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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 31st MEETING

Chairman: Mr. MURGESCU (Romania)

later: Mr. AHSAN (Bangladesh)

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AGENDA ITEM 60: UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.40 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 60: UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME (continued) (A/34/25, 296, 405, 406, 557, 575; A/C.2/34/L.2)

1. Mr. OLZVOY (Mongolia) said that the application of science and technology to economic development inevitably led to ever-increasing pollution of the human environment, and the global nature of that problem was now indisputable. Much attention was therefore given to the close link between development efforts and protection of the environment. His delegation noted with satisfaction that the Governing Council of UNEP had placed greater emphasis on the integrated approach to development and the environment.
2. In pursuing that objective, his delegation believed it important that UNEP should pay greater attention to the experiences of different countries in the field of environmental protection and the rational use of natural resources. The positive experience of the socialist countries in that field might be of use to other countries. The essence of their approach to the environment problem lay in strictly planned development and care for the well-being of the people.
3. The environmental problems of a great number of developing countries had been mainly engendered by colonialism and neo-colonialism. Transnational corporations, which were the main tools of neo-colonialist policy, continued to exploit the natural resources of developing countries in complete disregard of the need for environmental protection and the well-being of the local peoples. Such a fact should not be forgotten in the activities of UNEP.
4. In promoting international co-operation among States in the field of environmental protection, UNEP should bear in mind its role in promoting the implementation of the progressive principles contained in the Declaration and Programme of Action on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order and the Charter of Economic Rights and the Duties of States. Such a course of action would undoubtedly benefit the developing countries in their efforts to eliminate the remnants of colonialism and the policy of neo-colonialism.
5. His delegation noted the proposal to convene a special session of the Governing Council in 1982 to mark the tenth anniversary of the Stockholm Conference. In order to ensure the success of that session, thorough and effective preparations should be made well in advance. His delegation also commended the efforts of the Executive Director to use non-convertible currencies for technical assistance programmes. The use of those currencies would have a positive impact on the volume and effectiveness of the technical assistance of UNEP in the field of environmental protection.
6. His delegation fully shared the view of those who believed that effective environmental co-operation could be achieved only in conditions of universal and lasting peace throughout the world. UNEP, like all other organizations of the United Nations system, had a special role to play in promoting effective disarmament measures.

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(Mr. Olzvoy, Mongolia)

7. The Governing Council had chosen a series of very topical themes for the 1980 state of the environment report. Topics such as "The child and the environment" and "Environmental effects of military activity" were particularly important, and his delegation urged the UNEP secretariat to study the latter theme thoroughly in order to show the grave consequences of military activities, especially of the nuclear arms race. The negative attitude of certain delegations to that important topic could hardly be justified. He could not but mention the hostile reaction of one delegation, whose country pursued hegemonistic, aggressive policies towards its neighbouring States, including Mongolia, to the proposal for the inclusion of that topic in the state of the environment report.

8. His delegation supported Governing Council decision 7/2, on the environmental conditions of the Palestinian people, and hoped that the Executive Director would ensure its proper implementation. It also fully shared the view that efforts in environmental education and training should be increased and, in that connexion, drew attention to General Assembly resolution 33/135 on the role of qualified national personnel in the social and economic development of developing countries.

9. Mongolia attached great importance to the most rational utilization of its natural resources and to the implementation of measures to protect its lakes and rivers, forests, animals, vegetation and soil. In Mongolia, two months of each year were devoted to the cause of the protection of the environment and were observed in a proper manner. The Mongolian Nature Protection Association was actively engaged in propagating specific tasks of environmental protection and rational use of natural resources. Mongolia also took an active part in the joint elaboration of programmes of environmental protection within the framework of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance. In co-operation with UNEP, Mongolia had created a wildlife sanctuary, the Gobi National Park, and it looked forward to further fruitful co-operation with the Programme.

10. Mr. HERRERA VEGAS (Argentina) said that his delegation had had an opportunity at the summer session of the Economic and Social Council to refer to various aspects of the report of the Governing Council of UNEP (A/34/25). He would therefore confine his remarks to the question of co-operation in the field of the environment concerning natural resources shared by two or more States (A/34/557).

11. The Committee had before it 15 draft principles for the guidance of States in the conservation and harmonious utilization of natural resources shared by two or more States. The background of the development of those principles was well known by all delegations. They had been drafted as a result of the 1972 Stockholm Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment and General Assembly resolutions 3129 (XXVIII) and 3281 (XXIX). The Government of Argentina believed that the 15 draft principles could be of useful application. In the past, Argentina had used the provisions contained in those principles in drafting its treaties with neighbouring countries concerning river basins. That showed that the draft principles could contribute to the development of norms to be applied in legally binding form in bilateral and regional relations. At its current session, the General Assembly had the responsibility of contributing to co-operation and the

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(Mr. Herrera Vegas, Argentina)

development of friendly relations among States, and his delegation was therefore in favour of the adoption of the principles together with a recommendation to States to apply them in their mutual relations.

12. The legal status of the principles had raised doubts among some delegations. His delegation believed that the explanatory note (UNEP/IG.12/2) was sufficiently clear in that regard; any United Nations resolution was, of course, of a recommendatory nature when addressed to sovereign States. With regard to the future of the draft principles, his delegation believed that it would be desirable for States to facilitate their effective entry into force by transforming them into obligatory norms through their incorporation in bilateral agreements or multilateral conventions. That would give an impetus to the progressive development and codification of international law, in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter.

13. Mr. KAFANDO (Upper Volta) said that his country was keenly interested in the work of UNEP, especially with respect to desertification. The report of the Governing Council drew attention to the importance of protecting nature and adopting appropriate measures to preserve the environment. In addition to pollution, desertification was one of the most pressing problems in that regard, and it was for that reason that the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification had been adopted.

14. UNEP had done good work in that connexion in the past year, and his delegation was gratified that the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office had established a Regional Office at Ouagadougou. It was true that there had been some procedural difficulties in establishing the Office, but he wished to assure the Committee that the Government of the Upper Volta and those of other Member States in the region would do their utmost to provide the facilities needed. They were especially interested in any co-ordinating measures which UNEP and UNDP might adopt to assist UNSO in implementing the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification.

