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PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE UNITED  
NATIONS CONFERENCE ON SCIENCE AND  
TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT

Fourth session

23 April-4 May 1979

Item 2 of the provisional agenda\*

PREPARATIONS FOR THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE  
ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT

Progress report of the Secretary-General of the Conference

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## I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present document is submitted by the Secretary-General of the Conference to the fourth session of the Preparatory Committee to bring up-to-date the information provided in his progress report to the third session describing action taken in respect of preparations for the Conference (A/CONF.81/PC/13). Attention is also drawn to earlier progress reports of the Secretary-General of the Conference presented to the Economic and Social Council at its second regular session of 1978 (E/1978/82) and to the General Assembly at its thirty-third session (A/33/298).

## II. CO-OPERATION WITH MEMBER STATES

2. As at 1 April 1979, 125 countries had responded to the request for national documentation and the Conference secretariat had received 116 papers (one of which covers 5 countries) and 109 summaries. The 32 countries classified by the General Assembly as least developed contributed a total of 24 papers. A list of papers and summaries received is to be found in annex I to the present report.

3. While the original programme of seminars and other meetings as drawn up by the Conference secretariat has been completed, a number of countries, in continuation of their national preparations for the Conference, are organizing international or internal seminars, colloquia and meetings to examine the preliminary draft programme of action for the Conference and to discuss the issues involved.

## III. CO-OPERATION WITH THE HOST COUNTRY

4. The organizational arrangements at Vienna for the Conference is well in hand. Discussions were held at Vienna in February 1979 between representatives of the Austrian Government and members of the Conference secretariat and other concerned departments of the United Nations. A small liaison office of the Conference secretariat has been established at Vienna to facilitate further planning and execution of the arrangements for the Conference.

## IV. CO-OPERATION WITH THE REGIONAL COMMISSIONS

5. While the second round of regional preparatory meetings for the Conference has been completed (see A/CONF.81/PC/13), the regional commissions are continuing their preparations for the Conference by providing assistance and advice to national Governments.

6. The Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA) convened an ad hoc working group to analyse possibilities and limitations of the existing machinery for the financing of science and technology for development and formulate new proposals. The meeting took place at Lima on 26 and 27 March 1979.

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V. CONSOLIDATION OF NATIONAL PAPERS: PREPARATION  
OF THE PRELIMINARY DRAFT PROGRAMME OF ACTION

7. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 33/192, an updated draft outline of the programme of action (A/33/303/Rev.1), a preliminary draft programme of action (A/CONF.81/PC/21), a report on the possible alternatives for the final structure of the draft programme of action (A/CONF.81/PC/25) and a synoptic table of regional recommendations (A/CONF.81/PC/26) were before the Preparatory Committee at its third session. After discussion of those documents, the Preparatory Committee adopted resolution 6 (III) in which it requested the Secretary-General of the Conference, "taking into account the statements made by delegations on the structure of the draft programme of action, to rearrange the draft programme of action for the United Nations Conference on Science and Technology for Development and to submit it to Member States not later than six weeks before the fourth session of the Preparatory Committee". <sup>1/</sup> The rearranged programme of action has been issued (A/CONF.81/PC/28). As a result of the decision to change the dates of the fourth session of the Preparatory Committee from 7 to 18 May to 23 April to 4 May, it was not possible to meet the six-week rule for the circulation of the rearranged document.

VI. CO-OPERATION WITH OTHER DEPARTMENTS OF THE UNITED NATIONS  
SECRETARIAT, THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY AND  
OTHER INTERESTED PROGRAMMES AND BODIES OF THE UNITED  
NATIONS SYSTEM

8. As the Secretary-General of the Conference emphasized in previous reports, the Conference should not be regarded as an isolated exercise but rather as part of a broad framework for translating into action the agreed principles of the new international economic order.

9. To that end, a close working relationship has been established between the Secretary-General of the Conference and the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation who is providing pertinent advice on all matters relating to the substance of the Conference.

