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SECOND COMMITTEE  
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held on  
Friday, 4 November 1983  
at 3 p.m.  
New York

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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 30th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. DIETZE (German Democratic Republic)

later: Mr. GIBSON (New Zealand)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.30 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 78: DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION (continued)

- (c) INDUSTRIALIZATION (continued) (A/C.2/38/L.12 and L.13)
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(A/C.2/38/L.14)

Draft resolutions A/C.2/38/L.13, L.12 and L.17

1. Mr. MUÑOZ-LEDO (Mexico), introducing the three draft resolutions on behalf of the Group of 77, said that the purpose of draft resolution A/C.2/38/L.13 was to ensure the conversion of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization into a specialized agency as soon as possible in such a way as to enable it to operate effectively with means on the same scale as the challenges currently arising in the context of international economic co-operation and above all the enormous industrialization effort of the developing countries. The members of the Group of 77 hoped that those States which had not already done so would ratify the Constitution in the near future.

2. The draft resolution concerning industrial development co-operation (A/C.2/38/L.12) was likely, both because of the elements it contained and the spirit in which it was drafted, to be the subject of consensus among the members of the Committee, and that would represent a step forward for the industrialization of the developing countries and for the establishment of healthier and more balanced international economic relations. The Group of 77 considered that the Fourth General Conference of UNIDO, which was the subject of the third part of the draft resolution, would be extremely important and that the preparatory activities for the Conference were essential for its success.

3. The provisions of the draft resolution entitled "Critical situation of food and agriculture in Africa" (A/C.2/38/L.17) required no explanation. He had already referred to that situation in a statement which he had made earlier on the subject on behalf of the Group of 77 and in which he had emphasized the real urgency of the food requirements in Africa. The scale of those requirements and the priority position of food in development had also been emphasized by the members of the Committee and the representatives of the international organizations involved.

4. The Group of 77 hoped that the three draft resolutions would be adopted by consensus and would mark the beginning of fruitful co-operation within the Second Committee.

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5. The CHAIRMAN thanked the Group of 77 and all the other sponsors of draft resolutions for having met the submission deadlines and hoped that the same spirit of co-operation would prevail in all the Committee's activities during the current session.

Draft resolution A/C.2/38/L.15

6. Mr. RICHARDSON (Jamaica), speaking on behalf of the sponsors, introduced the draft resolution entitled "Study on financing the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification" (A/C.2/38/L.15). The United Nations Conference on Desertification had been held in 1977 and the Plan of Action which had been adopted on that occasion had been regarded as an urgent matter even then.

7. However, the Secretary-General had still not received enough comments concerning the financing of the Plan of Action to enable him to draw up the reports which the Member States had themselves requested. Most of those who had made comments did not seem to have known about the Plan of Action before, while those who acknowledged knowing about the Plan gave the impression that they had never heard of the working plan for the establishment of an international financial corporation to finance projects designed to combat desertification. It might be worth pointing out again that the purpose of establishing the corporation in question was, as indicated in paragraph 4 of the draft resolution, to finance a particular category of projects, namely non-commercial projects, the economic results of which could not be gauged at present. Such projects could not therefore be submitted to the World Bank, IFAD, FAO or the financial institutions in the Middle East; they could only be financed by means of interest-free loans granted by Member States to the financial corporation to be established for that purpose.

8. In paragraph 4 of the draft resolution, Member States were urged to provide their comments on the establishment of the corporation and on their interest in participating financially therein. They had ample time to do so - until April 1985 - and he hoped that they would take advantage of that time to make comments as well thought out as those of the Australian Government without, however, reaching the same conclusions as that Government.

Draft resolution A/C.2/38/L.20

9. Mr. DIOP (Senegal) introduced the draft resolution entitled "Implementation in the Sudano-Sahelian region of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification", which was sponsored by Benin, Cape Verde, Chad, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Somalia, Sudan, Uganda, the United Republic of Cameroon and Upper Volta.

10. The situation of the 19 countries currently dealt with by the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office was well known to the members of the Committee, and it was therefore enough to recall that 80 per cent of the surface area of those countries consisted basically of arid and semi-arid land and that 90 per cent of pastureland and 85 per cent of irrigated agricultural land was affected by desertification. Despite the world recession and the general reduction in the contributions of donor

(Mr. Diop, Senegal)

countries, the Office was redoubling its efforts to mobilize resources and increase its assistance to the Governments concerned with a view to helping them to formulate and implement projects which were consistent with their priorities and the purpose of which was to study the main causes and effects of desertification in the region. The Office continued to co-operate with various United Nations and other bodies and to maintain close contact with CILSS and ECOWAS. It had also participated in the subregional meeting of UNDP resident representatives in Africa, held at Lomé in 1982, and was pursuing its co-operation with UNEP.

