

### 3 The Uncommon UN System

In 1969 the Jackson Report assessed the capacity of the UN Development System. It concluded that this was a 'non-system' lacking a 'central brain'. The specialized agencies were characterized as 'principalities'. 'Lacking any central control, they have naturally advanced independent sectoral policies, often without regard to the interests of either the developing countries or the UN system.' At the regional level, the system was described as an 'administrative jungle'.<sup>1</sup>

In his 'Reflections on Reform of the United Nations',<sup>2</sup> Inspector Maurice Bertrand underlined the extraordinary complexity of the system, its extreme fragmentation, and the failure of all the attempts at coordination and planning in spite of the machinery created for this purpose.

The UN system includes the UN proper, its subsidiary bodies and all the specialized agencies. The financial institutions, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund and their agencies participate in some of the common bodies. The organizations were created at different dates with different mandates: some predated the UN. Their common character is to be inter-governmental organizations, to have a global mandate, global programmes and to have or seek global membership.

In implementation of the functionalist theory, the founders of the specialized agencies drafted constitutions which gave them legal and practical autonomy. Every institution has its own governing body, its own secretariat, its own programmes and its own financial independence through a scale of obligatory contributions, supplemented by voluntary funds. The founders' concern was to separate the specialized, technical organizations from the political organization, the UN proper, thus protecting the former from the recurrent political storms centring on the Security Council and General Assembly.

The specialized agencies are linked to the UN by 'Relationships Agreements' required under Articles 57 and 63 of the UN Charter and their agencies' constitutive act. These Agreements establish a voluntary cooperation and coordination of

activities between the specialized agency and the UN through consultation. They promote the establishment and use of common administrative and technical services and facilities, and the desirability of close budgetary and financial relationships with the UN, in the interest of efficiency and economy. They recognize that the eventual development of a single unified international civil service is desirable from the standpoint of effective administrative coordination.<sup>3</sup>

The Agreements promote voluntary cooperation through mutual consultation but do not create a central authority. Neither the UN nor its Secretary-General have any authority to directly impose their decisions on the specialized agencies. The agencies' governing bodies have retained their full power to decide, approve or reject UN resolutions, decisions or recommendations. In consequence, the common system machinery is itself based on voluntary cooperation and mutual interest: it is pluralistic, decentralized and non-coercive.

The fourteen organizations belonging to the 'common system' are listed in Table 3.1, showing the place of their headquarters and the date of entry into force of their agreement with the UN. The Financial Institutions, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the International Monetary Fund, the International Finance Corporation and the International Development Association are part of the 'UN family', as they are also linked to the UN by relationships agreements. They have, however, not accepted the rules and constraints of the 'common system'.

## THE COMMON SYSTEM MACHINERY

This machinery has developed in an incremental and *ad hoc* fashion, following no overall plan but responding to concrete needs and initiatives. Part of it is strictly inter-agency, its bodies' membership being limited to organizations' officials – one body, the Joint Staff Pension Board, includes organizations' and participants' representatives together with government representatives. Others are composed of independent experts, specialists or judges. A few bodies deal with programme matters: most of them review and advise on management and administrative issues. The Tribunals render binding judgements.

*Table 3.1* List of organizations in the United Nations system

<i>Organization</i>	<i>Headquarters</i>	<i>Date</i>
United Nations (UN)	New York	
International Labour Organization (ILO)	Geneva	14.12.1946
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)	Rome	14.12.1946
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)	Paris	14.12.1946
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)	Montreal	13.05.1947
Universal Postal Union (UPU)	Bern	1.07.1948
World Health Organization (WHO)	Geneva	10.07.1948
International Telecommunications Union (ITU)	Geneva	1.01.1949
World Meteorological Organization (WMO)	Geneva	20.12.1951
International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)	Vienna	14.11.1957
International Maritime Organization (IMO)	London	13.01.1959
World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)	Geneva	17.12.1974
International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)	Rome	6.04.1978
United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)	Vienna	1.01.1986

*Source:* 'Administrative Coordination in the United Nations Family', in de Cooker (ed.), *International Administration*, I.2/3.

### **The Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC)**

The highest internal body dealing with the common system is ACC, which was established under ECOSOC resolution 13(III) of 1946. It is composed of the UN Secretary-General, the executive heads of the specialized agencies and IAEA, the President of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund. The heads of WTO and UN Programmes and Funds also attend

ACC meetings. The Committee's function is to supervise the implementation of the agreements between the UN and the specialized agencies and ensure inter-agency coordination.