10. Among the offices of the United Nations Secretariat that are continuing to co-operate with the secretariat of the Conference are: the Department of Administration and Management, the Department of Conference Services, the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs, the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development and the Department of Public Information.

11. The Secretary-General of the Conference continues to maintain a close working relationship with the Division for Economic and Social Information of the Department of Public Information. Work undertaken to date, or in progress covers:

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<sup>1/</sup> See Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 43 (A/34/43), vol. I, annex I.

a leaflet describing the objectives of the Conference, issued in English, French and Spanish; a newsletter, UPDATE, describing preparatory activities for the Conference; articles in scientific and technological journals; press releases; a 70-page booklet in the languages of the Conference for wide distribution describing preparatory activities and emerging themes and issues to be taken up at Vienna; study tours for journalists from developing countries to visit selected developed countries in order to gain exposure to the application of science and technology to development; organization of an "encounter" for journalists to take place at Vienna on the eve of the Conference itself. In addition, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), with the support of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the World Intellectual Property Organization, is distributing a newsletter with the aim of generating still further interest in the Conference in that region. A similar newsletter has been distributed in the ECLA region, with the support of UNESCO, and another will be distributed in the region of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). Further activity envisaged includes the preparation and distribution of a series of leaflets in Arabic for distribution in the region of the Economic Commission for Western Asia (ECWA). Currently arrangements are under way for the preparation of articles dealing with positions of member countries of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) vis-à-vis the Conference for publication in journals dealing with the application of science and technology to development. In the course of the travels of the Secretary-General of the Conference, arrangements have been made through the offices of the Department of Public Information for interviews with appropriate members of the press and other media.

12. In paragraph 3 of its resolution 33/192, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General of the Conference to prepare a supplement to the "Overview of activities of organs, organizations and programmes of the United Nations system" (A/CONF.81/PC/19) analysing outputs, gaps and/or overlap of present United Nations activities in the area of science and technology for development as a background document for the consideration of the draft programme of action, bearing in mind the views expressed by the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination at its eighteenth session. 2/ According to an arrangement endorsed by Member States when examining the Secretary-General's statement of the financial implications of the General Assembly resolution (A/C.2/33/L.68, para. 6), the Secretary-General of the Conference has requested the Assistant Secretary-General for Programme Planning and Co-ordination to undertake this work, and the supplement is expected to be submitted to the Preparatory Committee at its proposed fifth session. The Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation would provide over-all guidance in this work.

13. Interagency consultations on the Conference were held at Geneva on 1 March 1979 under the chairmanship of the Secretary-General of the Conference. The purpose of that meeting was to agree on certain principles for the utilization of the existing United Nations system (item 6 of the draft provisional

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2/ Ibid., Thirty-third Session, Supplement No. 38 (A/33/38), chap. IV, sect. B.

agenda 3/) to be taken into account, inter alia, in the preparation of the discussion paper to be submitted to the Conference under the responsibility of the secretariat.

14. The Advisory Committee on the Application of Science and Technology to Development (ACAST) continues to offer its counsel to the Secretary-General of the Conference and, at its twenty-fifth session held at Geneva from 5 to 16 March 1979, after hearing a statement from the Secretary-General of the Conference, discussed the arrangements to be made for the international colloquium on "Science, Technology and Society: Needs, Challenges and Limitations", which ACAST is organizing at the request of the Secretary-General of the Conference. This colloquium will be held at Vienna in the week immediately before the Conference (13-17 August 1979). It is being planned in such a way as to synthesize the results of the meetings convened by major non-governmental organizations in connexion with the Conference (see para. 20) and to enable an effective contribution from the United Nations agencies and organizations, taking account of their rich experience in the application of science and technology to development. The colloquium will be arranged on the basis of a matrix of "vertical topics" covering subject areas similar to those chosen by the Preparatory Committee at its second session and "horizontal topics" covering the mobilization and planning of science and technology for development and global problems. Participation in the colloquium will be on the basis of invitations to individual experts from countries likely to be represented at the Conference. It is intended that a declaration and report from the colloquium will be available at the Conference.