11. After reading the resolution aloud, he pointed out that draft resolutions on that question were generally adopted by consensus. He therefore hoped that the same would be true at the current session.

Draft resolution A/C.2/38/L.11

12. Mr. FARRID (Pakistan) introduced, on behalf of the delegations of Bangladesh and the Sudan and his own delegation and also on behalf of the delegations of Mali and Madagascar, which had become sponsors, the draft resolution entitled "Living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territories" (A/C.2/38/L.11). He recalled that the living conditions of the Palestinians in the occupied territories had been continuously worsening as a result of the policies of systematic settlement and expulsion which the Israeli Government had been pursuing for 36 years and which made the life of the Palestinians unbearable, so that they had no option but to seek refuge in other Arab States. The actions of the Israeli authorities intended to change the demographic composition of the occupied territories, the expropriation of agricultural land for the establishment of settlements, the restrictions imposed on the Palestinians regarding water use and other similar practices constituted a flagrant violation of the rights of the Palestinian people, as well as a usurpation of their permanent sovereignty over their natural resources.

13. Similar resolutions had been adopted in the past without significant results. It was, however, the moral duty of the international community to condemn those policies and to continue to exert pressure on Israel to comply with United Nations decisions. The provisions of the draft resolution were self-evident and conformed with internationally recognized norms and practices. He urged the members of the Committee to support the draft resolution in a manner that would send a clear message to the Government of Israel.

Draft resolution A/C.2/38/L.19

14. Mr. SCHLINGEMANN (Netherlands), introducing the draft resolution entitled "Development and international economic co-operation: human settlements", on behalf of the delegations of Gabon, Kenya and the Philippines and his own delegation, said that the sponsors were disappointed at having once again to draw the attention of the Second Committee to the problem of the participation of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) in the work of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination and its subsidiary machinery. When the

(Mr. Schlingemann, Netherlands)

General Assembly had established the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) by resolution 32/162, it had given it the mandate of, inter alia, assisting the Commission on Human Settlements in co-ordinating human settlements activities in the United Nations system keeping them under review and assessing their effectiveness. At that time, the Assembly had recognized that, in order for Habitat to be able to implement its mandate fully and effectively, it was essential for Habitat to become a member of ACC and had consequently decided that the existing mechanisms of ACC must be strengthened to ensure that co-ordination in the field of human settlements was effective throughout the whole United Nations system. Since no action had been taken on resolution 32/162, the General Assembly, in resolution 35/77 C, had invited the Secretary-General to arrange, in consultation with the members of ACC, for the Centre to participate in all aspects of the work of that Committee and its subsidiary machinery.

15. The General Assembly, in resolution 37/223 C, had reiterated its appeal, urging the Secretary-General to accelerate his efforts. However, the Secretary-General stated in paragraph 3 of his report issued as document A/38/548 that ACC had decided that the Executive Director of UNCHS should be invited to participate in meetings of ACC and its subsidiary bodies when questions in which the Centre had a direct interest were under consideration. The decision of ACC was far from what the General Assembly had had in mind when adopting the aforementioned resolutions and did not change at all the standing practice whereby the Secretary-General could invite organizations that were not members of ACC to participate in its work. The sponsors of the draft resolution were, therefore, unable to accept the presented formula. As human settlements problems were, by definition, multidisciplinary, all the deliberations of ACC had a bearing on the Centre's activities, and it should be left to the Centre to decide which aspects of the work of ACC were of direct interest to it and required its participation. Moreover, the sponsors of the draft resolution were convinced that an organization like Habitat, which had been given the mandate of serving as a focal point for human settlements action and the co-ordination of activities within the United Nations system, could not discharge its task effectively unless it was authorized to participate, as a full member, in all aspects of the work of ACC and its subsidiary machinery. The sponsors of the draft resolution hoped that it would be adopted by consensus.

