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SECOND COMMITTEE  
6th meeting  
held on  
Tuesday, 5 October 1982  
at 10.30 a.m.  
New York

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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 6th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. PAPADATOS (Greece)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.50 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 72: OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT (continued)

1. Mr. BI Jilong (Under-Secretary-General, Department of Technical Co-operation for Development) said that the grave uncertainties in the international economic situation, combined with lack of consensus on key economic issues, were aggravating the problems of co-operation among nations. The situation was particularly hard on the developing countries, many of which had seen a slowing down of development while others had experienced negative growth. Earlier hopes that the quality of life for mankind could be improved were fast eroding. The international community was faced with no less a task than reversing that trend because the economic viability of many countries was at stake.
2. Preoccupation with the immediate problems, though understandable, had tended to relegate technical co-operation to the background; moreover, technical co-operation had inevitably been affected by the prevailing uncertainties, and there had been a decline, in real terms, in the resources available for such co-operation through multilateral channels. That was particularly regrettable inasmuch as the major objective of technical co-operation was to promote institution-building, infrastructural development and manpower training - all of them activities which took time and could not be turned on and off without damaging their chances of success. While some countries in the developing world might have reached a stage of development at which they could manage without conventional types of technical co-operation, there were still many which needed major assistance to develop their physical and institutional infrastructure for the purpose of national development and in order to cope with international economic demands. The development of institutional and physical infrastructure was important under all socio-economic systems; opportunities for economic and social development could not be exploited fully unless a society had achieved a minimum level of infrastructural development.
3. Those truisms had been underlined by the series of world conferences held in the recent years on such questions as science and technology, energy and the least developed countries, all of which had resulted in extensive programmes of action for which technical co-operation was essential. However, the recommendations relating to technical co-operation had not been matched by a volume of resources commensurate with the needs and requests of Member States.
4. In such circumstances, the role of the United Nations in technical co-operation was a topical issue. Of course, both multilateral and bilateral programmes of technical co-operation were needed, and the United Nations system had developed extensive organizational arrangements and considerable expertise in the field of technical co-operation with developing countries. However, there had been no real debate on the subject comparable with those which had taken place regularly in the General Assembly in earlier years. The time had come for the Assembly to undertake a full review of technical co-operation and the role of the United Nations in it with a view to reaffirming Member States' commitment to the Charter - one objective of which was "to promote higher standards of living, full employment

(Mr. Bi Jilong)

and conditions of economic and social progress and development" - protecting multilateral technical co-operation from funding crises and uncertainties, and re-establishing technical co-operation as an important component of development activities.

5. In the four years since its establishment, the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development had made considerable progress. As the main operational arm of the Secretariat, it was primarily a technical rather than a financing entity. It acted as executing agency for other funding bodies within the United Nations system, and was the second largest executing agency for UNDP and the main executing agency for the United Nations Fund for Population Activities. In 1981 it had executed more than 1,500 projects, delivering a programme of \$137 million. By and large its work was country-oriented and most of the activities took place at the country level. A major emphasis was on institution-building, and there had been continuous growth in requests for its assistance. The Department was continuing to increase its usefulness by broadening the scope of its technical staff and strengthening its substantive competence.

6. Practically all of the resources for financing projects executed by the Department came from voluntary funds. There had already been a sizable reduction in such funds and further severe constrictions were likely in the near future. Not only did those reductions make it difficult for countries to maintain ongoing projects but they also had serious consequences for the organizations involved. For example, the Department was having to make cuts in the staff and other support essential for backstopping projects and providing quality services. That situation raised fundamental questions about the role of the United Nations in technical co-operation and whether the implementation of one of the major purposes of the Charter was to be left to the vagaries of voluntary contributions. Other related issues concerned the organization for technical co-operation in the United Nations Secretariat and the kind of substance and profile it should have. Those were not purely technical or financial questions but political ones, and the answers to them would give an indication of the commitment of the community of nations to the Charter.