15. The desert was still making inroads in the countries of the region, and he therefore appealed to all States to contribute generously to the United Nations Trust Fund for Sudano-Sahelian Activities. The Plan of Action to Combat Desertification should include not only short-term measures but also programmes for the lasting preservation of the ecosystem of the region. The Government of the Upper Volta would undertake a broad programme of reforestation in that regard.

16. Lastly, his delegation fully approved of the report of the Governing Council of UNEP (A/34/25).

17. Mr. YU Mengjia (China) said that ecological protection was of great significance to human life and to the production activities of mankind. In the course of its struggle for survival and its social and economic development, mankind was in a constant process of exploring, exploiting and transforming nature so as to create for itself increasing material well-being and civilization. However, irrational social and economic systems and arbitrary development in violation of natural laws had often led to enormous waste of natural resources, and

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(Mr. Yu Mengjia, China)

had resulted in such phenomena as dwindling forest cover, soil erosion, desertification and increasing pollution of air, water and soil.

18. The many developing countries had suffered under the oppression and exploitation of imperialism and hegemonism for a long period of time, so that their peoples were poverty-stricken, short of financial means and backward in science and technology, and were confronted with even more difficulties in the work of environmental protection and improvement. All that showed that the problem of environmental protection should not be considered out of the context of social and economic development; it was closely connected with the struggle for the establishment of a new international economic order.

19. Environmental pollution had focused attention on the question of correctly dealing with the relationship between environment and economic development. It had been argued by some that it was necessary to slow the pace of economic advancement or even halt development so as to protect the environment. That approach was totally negative, and there were no longer many who believed in it. His delegation was of the opinion that the solution lay in appropriate protective measures to be taken side by side with economic development, thus co-ordinating environment and development activities. It was necessary to develop the economy in an active manner so as to promote the people's livelihood and, in the case of developing countries in particular, rapidly to change their condition of poverty and backwardness. On the other hand, environment protection and improvement would ensure the necessary conditions for effective and continuous development of the economy. It was also important for the developing countries to avoid, in the process of developing their national economies, detours such as those taken by some developed countries in the field of environmental protection.

20. The activities of UNEP, which in close co-operation with various countries had done a great deal in environmental protection and improvement, were very useful, and his delegation wished to express its appreciation of them. The Governing Council had pointed out that environment considerations should be reflected in the new International Development Strategy as a whole. That was a manifestation of the great importance the international community attached to the close relationship between environment and the various fields of social and economic development. His delegation hoped that the Preparatory Committee for the New International Development Strategy would give it due consideration. While his delegation supported other decisions of the Governing Council, it believed that the question of environmental effects of military activity, referred to in decision 7/1, section IV, should be referred to a disarmament forum or some other relevant meetings for consideration.

21. For historical and other reasons, fairly serious problems of environmental pollution and damage to natural resources could be found in some parts of China. In recent years, drawing lessons from experiences at home and abroad, China had been paying due attention to the question of environmental protection. It had decided to participate in the Global Environmental Monitoring System (GEMS) and had undertaken a series of environmental monitoring programmes and scientific studies.

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(Mr. Yu Mengjia, China)

It was now engaged in large-scale construction of shelter-belt systems as part of its long-term programme to combat desertification over vast desert regions in China. It had also launched a campaign to educate people in a better understanding of the environment and was training specialists in institutes of higher education in that field. It had promulgated environmental protection laws and was determined to do well in rational environmental protection while going all out in economic construction, so as to create better and healthier living and working conditions for the people.

22. In the past few years, China had expanded its contact with UNEP and had jointly undertaken fruitful surveys and training programmes in various fields. It wished to strengthen its co-operation with the Programme and would also like to exchange experience with other countries, many of which had scored positive results in that field.

23. Mrs. SIKRI (India) said that her delegation was conscious of the immediate and long-term impact of UNEP's wide-ranging activities, the importance of environmental and ecological concerns for ensuring the attainment of development objectives and the need to reflect those concerns in the new International Development Strategy. Environmental issues could no longer be isolated from international co-operative development efforts. In that context, the proposals regarding the development of the system-wide medium-term environment programme took on special relevance.

24. India's support to UNEP's objectives, and its co-operation with the Programme's activities, had been strong ever since the Stockholm Conference. The Constitution of India contained specific provisions for environmental protection. Industrial development in both the public and the private sectors now took environmental considerations into account. Legislation to control water pollution had been enacted in 1974, and major industrial and thermal power and hydroelectric and irrigation projects were being reviewed by the National Committee on Environment Planning and Co-ordination. Her country recognized the potential contribution of desert and arid areas to its economy, and had taken a number of steps for their reclamation and development.

25. Her delegation welcomed the close co-operation between UNEP and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat). It hoped that further co-operative arrangements and programmes would be worked out between the two, in keeping with the need to avoid unnecessary duplication and to achieve maximum efficiency in the utilization of available resources.

26. With regard to document A/34/557, she noted that less than half of the 34 Governments conveying their views on the subject had whole-heartedly supported the adoption of the draft principles by the General Assembly. Her delegation felt that they should merely provide guidelines for States and serve as recommendations. In the absence of any agreed and acceptable definition of shared natural resources, it would be premature to force the adoption of the draft principles. Her delegation would strongly urge that the draft principles, when considered by the General Assembly, should include as part of the text the

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(Mrs. Sikri, India)

explanatory note appearing at the beginning of the draft principles as adopted at the fifth session of the intergovernmental Working Group of Experts, which clearly indicated that the draft principles had been drawn up for the guidance of States, that they did not intend to create any specific legal obligations under international law and that they did not prejudice any existing rules of general international law. The extent and nature of the role to be played by UNEP regarding the principles, including their application by Governments, needed to be very carefully considered. Her delegation could support a role for UNEP based on specific requests from Governments and in keeping with UNEP's mandate as a specialized agency.