Draft resolution A/C.2/38/L.14

16. Mr. VERCELES (Philippines), introducing draft resolution A/C.2/38/L.14, recalled that a similar draft resolution had already been the subject of lengthy discussion at the thirty-seventh session and had been adopted by consensus by the General Assembly, to become resolution 37/225. With regard to paragraph 1 of the draft resolution, he pointed out that it would be for the Secretary-General to determine the size of the group of experts. In addition, he announced that the text of paragraph 4 had been amended to read:

"Further requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly in its thirty-ninth session a report on the preparation of the draft declaration".

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(Mr. Verceles, Philippines)

That draft resolution would be considered during informal negotiations, and his delegation was open to any constructive suggestions from Governments. It hoped that the Second Committee would adopt the draft resolution by consensus.

Draft resolution A/C.2/38/L.5

17. The CHAIRMAN said that he understood that the informal negotiations had made it possible to reach a consensus on the proposed text. If there were no objections, he would take it that the draft resolution was adopted.

18. Draft resolution A/C.2/38/L.5 was adopted.

19. Miss FERNANDES (Brazil) said that her delegation had willingly joined the consensus on draft resolution A/C.2/38/L.5, since Brazil was a member of the Governing Council, of UNEP, from which it originated. However, her delegation would like to stress that the expression "for adoption by" which appeared in paragraphs 2 and 11 of the draft resolutions in no way constituted a limitation on the liberty of the General Assembly to take, in the future, any decision whatever concerning documents or proposals presented to it. In other words, Brazil read that expression as meaning "for final decision by" the General Assembly.

Draft resolution A/C.2/38/L.21

20. The CHAIRMAN said that he understood that the informal negotiations had made it possible to reach a consensus on draft resolution A/C.2/38/L.21. If there were no objections, he would take it that the draft resolution was adopted.

21. Draft resolution A/C.2/38/L.21 was adopted.

22. Mr. DE LA TORRE (Argentina) said that his delegation had joined the consensus on the understanding that "the enlarged and integrated concept of world food security" mentioned in paragraph 8 was in conformity with the definition thereof given by the Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes in its seventh annual report (E/1982/73).

23. Mr. Gibson (New Zealand) took the Chair.

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued) (A/38/3 (Parts I and II), 106, 132 and Corr.1 and 2, 297, 325, 479, 494 and Corr.1, 537; (a) A/38/421; (b) A/38/176; (c) A/38/236; (d) A/38/207; (e) A/38/265, 282; (f) A/38/275; (g) A/38/259, 263; (h) A/38/264 and Add.1; (i) A/38/505 and Add.1; (k) A/38/512; E/1983/91 and Corr.1; (m) A/38/498; E/1983/71; (n) A/38/190; (o) A/38/182; (p) E/1983/17/Rev.1; (q) E/1983/70; (r) A/38/374)

24. Mr. HUSSAIN (Pakistan) said that the meager results achieved at the sixth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development had cast a shadow over the deliberations of the Economic and Social Council. The Council had, however, been able to base its debate on two excellent documents, the World

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(Mr. Hussain, Pakistan)

Economic Survey (E/1983/42) and the report of the Committee for Development Planning on its nineteenth session (E/1983/16). His delegation supported some of the ideas presented in the latter report, namely the proposal to establish an ad hoc group of experts under the auspices of the United Nations to examine the proposed reforms of the world monetary and financial system, the proposal to convene a working group to assess the progress made and identify the factors responsible for the shortfalls in the implementation of the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade and the suggestion that the criteria used for the identification of the least developed countries should be reappraised.

25. Five years had elapsed since the proclamation of the Transport and Communications Decade in Africa, and it was important to make an assessment of the results achieved under the Programme for the first phase and draw conclusions from them. While it had been possible during the first phase to determine the potential in the transport and communications sector and to begin to create the necessary infrastructure, the international community and especially the United Nations system must continue to increase its support for the plan of action for the second phase. The development process in Africa and the success of efforts in the area of food and agriculture would depend in large measure on how successfully the targets for the Decade were attained.

26. His delegation was alarmed by the magnitude of the suffering brought about by the continued illegal occupation by Israel of Palestinian and other Arab territories. The inhuman policies of Israel made it more and more difficult to reach a comprehensive settlement in the Middle East; those policies were designed to prevent the Palestinians and Arabs from exercising their permanent sovereignty over their natural resources and must be regarded as an affront to the conscience of the international community, which must act quickly and justly to bring an end to that situation. His delegation supported the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's reports in documents A/38/265 and A/38/282.