7. It was right that emphasis should be given to the need for efficiency and effectiveness in United Nations activities. The Department recognized the importance of streamlining and increased effectiveness as vital aspects of the response to current circumstances and it welcomed decision 82/19 on the subject, adopted by the Governing Council of UNDP, in the belief that the division of labour between financing institutions and executing agencies as that should be preserved, particularly because of its importance for the effective use of scarce resources. However, the margin for savings through such measures was negligible in the case of regular budgets and modest in the case of the voluntary funds which were the main source for financing technical co-operation, and it was unrealistic to expect significant amounts of resources to be released through such measures. The real issue was to raise additional resources for the activities mandated by the Charter and the decisions of the world community during a crisis for which a response adequate to meet the challenge was required. Both short-term and long-term action

(Mr. Bi Jilong)

would be needed. He urged the Assembly to agree upon some decisions to alleviate the problem in its short-range aspects: some way must be found to reduce the adverse impact of dwindling resources on the ability of the technical co-operation bodies of the United Nations system to maintain their services and expertise. In the case of his Department, ways must be found to ensure the survival of the capabilities which had been built up over such a long period. The only real solution was to agree on a basic minimum organization for technical co-operation and to keep it going by the allocation of adequate resources, including resources from the regular budget.

8. Energy had been a major specialization of the Department and its predecessors for some 30 years. The Department was currently the largest executing agency for technical co-operation projects in the field of renewable sources of energy and energy planning. As a follow-up to the Conference on New and Renewable Sources of Energy, in had, in 1981, organized a major symposium on energy planning for developing countries, and there were plans for a further symposium in December 1982. At the same time, the Department was working closely with UNDP and the World Bank to ensure complementarity with their joint programme of energy planning missions. Moreover, it was responding to an ever-increasing number of requests for technical advisory missions. If its energy programme was to be effectively implemented, the Department and, in particular, the relevant division would have to be strengthened.

9. With regard to the Substantial New Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries, he said that the Department gave special emphasis to co-operation with the least developed countries and gave priority to their requests in allocating its regular programme funds. The Substantial New Programme of Action included a number of key sectors within the Department's mandate. It was especially interested in strengthening national institutions in the least developed countries and in supporting the round-table discussions with donors. The round-table exercises had to be made an integral part of the national development plans of the individual country. It was critical, in order to enlist the support of potential donors, to ensure maximum consistency, through multidisciplinary and intersectoral linkages, between national strategies, objectives and efforts, on the one hand, and the programmes and projects which would be presented at the round tables, on the other. The Department's extensive presence in the least developed countries could be a means of providing a substantive contribution in support of UNDP's lead role in the organization of the round tables.

10. In identifying and implementing technical co-operation activities, one of the Department's guiding principles was that the theme of the integration of women in development must be taken into account throughout all projects and programmes. Accordingly, it sought to make provision in ongoing and planned projects for extending project-related training to women or adapting planned institutional changes to their special needs and, at the same time, it was taking advantage of its role in development planning to apply multidisciplinary approaches linked to national plans in identifying needs and formulating activities to promote the integration of women in development. In that work, the Department collaborated closely with the other United Nations organizations concerned.

(Mr. Bi Jilong)

11. The Economic and Social Council had adopted two resolutions supporting the Department's activities in the field of development administration and finance. In one, it had approved the proposed international centre for public accounting and auditing, which was intended to help improve public financial management in developing countries. Secondly, the Council, having considered the recommendations of the Sixth Meeting of Experts on the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance, had requested the Secretary-General to increase technical co-operation in that field and had asked UNDP to bear in mind the importance of public administration and finance when formulating technical co-operation programmes. The establishment of a strong administrative and managerial infrastructure deserved full political support, because without it even the best-conceived goals could not be translated into reality.

12. Finally, he drew attention to the report of the Secretary-General on United Nations technical co-operation activities (DP/1982/22 and Add.1). A brochure on the Department had been published recently which gave an overview and details of the types of services available to requesting Governments.