In 1993, ACC reorganized its own subsidiary machinery, which now consists of an organizational committee, the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ), the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions (CCAQ), the Information Systems Coordination Committee (ISCC) and sub-committees on information, nutrition and statistics. ACC meets twice a year for two days, and periodically meets with the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC).

CCPOQ is the ACC mechanism for programme and operational matters in which 33 UN bodies participate. It replaced in 1993 the Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions, which operated throughout the 1980s. CCPOQ provides an overview and monitoring mechanism for programme responses, objectives and strategies, and deals with national implementation, the country-level resident coordinator system and inter-agency training in the management of field coordination. CCAQ, CCPOQ and the Information Systems Coordination Committee each have a small secretariat in Geneva.

According to a Joint Inspection Unit report issued in 1995,<sup>4</sup> the extensive ACC network of committees and subsidiary bodies has been sharply criticised by governing bodies and agencies themselves over the years as a crowded and cumbersome structure where aggressive agencies pushed their agendas while others 'defended their turf', and where the large agencies dominate while the small ones can hardly participate. Another critic deplores that hundreds of senior officials do nothing except attend coordination meetings, without illusion that these efforts have the faintest impact on overlap and duplication. She asserts that ACC 'summits' serve principally as occasions for long and generally inconclusive arguments over territory, unless common interests are perceived to be threatened.

On programme coordination, ACC's main problem is the difficulty in reaching agreement among the executive heads of the various UN agencies and programmes on economic and social development policies. ACC cannot order any agency to cancel, postpone or reconsider one or several of its programmes: such decisions can only be taken by each agency's

governing body. Working by consensus, ACC can only discuss, propose and apply a degree of influence. The short duration of ACC's sessions (two days) does not allow for any discussion in depth by the executive heads, nor resolution of controversial programme issues.

The former Secretary-General, Javier Pérez de Cuellar, found ACC no more satisfactory than ECOSOC as an instrument for bringing about agreement among its members. 'The Secretary-General serves as chairman, but has no means other than persuasion to bring the various agency heads to coordinate their programmes within the framework of commonly agreed global policies.' He recalled that 'the heads of the specialized agencies are in no way dependent on the Secretary-General, neither for their selection (or dismissal) nor their budget'.<sup>5</sup>

ACC plays a more important role in administrative coordination. Senior administrators meet twice a year in each of the two sections of CCAQ: personnel and general administrative questions, and budget and finance. CCAQ helps organizations' administrations to adopt common positions on such questions in order to present a unified front in sessions of the International Civil Service Commission, in the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) and in the Fifth Committee.

### **Other Internal Groups**

On programme matters, the Inter-Agency Working Group on Evaluation (IAWG), sponsored by UNDP since 1984, provides a forum for informal discussion of evaluation issues, practices and experiences by UNDP and its executing agency partners. The Group meets annually, with about 35 participating agencies, including the Financial Institutions. It discusses the substance and techniques of evaluation, the evaluation of international and nationally-executed projects and the harmonization of monitoring and evaluation approaches.

The Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP), created in 1981, is composed of the funding agencies for operational activities: UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, IFAD, WFP, with UNHCR and UNDCP having joined as observers. This Group works through an annual High-Level Meeting of executive heads, two or three General Meetings of senior staff each year, and sub-groups which coordinate the agencies' activities in such

areas as decentralization, harmonization of programming, management audit and monitoring.

Why are such groups as IAWG and JCGP not placed under ACC's umbrella? Is there some duplication between the activities of these two groups and those of CCPOQ? The number of separate groups dealing with interagency programme matters gives some arguments to those who believe that the time taken by senior officials in coordination meetings is excessive and possibly unproductive.

As another internal group in the administrative area, representatives of more than twenty Internal Audit Services, including the Financial Institutions, have met annually since 1966 to develop standards and guidelines, to organize common audit training, to review quality assurance and to survey internal audit mandates and structures. Such meetings are important in order to harmonize norms and practices, assess successes and failures and plan for improvements.