27. With regard to the formulation of draft principles for international environmental assessment, her delegation would similarly advise caution and careful consideration of the practicability of delineating procedures which might either prove impossible to implement or cause inordinate delays in developmental projects or activities undertaken well within national frontiers.

28. Mr. DA MOTTA (Portugal) said that the possibility of successfully establishing a new international economic order would largely depend on the environmental and ecological soundness of the actions taken, and on the rational management of resources. The link between development and environment was now being given particular emphasis, and there was a growing recognition that development was a people-oriented phenomenon rather than merely a matter of economic growth. It had therefore become necessary to provide Governments with operational tools that would permit the replacement of strategies and projects concentrating on short-term gains by an integrated approach to development which would systematically take account of environmental considerations.

29. UNEP's activities in evolving methodologies in that field through studies on a cost-benefit basis, should be supported and pursued with the highest priority. His delegation had been particularly pleased with the OECD figures on the cost-benefits of pollution abatement quoted by the Executive Director. The fact that UNEP, after years of conceptual work on the nature of the relationship between environment and development, was now also involved in activities aimed at testing and applying concepts in the field was a very important development. His delegation hoped that the pilot projects on ecodevelopment, and above all the major environmental study on integrated development planning being conducted in conjunction with the Government of Kenya, would bring valuable knowledge to the search for an environmentally sound path to development.

30. The findings of the recent Stockholm Seminar, which showed the importance of dealing with the questions of development, environment, population and resources in an interrelated way, would certainly help in devising a coherent new International Development Strategy. His delegation wished to reaffirm its view that environmental considerations should be taken into account throughout the text of the Strategy.

(Mr. da Motta, Portugal)

31. Attention should be paid to UNEP's valuable work on alternative patterns of development and life styles. His delegation attached great importance to the various regional seminars on those questions, and hoped that the final report of the interregional seminar would be available to the Preparatory Committee for the New International Development Strategy as early as possible in 1980.

32. His delegation strongly supported UNEP's in-depth reviews of the environmental impacts of the production, transport and use of the various types of energy, which would certainly be useful to Governments in their search for the proper energy mix. The establishment of experimental rural energy centres such as the one in Senegal was a welcome feature. His delegation urged UNEP to play an important role in the preparations for the United Nations Conference on New and Renewable Sources of Energy, and supported its call for energy conservation through more efficient production methods and less wasteful use of energy.

33. UNEP's work in the field of the development and transfer of environmentally sound technologies deserved to be emphasized. His delegation hoped that the project aimed at establishing a network of pilot projects on environmentally sound and appropriate technology and the one on low-waste and no-waste technology would soon yield results.

34. With regard to international environmental law, he agreed with the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on natural resources shared by two or more States (A/34/557). The views of the vast majority of States that had replied to the questionnaire clearly showed that the draft principles had been widely accepted as guidelines which should assist the conduct of States in that area. Their legal status as mere recommendations should dispel any doubts or reticence. His delegation wished to emphasize the high priority which should be given to arriving at an agreed definition of shared natural resources, without which the applicability of the principles could obviously be undermined. UNEP should also be involved in that activity.

35. The work being done by the Working Group of Experts on Environmental Law on the legal implications of sea pollution due to off-shore mining and drilling should be pursued with vigour. The Working Group should also expeditiously prepare a list of priority areas, which his delegation felt should include other problems of sea pollution, such as pollution caused by oil spills and cleaning of tankers, by accidents to oil tankers and by dumping of wastes and other substances.

36. His delegation was pleased that the eighth Congress of WMO had accepted UNEP's offer to assume responsibility for carrying out the climate impact studies subprogramme of the World Climate Programme. UNEP's work on the carbon cycle was also noteworthy. It was important to strengthen and render fully operational the environmental assessment system of Earthwatch. The system-wide medium-term plan was of great importance for UNEP's catalytic and co-ordinating role. His delegation was pleased to note the increasing co-operation of the other members of the United Nations system in that plan. It shared UNEP's concern that the resources of the Environment Fund should be effectively utilized for programmes. It therefore wished to receive some explanation regarding the transfer of posts to the regular budget.

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37. Mr. DMITRIEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the increasing interrelationships between various aspects of politics and society, science, technology, economics and culture, and the increasingly complex links between countries, had given rise to new and global problems,, which included problems relating to the environment.

38. In the Soviet Union, the environment and the rational exploitation of natural resources had always been given close attention. That had become particularly apparent in the course of the past 20 years, which had seen the adoption of laws on environmental protection in the Union Republics and the formulation of principles of legislation for the USSR as a whole and the Union Republics on the most important aspects of environmental protection.

39. Taking into account the rapid rate of development of the Soviet economy, the growth of cities and the development of new regions, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Council of Ministers of the USSR had adopted, in December 1978, a resolution on additional measures to increase environmental protection and to improve the exploitation of natural resources, in recognition of the fact that those were among the most important economic and social tasks confronting the Soviet Government.

40. Because of their global character, environmental problems could only be effectively solved on the basis of broad international co-operation, and his country was taking an active part both in UNEP and in other international programmes in that field. The Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR had said that the Soviet Government was in favour of the broad development of political, economic, cultural and scientific and technological links between all countries of the world and believed that the efforts of Governments should be combined at the international level in order to solve the extremely complex global problems connected with rapid population growth and the need to satisfy the growing demand for food-stuffs, raw materials and energy resources, and with environmental protection and the struggle against disease. The Soviet Union was willing to undertake co-operation with other countries, irrespective of their social structures, on the basis of equal rights and mutual benefit. An essential pre-condition for achieving that aim was détente, which encouraged the establishment of an atmosphere of confidence and opened up new possibilities for expanding international co-operation, including co-operation in environmental matters.

41. At the Helsinki Conference, the USSR had proposed the holding of European congresses or intergovernmental meetings on specific current problems, including those relating to environmental protection. In accordance with the decision taken at the last session of the Economic Commission for Europe, a high-level meeting on environmental protection would shortly be convened. His delegation was convinced that the European conference on the Environment, and also the proposed congresses on energy and transport, could lead to an agreed approach to solving such problems within the field of activities of ECE, which would continue to serve as an example for the achievement of those objectives on a still wider scale. The purpose of those forums was to make a significant practical contribution to the solution of contemporary global problems and to the development of international co-operation.