#### AGENDA ITEM 73: TRAINING AND RESEARCH

##### (a) UNITED NATIONS INSTITUTE FOR TRAINING AND RESEARCH: REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

13. Mr. NICOL (Executive Director, United Nations Institute for Training and Research) said that, in view of the succession of international crises and the erosion of the authority and status of international institutions, UNITAR's studies on the peaceful settlement of disputes, the Security Council and its Presidency, and disarmament had been particularly timely. It was his hope that the studies on the effectiveness of its International Law Commission, the Economic and Social Council and the Conference on the Law of the Sea would help the Organization to become a more effective and creative instrument of change in a world of turmoil.

14. The Conference on Regionalism and the New International Economic Order, organized in May 1982 by UNITAR, in collaboration with the Centre for the Economic and Social Study of the Third World (CEESTEM) and the Club of Rome, had resulted in a programme of regional and interregional co-operation in the 1980s and had concluded its preliminary phase with the establishment of a Panel of Eminent Persons. The Panel had already met twice and would have further meetings before a final report and a series of technical studies were issued. That programme, together with the studies on the progressive development of the principles of international law as they related to the new international economic order, should make an important contribution to the continuing debate in the United Nations on the reform of the world economic system.

15. The briefing seminars on the law of the sea, economic development and its international setting, and multilateral diplomacy had again generated considerable enthusiasm. Subject to the availability of funds, it was intended to introduce new courses during the coming year. The Secretary-General was striving to strengthen

(Mr. Nicol)

the co-ordination of training activities throughout the United Nations and had convened a meeting which he had attended, together with the Rector of the United Nations University and senior representatives of UNDP, the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development and the Office of Personnel Services, the working group which had been established to examine all aspects of training conducted by different parts of the United Nations had recently presented its report to the Secretary-General.

16. UNITAR had been able to develop its research and training programmes despite considerable financial difficulties. He was gratified to be able to inform the Committee that, through a programme of serious reductions in staff and a vigorous fund-raising effort, UNITAR had at last achieved its goal of a balanced budget in 1982. Nevertheless, if the Institute was to expand its programmes and services to meet the real needs of the United Nations in years to come, it would have to attract much greater support from Member States.

17. The Project on the Future continued to offer refreshing insights into some of the most pressing issues facing the international community. Among its recent achievements were its contribution to the work of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination's Task Force on long-term development objectives and its studies on development strategies in Asia and Africa. Its work on energy had gained widespread recognition. The UNITAR conferences on small-scale energy resources (September 1981) and heavy crude and tar sands (February 1982) had generated a great deal of interest and had increased the knowledge of the range of resources still available for exploitation and development. If sufficient funds became available, those conferences would be followed by symposia on the supply of natural gas, hydrocarbon resources in Western Europe and the energy potential of Asia and the Pacific basin.

18. The recurring financial difficulties of UNITAR arose from inflation, which continued to increase costs, and the fact that UNITAR was funded entirely by voluntary contributions, which had not kept pace with inflation. Its dependence on voluntary contributions alone was not conducive to effectiveness in the long run or to the maintenance of the Institute's independence. When unfavourable economic conditions compelled most Member States to make large cuts in public expenditure, including expenditure on international organizations, those cuts often affected smaller organizations like UNITAR most acutely. In the absence of an assured core budget, fund-raising became a perpetual activity, consuming a large portion of the time of the Executive Director and his senior staff. He urged Member States to support more effectively a comprehensive programme of training and research, by endorsing the idea of a core budget as recommended by the Joint Inspection Unit.

19. In conclusion, he said that guidance provided by members of the Committee was of great importance in charting the direction of UNITAR's work and he looked forward to hearing their suggestions. As of 31 December, he would be on leave prior to retirement. It had been a great honour to serve a staff drawn from all parts of the world and of such high intellectual calibre. He would continue to support UNITAR and the United Nations in every way he could.