15. Formal co-ordination among interested organizations of the United Nations system regarding preparations for the Conference continues to be undertaken through the medium of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination. A number of organizations of the United Nations system are preparing documents for the Conference, as provided under decision 4 (II) of the Preparatory Committee, setting out their experience and their position regarding the issues of the Conference agenda.

16. Organizations of the United Nations system continue to sponsor meetings within the framework of the Conference. Mention should be made of the seminar on technological information contained in patent documents organized by WIPO at Bangkok from 15 to 26 January, the United Nations Interregional Symposium on Development Process and Technological Options in Developing Countries to be held at Lomé from 21 to 26 May 1979, the Intergovernmental Conference on Scientific and Technological Information for Development (UNISIST II) to be held at UNESCO, Paris, from 28 May to 1 June, and the UNITAR seminar on financial arrangements for the promotion of science and technology for development to be held at Vienna from 18 to 21 July.

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3/ In para. 3 of resolution 2028 (LXI), the Economic and Social Council recommended four substantive items as the framework for the Conference. Those items now appear as items 4, 5, 6 and 7 of the draft provisional agenda of the Conference (see annex II).

VII. CO-OPERATION WITH INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS  
OUTSIDE THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

17. Contacts with intergovernmental organizations outside the United Nations system have been maintained and expanded in order to ensure the participation of those organizations in the Conference and its preparatory activities, in accordance with the relevant resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Preparatory Committee.

VIII. CO-OPERATION WITH NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS  
AND THE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL COMMUNITIES

18. The Secretary-General of the Conference has continued to promote co-operation with the scientific and technological communities at the national, regional and global levels by participating in governmental and non-governmental meetings, bilateral discussions and briefings and by making documentation and information material available to interested individuals and organizations.

19. In order to encourage the involvement of those organizations that may be in a position to contribute constructively to the Conference in accordance with paragraph 13 of General Assembly resolution 31/184, close liaison is being maintained with the Conference on Non-Governmental Organizations in Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council. That Conference organized a symposium at the time of the third session of the Preparatory Committee and a similar meeting will be held during the fourth session. Plans are well in hand for the NGO forum which the Committee is arranging at Vienna concurrently with the Conference.

20. The Secretary-General of the Conference was represented at an international symposium on science and technology for development organized by a consortium of 19 scientific organizations convened by the International Council of Scientific Unions in Singapore from 22 to 26 January 1979, and at a symposium on Mobilizing Technology for Development held under the auspices of the International Institute for Environment and Development in Jamaica from 7 to 11 January 1979. The reports of those meetings provide valuable input for Conference deliberations, as does the report of the meeting held in Tallinn under the sponsorship of the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics from 8 to 12 January 1979, particularly under item 7 of the draft provisional agenda of the Conference, 3/ entitled "Science and technology and the future" (see para. 23).

21. A number of other meetings related to the Conference are scheduled to take place in the next few months. Among these are a meeting on "Science, Technology and Development - Views from the Developing World" to be held by the Committee on Science and Technology for Development at Kuala Lumpur from 27 to 30 April; a symposium on "Science and Technology for Development Planning" to be held under the auspices of ACAST and the Colegio de Mexico in Mexico City from 28 May to 1 June; a conference sponsored by the Institut de la Vie, "La science au service de la vie" at Vienna in July; and a world conference on "Faith, Science and the Future" sponsored by the World Council of Churches in Cambridge, Massachusetts, from 12 to 24 July.

22. The Conference secretariat maintains close contact with the Vienna Institute for Development, the focus for non-governmental activity in the host country.