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(Mr. Dmitriev, USSR)

His delegation noted with satisfaction the active participation of UNEP in the preparations for the European Conference.

42. UNEP's activities indicated the increasing role and importance of the Programme in combining the efforts of the countries of the world and of international organizations in solving major problems of the environment and the rational exploitation of natural resources. While taking a generally positive view of UNEP's activities in the past, his delegation wished to emphasize the importance of strengthening the planning of its work and of continuing the efforts to consolidate its position in the United Nations system as a co-ordinating centre in environmental matters. It therefore supported section II of decision 7/1 of the Governing Council, endorsing the proposals of the Executive Director regarding the development of the system-wide medium-term environment programme, which would improve the co-ordination of environmental activities and prevent duplication of work.

43. Decision 7/3, on programme matters, should also be approved. In its new form, the environment programme was more concise and graphic, with each of its parts containing a work plan for the next one to two years, a brief account of the work carried out, and the budget allocations envisaged for UNEP and the other participating United Nations agencies and bodies.

44. His delegation also attached importance to decision 7/1, section I, concerning UNEP's participation in the formulation of the new International Development Strategy. It believed that development must not have a harmful effect on the environment, and that the problems of development and protection of the environment were inseparable. UNEP could make its contribution by carrying out the research envisaged in decision 7/7.

45. Although his delegation took a generally positive view of UNEP's activities, it wished to point out certain short-comings. It seemed that, as in the past, a high proportion of UNEP's programmes were devoted to small-scale projects, and that too much attention was being given to regional activities while programmes of a global character remained outside its scope. The latter would include, in particular, formulation of the concepts of global monitoring and of the scientific and organizational principles for establishing a network of monitoring stations. Instead of undertaking such work, UNEP had to a large extent dissipated its efforts in formulating separate and partial types of monitoring. It was true that establishing a global monitoring system for the environment was a new and complex task, but it must nevertheless be carried out.

46. He also wished to remind the administration of UNEP of the need for rational and economic expenditure of the funds allocated to it both from the regular budget of the United Nations and from the Environment Fund. Administrative costs remained unjustifiably high, and the practice of transferring to the regular budget posts previously financed from voluntary sources continued. His delegation considered that the policy of increasing the number of staff in the UNEP secretariat was contrary to the provisions of General Assembly resolution 2997 (XXVII) concerning the establishment of "a small secretariat" and did not stem from the need to carry

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(Mr. Dmitriev, USSR)

out the programme assigned to UNEP. The UNEP administration should be called upon to take appropriate action in that matter.

47. With regard to the Secretary-General's report on co-operation in the field of the environment concerning natural resources shared by two or more States (A/34/557), his delegation wished to express its agreement with decision 7/11 of the Governing Council. In its view, the proposed principles for the conduct of States must take the form of recommendations. It also believed that work should be continued on the drafting of an acceptable definition of "shared natural resources".

48. In connexion with the Secretary-General's note on the implementation in the Sudano-Sahelian region of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification (A/34/405) and his report on additional measures and means of financing for the implementation of the Plan of Action (A/34/575), his delegation took a generally favourable view of the measures undertaken by UNEP. It wished to reiterate that execution of the projects envisaged in the Plan of Action must be financed exclusively from voluntary contributions, as envisaged in decision 7/13 of the Governing Council.

49. His delegation viewed with understanding the difficulties experienced by the UNEP secretariat in executing the programme at the level established by previous sessions of the Governing Council. Such difficulties were, of course, largely connected with the amount of funds available to UNEP. He wished to emphasize once again that the Environment Fund consisted of voluntary contributions and that the expenditure of those resources was carried out with the approval in principle of the Governing Council. It was therefore necessary to exercise maximum caution, in the annual planning exercise, to ensure that the types of activities planned were covered by funds already in hand or certain to be received. The USSR had participated in the Environment Fund since 1975, and its contribution for 1978-1980 was 7,864,000 roubles, of which 25 per cent was in convertible currency. Following the Executive Director's last visit to Moscow in 1978 and the signing of a number of agreements between UNEP and the USSR State Committee on Science and Technology, his country had been able to increase its participation in the activities of UNEP. The agreements included provisions for training courses and study tours on environmental subjects. Support had been given to the convening of an international congress of geneticists and consultations had been arranged between experts in the field of genetic monitoring.

50. The second administrative conference of the International Referral System had been held in Moscow in October 1979. At the same time, a number of documents had been signed in connexion with UNEP projects totalling more than \$8 million in value. Such activities were a step forward in using part of the Soviet Union's contributions in non-convertible currency to the Environment Fund. His delegation was pleased to note that Soviet proposals on the utilization of non-convertible currency had met with the understanding and support of the UNEP administration.

51. Mr. PARANHOS-VELLOSO (Brazil) said his delegation felt that progress had been made during the seventh session of the Governing Council of UNEP. In particular, it welcomed the results achieved in connexion with the organization of the Governing Council's work, as reflected in decision 7/1, section III. Much would be

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(Mr. Paranhos-Velloso, Brazil)

gained if UNEP's work was systematically arranged in future, so that Governments could plan adequately for the subjects to be dealt with at meetings of the Governing Council.

52. Unfortunately, a tendency to attribute to UNEP tasks that did not fall within its mandate still persisted. His Government had often stated that any international action in the field of the environment was valid only if it conformed to basic and recognized principles, such as the full and permanent sovereignty of States over natural resources within their territories, the primary responsibility of States for the preservation of the environment in their territories, and the primary role that must be assigned to the utilization of existing regional mechanisms in measures of environmental preservation. Brazil could not accept any interpretation that could lead to the admission of supranational responsibilities in the administration of any State's natural resources. If UNEP were led in that direction, it might become a controversial organization and its work would be jeopardized. It would come to lack scope and objectivity if the tendency to attribute to it responsibilities clearly beyond its competence were not reversed.