AGENDA ITEM 74: SPECIAL ECONOMIC AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE

(b) SPECIAL PROGRAMMES OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE: REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

20. Mr. FARAH (Under-Secretary-General for Special Political Questions and Co-ordinator, Special Economic Assistance Programmes) said that in recent years many developing, and particularly, least developed countries with limited natural resources and narrowly-based economies, had brought their problems to the attention of the General Assembly, hoping to benefit from special programmes of assistance. So far the General Assembly had adopted resolutions calling for special assistance to 19 countries, all but 2 of which were in Africa. Reports by the Secretary-General on each of those countries were being processed or already available, and an informal summary of their contents had already been distributed to Committee members.

21. The Secretary-General had assigned to the Office for Special Political Questions responsibility for maintaining regular contact with the countries concerned and co-ordinating the collection of all information relating to the assistance programmes. An important part of the process was the dispatch of missions to review countries' needs with national authorities and to help Governments to present an overview of the situation to the international community. His Office's role was principally that of a catalyst, trying to provoke an active response through bilateral no less than multilateral channels.

22. The countries concerned had much in common, although the reasons for their difficulties differed. All were handicapped by inadequate infrastructures and resources, a shortage of skilled manpower and a lack of middle- and high-level management capabilities. They faced overwhelming problems in adjusting to the switch from a subsistence to a marketing economy, creating or restructuring the institutions of production, diversifying their economic positions and adjusting them to the patterns and demands of international trade. The challenges posed by highly competitive international markets were compounded by deteriorating terms of trade: export prices for their primary products were falling, while the escalating costs of imports added to the crushing economic burdens they were forced to shoulder. As a result, they suffered from chronic balance-of-payments difficulties, large deficits and ever-increasing debt-servicing burdens.

23. For all those countries, however, the food deficit was perhaps the most alarming problem. Drought, irregular rainfall or, in some cases, flooding and cyclones had had a drastic effect on already inadequate agricultural production, and they had neither sufficient food to feed their populations nor the means to acquire it.

24. The Governments in all of those countries realized that they would have to make a massive effort to overcome their problems. Many already had programmes to strengthen their existing infrastructures, create essential institutions, increase revenue, introduce new investment codes and streamline their administrations. Unfortunately, few could afford to bear the cost of such vital tasks alone, and the General Assembly had accordingly appealed to Member States for assistance. The

(Mr. Farah)

international response had been most encouraging in the case of a few countries, but in others more assistance was still needed, and in a number of cases the response had fallen far short of the countries' most compelling needs. Experience showed that most donors preferred to support the kind of programme called for by the General Assembly on a bilateral basis. Trust funds had been established at Headquarters to receive contributions, but the assistance contributed had been relatively small.

25. The Governments themselves recognized the importance of maintaining close contact with donors. A well-proven method of doing so was to organize donor conferences and round-table meetings, at which Governments could work out with potential donors how to make optimum use of aid. Several of the countries would be holding donor conferences in the coming months for that purpose; the Secretary-General hoped that the conferences would eventually lead to substantial international support.

AGENDA ITEM 71: DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION (continued)

26. Mr. YOLAH (Under-Secretary-General for International Economic and Social Affairs) said there was little doubt that 1982 would be the third consecutive year of world-wide recession. For the developed market economies, estimates pointed to zero growth in 1982, with unemployment growing worse. Preliminary evidence indicated no improvement for eastern Europe in 1982 over the generally weak growth performance of 1981. And for the developing world, the likelihood was that per capita incomes had fallen in 1982 for the second year in a row. Because of the world recession most developing countries had suffered an absolute decline in living standards. The short-term effects on employment and income were already apparent, and the poor in the slow-growth countries had been particularly badly affected, with rural populations, especially in Africa, being driven further below subsistence levels. Employment in the modern sector had ceased to grow, there had been cutbacks in investment plans, and public spending had either levelled off or declined in real terms. The situation of developing countries was not likely to improve before recovery in the industrialized countries was well under way, and accordingly no significant relief was in sight for 1983.