### **The UN Joint Staff Pension Board**

The UN Joint Staff Pension Fund was established under regulations adopted by the General Assembly in resolution 248(III) of 1949 to provide retirement, death, disability and related benefits for staff upon cessation of the services with UN organizations. The 16 organizations which are currently members of the Fund jointly administer the Fund through the UN Joint Staff Pension Board, consisting of 33 persons. The Board has a tripartite composition, with equal representation from governing bodies, executive heads and pension participants in service. The Board reports biannually to the Assembly on the operation of the Fund and the investment assets, and when necessary recommends to the Assembly amendments to the Fund's regulations. Amendments approved by the Assembly are then applicable to all participants in service and pension beneficiaries.

## **INDEPENDENT EXPERT GROUPS**

### **The Joint Inspection Unit (JIU)**

The Unit, created on an experimental basis in 1976, was established as a subsidiary organ of the General Assembly in January

1978. In addition to the UN, 12 UN organizations have accepted the statute of the JIU.<sup>6</sup> The Unit consists of 11 inspectors, appointed by the General Assembly, serving in their personal capacity. They should be chosen from among members of national supervision or inspection bodies, or from among persons of a similar competence, on the basis of their special experience in national or international administrative and financial matters, including management questions. In practice, several of the Inspectors are diplomats or former diplomats without specific inspection or management experience or competence, one of the basic weaknesses of this body.

The statute of JIU stipulates that Inspectors shall provide an independent view through inspection and evaluation aimed at improving management and methods and at achieving greater coordination among organizations. 'The Unit shall satisfy itself that the activities undertaken by the organizations are carried out in the most economical manner and that the optimum use is made of resources available for carrying out these activities. The Inspectors shall not, however, have the power of decision, nor shall they interfere in the operations of the services they inspect' (Statute, art. 15). The Unit's 'output' consists of reports and notes submitted to the General Assembly, to the other organizations' governing bodies, and to executive heads.

In 1985, the General Assembly invited JIU to evaluate the results of its activities: JIU reported two years later that it was 'extremely difficult to assess with any degree of confidence the Unit's overall performance and impact', a statement which did not improve confidence in the Unit's own evaluation capacity.<sup>7</sup>

A Report by the US General Accounting Office (GAO) issued in 1986 was more straightforward. The Report stated that JIU's effectiveness is limited by several factors. While some of its reports have been useful, the Unit's credibility has been harmed by uneven report quality. JIU does not systematically follow up on its recommendations. UN agencies tend to set aside reports without taking specific action. Appointed inspectors continue to lack experience in the inspection and evaluation fields. UN system officials cite inadequately supported and vague recommendations as reasons why many are not implemented. On the positive side, JIU has played a major role in calling attention to the need for evaluation in the UN and influencing design and development of internal evaluation

systems. However, JIU's external evaluation role has been much less than envisaged when it was created.

The GAO recommended that JIU should establish a multi-year work programme to be submitted to the General Assembly before implementation, develop and implement comprehensive written guidelines for conducting inspections and evaluations and drafting reports, establish a formal follow-up system on its recommendations, and devote more of its resources to evaluation.<sup>8</sup>

The General Assembly has been generally supportive of JIU, although it is the main culprit in not respecting the JIU statute's criteria for the selection of Inspectors. In 1990, the Assembly asked JIU to give greater attention to management, budgetary and administrative issues. In 1991, it blamed ACC or the organizations' executive heads for the late issue of comments on JIU reports. It asked ACABQ to examine the functioning of JIU.<sup>9</sup>

ACABQ's report clearly identified the problems and made sensible proposals. There should be a specific mix of expertise among the Inspectors, which implies that they should all be 'experts', but in various management fields. Countries should submit multiple candidates, and not just one. The Unit's research function should be discontinued in favour of more inspection and evaluation. A formal set of inspection standards should be approved by the participating agencies and annexed to the statute. ACABQ reflected the agencies' criticisms: the Unit was not responsive to their suggestions in drawing up its work programme, they were not receiving 'value for money', many of the reports could have been done by consultants.<sup>10</sup>

Commissioned by JIU, a Senior Consultant analysed, in 1993, the 394 recommendations in the 74 JIU Notes and Reports issued between 1 January 1985 and 31 December 1992 for their cost-saving implications. Of these, he isolated and quantified 30 specific recommendations in 14 Notes and Reports. As a result, he identified \$78 400 000 in cost-savings which resulted, or could have resulted, from the implementation of JIU recommendations over the eight-year period under review. As a reference, the Consultant stated that this amount compared very favourably to the operating costs of JIU over that same period, \$24 million. But is it fair to compare actual expenditure with real *and* potential savings? According to the

Consultant's report, the Inspectors were then 'persuaded' to be more specific and action-oriented in formulating their recommendations, to identify their programme budget implications, to focus on potential cost-savings, and to welcome inspection proposals from ACABQ.<sup>11</sup>

This should entice JIU to focus systematically on results, and particularly on quantified savings to be achieved. As the GAO Report had noted, the quality of JIU's work depends on the degree its reports clearly describe purpose, scope and objectives; support conclusions by objective evaluation of all pertinent facts; and contain action-oriented and specific recommendations.