53. Certain decisions taken by the Governing Council at its last session posed serious difficulties for Brazil. For instance, the subject-matter of decision 7/6 A should have been the object of more extensive and detailed consideration before an initiative of that scope was taken. However, his Government now understood that the concern shown in the decision, particularly in the second preambular paragraph, was valid in relation to all forest ecosystems and not only to tropical forests. It would therefore follow the matter closely, since the importance of the exploitation of tropical forests should not be overstated in relation to the situation of the earth's vegetal cover, without due account being taken of other ecosystems.

54. With regard to decision 7/11, Brazil considered that the elaboration of draft principles of conduct for the guidance of States in their interrelations in respect of shared natural resources did not fall within UNEP's competence. His delegation had been unable to associate itself with the results of the work of the Intergovernmental Working Group of Experts, because the document it had produced proposed that States should adopt the same approach to questions of a completely different nature, such as the impact of transfrontier pollution and the economic use of a natural resource. The draft principles attempted to establish guidelines universal in scope, without taking into account the fact that the nature of problems linked to the conservation and utilization of natural resources differed from region to region. The document prepared by the Working Group contained certain provisions that would impose unacceptable limitations on the exercise of sovereignty. His Government believed that it should be stressed, firstly, that each State had full and permanent sovereignty over its natural resources, and, secondly, that each State had the right to use its natural resources according to its national policies, provided that it did not cause significant damage to another State or States. Any formulation which deviated from those two general rules weakened the principle of State responsibility and violated the principle of sovereignty. Brazil therefore felt that the draft principles should be the object

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(Mr. Paranhos-Velloso, Brazil)

of both caution and concern on the part of States Members of the United Nations, and its position, as reflected in paragraph 431 of the report of the Governing Council (A/34/25), remained unchanged. The Secretary-General's report on the subject (A/34/557) clearly reflected its complexity and the caution with which it should be addressed, and his delegation was confident that the General Assembly would exercise such caution.

55. Mr. MÉNDEZ AROCHA (Venezuela) said that his delegation attached particular importance to decision 7/1 of the Governing Council, especially section II, paragraph 10, which emphasized the importance of intergovernmental regional environmental committees for exchange of views and experiences and for the formulation of policies for action in the environmental field. His delegation also supported the emphasis placed in decision 7/3, paragraph 7 (c), on activities that contributed to the assessment of irreversible deleterious processes and promoted the restrained use of non-renewable resources and better use of renewable resources.

56. His delegation had strong reservations with regard to the provision of decision 7/6 in which the Executive Director was requested to "develop proposals for an integrated programme of activities for conservation and the wise utilization of tropical forests". It was unacceptable to subject resources over which States exercised sovereignty to any world-wide plan. To do so would mean that, for instance, a world climate plan that took into account tropical deforestation would be incomplete unless it also included a world-wide programme on non-essential energy consumption in developed countries.

57. His delegation welcomed decision 7/9 on energy, especially paragraph 2.

58. With regard to education and training, his delegation supported the establishment of an appropriate mechanism for ensuring consultation and co-operation between the International Centre for Training and Education in Environmental Sciences and Latin American countries. In that connexion, his delegation urged that, for the purposes of the establishment of a network of Latin American institutions in the field of environmental training, account should be taken in particular of the facilities of the Inter-American Center for Land and Water Resource Development (CIDIAT) at Mérida, Venezuela. CIDIAT which was financed by the Venezuelan Ministry of Environment and Renewable Natural Resources, was another of the Government's programmes for promoting the training of personnel for public and private institutions in the region which, owing to the nature of their work, required high-calibre environmental specialists. CIDIAT offered fellowships and research opportunities for professionals from other Latin American countries.

59. In its decision 7/11, the Governing Council expressed the hope that the General Assembly would adopt the 15 draft principles on the guidance of States in their interrelations in respect of shared natural resources. Generally speaking, Venezuela was not opposed to the idea of establishing principles to guide States in the equitable and harmonious utilization and conservation of resources which, because of their particular characteristics, might require the co-operation of two or more States. It could agree to principles that were purely recommendatory and

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(Mr. Méndez Arocha, Venezuela)

in the nature of general guidelines for co-operation in pursuance of bilateral or multilateral agreements concluded between the States concerned. However, it had some reservations regarding the principles as drafted. While a number of them were quite useful in so far as they related to the use of water resources, there were difficulties in applying those principles to other resources. Venezuela also had reservations regarding the use of international forums to solve problems which fell within the sovereign jurisdiction of States. Lastly, the establishment of global principles should not be expedited in that field alone but should be pursued with the same dispatch in other fields, such as the activities of transnational corporations and the transfer of technology. Accordingly, his delegation considered that the draft principles required further refinement in the light of comments received from Governments. His Government, for its part, was keeping the proposed draft principles under close study and could not at present take a definitive position on the matter.

60. Mr. AKTAN (Turkey) observed that the Preparatory Committee for the New International Development Strategy did not seem entirely favourable to the incorporation of environmental considerations in the new Strategy to any meaningful extent. One of the reasons was that ecological concerns had only recently gained prominence, and the current state of environmental science did not facilitate the systematic reconciliation of the environment issue with conventional approaches to development. Moreover, a number of misconceptions were prevalent with regard to the relationship between development and environment. While poverty stemmed from the insufficient development of the man-made environment, it could not be argued that poverty per se caused ecological imbalances which might ultimately endanger global support systems. As to the deterioration of fragile ecosystems situated in critical boundary zones, it was not clear whether the situation was the result of an absence of development, wrong development policies or other causes yet unknown.

61. The vital question which had to be answered in formulating the new Strategy was whether the international community could succeed in designing a new, ecologically sound and sustainable development model. In tackling the problems of poverty, it would not be wise to create a new set of more complex and lasting ecological disturbances which might resist remedial action. Any cost-benefit analysis in the environmental field should proceed from the recognition that prevention was cheaper than cure.