27. The rising unemployment and stagnation of the 1980s resulted, in a sense, from a policy decision to control inflation and correct external balances even at the cost of higher unemployment, lower incomes and contracting investment. Most disturbing was the view, prevalent among policy-makers in the industrialized countries and members of the international financial community, that the level of world output might have to be constrained for several years more. It was to be hoped that those who contemplated such an outcome had fully calculated the costs. The 1970s had been a decade of widespread impoverishment in many developing countries, with most countries' economies expanding only slowly, and several contracting. Retrogression was the enemy of hope in countries struggling to alleviate widespread poverty, a fact that deserved more attention among policy-makers, who should avoid taking action that would plunge much of the developing world back into similar circumstances for the 1980s.



(Mr. Volah)

28. Persistent stagnation and recession were also jeopardizing the international trading system. Recent reports from GATT and UNCTAD drew attention to the continuing proliferation of sectoral and bilateral difficulties in trade relations, and to the increasing number of disputes in the agricultural and industrial sectors. If deflationary pressures continued to grow, restrictive trade policies, which were becoming increasingly commonplace, would place still greater strain on the world economy.

29. The international financial system faced a similar threat. The external debt of the energy-importing developing countries might well exceed \$500 billion in 1983; most of the energy-exporting countries were also in debt. However responsibly the developing countries managed their domestic economies, however wisely and productively the funds they borrowed were used, their capacity to repay ultimately depended on the willingness of developed countries to accept larger imports of their goods and services. In other words, the servicing of external debt required uninterrupted world economic expansion. As matters stood, the debt-servicing burden of the developing countries amounted to more than 25 per cent of their total export earnings. One major factor had been the exceptionally high interest rates brought about by excessive reliance on monetary restrictions as a means of fighting inflation, a time when recession had curtailed the demand for and prices of developing countries' exports. The collapse of commodity prices to their lowest level, in real terms, for 30 years was particularly disturbing. Efforts by developing countries to overcome such obstacles through measures such as devaluation, export subsidies or more aggressive marketing were of little help when high-interest-rate-oriented deflationary policies persisted in developed countries.

30. In Articles 55 and 56 of the Charter, all Member States had pledged themselves to take joint and separate action for the achievement of conditions of stability and well-being, including full employment. The time had arrived to fulfil that pledge through concrete action. The major task of international co-operation for the moment was to convince all nations of the importance of avoiding mutually defeating policies in favour of the more convergent growth policies which were essential to the restoration of the world economy, the success of domestic recovery programmes in developed countries and accelerated development in developing ones.

31. The developed countries were becoming increasingly aware of the need for economic recovery. They also had to recognize, however, that no country could recover in isolation: recent experience had shown that a single country's efforts to expand its economy quickly led to pressures on its balance of payments. Lower interest rates in one country led to capital transfers to other countries, so that the mobility of capital alone made it essential for major industrial countries to co-ordinate their recovery programmes. The co-ordination and formulation of such programmes should give full consideration to the international aspects of the recovery process. One major objective should be a significant reduction in interest rates, which would in turn require a better balance between monetary and fiscal policies. An over-all concern at the international level must be to shorten the time lag between recovery in the developed market economies and the resumption

(Mr. Yolah)

of growth and development in the developing world. World recovery could not be allowed to be a trickle-down process. The international community must not allow per capita incomes in the developing world to fall for a third consecutive year.

32. There were other reasons for aiming at a broadly-based recovery. Simultaneous growth in developing countries would reinforce the weak recovery by the developed countries in 1983 that was being forecast. Developing countries were no longer peripheral to the international system; in the mid-1970s a number of developing countries had maintained relatively high rates of growth despite a sharp deterioration in their terms of trade, and a study by OECD had shown that that growth had made a significant contribution to employment in the industrialized countries. Another reason was that the current uncertainty surrounding the ability of developing countries to service their debts must be removed as quickly as possible: in the long run, their improved export earnings would strengthen their debt-servicing capabilities, but their financial position must be strengthened immediately so that the deflationary measures they had been forced to adopt could be mitigated or removed.

