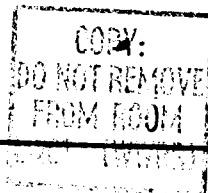


GENERAL
ASSEMBLY

THIRTY-SEVENTH SESSION

Official Records *



SECOND COMMITTEE

✓8th meeting

held on

Tuesday, 12 October 1982

at 10.30 a.m.

New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 8th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. FAFOWORA (Nigeria)

CONTENTS

ELECTION OF THE RAPPORTEUR

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

(j) HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

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

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

UN LIBRARY

OCT 19 1982

UN/SA COLLECTION

* This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room A-3550, 866 United Nations Plaza (Alcoa Building), and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate fascicle for each Committee.

82-56537 4022S (E)

Distr. GENERAL

A/C.2/37/SR.8

18 October 1982

ENGLISH

ORIGINAL: FRENCH

/...

The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.

ELECTION OF THE RAPPORTEUR

1. Mr. LIPATOV (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) nominated Mr. Bakalov (Bulgaria) for the office of Rapporteur.
2. Mr. Bakalov (Bulgaria) was elected Rapporteur by acclamation.

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

(j) HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

3. Mr. RAMACHANDRAN (Executive Director, United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)) said that human settlement trends would in the years ahead influence development. It was therefore important to have a clear view of the goals and the means to be employed to that end.
4. The great task was to deal with the population explosion in developing countries, which involved providing their peoples with satisfying jobs, decent housing, social facilities and at least minimum levels of water supply and sanitary services; they should also be guaranteed access to education and have the opportunity to participate in decision-making on issues directly affecting them. That task was all the more difficult since a large proportion of mankind was still very far from enjoying such advantages. Furthermore, that population would become increasingly urbanized, and would be concentrated chiefly in the large cities, which offered employment for semi-skilled and unskilled workers, together with barely adequate housing and services. The limited technical, financial and managerial resources available to developing countries generally enabled them to develop no more than one city, which then became a magnet for the rural population. (In purely economic terms, that course was often the most advantageous one but it could have serious drawbacks, with a high proportion of the rural population remaining isolated from the mainstream of development and receiving no economic and social benefits. The rural population was large, and would still account for half of the population of the developing world in 20 years' time.) There should accordingly be systematic efforts to direct the increasingly numerous rural migrants towards secondary cities. It should, however, first be clearly understood that urban and rural development were indissolubly linked and that there should be no separation of those two fields of action but rather a symbiotic approach. It might be said that what was required was the development of an urban strategy for rural development, to the benefit of both town and country.
5. Secondary cities served important functions: they encouraged social heterogeneity, infused new values and provided opportunities for economic mobility. They could stimulate the development of an agricultural hinterland by encouraging output, heading to increased income for farmers, the creation of jobs for farm workers and a resurgence of demand. They could also, to the extent that they assisted in the dissemination of new ideas, help to contain the population

(Mr. Ramachandran)

explosion in developing countries, so that in some countries it had been found that fertility rates could be correlated with city size and distribution. It was therefore to the advantage of the many countries with high rates of population increase to define urban policies for the coming 20 years.

6. Nevertheless, despite the aims of Governments, very often there was no expansion of secondary cities. To remedy that, it would be necessary: (a) to integrate land-use policies and urban development policies with overall economic and social development policies and support them by consistent public investments in transport, utilities and industry; (b) to diversify economic activity, particularly export-oriented activity, in intermediate cities, in order to shelter them from fluctuations in world markets, but without the use of excessive subsidies, which would produce an artificial centre that would be a drain on the economy instead of a growth magnet; (c) to provide improved services and facilities in secondary cities so as to attract managers and professionals; (d) to improve facilities and living conditions in secondary cities by overcoming housing shortages and encouraging small and medium-sized industries so as to create jobs for entire families; (e) to take account, in the economic development of secondary cities, of the socio-economic characteristics of their regions; and (f) to strengthen the planning, administrative and financial capacities of secondary cities.

7. Such an urban policy, although entirely appropriate, was difficult to implement because the optimum package of legal, administrative, financial and technical measures had yet to be devised. The first need, therefore, was to concentrate on determining the different types of settlement network best for increasing total employment and production, improving the standard of living of the population in general and the poor in particular, and reducing disparities in living conditions between rural and urban areas. Such objectives could be achieved only if the geographical aspect of development received as much attention as other aspects. Existing institutional structures had not been designed to cope with those special demands, and adjustments would be necessary. The next step was for Governments to take action, by displaying the political will necessary to develop small and intermediate cities, which would be the spearheads of national development.