62. Ecologically sustainable growth was incompatible with the ever-increasing depletion of finite natural resources. The market mechanism had so far proved to be a rather poor substitute for conscious and determined efforts to adjust to the new era of scarcities. Industrialized countries must adopt conservation measures and intensify their efforts to develop energy-and-resource-saving technologies. The developing countries, for their part, had not yet exhausted the potential use of reasonably competitive labour-intensive energy-saving technologies. The adoption of such technologies could not, however, be achieved through purely economic policy decisions, but rather would require a radical shift in development concepts from growth-orientation to need-orientation. Neither need-oriented growth nor energy-and-resource-saving technologies in developing countries were meant to

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(Mr. Aktan, Turkey)

perpetuate the existing gap in resource consumption between developed and developing countries; rather, resource conservation measures in developed countries would enable developing countries gradually to attain higher levels of development on the basis of an ecologically sounder development model.

63. The difficulties encountered in incorporating environmental issues in the new Strategy were intrinsic in the nature of the strategic approach. There was widespread suspicion among developing countries that any qualification of development might be interpreted and used later as conditions for the fulfilment of measures to be undertaken by the international community. Furthermore, need-oriented development, which inevitably highlighted the importance of the ongoing work on alternative patterns of development and life styles, could not be expected at the current stage to be translated into goals in the new Strategy because of their still controversial character. Nevertheless, in addition to efforts to accelerate development of developing countries in keeping with existing development concepts, efforts should also be made to facilitate the transition to ecologically sound and sustainable growth. Accordingly, the new Strategy should be sufficiently flexible and open to future conceptual developments through a review and appraisal mechanism which would make it possible to incorporate progress achieved in UNEP and other international forums.

64. Mr. MIHALJEVIĆ (Yugoslavia) said that after the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in 1972, which had already made a significant impact on the international community in its endeavour to protect the environment and preserve basic natural values, continuous activity at both the national and the international levels had contributed to a better understanding of the universality of many aspects of the environment. It was to be hoped that progress in that field would be assessed when the report on the period since the Conference was considered in 1982.

65. His delegation was satisfied with the results achieved by UNEP with regard to regional co-operation in the field of marine protection, and commended the establishment of a Regional Trust Fund for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution. It supported UNEP's efforts in the Sudano-Sahelian region, in collaboration with UNDP, on the problems of desertification, soil erosion and depletion of water resources. It was pleased with the levels of co-operation between UNEP and other organs within the United Nations system and particularly appreciated the co-operation with ECE. It was satisfied with the performance of the Global Environmental Monitoring System and its co-operation with FAO.

66. Activities in the field of environmental protection were inseparable from the process of economic and social development, and in particular from industrial development. His delegation therefore commended UNEP's efforts with regard to the study of the relationship between population, resources, environment and development.

67. His delegation attached great importance to the draft principles of conduct on the sharing of natural resources by two or more States. In practice, his

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(Mr. Mihaljević, Yugoslavia)

Government was already guided by the spirit of those principles. The conservation and harmonious utilization of natural resources shared by two or more countries obviously required broad co-operation and understanding. His delegation was therefore prepared to support any action which would lead to the adoption of the principles, and felt that Governments should be encouraged to apply them whenever they engaged in discussions on shared natural resources.

68. The common interests of developed and developing countries were shown by their broad co-operation in finding the most appropriate way to enhance the development of developing countries and at the same time to secure ecological balance, promote the health of populations and prevent the deterioration of the environment. Yugoslavia, as an active member of the Governing Council, supported the work of UNEP.

69. Mr. PONCET (France) said that, on the whole, his delegation welcomed recent trends in UNEP's activities and had noted with satisfaction the efforts made by the secretariat at the seventh session of the Governing Council to ensure the adequate organization of work, which had made it possible, inter alia, to initiate a genuine dialogue between delegations and the secretariat. It had regretted, however, that at that session pronounced differences of view had emerged for the first time and there had been three departures from the rule of consensus. If that were to continue in the future, it would undoubtedly undermine the calm which had characterized the deliberations of the Governing Council, and therefore its effectiveness. While agreeing on the whole with the report of the Governing Council (A/34/25), his delegation wished to reiterate the reservations it had expressed at the seventh session, particularly those relating to the inclusion of the topic "Environmental effects of military activity" in the 1980 state of the environment report.

70. His delegation noted with satisfaction that the Governing Council attached great importance to the protection of the oceans and welcomed, in particular, the measures adopted for the implementation of the Mediterranean Action Plan. It was to be hoped that UNEP would maintain its commitment to that project during its next medium-term plan. The success achieved in that specific field should not, however, obscure the existence of more general problems which affected the entire international community and which accordingly called for concerted action under United Nations auspices. The Executive Director had reported on his efforts to ensure that the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea gave due attention to environmental considerations. Such efforts relating to the development and codification of law needed to be matched by parallel efforts at the practical level. In that connexion, a number of countries, including the States members of EEC, had submitted to the General Assembly at its preceding session a draft resolution entitled "Marine pollution", which had recently been reissued as document A/34/C.2/L.2. His delegation hoped that all Member States, especially coastal States, would comprehend the urgent need for a solution to the serious problem of marine pollution, which, as recent events had shown, spared no country.

71. In view of the late date on which it had received the Secretary-General's report on additional measures and means of financing of the Plan of Action to

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(Mr. Poncet, France)

Combat Desertification (A/34/575), his delegation was not in a position to comment on the conclusions contained in it. In reiterating his delegation's well-known position on the question of the special account, he recalled that France had for some years been allocating approximately 50 million francs a year to combating desertification, and in 1979 it had provided an additional amount of 100 million francs for that purpose. Some 30 projects, executed for the most part in collaboration with such organizations as the World Bank and UNDP, were currently under way in Africa, and France intended to continue its activities in the same bilateral and multilateral forms which had proved effective. His delegation continued to believe that the Consultative Group for Desertification Control could not serve as a funding agency. In accordance with its terms of reference, its role should be to co-ordinate activities, assess the feasibility of projects submitted to it and ensure their smooth implementation.