In December 1993, the General Assembly invited the Unit to put more emphasis on inspection and evaluation, to follow up on the implementation of its recommendations and to maintain a close relationship with CPC, ACABQ, the Board of Auditors and the Panel of External Auditors. The Assembly requested the Secretary-General to make proposals regarding the procedures for selecting Inspectors, in order to improve this process.

In its report of 1994, the Unit practised self-criticism in stressing that those who are appointed to oversight functions should possess the necessary high professional qualifications and experience. However, the report rightly recalled the responsibility of governing bodies, and therefore of Member States, in sending a clear message to the UN secretariats that organs of external oversight, including the Unit, exercise these functions on behalf of Member States and therefore need to be taken seriously by the secretariats. Finally, the Unit mentioned that more inspection and evaluation necessitated additional travel funds.<sup>12</sup>

The first priority is to ensure that governments nominating candidates and the General Assembly respect the selection criteria: future inspectors should have the required training and experience, with a proper mix of expertise. Nominating countries should offer multiple candidates. External auditors are not appointed among serving or retired diplomats: asking diplomats to undertake management surveys and give management advice to executive heads and administrators is a sure recipe for quality problems and the quiet burying of their recommendations. Better and more useful reports would be

produced by a strong team of well-qualified inspection and management experts, who would be taken more seriously by governing bodies and secretariats.

JIU has had its share of well-qualified and dedicated Inspectors and it has produced a number of important and influential reports, some of which are referred to in various parts of this book. However, the quality of its work has been uneven. The Inspectors have themselves recognized that there is a need for change.

If the General Assembly does not respect the criteria set for the selection of the Inspectors, a drastic remedy would be to abolish the Unit. A few Western countries have considered letting JIU die a natural death by attrition. Management surveys and inspections at the inter-agency level would be then carried out by public or private management groups at the request of organizations' governing bodies or ACC.

An intermediate solution would consist in trying to improve the expertise and efficiency of the Unit and to reduce its staff costs. The 'top-heavy' Unit is now composed of the 11 Inspectors plus one Executive Secretary, all graded D.2, 7 research officers at grades P.2 to P.5, and 10 general service staff. The number of Inspectors could be reduced from 11 to 3 or 5, while a number of posts of non-political, non-diplomatic management experts would be created at P.4 and P.5 levels. The number of research officers and assistants would be increased. The post of Executive Secretary could be downgraded from D.2 to P.5.

Governments have to decide whether the Unit should be abolished or retained. If retained, the Unit should be re-formed so that it becomes what it was meant to be: a respected watchdog in identifying and publicizing administrative errors or abuses, mismanagement, inefficiency and duplication, a mentor in proposing management reforms, a competent and independent body of international management experts.

### **The Panel of External Auditors**

The Panel of External Auditors, which first met in 1959, is composed of the external auditors of the UN, the specialized agencies and IAEA, with current national government auditors provided by the UK, Ghana, Switzerland, Canada, Austria,

France, India and Germany. The Panel seeks to further the coordination of its members' audits and exchange information on methods and findings. It may submit opinions to the organizations to achieve greater uniformity of audit standards and greater use of accounting principles. Panel sessions and a Technical Group meeting are held at least once a year, with a small supporting secretariat in New York. More references to internal and external auditors will be found in Chapter 7.

