1995, appears to be gaining momentum.

In the economic and social area, the continuum of major global conferences is forging a new consensus on global challenges and the role of the United Nations in addressing them. These conferences are giving impetus to the inter-governmental discussions on an Agenda for Development, under the aegis of the General Assembly.

Building on this emerging vision for a United Nations of the future, I want to share with you my assessment of the situation as I see it.

We need a streamlined, more coherent and responsive Secretariat. It must possess the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity. It must be structured to provide the most integrated and effective support possible to Member States and the inter-governmental machinery.

We need inter-governmental machinery that is less fragmented, better able to affect global forces, and more open to civil society. It should operate consistently at the political level which ultimately shapes all areas of the Organization's mandate.

And we need an Organization in which all principal Organs function in the balance and harmony envisioned by the Charter. This means an Organization with a clear sense of its comparative advantages and priorities, conscious of the linkages among all dimensions of its mission, and where tasks and means, mandates and resources, are effectively matched.

How do we go forward on all of these fronts ?

* * *

A look at the record will reveal that significant reforms have been taking place within the Secretariat over the past four years. Advancing and managing this process of change has been a key objective since I took office.

Early in 1992 I initiated a process of consolidating related Secretariat functions and activities. This reduced the number of high-level posts by 23%, from 48 to 37.

I pursued this effort to create a simpler structure and clearer lines of responsibility in the reorganization which I proposed to the General Assembly in 1993. In the political area, the diffused structures existing at that time were simplified and reorganized in two Departments: political affairs and peace-keeping operations. Reorganization in the economic and social area enhanced the capacity of the Secretariat for data gathering and analysis. Integration of economic and social work enhanced the coherence of substantive support to the inter-governmental machinery. And the technical cooperation work of the Secretariat was reoriented to become more focused.

In both the political and the economic and social areas, the reorganization was built around basic Secretariat functions, rather than the evolving structures of the inter-governmental machinery. It was designed to facilitate further streamlining and consolidation in the future.

The reorganization did not affect the basic structure of United Nations Programmes and Funds. It did, however, unlike previous restructuring exercises, involve relocating Offices between United

Nations centres in order to consolidate related activities or to create new synergies among them.

During this period, the General Assembly took the initiative to establish new high-level posts in priority areas such as the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Notwithstanding these additions, such posts now number 33% less than 10 years ago.

The dramatic increase in peace-keeping and other United Nations operations has required the services of a number of Special Envoys or Representatives. To minimize the establishment of high-level posts, I have endeavoured to make term appointments so that these posts do not, as often happened in the past, become part of the basic Secretariat structure.

These measures have been accompanied by the development of a comprehensive management plan aimed at enhanced performance, greater productivity and increased cost-effectiveness. The plan is designed to create a new management culture conducive to innovation and change. It strengthens the management of human resources, technology, and the Organization's cost structure.

By incorporating important efficiency gains, I was able to propose a programme budget for the 1996-1997 biennium which

represented a significant reduction compared with previous budgets including a reduction of some 200 posts. The total number of staff is now 17% smaller than it was ten years ago.

I am currently examining ways to make the significant additional reductions required by the General Assembly. As I indicated in my statement to the Working Group on Financing, this will involve staff reductions and reductions in non-staff costs. Spending will be reduced by more cost-effective ways of implementing mandates, by rationalizing work programmes, and by technological innovations. An Efficiency Board, chaired by the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management, is working to identify further opportunities for reducing costs. The Office of Internal Oversight Services is contributing to more effective and efficient programme management.

Today, even the harshest critics of the United Nations must acknowledge that serious Secretariat reform is well underway.

Carrying this process forward will require mutually supporting actions by the Secretary-General and the Member States. We must be clear as to where the main responsibilities lie. We must be clear about where the main leverage for positive change can be found. And we must be clear about the main obstacles to progress.

