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7th meeting  
held on  
Wednesday, 10 October 1984  
at 3 p.m.  
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 7th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. KAABACHI (Tunisia)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mr. ABDULLAH (Oman) said that the statement by the Chairman of the Group of 77 reflected the views of his delegation on the disquieting international situation. That statement underscored the need to put the principle of interdependence into practice and to establish a just and equitable economic equilibrium through international co-operation. With that objective in view, the participation of the developing countries was of critical importance to the success of the global negotiations, and he also emphasized the importance of economic co-operation among the developing countries themselves and the role to be played by the United Nations in encouraging co-operation among Member States.
2. The world economic crisis had prevented the developing countries from implementing industrialization plans and had thus perpetuated their stagnation in the industrial and trade sectors. Despite the expectations placed in it, at the Fourth General Conference of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, held at Vienna in August 1984, no agreement had been reached on the modalities for assistance in the fields of financing, the transfer of technology and the restructuring of world industry on an equitable basis, as had been called for in the Declarations of Lima and New Delhi. It was important to strengthen UNIDO to enable it to accomplish its task of supporting the industrialization of the developing countries, and he also emphasized the need to eliminate trade barriers and other arrangements that hindered the development of those countries.
3. Mr. LEE (Canada) said that, although the current session of the General Assembly was taking place in the wake of the most serious world economic crisis since the 1930s, the effects of the recovery were beginning to be felt, even in the developing countries. World trade had increased by 2 per cent in 1983, and the prospects for 1984 were good. Unfortunately, the difficult recovery towards sustained and non-inflationary growth had been slow and uneven.
4. At the recent meeting of Commonwealth Finance Ministers at Toronto and at the London summit meeting, Canada had strongly pressed for a special session in 1985 of the Development Committee, and viewed as highly encouraging the decision to make the Interim Committee of the Board of Governors on the International Monetary System and the Development Committee the focus for a dialogue on the financial issues of interest to the developing countries in the coming months. However, the largest share of resources for their sustained development must come from the developing countries themselves, although bilateral and multilateral assistance programmes drawing on private domestic and foreign sources were also needed. In that context, closer co-operation between the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank was very important and could make more efficient use of existing resources and help attract the additional flows of funds necessary for sustained growth over the longer term.

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(Mr. Lee, Canada)

5. Among the substantive items which merited detailed discussion and on which decisive action might be possible were operational activities for development, which were among the major contributions of the United Nations to the betterment of life on earth, and he observed that the United Nations budget of \$2 billion could be put to better use through improved co-ordination among the bodies concerned. The role of women in development was also a priority concern, particularly in the light of the preparations for the tenth anniversary in 1985 of the establishment of the United Nations Decade for Women. His delegation also awaited with great interest the report and proposals of the Secretary-General on the revision of General Assembly resolution 32/197 concerning the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system. Also included in the list of issues was the review and appraisal of the International Development Strategy, and the United Nations code of conduct on transnational corporations, the future course of which would be decided at the current session of the General Assembly. In that regard, his country supported a balanced, universal code which could enhance the climate for, and the positive role of, international investment. He also believed that the resources of UNITAR should be placed on a firmer foundation to enable it to discharge its important training functions: the Institute could also study the components of the system and recommend ways to improve them, and his delegations would make concrete suggestions on the subject.

6. His country regretted that the Economic and Social Council had been unable to agree on a general policy statement concerning the disturbing situation in Africa; it continued to attach great importance to the role which the General Assembly could play in reinforcing the measures already taken by the international community, and therefore welcomed the fact that the General Assembly would examine the African crisis in plenary meeting. It should be noted that Canada had actively participated in the work of many international organizations which had responded to the African crisis, including the United Nations Secretariat, FAO, WFP, the World Bank and other related organizations, as well as the Second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa. Recognizing the need for short-term, medium-term and long-term measures Canada, in 1983, had targeted approximately 40 per cent of its bilateral official development assistance for Africa, and food aid and humanitarian assistance had also increased, totalling more than \$100 million. Increased effectiveness in the utilization of available resources in the short term and medium term was required, as were, in the long term, economic policy reforms and structural adjustments, increased flexibility and better co-ordinated support from multilateral and bilateral donors.

7. The tenth anniversary of the World Food Conference, which had been held in Rome in 1974, should be a time for taking stock of progress made towards the objective of eradicating hunger and malnutrition. Whether one considered the forthcoming debate on the situation in Africa, the arrangements made by FAO to mark World Food Day the following week, or the debate on the report of the World Food Council, there was evidence of the need to give continuing high priority to that question. Canada, which had developed as an agricultural country and had become a leading producer, trader and donor of foodstuffs, understood the importance of agriculture for development and believed that the Second Committee should give

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(Mr. Lee, Canada)

serious consideration to the conclusions and recommendations made by the World Food Council in evaluating the progress made towards strengthening the global food economy.