33. In suggesting measures to revitalize the world economy, he was not implying abandonment of the fight against inflation. He did, however, feel that policies to lessen inflation which induced persistent stagnation and massive unemployment had to be questioned. The upward spiral of prices and incomes in many countries, and the expectation that inflation would continue, were unlikely to be dissipated by demand management policies alone. Growth control over public spending was doubtless among the measures needed to bring about sustained and non-inflationary growth. He noted, however, that military expenditures were usually more inflationary than civilian ones. Additionally, protectionism contributed to inflation by slowing structural adaptation and change and reducing the level of competition; furthermore, slow growth itself contributed to long-term stagflation by delaying re-investment, higher productivity and the introduction of new processes following advances in science and technology.

34. An expansion of industrial production would halt the decline in commodity prices. That was a normal feature of any economic upturn, but a beneficial, not an adverse one, since a recovery in primary commodity prices was essential if the benefits of economic recovery were to be equitably distributed.

35. The steps taken by developed countries towards their own economic recovery would largely influence the growth of the world economy in the years to come, but steps taken by developing countries would not be insignificant. The developing world must intensify its efforts towards the longer-term adjustment of productive structures, and begin to think in terms of a more practical response to the current crisis, so that co-operation among developing countries in trade, finance and other sectors might serve as a catalyst for accelerated growth, both within the developing world and on a global scale.

36. Joint steps at the international level could be taken in several areas. The major priority was immediate action to reinforce the international liquidity

(Mr. Yolah)

position of developing countries, and among the most effective and expeditious ways of doing so would be to resume the creation of Special Drawing Rights. The substantial increase being contemplated in quota resources in the International Monetary Fund would be important in the medium term, but there was also an immediate need to ease access to IMF sources. Steps also had to be taken to restore the flow of concessional and non-concessional capital to developing countries. Furthermore, it was essential for the international community to use the co-operation processes available within GATT and UNCTAD to turn back protectionism and ensure an open trading system. Particular attention had to be given to the problems of commodity trade.

37. Major investment should be encouraged world-wide, particularly in the developing countries in such sectors as food, energy, and science and technology. Concessional financial assistance and technical co-operation were essential, and there was an urgent need to reverse the drastic cutbacks in multilateral technical co-operation. The Administrator of UNDP had already informed the Committee of the decline in voluntary contributions to the Programme in 1981.

38. International consultation and concerted action were an essential part of the strategy to neutralize the current crisis. Parallel action on several different issues could have a very substantial cumulative impact on world investment and output; the scope and importance of the issue was such that consultations needed to involve all the main groups of countries, North, South, East and West.

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued)

39. Mr. MUELLER (German Democratic Republic) said that economic warfare destroyed not only the fabric of international economic co-operation but also the structure of international relations in general. No forum was more suitable than the United Nations for the patient and equitable discussion of global economic problems affecting everyone. The Economic and Social Council's most important task was to help to achieve progress in implementing the fundamental resolutions on the democratic restructuring of international economic relations, and its activities should be judged by how well they contributed to that effort.

40. The most important result of the Council's second regular session had been that the vast majority of participating States had again endorsed a policy of conducting international economic co-operation peacefully and on the basis of equal rights. A desire to preserve all the favourable results of détente and to use them to benefit everyone had been expressed, and many delegations had strongly condemned the confrontationist course of certain imperialist States and their trade sanctions against socialist and non-aligned countries, and had characterized policies of economic pressure, blackmail and interference in the internal affairs of other States as incompatible with the United Nations Charter and other basic United Nations instruments. The deliberations at both of the Council's regular sessions of 1982 had again highlighted the fact that there was no reasonable alternative to a policy of peaceful coexistence.