The first and greatest obstacle is the financial crisis. The statement I made to the High-level Group on the Financial Situation describes the magnitude of the situation. The facts and figures are well known to all.

Day-to-day management of the cash-flow crisis is diverting attention and resources that instead should be devoted to the efficient management of the Organization and to carrying forward the reform effort.

Consolidation and integration are key not only to greater effectiveness, but also to greater efficiency and savings. But reform cannot ultimately succeed unless it is rooted in a predictable and assured financial basis. Unless a comprehensive solution is found, the progress already made on many fronts will be jeopardized.

Another major obstacle is the complexity and rigidity of the budgetary process. Programme budgeting should be - for both Member States and the Secretary-General - a key instrument for priority-setting, for adapting the Organization to changing requirements. It should serve to match agreed tasks with the requisite resources. It should be one of our principal means of managing change.

But as currently functioning, the process does not provide an effective instrument for policy direction and management for either the Secretary-General or Member States. I believe we must simplify the process and ensure a genuine policy discussion on the budget that addresses both programmatic and resource aspects.

The budget process needs to be more flexible. This is essential if I am to be able to make the best use of the staff at my disposal. Once the size of the staffing table is decided upon, I need the flexibility to redeploy staff among domains of activity, subject, of course, to effective ex-post facto controls. When I took office, I experimented - successfully, I thought - with utilizing a limited number of vacancies to redeploy posts on a short-term basis to meet priority or unexpected needs. But I was unable to get the latitude from the General Assembly needed to continue this practice. Subsequent developments, including growing budgetary constraints, have made the need for such flexibility even more pressing.

A fundamental obstacle to further rationalization is the multiplicity of separate Programmes and Funds in the economic, social and humanitarian sectors.

According to the original conception of the Charter, the responsibilities of the Organization in these sectors were to be carried out primarily through coordination vis-à-vis the specialized

agencies. The General Assembly established separate Programmes and Funds in response to a perceived need for additional instruments to fulfill the economic and social responsibilities of the Organization. In most cases, these Programmes were called to address inter-sectoral issues, thus supplementing the sectoral-based structure of the specialized agencies.

These Programmes have been a source of strength and vitality for the Organization. They have diversified the sources of funding for development work. Their sheer number, however, has created, over time, definite problems in terms of policy coherence, and the span of control of the Secretary-General.

We must preserve the advantages sought by the Assembly in establishing these Programmes, while at the same time correcting the policy coordination problems that have arisen.

Another key issue in advancing the reform agenda is the capacity of the inter-governmental machinery to provide clear and coherent policy direction.

There is a need for better balance in the functioning, responsibilities and authority of the Security Council, the General Assembly and ECOSOC, as required by the Charter. The ACABQ

and the Fifth Committee also should seek a more effective relationship.

The General Assembly is the symbol of the universality of the Organization. I see the Assembly performing on a continuing basis the role that the special world conferences have been playing in recent years. I see the Assembly addressing comprehensively, and at the highest political level, the major global issues facing the international community. I see the Assembly fostering national and international commitments. The Assembly's role should be one of synthesis and overall policy assessment and coordination vis-à-vis the membership, as well as the United Nations system. The length of its agenda and its committee structure and procedures are increasingly proving to be impediments to the effective performance of this role.

The strengthening of ECOSOC has been a long-standing item on the reform agenda. It received special attention in the G-7 Communique at Halifax and currently is being considered by two Working Groups. I see two priority requirements here: Ministerial participation, and increasing involvement of the new players on the global scene, in the High-Level segment; and a decision to bring the reforms initiated so far in relation to operational activities a step further, so as to enable ECOSOC to exercise an effective role of **overnance over all the operational Funds and Programmes of the Organization.**

A related issue to be addressed is how best to provide - in the General Assembly or ECOSOC - for the governance of the emergency relief activities of the United Nations, including its Programmes and Funds.