8. He drew attention to the main conclusions of the fifth session of the Commission on Human Settlements (Nairobi, 26 April-7 May 1982). Two subjects had been taken up: transport for low-income social groups in urban and rural areas, and the planning of human settlements in natural-disaster-prone areas. With regard to the former, the Commission had concluded that the policies followed by most Governments had largely benefited the affluent minority while doing little for the bulk of the poor, for whom transport had actually deteriorated. Consequently, countries should link transport and land-use planning and encourage the establishment of mixed-use neighbourhoods, where people lived, worked and had access to nearby services. With regard to the second subject, the effects of disasters could be considerably mitigated by incorporating preventive measures into human settlements planning, which in turn was part of national development planning. But for that developing countries needed external assistance which would

/...

(Mr. Ramachandran)

enable them to introduce, at the planning stage, relatively inexpensive disaster-mitigation measures and acquire technical skills, collect data and set up the necessary institutions.

9. The main recommendation of the Commission on Human Settlements concerned the designation of an International Year of Shelter for the Homeless. After covering the background to that question, he outlined the essence of the proposals that he had submitted on the matter. The objectives were to develop and demonstrate new ways of improving shelter for the poor, with emphasis on community participation and self-reliance; and to obtain concrete results in the form of maximum return on the investments made by participating countries. Governments would therefore have to prepare replicable pilot projects which would provide a basis for developing a world strategy up to the year 2000.

10. In terms of organization, it was proposed to use existing institutions instead of creating new ones: the Commission on Human Settlements would serve as the intergovernmental body for the Year, while the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements would serve as the secretariat, with the minimal resource augmentation on a strictly temporary basis. As far as financing was concerned, the bare minimum had been requested; the core of the activities would be carried out at the local and national levels, with the resources being generated internally. The cost of the international activities had been held to the minimum and would be met by voluntary contributions. Provision had been made for an annual review of progress in the preparations for the Year so that the necessary adjustments could be made in response to the availability of financial resources. He was optimistic, however, that the necessary voluntary contributions would be forthcoming. Several States and non-governmental organizations had already made pledges which would be fulfilled if the General Assembly formally proclaimed the Year.

11. He drew the Committee's attention to the resolutions of the Commission on Human Settlements relating to the mobilization of financial resources for the development and improvement of human settlements (resolution 5/10), the co-ordination of human settlements programmes within the United Nations system (resolution 5/13) and the report of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (resolution 5/17), and to the report of the Secretary-General on the living conditions of the Palestinian people (A/37/238).

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

12. Mr. MI Guojun (China) said that the developing countries had become a force to be reckoned with in international politics. They had played an important role in the struggle against imperialism, colonialism, racism, hegemonism and war and for the preservation of peace, and had greatly contributed to the transformation of the old international economic order and the development of economic co-operation among nations. Nevertheless, they remained economically disadvantaged, and it was the least-developed countries, whose economies rested on such fragile foundations, that had been hardest hit by the current world economic recession.

(Mr. Mi Guojun, China)

13. Urgent measures would therefore have to be taken to find ways of rectifying that situation. In that connection, it was unfortunate that the efforts made over the past year to change the nature of world economic relations should have been blocked: there had been no progress in the North-South dialogue, the volume of official development assistance had decreased and multilateral assistance institutions had had to deal with an unprecedented crisis. Despite those difficulties, however, the Economic and Social Council had made progress in its work since the thirty-sixth session of the General Assembly. It had, inter alia, adopted resolution 1982/50 on the revitalization of the Council. The implementation of that resolution would make it possible to strengthen the effectiveness of the work of the Council, the principal organ of the United Nations for considering economic and social questions. The Council had also decided to convene in 1984 an International Conference on Population in order to make the public aware of population questions, to encourage Governments to formulate demographic policies suited to their own needs and to promote at the international level the required exchanges of information and experience in that field.

14. Furthermore, the Council had devoted its full attention to the economic difficulties of countries which had suffered natural or other disasters and had considered problems in such fields as foodstuffs, trade, development and economic co-operation among developing countries. With regard to Africa, domination and exploitation by the racist and colonialist régimes had seriously weakened the economy of that continent. Many African countries lacked the appropriate infrastructures, were vulnerable to the crises generated by the market-economy developed countries and were therefore the principal victims of the current economic decline. Consequently, the international community should unreservedly support the Lagos Plan of Action, in which it was stated, inter alia, that the development of the African economy depended essentially on the determination of African countries to achieve collective self-reliance and to make significant efforts at the regional level. Africa must develop its transport and other services in order to promote agriculture, industry and trade.