(Mr. Mueller, German Democratic Republic)

41. Resolution 1982/50, on the revitalization of the Council, was consistent with the fundamental provisions and guidelines for international economic and social co-operation set forth in Chapter IX of the United Nations Charter.

Paragraph 1 (a) and other provisions were a solid basis for making the Council's work more effective, an endeavour which included ending the fruitless discussions about changing the Council's mandate and composition; what was needed was to make more effective use of existing possibilities, and his country would do its utmost to contribute to that effort.

42. His delegation felt that the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1984-1989 (Council decision 1982/173) correctly expressed the priorities of United Nations activities. His country supported the economic and social aspects of the plan and, in particular, those provisions dealing with the implementation of United Nations resolutions and decisions concerning progressive socio-economic changes, the restructuring of international economic relations on a just and democratic basis, the safeguarding of the sovereignty of all States over their natural resources and the elimination of the adverse effects of the operations of transnational corporations in developing countries.

43. No agreement had been reached on chapter 16 of programme 5 and chapter 21 of programme 1, subprogramme 5. Some Western States had blocked the adoption of those programmes by questioning the resolutions on activities in support of East-West trade, which had already been adopted by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and the decisions of the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, which the General Assembly had already endorsed. The texts of the programmes and subprogrammes in question were fully consistent with the resolutions of the intergovernmental bodies concerned, and his delegation opposed any attempt to alter them.

44. Events in the Middle East and particularly in Lebanon had dramatically highlighted the need to give the people of Palestine unstinting assistance in their efforts to overcome the consequences of aggression. The specialized agencies and international institutions associated with the United Nations were required by their mandates to render assistance to victims of aggression. The Israeli authorities should at least respect the humanitarian activities of the United Nations organizations and other agencies concerned, but apparently they did not. The brutal food and medical blockade of west Beirut was clear evidence of the cruelty of the occupation régime. Document A/37/214 cited other regrettable facts; for example, in paragraph 17 it stated that the Government of Israel had declined to give the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) access to the West Bank and the Gaza Strip to implement six industrial development projects. Artificial procedural restrictions had likewise been imposed by the occupation authorities to prevent the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements from assisting the housing co-operative societies in the occupied territories. Such practices were incompatible with legal and moral principles and represented another provocation of the international community by the Israeli occupying power.

(Mr. Mueller, German Democratic Republic)

45. Support had been given to the Palestinian people and the Palestine Liberation Organization by United Nations agencies and related institutions, but it was not sufficient and did not take account of recent developments in the Middle East: immediate material assistance was indispensable. His delegation was prepared to sponsor a resolution on strengthening, under the new, aggravated circumstances, the assistance provided to the Palestinian people.

46. Mr. DOMOKOS (Hungary) said that the document on assistance to the Palestinian people (A/37/214) described all the assistance channelled through the United Nations and the specialized agencies to alleviate the plight of a people which had been driven out of its homeland and scattered throughout many countries. The recent events in Lebanon - the large-scale Israeli aggression and the massacre of hundreds of innocent people in the Palestinian refugee camps under Israeli occupation - were fresh testimony to the fact that international assistance to the Palestinian people could not achieve its goal unless a comprehensive solution to the Middle Eastern problem was found. Attempts to reach a settlement through armed force could only lead to escalation of the terrible crimes being committed against the Palestinian people.

47. His country was preparing for the observance of World Communications Year in 1983 and was using the opportunity to promote the full implementation of its policy and plan targets for the development of communications, including the rapid development of infrastructural facilities, in line with its economic policy goals, development priorities and economic resources. A national co-ordinating committee for World Communications Year was drawing up the national programme and devising ways and means of participating more effectively in the international division of labour and of expanding co-operation with the developing countries in the field of communications. In addition, Hungary was participating actively in regional and interregional programmes and projects related to the Year. Those activities reflected its conviction that a communications network, if properly developed and well operated, could contribute substantially to economic and social development and to rapid progress.