8. Recalling that the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization had called for a revitalization of the work of the United Nations, he stressed the importance of streamlining the work of the Second Committee and of elaborating a biennial programme of work. He also welcomed the efforts made to that end during the past three years and other measures, such as a greater focus in debates, the discussion of issues in clusters, the limitation of annual reporting of subsidiary bodies to one senior body and adherence to deadlines for the submission of draft resolutions.

9. As it had done at the last session of the Economic and Social Council, his delegation proposed greater selectivity, better preparation and a pragmatic issue-oriented approach in order to make better use of the Second Committee, which was a universal body, and of the Council. In addition, the Committee could leave to other organizations in the system the detailed resolution of questions which it had raised and should concentrate on identifying new issues and proposing innovative programmes; to that end, more time should be spent considering issues in their broader perspectives.

10. Mr. GOTSEV (Bulgaria) said that the General Assembly was meeting at a time when the deterioration of the world situation constituted a real threat to the future of mankind. The destructive impact of the arms race had never been stronger or more evident. The rearmament programme of certain Western countries would cost two and a half times more than the total external debt of the developing countries, a fact that was all the more serious inasmuch as the programme was being financed to a large extent through a redistribution of resources on an international scale by means of huge budget deficits and artificially high interest rates. It was a strange paradox that the nations of the world were being compelled to pay for the instruments of their own possible annihilation.

11. The economic consequences of that adventurist course were global inflation, high interest rates and growing unemployment which, combined with irresponsible and aggressive policies based on the so-called "position of strength", bred uncertainty about peace and security and about international economic relations as a whole, and was hampering any initiatives for alleviating existing economic problems. The activities of the United Nations in that field were a meaningful example. Ten years had passed since the adoption of the Declaration and Programme of Action on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order and the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States, but it was a generally recognized fact that no real progress had been made in establishing the new international economic order. The same applied to the initiative of the developing countries regarding the global negotiations, and the process of review and appraisal of the implementation of the International Development Strategy had failed to achieve any substantive results.

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(Mr. Gotsev, Bulgaria)

12. The real reason for the lack of progress lay in the substance of the policies of the capitalist countries, which had not shown the political will to implement the basic resolutions and decisions of the United Nations in the field of international economic relations. He recalled, in that regard, the address of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria to the General Assembly.

13. Referring to the so-called "interdependence" as an alternative to the new international economic order and as a means of promoting growth in the developing countries, he pointed out that the experience of the previous 10 years had shown the real meaning of that concept and recalled that, as the President of Argentina had said in his address to the General Assembly, currently it was the developing countries which had to transfer part of their gross national product to the developed countries. As a result, the gross national product of the developing countries had fallen by 10 per cent between 1980 and 1983. If one added to that the massive outflow of resources from the developing countries as a result of the activities of transnational corporations, and of foreign debts, it became clearer that that "interdependence" was the same which existed in the past in relations between the metropolitan countries and their colonies. For more than 10 years the socialist and the developing countries had been engaged in persistent efforts to curb such forms of "interdependence", to put an end to the exploitation of the developing countries, to obtain full recognition of their sovereignty over their natural resources and to secure the practical implementation of the Declaration and the Programme of Action on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order and of the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States.

14. Bulgaria, along with the other socialist countries, supported all initiatives of the developing countries, including the holding of global negotiations. It also attached particular importance to the review and assessment of the implementation of the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States, and hoped that the General Assembly would pay due attention to that question.

15. When speaking of the enormous dimensions of the current crisis, it was not sufficient to recognize that once again the developing countries had been the ones most affected by the cyclical downturn in the market-economy countries. In that regard, Bulgaria was in full agreement with the relevant passages of the Declaration of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Group of 77.

16. Structural change presupposed long-term investments which required, in contrast to the policy of sanctions, discrimination and diktat that had been the usual practice in certain circles in the West over the past years, there must exist a reasonable certainty that international economic policy decisions would not be negated by politically motivated restrictions.

17. It was increasingly important in the current situation to reaffirm the validity of the ground rules on which the system of international relations should be based, namely, equality, non-discrimination and mutual advantage. His delegation had always fully supported the idea of instituting confidence-building measures in international relations and curtailing protectionism and other

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restrictive economic and trade policies. His Government attached great importance in that respect to the work of the regional commissions of the United Nations and of the Economic Commission for Europe in particular, and was ready to participate actively in that work, especially in the search for more constructive and useful approaches aimed at strengthening East-West co-operation.