27. The Economic and Social Council had adopted an important decision on consumer protection in which it had taken note of the report of the Secretary-General on consumer protection and of the statements made on the draft guidelines contained therein by delegations and recommended to the General Assembly to determine the procedure for the consideration of the draft guidelines, with a view to their adoption by the Assembly at its thirty-ninth session (decision 1983/174). His delegation proposed organizing a working group during the first regular session of the Economic and Social Council in 1984 to enable Governments to examine all aspects of the question. The working group could submit its conclusions to the Council during its second regular session, so that they could be transmitted to the General Assembly for adoption at its thirty-ninth session.

28. With reference to General Assembly resolution 37/137 on protection against products harmful to health and the environment, his delegation had noted with satisfaction that the consolidated list of products requested in that resolution would be issued on schedule in December 1983.

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(Mr. Hussain, Pakistan)

29. Lastly, his delegation was pleased to note that the preparations for the International Conference on Population were proceeding on schedule.

30. Mr. EXARCHOS (Greece), speaking on behalf of the States members of the European Economic Community, said that the note by the Secretary-General on the development of the energy resources of the developing countries (E/1983/91) gave a very good analysis of the main issues in the field but that it would have been useful if the report had studied in greater depth questions regarding coal exploration, hydroelectric power and energy conservation. The provision of adequate supplies of energy to meet economic and social development needs had been a priority item on the agendas of the developing countries and international community over the past decade. However, the slowdown in energy exploration and development efforts in developing countries was a source of concern, and global exploration efforts and investment must therefore be intensified and diversified.

31. The Secretary-General had pointed out in his note that the energy deficient developing countries possessed a vast but unexploited energy resources potential, particularly hydrocarbon resources such as oil and gas, and that a four-fold increase over the current levels of energy exploration and production investment was called for if the energy-deficient developing countries were to achieve 50 per cent self-sufficiency in respect of their oil and gas requirements. It was, therefore, regrettable that only a small fraction of the world exploration effort was directed towards the countries that needed international assistance. The private sector being the main source of risk capital for oil exploration in most developing countries, it would have been interesting to know how the oil companies could make an even greater contribution towards hydrocarbon exploration in the developing world.

32. The need to take further measures at both the national and the international level to provide additional funding, particularly for exploratory drilling, constituted a substantive argument for an energy affiliate within the World Bank. Furthermore, substantial benefits could be derived from economic and technical co-operation among developing countries, and international co-operation in efforts to reduce the dependence of all countries on oil should be given priority. The European Economic Community had for its part already initiated significant programmes for the provision of financial and technical assistance to the developing countries, and it regarded the work being done by the World Bank and UNDP under their energy sector assessment and management programmes as a useful basis for further action in the field.

33. With regard to transnational corporations, at the second session of the Economic and Social Council in 1983 several States members of the European Economic Community had made clear their willingness to participate actively in the completion of a code of conduct on transnational corporations. It was, however, regrettable to note the lack of progress that had been made. All delegations must therefore redouble their efforts and demonstrate good will in order to complete as soon as possible a code of conduct on transnational corporations that would be balanced, comprehensive, generally acceptable and universally adopted.

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(Mr. Exarchos, Greece)

34. Lastly, the European Economic Community noted the conclusions of the President of the Economic and Social Council in regard to the revitalization of the Council. EEC had on several occasions made proposals for strengthening the Council's functioning as a principal organ of the United Nations. With that in mind, the Council should fulfill its mandate more effectively in order to carry out the tasks delegated to it by the Charter. The process of revitalization should, moreover, proceed along two lines: first, the Council should concentrate on issues which had the greatest appeal to all and were directly related to its mandate, and secondly, it should deal with more vital tasks.

35. Mr. HILLEL (Israel) said that the actions called for by the resolutions pertaining to permanent sovereignty over national resources in the territories administered by Israel, and particularly General Assembly resolution 36/173, were motivated by blatant hostility towards Israel. Those resolutions gave a distorted version of the facts and contained accusations which were completely unfounded.

36. Israel was an open and free country which permitted journalists, tourists and international organizations to visit not only Israel but the administered territories as well. However, no self-respecting Government could permit a visit of United Nations experts under the circumstances dictated by General Assembly resolution 36/173.

37. The policy of Israel in the administered territories had always been to maintain the laws in force, to ensure the safety and well-being of the population, to promote social and economic development and to foster good-neighbourly relations. Moreover, a large number of observers had affirmed the progress attained since 1967 in all sectors, particularly in health, social services, building, agriculture and employment. The inhabitants of the territories enjoyed virtually complete freedom of movement and their living standards had improved considerably under Israeli administration.