#### IX. SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND THE FUTURE

23. Economic and Social Council resolution 2028 (LXI), endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 31/184, specifies that item 7 of the draft provisional agenda of the Conference 3/ (Science and technology and the future), should be dealt with on the basis of a debate of a report of a panel of experts to be convened on this subject. In the preparation of the report, the Secretary-General of the Conference first consulted an ad hoc group of experts, drawn from a wide range of developing and developed countries, on the general scope and thrust of the report to be prepared. This group recommended that the report should be aimed primarily at the decision-makers attending the Conference and should be of concern to the United Nations, its organizations and other concerned bodies, as well as other intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, the scientific community and the general public. It was also recommended that the report should be prepared to complement the approach taken in dealing with the other three substantive items of the Conference agenda and that it should be consistent with the objectives of the new international economic order. The purpose of the report should be:

(a) To assess in both the short-term and long-term the potential and direction of scientific and technological progress in the context of the joint interest in development of all members of the world community in relation to the needs of developing countries within the framework of a new structure of the world economy;

(b) To draw attention to emerging needs for science and technology in the world community over the longer term:

(c) To suggest how scientific and technological activities, both in the natural and social sciences, might be initiated, strengthened and oriented:

(d) To suggest how scientific exchanges as well as technological transfers may be promoted, as appropriate, to play the most effective role in relation to the development objectives of all countries, and in particular those of the developing countries, for the common benefit of humanity through collective effort.

The time frame of the report should extend to the end of the century and beyond, taking into account not only expectations but preferred goals and alternative futures.

24. The Secretary-General of the Conference has borne these recommendations in mind in arranging for a number of other experts to prepare contributions to the report. The preparation of these contributions is now almost completed and some of them have already been received by the Conference secretariat. It is intended that the report, which is expected to be about 300 pages in length, will contain:

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(a) A preface;

(b) A broad discussion of limited length of the principal issues involved;

(c) A series of chapters providing more detailed treatment of selected areas in relation to development strategies, namely, chapters on knowledge and science, asymmetry of scientific effort in the developed and developing world, transfer of technology and industrialization, modern biology and health in the developing world, science and technology for agricultural development, energy, technological potentialities of photosynthesis, information, disarmament and science and technology for development;

(d) A series of annexes summarizing the views of expert groups, including those of the productive sectors, convened to discuss particular aspects of the application of science and technology to development. (The full reports of most of these groups will be available as background documents for the Conference.)

#### X. CONVENING OF THE CONFERENCE

25. In accordance with paragraph 2 of General Assembly resolution 32/184, letters of invitation convening the Conference have been sent by the Secretary-General. In those communications, the Secretary-General indicated that in the discussions regarding the preparations for the Conference it had been emphasized that heads of national delegations should be ministers, or their equivalents, having a particular concern with the application of science and technology in such portfolios as planning, development policy or co-operation, and that they should be supported as appropriate by advisers.

26. The draft provisional agenda of the Conference (annex II), which includes as items 4 to 7 the four substantive items recommended by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 2028 (LXI) of 4 August 1976 and endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 31/184 of 21 December 1976, was attached to the letters of convocation. The provisional rules of procedure, as drawn up by the Preparatory Committee, are being issued (A/CONF.81/2).

ANNEX I

List of national papers and summaries received by  
the Conference secretariat as at 1 April 1979

<u>Country</u>	<u>National paper</u>	<u>Summary</u>	<u>Country</u>	<u>National paper</u>	<u>Summary</u>
Afghanistan	x	x	German Democratic Republic	x	x
Algeria	x	x	Germany, Federal Republic of	x	x
Argentina	x	x	Ghana	x	x
Australia	x	x	Greece	x	x
Austria	x	x	Guatemala	-	x
Bahrain	x	x	Guinea	x	x
Bangladesh	x	x	Guyana	x	x
Barbados	x	x	Haiti	x	x
Belgium	x	x	Hungary	x	x
Bhutan	x	-	India	x	x
Bolivia	x	x	Indonesia	x	x
Botswana	x	x	Iran	x	x
Brazil	x	-	Iraq	x	x
Bulgaria	x	x	Ireland	x	x
Burundi	-	x	Israel	x	x
Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic	x	x	Italy	x	x
Canada	x	x	Jamaica	x	x
Central African Empire	x	x	Japan	x	x
Chad	x	x	Jordan	x	x
Chile	x	x	Kenya	x	x
China	x	x	Kuwait	x	x
Colombia	x	x	Lebanon	x	x
Congo	x	x	Lesotho	x	x
Costa Rica	-	x	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	x	-
Cuba	x	x	Madagascar	x	x
Cyprus	x	-	Malaysia	x	x
Czechoslovakia	x	x	Mali	x	x
Democratic Yemen	x	x	Malta	x	x
Denmark	x	x	Mexico	x	x
Dominican Republic	x	-	Mongolia	x	-
Ecuador	x	x	Morocco	x	x
Egypt	x	x	Nepal	x	-
El Salvador	x	x	Netherlands	x	x
Ethiopia	x	x	New Zealand	x	x
Fiji a/	x	x	Nicaragua	x	x
Finland	x	x	Niger	x	x
France	x	x	Nigeria	x	x
Gambia	x	x	Norway	x	x