15. In his statement in the Committee, the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa had reported that the preparations for the second stage of the Transport and Communications Decade in Africa were well advanced. Much remained to be done in that field, and the resources mobilized so far were far below the amount required to implement the programme for the Decade. The competent United Nations institutions and countries having the means to do so should therefore strive to provide financial and technical assistance for that purpose. China, which had friendly relations with the African countries, had given them political support and economic assistance in such fields as transport, communications, development, agriculture, industry and medicine.

16. With regard to the question of Palestine, it had to be remembered that Israel's aggressive and expansionist policy had forced the Palestinian people to leave their homeland. Encouraged by the Government of the United States, the Israelis had recently unleashed a violent attack on the Palestinian and Lebanese peoples, which had left many members of the civilian population dead and wounded.

/...

(Mr. Mi Guojun, China)

The Chinese Government and people vigorously condemned Israel's invasion of Lebanon and its recent crimes and extended their wholehearted sympathy to the Palestinian people, upon which indescribable suffering had been inflicted. China had consistently given moral and material support to that people, and had, inter alia, contributed \$1 million in cash to the Palestine Liberation Organization.

17. In view of recent events in Lebanon, the international community and the competent United Nations bodies should provide even more assistance to the innocent victims of oppression. In his Government's view, Israel should withdraw from the Arab territories it had occupied since 1967 and allow the Palestinian people to return to their homeland, to decide on their own future and to establish an independent State, as was their right. Furthermore, his Government believed that all peoples, whether Palestinian or not, had the right to exercise permanent sovereignty over the natural resources of their territories.

18. Mr. TROYANOVSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the world political and economic situation had steadily deteriorated since the thirty-sixth session of the General Assembly. It was therefore no accident that during the Economic and Social Council sessions a great many States had expressed growing concern over activities of imperialist circles which were aggravating international tensions, accelerating the arms race and stirring up distrust and hatred of countries with different social and economic systems. That was also why the main theme of most delegations that had spoken in the current plenary assembly had been the need to avoid nuclear war and to preserve détente and mutual understanding, their concern over the deteriorating world economic situation.

19. Those feelings were fully shared by the Soviet Union, which was doing all in its power to curb the arms race and which advocated the normalization of relations among countries and observance of the rules of international law. The Soviet people were working towards the social and economic objectives the country had set itself, and Soviet foreign policy was guided by the statement of Lenin that the Soviet State desired to live in peace with all peoples and devote all its energies to national construction. That principle was a clue to understanding the inseparable link between the objectives of ensuring peace, détente and development. That link underscored the need for the tremendous resources being channeled into war preparations to be shifted to peaceful purposes, such as the elimination of unemployment, the fight against inflation, assistance to developing countries and efforts to ensure the well-being of all people on earth.

20. The interrelationship between peace and development made it imperative for the economic bodies of the United Nations to take a more active part in solving the main problem of the present day, namely, elimination of the threat of nuclear war. The Economic and Social Council must therefore play a co-ordinating role in carrying out the decisions of the General Assembly on curbing the arms race and lessening international tensions. In that connection, the head of the Polish delegation had made a proposal in the plenary Assembly on devising, adopting and implementing measures to bolster confidence in the economic sphere that deserved serious consideration by the Economic and Social Council and the Second Committee.

/...

(Mr. Troyanovsky, USSR)

Economic and Social Council resolution 1982/48 on assistance to the Palestinian people testified to the fact that the Council could make a useful contribution to the efforts being made to improve the international situation. That resolution reflected the indignation of the international community over the barbaric aggression by Israel against Lebanon which had resulted in the massacre of many defenceless Palestinians. The criminal acts perpetrated by the Israeli authorities in Lebanon and in the occupied Arab territories were a direct consequence of the Camp David accords, the so-called "strategic consensus" between Israel and the United States.

21. The Soviet Union, for its part, had invariably supported the legitimate demands of the Arab countries to be able to exercise their inalienable sovereignty over national resources in the territories occupied by Israel, and it had consistently advocated comprehensive, durable and peaceful settlement in the Middle East. That position had been confirmed by Leonid Brezhnev, who had proposed a six-point programme in September 1982 which would open the way to a just and lasting peace in the Middle East through the collective efforts of all the parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization.