72. His delegation noted with satisfaction the strengthening of co-operation between UNEP and the Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), and hoped that the contacts scheduled to take place in December in Nairobi would promote further co-operation between the two and lead to the establishment of institutional arrangements clearly delineating their respective roles. The Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation could make a useful contribution to co-ordination of activities in that field.

73. He drew the attention of the Secretariat to the fact that, so far as his delegation could see, none of the corrections it had requested had been incorporated in the report of the Governing Council (A/34/25). Perhaps the Secretariat could explain why that was so.

74. Mr. BIRIDO (Sudan) said that his delegation had noted with satisfaction the commendable efforts of UNEP in co-ordinating and harmonizing international actions related to environmental protection and economic development. The objectives of the new international economic order could not be achieved unless it was based, inter alia, on a just, equitable distribution and rational management of world resources. The new Strategy should therefore take account of environmental protection in the various economic plans and priorities of developed and developing countries.

75. His delegation shared the view expressed by the Governing Council in its decision 7/1, section I, paragraph 3; he might add that poverty in the developing countries also led to unrest, instability, insecurity and probably intervention and involvement of foreign Powers.

76. His country was faced with the problem of desertification, and the Government made efforts to combat it. However, the lack of adequate financial resources had hampered national efforts in that field. He expressed appreciation for documents A/34/575 and A/34/405, and commended UNEP's efforts to implement the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification, with special reference to the Sudano-Sahelian region. However, the action recommended in document A/34/575 did not reflect the urgency of the situation in the countries concerned. The implications of desertification in

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(Mr. Birido, Sudan)

those countries, and appropriate solutions to the problem, had already been clearly identified; yet the report suggested further studies on additional measures to combat desertification. What was perhaps missing was political will, awareness and understanding on the part of many developed countries.

77. His delegation supported the Executive Director's proposal to mark the tenth anniversary of the Stockholm Conference, because it would provide an opportunity to assess the achievements of UNEP, the difficulties which had confronted it and its priorities for the next decade.

78. While his country generally supported the draft principles of conduct for the guidance of States in the conservation and harmonious utilization of natural resources shared by two or more States, it wished to register its reservations regarding principles number 3, 6 and 7. Because only 34 Governments had responded to the Secretary-General's note verbale, it might be premature to adopt the principles at the current session. It might be appropriate for the Secretary-General again to seek the views of Governments which had not yet responded, and to report to the General Assembly at its next session.

79. His delegation shared the Executive Director's concern at the lack of adequate financial resources for the Environment Fund. If UNEP was to carry out its mandate and responsibilities in an effective and speedy manner, the target of \$150 million must be met as early as possible. He therefore joined other speakers in calling on donor countries to increase their financial support for UNEP.

80. Mr. Ahsan (Bangladesh) took the Chair.

81. Mr. TURJANSKY (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that his delegation took a generally positive view of the report of the Governing Council of UNEP (A/34/25), but thought that certain deficiencies in the Programme should not go unmentioned. In particular, the preparation of the new International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade required an increase in the general effectiveness of UNEP, an improvement in the quality of the materials being prepared and greater co-ordination with the other international organizations and specialized agencies of the United Nations whose programmes of work touched on questions relating to environmental protection. UNEP must make an active contribution to the United Nations programming process, and especially to the formulation of a system-wide medium-term environment programme. He supported the Executive Director's intention to develop such a programme and the steps which had been taken towards that objective between the sixth and seventh sessions of the Governing Council. Discussion of the first medium-term plan in 1982 would make it possible to draw conclusions with regard to UNEP's work over the 10 years since its inception and to formulate a programme of action for the whole United Nations system in environmental matters for the years to come. It was particularly urgent to formulate and approve as soon as possible a methodology for medium-term programming with respect to environmental problems.

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(Mr. Turyansky, Ukrainian SSR)

82. A European conference on environmental co-operation would be held shortly. The conference, which had been called for by the socialist countries, had been discussed at sessions of ECE over a number of years. Draft documents had been prepared on co-operation in such fields as low-waste and no-waste technologies, and their adoption at the conference could provide a new stimulus to international environmental protection, while the conference itself could serve as a model for promoting similar co-operation in other regions.
83. With regard to the basic objectives of UNEP's programme for the coming years, he emphasized that it must concentrate on urgent problems which were of concern to all or most of the countries of the world, such as the prevention of air and water pollution and pollution of the Pacific Ocean, the introduction of low-waste and no-waste technologies, the preservation and improvement of soil fertility, the formulation of methods for monitoring the state of the biosphere and the effect on it of human activity, the campaign against desertification, and the protection and improvement of the environment of human settlements. Regionalization of UNEP activities would, in his delegation's view, tend to limit the opportunities for international co-operation in implementing programmes.
84. More effective use of the resources available to UNEP was necessary to ensure that the Programme was able to solve the complex problems it faced. Unfortunately, those resources were still not being utilized as rationally as they should be. The high proportion of funds expended on administration was a case in point.
85. The Ukrainian SSR had always attached great importance to the question of environmental protection, and in 1979 alone it had allocated nearly 900 million roubles to measures for protecting the environment and ensuring rational exploitation of natural resources. Among the problems to which special attention was currently being given was the relationship between environmental protection and agriculture, and in particular the task of preventing the exhaustion and pollution of land resources. Agriculture was seen as an enormous and continuously functioning mechanism for protecting and cultivating living natural wealth. Despite intensive industrialization, the area of agricultural land had increased rather than diminished, thanks in large measure to the strict control exercised over the allocation of land for non-agricultural purposes. There were an increasing number of projects for the reclamation of land, prevention of erosion and purification of water. In 1978 alone more than 11 million hectares had been treated against erosion. The area of reclaimed land had also increased in recent years, with a consequent increase in grain production on such land.
86. UNEP, like other international organizations, must not stand aside from the struggle to bring about disarmament and to obviate the effects on the environment of military activity. His delegation therefore favoured the inclusion in the 1980 state of the environment report of the topic "Environmental effects of military activity".
87. Lastly, his delegation attached importance to the Governing Council's decision 7/2, on the environmental conditions of the Palestinian people. The

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(Mr. Turyansky, Ukrainian SSR)

implementation of General Assembly resolution 33/110 would provide a clear picture of one important aspect of the life of a long-suffering people struggling against aggression and for self-determination and a better future.