There is little doubt that the subsidiary machinery of both the General Assembly and ECOSOC is in need of further serious streamlining. The current structure is not conducive to coherent policy development. Member States speak with different voices in different fora. And demands on the Secretariat for servicing and documentation often duplicate each other.

These reforms would provide a strong basis for further streamlining and consolidating secretariat structures. I consider it essential that the next steps to be taken in this direction should encompass not only the central Secretariat, but also the secretariats of the Programmes and Funds of the Organization.

Subject to progress in inter-governmental reform, a new framework built on previous restructuring and based on clear, Organization-wide clusters of activities is possible. Such clustering should serve to reduce the lines of reporting to the Secretary-General while at the same time preserving the institutional integrity of each Programme and Fund. It could also contribute to a further reduction of high-level posts throughout all secretariats.

Clusters should be constructed from the bottom up. They should serve to eliminate, not add to, layers of bureaucracy. They should help do away with duplication in administrative support services and overlapping in programmes. They should serve to create critical masses of capacity and expertise for the Organization as a whole. The sphere of responsibility involved in each cluster should be manageable, and bridge basic dimensions of the functions of the Organization. Each must be built on a solid policy foundation.

The next programme budget, on which work will begin soon, can be the context for placing a new framework before the membership for review and approval.

Meanwhile, in order to move ahead promptly, I have directed that a number of management reviews directly relevant to this process be accelerated. Mr. Connor will provide you with details of these reviews.

* * *

Together with structural reform, a key requirement for a stronger and more effective Organization is a Secretariat with the highest standards of "efficiency, competence and integrity". There has been excessive, often ill-informed, criticism of the Secretariat. Frequently no distinction is made between the functions and responsibilities of the Secretariat and those of the other principal Organs.

In fact, Member States have in the Secretariat a unique international civil service. Its geographic, ethnic, linguistic and cultural diversity cannot be matched by any other work force in the world. The overwhelming majority of United Nations staff are highly qualified, bring to the Organisation a wealth of experience and diverse perspectives. And, in recent times, very small staffs in many parts of the Organization have taken on significant additional responsibilities, with little or no reinforcement.

As international civil servants, United Nations staff do not have the protection enjoyed by many national public service employees. Nor do they have the advantages of most diplomatic staff working for national Governments. My experience, and that of my colleagues in the ACC, is that conditions of service are no longer competitive. The International Civil Service Commission has now concluded that they are not in accordance with the Noblemaire Principle. As Secretary-General, I need your support to ensure that conditions of service are such that we can continue to attract and retain highly qualified personnel.

Efforts at organizational reform will be successful only if accompanied by strong political support for the integrity and independence of the staff. Article 100 is highly relevant in this regard. In the same context, I reiterate my belief that the practice of national subsidies paid to some staff members is unethical and unacceptable. The highest standards of integrity should not be compromised, even by implication.

I believe that the Secretariat of the future must be comprised of a core international civil service - which constitutes the independent heart of the Organization and provides experience and continuity - and short-term staff with the particular skills needed for a certain time-frame or specific set of tasks. I have a strong commitment to training as a crucial component of improved management and performance. I need the support of Member States in supporting this critical investment for the future. In an Organisation whose staff is its major asset, the quality, and motivation of its personnel will be an important factor in effectiveness of the reform effort.

* * *

I am convinced that more coherent and streamlined central inter-governmental machinery, and a streamlined and better coordinated Organization, can go a long way towards advancing policy coordination throughout the system. At the same time, we all know that reform is on the agenda of virtually every agency of the system. I have recently intensified my personal contacts with the heads of the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization, as well as with other executive heads. A key objective of these consultations, and of on-going discussions in the ACC, is to ensure that these processes build on each other and result in a more effective and coherent United Nations system.