22. The Economic and Social Council had, in its resolution 1982/47 concerning the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, made an important contribution to the struggle to eliminate the last vestiges of colonialism and to combat the policy of racism and apartheid. In that connexion, it was revealing that the only negative vote against the resolution had once again been cast by the United States delegation. It was no less revealing that the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, which were controlled by the United States and other major Western Powers, continued to ignore United Nations decisions on assistance by all United Nations bodies and specialized agencies to the peoples fighting for freedom, in particular the oppressed people of South Africa.

23. At the summer session of the Economic and Social Council, the Latin American countries had submitted a draft resolution deploring any resort to unlawful economic sanctions in order to bring political pressure to bear on independent States. The Soviet delegation, along with those of other socialist countries and many of the developing countries, had given full support to that draft resolution, for it regarded as completely unlawful, the attempts being made by the United States and its NATO allies to apply any kind of sanctions, impose economic blockades or resort to methods which actually amounted to blackmail.

24. The foreign economic policy of imperialist circles was designed to keep the developing countries under their domination and was at the root of the economic plight of newly independent States. Those States were sustaining huge financial losses as a result of the activities of foreign private capital, the protectionist policies of the Western States in world markets, and the inflation exported by the West to the developing countries. In June 1982, the members of the Co-ordination Bureau of the Non-Aligned Countries had come out in favour of measures to stem the flow of capital from developing countries by way of the transnational

/...

(Mr. Troyanovsky, USSR)

corporations. The Economic and Social Council and other United Nations economic bodies should participate more actively in a comprehensive study that would help to solve that pressing problem.

25. Given the negative position taken by the Western countries at the summer session of the Economic and Social Council, no progress had been made towards initiating negotiations on a world scale within the United Nations. The Soviet Union believed that such negotiations should be undertaken as soon as possible in accordance with the relevant decisions of the General Assembly. That position had recently been reiterated in the joint Soviet-Indian Declaration signed in Moscow by Leonid Brezhnev and Indira Gandhi. It stemmed from a desire to support developing countries in their attempts to restructure international economic relations on a democratic and equitable basis, to promote broad trade, economic, scientific and technological co-operation with those countries and to assist them in overcoming their economic backwardness.

26. Imperialist circles, in their attempts to shift the burden of responsibility for the economic difficulties experienced for years by the developing countries, were intensifying their campaign of slander against the Soviet Union by alleging that it refused to give development assistance. To counter such accusations, it sufficed to recall that from 1976 to 1980 economic assistance furnished by the USSR to developing countries amounted altogether to approximately 30 billion rubles and had risen from 0.9 per cent of the gross national product in 1976 to 1.3 per cent in 1980. Furthermore, unlike Western aid, the Soviet Union's assistance to newly independent States had no political strings attached: its sole purpose was to lay the foundation for truly independent national economies in those States and make a tangible contribution to the restructuring of international economic relations. That assistance was actually a practical application of the Soviet policy of supporting the struggle of developing countries for economic decolonization, a policy which had been reaffirmed at the Twenty-Sixth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

27. Mr. KHOJAME (Lesotho) stated that, in view of the importance of transport and communications for the economic development of his country, he would focus his comments on the Transport and Communications Decade in Africa and the World Communications Year.

The year 1978 had marked the start of the Transport and Communications Decade in Africa (with the adoption of resolution 32/160) which, it had been hoped, would lead to the solution of Africa's problems in that area by bringing about a substantial increase in voluntary contributions. Yet, five years after the proclamation of the Decade, the results were still negligible.

28. In 1983 the international community would celebrate World Communications Year. Though preparations for the year were well in hand, owing to the shortage of contributions all the effort made might unfortunately not prove to be worthwhile.

(Mr. Khojame, Lesotho)

29. The research done by ECA had revealed that the updated programme for the Decade would contain 940 projects, at a total cost of some \$12 billion. However, while the African countries had demonstrated their determination to solve transport and communications problems by making substantial contributions from their already limited resources, international support still needed to be supplemented in order to realize the objectives of the Decade. He therefore appealed for increased contributions from the international community.

30. His delegation was also deeply disappointed at the lack of interest in the air transport projects in Africa. For his country air transport was the only way of servicing the remote mountain areas and also provided the only direct link with other African countries without passing through the territory of apartheid South Africa. Not only fellowships, but technical assistance and training were required to develop that vital sector.

31. Mr. MORIN (Observer for the Agency for Cultural and Technical Co-operation) said that the Agency, founded in 1970 out of the desire to establish new relations among peoples, was an international organization which in 1978 had been granted observer status with the United Nations. That had been a milestone in terms of recognition by the international community.