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<u>Country</u>	<u>National paper</u>	<u>Summary</u>	<u>Country</u>	<u>National paper</u>	<u>Summary</u>
Pakistan	x	x	Uganda	x	x
Panama	x	x	Ukrainian Soviet		
Papua New Guinea <u>a/</u>	x	x	Socialist Republic	x	x
Paraguay	x	x	Union of Soviet		
Peru	-	x	Socialist Republics	x	x
Philippines	x	x	United Arab Emirates	x	-
Poland	x	x	United Kingdom of		
Portugal	x	-	Great Britain and		
Qatar	x	x	Northern Ireland	x	x
Romania	x	x	United Republic of		
Rwanda	x	x	Cameroon	x	x
Samoa <u>a/</u>	x	x	United Republic of		
Saudi Arabia	x	x	Tanzania	x	x
Senegal	x	x	United States of		
Seychelles	x	x	America	x	x
Sierra Leone	x	x	Upper Volta	x	x
Singapore	x	x	Uruguay	x	x
Solomon Islands <u>a/</u>	x	x	Venezuela	x	x
Somalia	x	-	Yemen	x	x
Spain	x	x	Yugoslavia	x	x
Sri Lanka	x	x	Zaire	x	x
Sudan	x	x	Zambia	x	x
Swaziland	x	x			
Sweden	x	x			
Syrian Arab Republic	x	x	Holy See	x	-
Thailand	x	x	Republic of Korea	x	x
Togo	-	x	Switzerland	x	x
Trinidad and Tobago	x	x	Tonga <u>a/</u>	x	x
Tunisia	x	-			
Turkey	x	x			
			Total	120	113

a/ These countries have submitted a joint paper.

ANNEX II

Draft provisional agenda of the Conference a/

1. Opening of the Conference.
2. Election of the President of the Conference.
3. Organizational matters:
  - (a) Adoption of the rules of procedure;
  - (b) Adoption of the agenda;
  - (c) Organization of work;
  - (d) Election of officers other than the President;
  - (e) Credentials of representatives to the Conference:
    - (i) Appointment of the members of the Credentials Committee;
    - (ii) Report of the Credentials Committee.
4. Science and technology for development:
  - (a) Choice and transfer of technology for development;
  - (b) Elimination of obstacles to the better utilization of knowledge and capabilities in science and technology for the development of all countries, particularly for their use in developing countries;
  - (c) Methods of integrating science and technology in economic and social development;
  - (d) New science and technology for overcoming obstacles to development.
5. Institutional arrangements and new forms of international co-operation in the application of science and technology:
  - (a) Building up and expansion of institutional systems in developing countries for science and technology;

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a/ Items 4 to 7 were originally recommended as items 1 to 4 by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 2028 (LXI) of 4 August 1976 and endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 31/184 of 21 December 1976.

- (b) Research and development in the industrialized countries in regard to problems of importance to developing countries;
  - (c) Mechanisms for the exchange of scientific and technological information and experiences significant to development;
  - (d) Strengthening of international co-operation among all countries and design of concrete new forms of international co-operation in the fields of science and technology for development;
  - (e) Promotion of co-operation among developing countries and role of developed countries in such co-operation.
- 6. Utilization of the existing United Nations system and other international organizations.
  - 7. Science and technology and the future.
  - 8. Adoption of the report and final documents of the Conference.

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