I believe that we can create a United Nations that is truly universal in its outlook, and more participatory in its methods. A United Nations with a clear mission and a well defined scope. An Organization whose operations are streamlined and efficient. An Organization whose approach is coherent, and whose activities are well coordinated. An Organization whose structures are responsive, and whose administration is flexible. An Organization whose objectives are concrete, and whose activities produce tangible results. An Organization whose financial basis is solid, and whose public and political support is secure.

For all of its imperfections, the United Nations has served humanity well in dangerous and difficult times. Let us now move forward in the spirit of partnership that is required, and in the shared belief that the future requires a strengthened United Nations system.

Thank you.

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For your comments.

Reçu le 21 MARS 1996

Amy Kough (3?)
800.
20-3
ED
Isel

4 March 1996

Dear Colleague,

Re: Annual Report of the Resident Coordinator on Operational Activities
for Development of the United Nations System

You will recall that in July 1994, the Secretary-General decided to entrust me with overall responsibility for assisting him in improving the coordination of operational activities for development, including the strengthening of the resident coordinator system. This mandate has recently led to the Secretary-General, nominating me Special Coordinator for Economic and Social Development. My new responsibilities include, among others, the management of reporting by resident coordinators. I am thus hereby requesting your cooperation in preparing the annual report of the resident coordinator on operational activities for development of the United Nations system. The Office of United Nations System Support and Services will serve as the focal point for managing the annual report process.

Recently, questions have been raised by you and colleagues in the system concerning the nature of the report and its usefulness, for example: Was it a report of the resident coordinator or of the resident coordinator system? Was it a report on the functioning of the resident coordinator system or a report on United Nations operational activities? Should it serve as a vehicle to submit inputs for preparation of reports to Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly? What use did organizations make of the reports? Is it necessary at all? We hope to clarify some of your concerns in the paragraphs below and provide the necessary guidance in the attachment for the preparation of the 1995 report (See Annex A). We will continue the dialogue with you as well as our partners in ACC/CCPOQ to improve further the guidelines in coming years. Therefore, I would highly appreciate your views, drawn up in consultation with your agency colleagues, regarding how to increase the usefulness and maximize the impact of the report. This is particularly important at a time when the General Assembly is requesting the members of the United Nations development system to adopt a more collaborative approach in preparing reports at all levels.

The resident coordinator has the ultimate responsibility for the substance of the report. It is his or her report to the Secretary-General on operational activities for development of the United Nations system. It can not be emphasized enough, however, that the report should reflect the views of the system as far as possible. In effect, the report's value is very much dependent on the collegial manner in which it is prepared. Therefore, we encourage appropriate consultations with all United Nations organizations active at the country level.

LETTER ADDRESSED TO ALL RESIDENT COORDINATORS

The report should capture the contribution of the United Nations system to achieving national development objectives and priorities. It should reflect the progress made towards the implementation of General Assembly resolution 47/199 and now 50/120. It should enumerate successes of the United Nations system and highlight the specific coordination activities that facilitated and contributed to them.

In order to make a meaningful contribution to the report of the Secretary-General to the Economic and Social Council, it is vital that we receive your report by 15 April at the latest. The report should be submitted to the Secretary-General with a copy to me. Copies should also be sent to the enclosed list.

The report should be concise and consist of two parts. In part one, you will have the opportunity to describe and analyze the economic and political context in which operational activities for development of the United Nations system have been carried out during 1995 and highlight the major accomplishments of the United Nations system in support of national development objectives and priorities.

The principal focus of part two, operational coordination within the United Nations system, is on selected issues arising from the implementation of General Assembly resolution 47/199 as well as new ones emerging from resolution 50/120, particularly those concerning the strengthening of the resident coordinator system. Please refer to annex B for selected annotations on GA resolution 50/120. The Economic and Social Council will be examining simplification and harmonization of programming procedures; common premises and shared services; and monitoring and evaluation in 1996.

Your considered views on these issues will therefore be particularly welcome. In addressing any of the subjects suggested in the attachment as well as any others you would like to bring to our attention, please do not hesitate to identify problem areas. We would also very much welcome specific suggestions regarding solutions, especially those which have been successful at your duty station and might be applicable elsewhere.