### **The International Civil Service Commission (ICSC)**

The International Civil Service Commission, created in 1974, is composed of 15 independent experts appointed in their personal capacity by the General Assembly. Only the Commission's Chairman and Vice-Chairman serve full-time. The Commission makes recommendations to the General Assembly for the regulation and coordination of conditions of service within the UN common system. It has some decision-making powers with respect to salaries, allowances and job classification standards. Twelve organizations have accepted its statute. The Commission meets twice-yearly for three weeks each time, and is serviced by a secretariat in New York. The Commission formulates its recommendations or reaches its decisions in closed meetings, after discussions in open sessions, when CCAQ members and staff representatives express their point of view on the items on the Commission's agenda. The general mandate of the Commission is to aim at the development of a single, unified international civil service, through the application of common personnel standards, methods and arrangements. The Commission addresses recommendations to the General Assembly on the broad principles determining the conditions of service of staff, salary and post adjustment scales for professional staff, allowances and other benefits. The Commission classifies duty stations for the purpose of applying post adjustments and organizes surveys to determine General Service salaries at headquarters and other duty stations. The Commission has developed job classification standards for professional staff and guidelines for standards applying to the general service category. It has reviewed and made proposals on recruitment, career development, promotion and training, human resources planning and performance appraisal.<sup>13</sup>

Staff representatives have repeatedly claimed that the Commission, created as a technical body, has become a political body and that it ignores the needs of the UN organizations and staff, in order to satisfy the General Assembly's budgetary concerns. They claim that influential members of the Commission are political appointees and neither independent from governments nor 'experts' in personnel management. Most UN administrations believe that the UN remuneration system, at the professional level, is no longer competitive in relation to other intergovernmental organizations and the private sector, and is therefore unable to attract high-calibre professional candidates. The fact that most important decisions on salaries and other benefits are taken by the General Assembly on the basis of recommendations by the Commission has created a feeling of alienation and distrust among UN staff in Europe for decisions taken 'by New York'. UN organizations' staff dissatisfaction has been made visible by the withdrawal from the Commission's deliberations of the representatives of one of the staff federations in 1988, and of both federations in 1992. They briefly resumed participation in 1993, and withdrew again in 1994 and 1995.<sup>14</sup>

More references to the role and impact of the Commission and to its current problems will be found in Chapters 8, 9 and 10.

### **Intergovernmental bodies**

Most of the committees and groups in charge of administrative coordination have an advisory role, particularly on important issues with significant financial consequences. Decisions on such matters are generally taken by the General Assembly, followed by the other organizations' governing bodies. The Assembly is assisted by its Fifth Committee on administrative and budgetary matters, which is itself counselled by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ).

ACABQ was created in 1946 by resolution 14(I) of the General Assembly. It examines and reports on the regular and peacekeeping budgets and the accounts of the UN, and the administrative budgets of the specialized agencies, proposed financial arrangements with such agencies, and the auditors'

reports on the UN and the specialized agencies. Its 16 members are appointed by the Assembly on the recommendation of the Fifth Committee on the basis of broad geographical representation, personal qualifications and experience. At least three of the members are recognized financial experts. The Chairman serves full-time. ACABQ meets extensively throughout the year as required and is assisted by a small secretariat in New York. ACABQ is widely regarded as a well-functioning and valuable expert organ of oversight. Established by the Economic and Social Council in 1962, the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) is the main subsidiary organ of the Council and the Assembly for planning, programming and coordination. In particular, it reviews UN programmes, recommends priorities, guides the Secretariat in avoiding overlapping and duplication, and develops evaluation procedures. It considers the activities and programmes of UN agencies sector by sector, and recommends guidelines for agencies taking into account the need for coherence and coordination. It cooperates with ACABQ and consults with the Joint Inspection Unit. It meets for six weeks in planning years and for four weeks in budget years. Its 34 members are elected by the Assembly upon the nomination of ECOSOC.

## THE ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNALS

The common system does not have one, but two Administrative Tribunals for dealing with individual complaints from staff members. The UN Administrative Tribunal has competence to hear and pass judgement upon applications alleging non-observance of contracts or terms of employment of staff members of the UN, ICAO and IMO. It also has competence for all questions, system-wide, involving the UN Joint Staff Pension Fund. The ILO Administrative Tribunal is competent to hear similar complaints from staff members of all other UN organizations, except for pension-related claims. The Tribunals play an essential function in the protection of staff against arbitrary, unfair or ill-considered action by the administrations of the UN organizations.

Chapter 11 will deal in part with the role of the Tribunals and the impact of their judgements on the international civil service.

## THE ELUSIVE COORDINATION

### **Programme Coordination**

The semi-autonomous parts of the 'UN system', and particularly the specialized agencies' jealously protected empires, do not lend themselves to an effective programme coordination. The elaborate and complex coordination mechanisms at the intersecretariat and intergovernmental levels only paper over entrenched differences, exhortations of the General Assembly are noted and generally ignored by the specialized agencies' governing boards and secretariats.