38. In response to pressures exercised by certain States Members of the United Nations, the anonymous authors of document A/38/282 had prepared a report in haste in order to present it in time to the Economic and Social Council and had spared no effort in selecting their data in such a way as to conform with General Assembly resolutions 36/173 and 37/135. The biased and prejudiced nature of the report could not escape any objective observer. In paragraph 5 the misleading assumption was made that the right of permanent sovereignty over national resources provided freedom to ignore existing institutions and any inconvenient legal principles. The authors of the report had thus managed to turn a purely economic matter into one of political controversy.

39. Paragraph 7 of the report had described the issuance by the administrative authorities of more than 1,000 directives as though that action in itself prejudiced the rights of the population. It was self-evident that the authorities would issue and implement directives in the context of their responsibility to maintain public order and security and to preserve normal daily life. The representation of that issue as something negative showed the in-built bias which was characteristic of the report as a whole.

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(Mr. Hillel, Israel)

40. In regard to paragraph 18, relating to restrictions upon hostile political activity, it was obvious that the administrative authorities must be in a position to prevent incitement to violence, disruption of public order and the unlawful use of force. To present the Committee of National Guidance and the Palestine National Congress as innocent organizations, notwithstanding their known subversive acts, and to blame Israel for not allowing them to conduct their nefarious activities freely was another case of deliberate distortion. It was a matter for regret that the authors of the report had chosen to ignore detailed material in their possession on the rule of law in the administered territories and the remedies open to the civil population.

41. Moreover, the report was replete with grave mistakes. For example, paragraph 50 of document A/38/282 stated that the rich resources of potassium and related minerals in the Dead Sea area constituted the main mineral resources of the occupied territories. In fact, the mineral resources which Israel had utilized for decades were outside the administered areas.

42. With respect to water resources, the authors of the report had indicated that the Israeli population in Israel used three times as much water per capita as that used by West Bank Arabs. They had, however, failed to mention that, through a national endeavour spanning more than 30 years, Israel had succeeded in rationalizing the use of all of its own water resources. Moreover, as stated in the report, Israel had the sole responsibility and means for determining the volume of water used by the Arab and Jewish inhabitants in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and was proud that that authority had not been abused so as to deprive the Arabs of the quantities of water which had been previously available to the local inhabitants.

43. In paragraphs 10 and 11 of document A/38/278 which also pertained to the situation in the administered territories, it was stated that the economy, if measured in terms of the real rate of the gross domestic and gross national products, had improved and that disposable private income and per capita GNP had increased in real terms. Those remarkable increases in the living standard of the residents of Judea, Samaria and Gaza were not accidental but were the outcome of a the socio-economic policy designed to promote the well-being of the entire population. Unemployment in Judea, Samaria and Gaza had been more than 10 per cent in 1968 but was currently virtually non-existent. It was totally absurd to ignore that fact and to describe the useful employment in Israel of thousands of workers from those areas as a negative phenomenon.

44. The authors of the report had also ignored the dramatic increase which had occurred in agricultural production in the administered territories between 1970 and 1980 as a result of the introduction by the Israeli administration of capital equipment, scientific production methods and modern technology through agricultural extension services.

45. As was so often the case in the United Nations, technical, professional or legal matters were taken out of context and presented from a one-sided point of view. That was especially true in the case of the Secretary-General's report

(Mr. Hillel, Israel)

contained in document A/38/265, the only purpose of which was to give credence to views already expressed in the resolution calling for the report.

46. On the issue of assistance to the Palestinian people, the Government of Israel favoured legitimate forms of assistance to the Palestinian Arabs and had co-operated fully with UNDP and other international agencies in implementing programmes which benefited the Arab inhabitants of the administered territories. Israel would continue its efforts to provide help to the Palestinian Arabs wherever such efforts were required. However, Israel was firmly opposed to any form of assistance to, or co-operation with, PLO.

47. Members of the committee should concentrate on those issues which were truly within its competence and not allow themselves to be swept along by expressions of hostility. Israel was determined to pursue its efforts to enhance the well-being and living standards of the inhabitants of the administered territories and was ready to co-operate with UNDP on purely humanitarian grounds despite the regular attempts which had been made to misrepresent the issue for political and partisan purposes. Those attempts would not deter Israel from pursuing its policy in that regard.

The meeting rose at 5.10 p.m.