Thank you in advance for your report, which I very much look forward to reviewing.

Yours sincerely,

James Gustave Speth

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¹ Please send the document in WordPerfect 5.1 format via diskette or e-mail.

Annex A.

**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE RESIDENT COORDINATOR
FOR (COUNTRY)**

**PART ONE: OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT - GENERAL
BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS**

A. Political and economic summary update (1 page)

1. Please provide an update on the political and economic context in which the operational activities of the United Nations system are currently being carried out in your country of assignment.

B. UN system contributions toward assisting Governments to achieve national development objectives and priorities (2-3 pages)

1. Please indicate major accomplishments of the United Nations system related to operational activities fostered within/by the resident coordinator system in different substantive and thematic areas. You may wish to cover, among others, the topics listed below:

a) Country strategy note. In countries where Governments have chosen to prepare one, please update us on the status of preparatory or implementation process and describe its impact in terms of focusing the contribution of the United Nations system to achieving national objectives and priorities. Indicate whether the CSN has become a common framework for country programmes and a tool for resource mobilization, programming, monitoring and evaluating United Nations system activities. Indicate foreseen schedule. Alternatively, in countries where Governments have not chosen to formulate a CSN, or the process is delayed, please elaborate on the framework devised to take full account of the interest and concerns of the Government, ensuring a more integrated, efficient and effective response through which the United Nations system could better assist countries in realizing their development objectives;

b) Highlight the main ideas, approaches and initiatives implemented in 1995 in support of either framework cited above; in areas such as the programme approach, national execution, national capacity-building for aid coordination and, in the year of the 50 Anniversary of the United Nations, joint public information activities.

PART TWO: OPERATIONAL COORDINATION WITHIN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

A. Role and functioning of the resident coordinator system (2-3 pages)

1. By its resolution 50/120, notably paragraphs 36 through 41, the General Assembly outlined further steps for the strengthening of the resident coordinator system and the functioning of field level committees. Therefore, the United Nations system will endeavour to revise the ACC/CCPOQ statement on the role and functioning of the resident coordinator system of February 1995 to reflect these new developments. **Please analyze the functioning of the resident coordinator system, within the framework provided by General Assembly resolution 47/199 (paragraphs 38-41) and 1995 ACC/CCPOQ statement, identifying issues that either facilitate or hinder its functioning.** In particular, review the role, outputs and effectiveness of field-level committees organized by the United Nations system²; inter-agency task forces established to follow-up global UN conferences; and other coordination mechanisms, such as thematic working groups (HIV/AIDS, etc.). Please provide feedback on the usefulness/utilization of guidelines prepared by an inter-agency task force on the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action.

2. As UNDP prepares to issue guidelines for the assignment of funds to support resident coordinator functions in the context of new successor programming arrangements, **please highlight the results achieved through activities financed with coordination funds in 1995 (SPR coordination supplement to DSS) and propose changes to existing guidelines of 9 February 1996 (UNDP/ADM/94/70/Amend. 1) that will maximize the impact of resources which will become available in the 1996-1999 period.**

3. The development of an agreed division of responsibility, called for in paragraph 13 of resolution 50/120 and reflected, inter alia, in paragraph 40 dealing with the resident coordinator system as well as human resource management issues (paragraph 40), such as encouraging a wider participation in the pool of candidates for resident coordinator positions, development of common guidelines for staff performance appraisal for the funds and

² "Calls upon the above-mentioned coordinating mechanism, in consultation with the host Government, to undertake advisory functions including, *inter alia*, the provision of guidance and advice on proposed programmes of funding organizations, the review of agency sector strategies and evaluations and the investigation of specific problems and issues requiring a coordinated response" (para 41, GA resolution 47/199)

programmes, including ways of assessing the contribution of staff members to United Nations system coordination; will require attention at both ACC and intergovernmental levels. Please submit views on the matter, taking as the starting point the position enunciated by the Secretary-General in his report on recommendations on an Agenda for Development with respect to operational coordination.³