32. The Agency was participating in numerous international bodies and had sponsored ministerial-level meetings within the framework of the political priorities common to its member countries. Although those meetings had not been related to the implementation of the Agency's programmes, they had made it possible to endorse certain operational guidelines and to give rise to new ones, as well as to highlight the usefulness of an interrelated approach among member countries and the benefits of their working out common positions vis-à-vis the world system.

33. The Agency's major programmes were directed towards the cultural, scientific and technological, educational, and training sectors. Turning to the field of science and technology, he expressed concern at the continued and, in some cases, increased dependence of the developing countries that had been noted in numerous sectors. The Agency's means were modest in comparison with the magnitude of the needs of those countries. It therefore had to be rigorous in its choice, and imaginative in its implementation, of programmes. In the light of that imperative and of its orientation, the Agency had focused its scientific and technological co-operation programmes on promotion of better living conditions for people in rural areas, improved compilation, dissemination and exchange of information among its member countries, on scientific, technological and rural development matters and assistance to the developing countries in inventorying and developing their natural resources, while at the same time strengthening their home-based capacity for adaptation and innovation in the technological field, as well as their institutional capacity to absorb and assimilate international assistance.

34. As for its modus operandi, the Agency's policy was to give pride of place to horizontal co-operation among developing countries. In addition, because it was eager to ensure active participation by national teams and to play its full role as

/...

(Mr. Morin)

a catalyst and organizer, the Agency continued to encourage the formation of a co-operative network of national teams for each project.

35. Within the framework of its concerted approach policy, the Agency had, since 1976, in co-operation with the Conference of Ministers of Education and Conference of Ministers of Youth and Sport, undertaken joint projects with its member States. Thanks to that co-operation it had been possible to update its programmes and thereby achieve conclusive results.

36. In line with its objectives and modus operandi, and based on the results of planning and evaluation missions which had recently visited member countries, the Agency considered its most important programmes and projects to be the socio-economic advancement of young people and of rural communities, the preparation, dissemination and exchange of scientific and technological information, and the inventorying and exploitation of natural resources through the use of appropriate technology.

37. Turning to education, he explained that there were four programmes which formed the main thread of the activities of its Education and Training Board for the biennium 1982-1983, namely the linguistics research programme, the educational innovation documentation and information programme, the audio-visual and pedagogical programme, and the training programme. There had been three concerns in designing those programmes, namely to ensure as far as possible that each formed a unified whole and responded to the optimum extent to the new requirements of States, and to bring some degree of novelty into the Board's practices. Some of the projects submitted within the framework of individual programmes responded to immediate demands made upon the Agency, and served purposes related to programme content.

38. In the field of training, the Agency for Cultural and Technical Co-operation had held a good number of vocational refresher courses as well as seminars and symposia to promote mutual enrichment in diversity. That was particularly true of the training courses held at the International School at Bordeaux where men and women from widely differing cultures and countries came together in a dialogue and in a common search to map out the future path of the organization in their own countries. Since 1972 the school had hosted more than 3,000 economic and cultural development officials from 50 countries, including some that were not French-speaking.

39. The better to contribute to the establishment of a new international economic order and to tailor its activities to the ever-changing needs of its member States, the Agency, in 1977, had established its Special Development Programme. The aim of that programme was to assist member countries in achieving certain targets in their national development plans by responding to their specific demands. It played a role complementary to that of the bilateral and multilateral assistance agencies. It attracted additional financial resources from national or international organizations and, thanks to its flexible structure, was able to provide timely, diversified, and adequate assistance. The ever-growing number of

(Mr. Morin)

projects undertaken by the Special Programme was a testament to the extent to which its programmes were tailored to the realities of its member developing countries, since those countries made voluntary contributions to its budget.

40. Referring to General Assembly resolution 36/174 in which the Secretary-General had been requested to examine proposals by the Agency aimed at reinforcing co-operation with the United Nations, he stated that since the adoption of that resolution the Agency had produced a report on the subject, giving the history of its co-operation with the United Nations family over the period 1973 to 1981. That report shed light on several avenues by which the two organizations might strengthen their co-operation over the next decade.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

41. The CHAIRMAN announced that the list of speakers on agenda item 12 (Report of the Economic and Social Council) would remain open until the beginning of November, but only for statements on the four documents that were not yet available. He suggested that the Committee should close the list of speakers on agenda item 73 (Training and research) at 6 p.m. that day.

42. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.