48. During a recent visit to Hungary, the Executive Director of the United Nations Fund for Population Activities had reported that preparations for the World Population Conference were proceeding smoothly and that the funds required had been made available, partly from voluntary contributions. The preparations had been organized rationally, with an attempt to avoid disproportions and overlapping. Hungary was contributing through a number of projects: in September 1983, it would serve as host for an international meeting of experts on population, environment and urbanization, and in October 1981 it had organized a course on family planning which had been unanimously assessed as successful and as a good example of co-operation with developing countries. The course would be repeated annually, thus enabling more developing countries to benefit from it.

49. His delegation was particularly receptive to any proposal which sought to increase the efficiency of work within the United Nations by exploring unutilized reserves, because it believed that in all areas of its activities, including the

(Mr. Domokos, Hungary)

economic and social spheres, the United Nations had ample scope for organizing its work more rationally and making more efficient use of material and intellectual resources. Ending the waste of resources and eliminating overlapping were in the interest of Member States, because the existing situation was certainly an impediment to the full achievement of the objectives of the Charter and meant that a host of unsolved problems would occupy the time and energy of United Nations bodies for many years to come. The provisions in Economic and Social Council resolution 1982/50, which dealt with the setting of priorities and the need for selected major policy issues to be studied in depth with a view to elaborating concrete recommendations, were a good step towards increased effectiveness. With regard to the idea of holding special sessions, however, care should be exercised to avoid unduly extending their length or increasing their number. Account should also be taken of the Council's important task of co-ordinating the work of subordinate bodies and specialized agencies. In view of their large number and the more markedly professional nature of their activities, those bodies and agencies needed much attention and required efficient co-ordination, which was time-consuming.

50. Mr. TUMBOKON (Philippines), referring to the establishment of an international centre for public accounting and auditing said that his Government was prepared to participate actively in the Secretary-General's consultations concerning preparatory measures for the establishment of the centre. That commitment arose from his country's belief that technical co-operation was a potent instrument of international economic development and that relevant, complete, timely and reliable information on the use of scarce resources in the public sector was essential for every Government, especially those of developing countries. Accurate financial information was invaluable for the assessment of the benefits and effectiveness of projects, especially at times when the flow of development assistance was being severely curtailed.

51. The feasibility study and project proposal for the establishment of the centre (E/1982/69), had documented the dearth of personnel trained in public accounting and auditing in the Governments of many developing countries. Although efforts to provide training at the national and regional levels had made some progress, there were large gaps in the availability of relevant teaching materials based on a comparative evaluation of standards and techniques in other countries, an evaluation which would prevent the uncritical adoption of standards and procedures ill-suited to the needs of the developing countries.

52. His country's experience in achieving self-reliance in training in public accounting and auditing had led to substantial improvement in those critical Government services. The Philippines had shared its experience, facilities and training materials with other developing countries through technical assistance programmes, with special attention being given to the needs of the least developed countries. Its experience led his Government to believe that the centre should work in the field of technical co-operation, support training institutes in developing countries by strengthening their technical and training capabilities and provide management training to those engaged in the formulation and design of training programmes in developing countries.

(Mr. Tumbokon, Philippines)

53. The over-riding criterion for the establishment of the centre was that the benefits should outweigh the cost. In view of the centre's voluntary nature and the fact that its clientele was to be primarily developing countries, costs must be kept as low as possible. The project proposal showed that costs were very much related to site. Estimates of major annual costs for personnel, travel, documentation and other expenses showed that about \$100,000, or 20 per cent, could be saved if the centre was situated in South-East Asia. Very serious consideration should therefore be given to basing the centre in that region.

54. His Government urged all Governments to contribute financially to the centre or to co-operate in other ways in order to facilitate its early establishment and effective operation, and it urged the United Nations Development Programme, other international institutions and appropriate regional institutions to co-operate fully. His country was prepared to contribute to ensure the early establishment of the centre at the lowest possible cost but with the maximum benefit to developing countries.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.