This is not a new phenomenon. After the Jackson study of 1969, Inspector Bertrand found in 1985 that 'joint planning' had remained wishful thinking: 'the extreme decentralization of the system, deliberate at the outset and then aggravated by the establishment of dozens of new organs, has not been able to be made up by "coordination" imposed on agents who did not want to be coordinated'.<sup>15</sup>

In July 1993, the Chairman of CPC said that it remained difficult for Member States to assess the impact of the actual implementation of UN programmes and programme budget, as well as to ensure sufficient coordination and cohesion of the UN system. The Committee had concluded that Member States and the UN secretariat still had a long way to go before they were able to assess fully the qualitative impact of the programmes implemented by the UN.<sup>16</sup>

The well-meaning appointment of high-level 'coordinators' without real powers has often been a purely bureaucratic pretence to satisfy one or another constituency, such as the Group of 77 or the industrialized countries. For example: the post of Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation, created by the General Assembly in 1977 (Resol. 32/197) without effective powers over the specialized agencies, post abolished in 1992; to a lesser degree, the appointment of an emergency relief coordinator in 1991 (Resol. 46/182), greeted with some reticence by the UNHCR, and without legal powers over the High Commissioner, WHO, WFP and non-UN humanitarian organizations such as the Red Cross and other NGOs.

Some observers have suggested that the decentralized and

pluralistic common system has some distinct advantages and strengths:<sup>17</sup> it is resilient, it prevents weaknesses and instability in one part of the system from automatically spreading to other parts, it represents the real world with its antagonistic interests. It has prevented some of the more successful agencies from becoming politicized and criticized at those recurrent times when the UN itself is the target of strong attacks.

The negative consequences of the loose 'non-system' have also been identified: possible overlapping and duplication of efforts, waste of funds or funds excessively spread over minute, ineffective projects, agencies' rivalry in coordination meetings and at field level, loss of effectiveness and of credibility, budgetary cuts from voluntary programmes, potential withdrawal of Member States from some of the organizations.

If real programme coordination is not achieved by executive heads, only governments can make it effective. This implies that a majority of governments want inter-agency coordination, and that they will first coordinate their international policies within the government ministries concerned. A government representative may vote for strict coordination in the General Assembly and another representative of the same Member State may support the independent programme of a specialized agency, through lack of clear instructions from the State's capital, or through excessive symbiosis with the agency's secretariat.

Urquhart and Childers have proposed<sup>18</sup> to create a common seat for the system, bringing to New York the headquarters of FAO from Rome, UNESCO from Paris, UNIDO from Vienna, ILO, ITU, WIPO, WHO, WMO from Geneva, IMO from London and ICAO from Montreal. Besides the expected resistance from all these agencies and their staff and from the host countries' authorities, it is most unlikely that Member States would willingly accept the enormous expenditure involved in such moves. Other low-cost measures, such as the creation of a new 'United Nations System Consultative Board', and strengthening ACC as an Executive Committee responsible to the General Assembly, should be seriously considered by Member States.

On a more modest but more promising basis, joint sectoral programmes, associating UN organizations and, at times, other public and private institutions, may work towards real coordination. For instance, the 'Children's Vaccine Initiative' launched

in 1990 by UNICEF, UNDP, WHO, the World Bank and the Rockefeller Foundation, and the joint and co-sponsored UN programme on human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/Aids), which associates UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, WHO, UNESCO and the World Bank, on the basis of co-ownership, collaborative planning and execution. This latter programme began in 1996.<sup>19</sup>

### **Administrative Coordination**

In contrast with the difficult programme coordination, the organizations have achieved and maintained a good level of administrative coordination. With a few exceptions and distortions, personnel policies and employment conditions for staff in all UN organizations are uniform. The pension system is common to all staff. The Administrative Tribunals give legal protection to staff. There is a large degree of standardization of budgetary and financial rules and practices, but there is no real budgetary coordination, as budgets reflect the programmes of autonomous organizations. There is a degree of cooperation in the purchase of supplies and in computing services.

In conclusion, there is altogether a large degree of consultation among the organizations, some cooperation on programmes, and a fair extent of administrative coordination.

Member States should decide if they want more real programme coordination and how it should be initiated and monitored. They have the financial means to make the common system more common, if they feel that this is in their interest and if they can themselves show a common determination for change.