B. Additional programme and managerial issues from GA resolutions 47/199 and 50/120 (2 pages)

1. Simplification and harmonization of programming procedures:

a) What specific actions have been and can be taken with regard to rules and procedures to simplify Governments, donors and/or United Nations system processes?

b) Does any United Nations agency have a support unit assisting the national authorities with the application of any aspect of United Nations system procedures? To what extent have they succeeded in solving the problem.

2. Common premises and shared services:

a) In paragraph 44 of resolution 50/120, the General Assembly has

³ "efforts to enhance operational coordination within the United Nations should endeavour to achieve the benefits of a unified system, while preserving the strength of the current approach. Such efforts should be aimed at the following objectives, among others: building a more integrated, efficient and effective framework through which the United Nations can better assist countries in realizing their development objectives, including clearer and more complementary definition of the roles and missions of the various components; eliminating duplication and fragmentation; strengthening leadership and cooperation at country, regional and headquarters levels; strengthening United Nations capabilities in the coordination and delivery of humanitarian assistance, the linking of emergency relief and development and the promotion of preventive and curative development; mobilizing analytical and normative capacities and strengthening the role of the Organization in inter-related areas such as trade and access to technology, in support of operational activities; defining the appropriate level - country, region or headquarters - for activity on various issues; integrating the regional commissions with the development work of the organizations as a whole; strengthening the resident coordinator and country-driven approaches; streamlining the delivery capacity of the United Nations through common premises, the programme approach and common programming cycles; and achieving more rapid and aggressive implementation of General Assembly resolutions 44/211 and 47/199, including the Country Strategy Note and other tools, for a more integrated United Nations response to country priorities." (A/49/665/para 86)

requested JCGP and, to the maximum extent possible, the specialized agencies, to raise substantially the target for achieving common premises. Taking into account that the Bureau of Finance and Administration will follow up this matter in greater detail shortly through separate correspondence, summarize progress and difficulties in dealing with the subject;

b) Inform about progress concerning shared/common services and future plans on the subject.

3. Monitoring and evaluation:

a) What is being monitored and how?

List three major United Nations system programmes that are being monitored. List their main goals, benchmarks and indicators. Describe key features of the monitoring process. Assess its effectiveness, citing any example of corrective actions taken by national authorities or United Nations organizations.

b) What is being evaluated and how?

Are the programmes being evaluated "national" or "United Nations system" programmes? What has any part of the United Nations system achieved in the strengthening the national capacity for monitoring and evaluation? Describe any example of an evaluation lesson being applied in United Nations system programming over the last three years.

C. Official Development Assistance (ODA) (This information should be readily available from DCAS) (1 page)

1. Summary table of total ODA

<u>Source of aid</u>	<u>US dollars</u>	<u>Year</u> (latest)	<u>Percentage</u>
Multilateral			
Breakdown:			
UN system			
World Bank			
Other IFIs			
Bilateral			
NGOs			100%

Note: Identify the most significant bilateral donors and NGOs. Use the OECD/DAC definition of ODA, which covers concessional inflows of resources to developing countries channelled via an international organization active in development (e.g., the UN system, the international financial institutions, the EEC).

2. Types of assistance (%)

<u>Type of aid</u>	<u>US dollars</u>	<u>Year</u> (latest)	<u>Percentage</u>
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Investment Project Assistance/Capital			
Technical Cooperation			
Food Aid			
Emergency and relief assistance/Humanitarian			

Note: to avoid double counting please specify whether food aid is included exclusively under food aid or also under humanitarian assistance.

3. Allocated resources for operational activities for development of the United Nations system

<u>Agency</u>	<u>US dollars</u>	<u>Year</u> (1995 unless otherwise noted)
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