88. Mr. DIOP (Senegal) said that his delegation attached great importance to UNEP not only because it was one of the few United Nations agencies which had its headquarters in Africa, but also because of the high quality of the assistance it provided to Member States, particularly the developing countries. It was impossible to over-emphasize the importance of providing UNEP with resources commensurate with its major responsibilities in an important sector in which many problems were still coming to light. His delegation attached special importance to the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification, and had followed with interest the work of the Consultative Group for Desertification Control. It had favoured the establishment of a special account to finance the implementation of the Plan of Action and hoped that the account, which had been in existence for eight months, would soon be able to play a major role in financing national, subregional and regional measures adopted within the framework of the Plan of Action. He appealed to the international community to contribute generously to the special account. His country was grateful for the assistance it received from bilateral and multilateral sources, but there was a continuing need for further resources.

89. The Senegalese Government had established national machinery for the mobilization of resources and the co-ordination of activities in the field of environmental protection. The Secretariat of State for Water and Forests carried out desertification control, environmental protection and reforestation activities. The Ministry of Capital Development carried out related activities, especially in the field of water resources, while the Ministry of Rural Development dealt with problems of agriculture and food supply. The Ministry of Town Planning, Housing and Environment also carried out activities in the environmental field. At the subregional level, Senegal was a member of the Organization for the Development of the Senegal River (OMVS), the Organization for the Development of the Gambia River (OMVG) and the Permanent Interstate Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS). In the context of subregional co-operation, his delegation endorsed the statement made by the representative of Guinea with regard to the situation of the river basins in that country. Owing to its geographical situation, Guinea was a veritable reservoir for the entire region, and any threat to the water supply in that country had serious implications for all neighbouring countries.

90. Mr. KALACHINSKY (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that co-operation between States in the field of environmental protection was expanding and gaining momentum. UNEP's organizational structure had been established and the most appropriate methods and forms of co-operation were being tried out. Fundamental objectives and current problems were being defined, while the programme which had been formulated was undergoing improvement.

91. The seventh session of the Governing Council had shown that the majority of countries took considerable interest in constructive co-operation in the rational

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exploitation of natural resources. Many delegations had noted in particular UNEP's work in developing co-operation in the protection of the marine environment against pollution, the protection of genetic resources, the prevention of soil erosion and desertification, the rational distribution of industry, the creation of the International Referral System and the legal aspects of environmental protection. The adoption of a number of decisions to improve co-ordination in the activities of United Nations bodies and institutions in environmental matters encouraged the hope that UNEP's programme of work would principally be concerned with the most pressing problems, primarily those of a global nature, but also major regional problems.

92. The fact that environmental questions were very diverse did not mean that UNEP must try to encompass them all, since that would lead to a dissipation of energies and resources and would delay the solution of many urgent questions. To avoid that, the activities of various international and national organizations must be more clearly co-ordinated and there must be increased planning of their work.

93. Among the most pressing problems were the formulation of methods for monitoring the state of the biosphere and evaluating the effects on it of human activities, the creation of low-waste and no-waste technologies, the prevention of water and air pollution, the protection and improvement of soil fertility, the campaign against desertification and the protection of the environment in human settlements.

94. It should, however, be emphasized that in order to solve such problems it was first of all essential to create an atmosphere of confidence in international relations and to preserve the relevant agreements affirmed in the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference. At the time of the drafting of those agreements, the Soviet Union had put forward a proposal for the convening of European congresses or international high-level meetings on environmental problems, on the development of transport and on energy studies. The convening in November 1979 of a European congress on environmental problems, in whose preparation UNEP had taken an active part, was a stimulus to the expansion of co-operation in that field, not only between European countries but also between other countries participating in the Programme.

95. International agreements were of importance in protecting the human environment, and for that reason the Byelorussian SSR had ratified, on 23 May 1978, the Convention on the Prohibition of Military or Any Other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques. However, the task of preserving environmental conditions must be undertaken primarily through efforts at national level.

96. In the Byelorussian SSR, natural resources were at the disposal of the society, and the Government's economic policy was directed towards meeting the ever-growing requirements of a socialist society by means of accelerated industrial and agricultural development on the basis of planned and rational use of natural resources and their preservation. Public ownership of land and the means of production made it possible not only to limit the undesirable effects of industrial

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activity on the biosphere and to maintain at a stable level the condition of the atmosphere, soil and water, but also to progressively improve the environment. Byelorussian legislation was fully compatible with the rational exploitation of natural resources. Recently laws had been formulated and implemented with regard to land, water and minerals. In June 1979, the Supreme Soviet of the Byelorussian SSR had approved a Forestry Code, which was of considerable significance to his country, since forests covered one third of its territory and their preservation was one of its most important tasks. Also being initiated was a broad programme of measures on low-waste and no-waste technology, a system for neutralizing, processing and decontaminating gaseous, liquid and solid wastes from industrial and municipal sources, anhydrous technological processes, recycling of water supplies and other progressive methods for protecting the environment against pollution.

97. In the belief that development programmes must not have an injurious effect on the environment, his delegation supported the provisions of UNEP's programme which related to participation in the preparations for the new International Development Strategy.

98. He noted that UNEP showed a continuing tendency to increase its administrative costs and was unjustifiably attempting to raise the number of its staff while failing to carry out the task of ensuring equitable geographical representation in its secretariat. His delegation was also opposed to attempts to transfer to the regular budget of the United Nations that portion of expenditure which was financed from voluntary contributions. In the future, UNEP must devote the major portion of its resources to certain high-priority problems of concern to all countries and having regional or global significance.

99. He was confident that, in its future activities, UNEP would fully direct its energies to developing effective international co-operation in the field of environmental protection and to solving problems connected with the rational exploitation of natural resources. As a member of the Governing Council, the Byelorussian SSR would work towards the successful solution of the tasks facing UNEP in matters relating to the preservation, protection and improvement of the environment.



The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.