18. Bulgaria had just celebrated the fortieth anniversary of the victory of socialist revolution. Through effective mobilization of its internal resources together with planning and an active participation in the international division of labour, Bulgaria had had particular success in overcoming economic backwardness. Over the past 35 years the annual growth in the gross national product had been 7.6 per cent. Bulgaria's active participation in the system of co-operation and integration among the socialist countries had been the external factor which had contributed most towards the attainment of national socio-economic goals. His Government was ready to co-operate with other countries and currently maintained economic and trade relations with 116 countries all over the world, more than 70 of them developing countries. During the past two decades the share of commercial exchanges with the developing countries in Bulgaria's foreign trade had increased almost fivefold, and according to United Nations statistics, Bulgaria was among those countries which were most rapidly developing their economic relations with developing countries. In the period since 1976, Bulgaria had provided more than \$900 million in economic and financial assistance, or 0.8 per cent of its net material product, to developing countries. Although such efforts could only be successful to the extent that other countries implemented similar policies, the Government of Bulgaria would continue to do everything in its power to expand economic co-operation with all countries of the world, and with the developing countries in particular. That approach had been reflected in the programme for improving international economic relations approved at the Moscow meeting of the member States of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, which emphasized the importance of peace and security as a prerequisite for solving the problem of development. In the words of the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party, speaking on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the socialist revolution in Bulgaria: "Our struggle for socialism and our achievements ... are inseparable from the struggle of peoples for national liberation, for democracy and social progress, for peace".

19. Mr. AHMED (Bahrain) said that his delegation was disappointed at the absence of progress in the Committee towards a formula for resolving the crisis in the international economic situation. That failure had aggravated the structural imbalances and inequalities which characterized the current economic system, and had intensified the economic difficulties of the countries of Africa in particular.

20. Many developed States squandered material and human resources on armaments, and exhibited at the same time a selfish attitude which made the economic situation still worse by contributing to the mounting indebtedness of the developing countries and to an increase in trade barriers, thus leading to a decline in primary product prices and causing imbalances in food supply.

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(Mr. Ahmed, Bahrain)

21. It was regrettable that at various recent international conferences such as the sixth session of UNCTAD and the Fourth General Conference of UNIDO, the developed countries had stubbornly maintained their position. To rectify that situation, Bahrain was urging the early initiation of the global negotiations and an end to the growth in the disparities between North and South due to their continued postponement. The negotiations should lead to a restructuring of international economic relations and should give impetus to the multilateral economy. He recalled particularly in that respect the Declaration of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Group of 77 which, in his view, painted a realistic picture of the international economic situation and put forward solutions to its problems.

22. Bahrain, which had rapidly become an international financial centre, had a particular interest in the improvement of international trade relations as a factor which would contribute to raising the general economic level.

23. Despite the recovery apparent in certain developed countries, Bahrain did not feel that the prospects for the future were good. The developed countries needed to co-ordinate their policies to incorporate developing countries in the development process. Bahrain was urging a review and appraisal of the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade in order to fulfil the founding principles of the Group of 77.

24. He appealed to the developed countries to increase their contributions to those specialized agencies which were experiencing shortfalls in their budgets and could not fully implement the development plans in the developing countries.

25. The delegation of Bahrain expressed its support for the Caracas Programme of Action for Economic Co-operation among Developing Countries and for the resolutions approved at the Cartagena meeting, and called for the implementation of General Assembly resolution 38/200 on immediate measures in favour of the developing countries.

26. Bahrain was of the opinion that no new financial institutions should be created in the South if they were not going to perform a useful function, and he pointed out that the development finance institutions of the South, such as the Islamic Development Bank, the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa and the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development had demonstrated their efficiency. In that connection he quoted from document TD/B/C.3/187, published by UNCTAD, which indicated that official development assistance provided by the members of OPEC was of the same level as assistance given by the industrialized countries; for example, in 1975 official development assistance from Saudi Arabia had amounted to \$3,970 million; from the United States, \$3,640 million; from the Federal Republic of Germany, \$1,690 million and from the United Arab Emirates, \$1,070 million. Moreover, in 1981 overall assistance from the countries of the Gulf Co-operation Council to developing countries had amounted to \$7,627 million.

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27. Bahrain reaffirmed its commitment to the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States. In its view, that instrument guaranteed the right of States to opt for the economic system they wanted, and ensured that international economic relations were based on democratic and equitable principles, while guaranteeing control by States over their own resources in their national interest.

28. In conclusion, he urged that international co-operation for development should be intensified so as to create a suitable climate for global development.

29. Mr. GAUCI (Malta) pointed out that the developing countries had been voicing their frustration at the lack of dialogue, both political and economic, which had lately marked many international gatherings. In that connection, the delegation of Malta supported the policy outlined in the Ministerial Declaration of the Group of 77 (A/39/536), and furthermore endorsed the comments made by the delegation of Egypt on behalf of the Group of 77.

30. Also, the delegation of Malta had no option but to raise repeatedly, in the same forum, the dangerous situation faced by Malta as a result of the refusal of the United Kingdom Government to remove, once and for all, the remnants of war that were hindering the vital modern economic development of the country.

31. Ever since the Anglo-Maltese negotiations held in 1972, 12 years ago, his country had been raising with the United Kingdom Government the serious question of the unexploded war ordnance and wrecks which lay in the beds of its two natural harbours and which needed to be rendered harmless and removed to permit full use of those ports for modern shipping requirements. The previous year, after a long series of delaying tactics by the United Kingdom Government, the Maltese delegation had finally obtained in the present forum a response in the sense that the United Kingdom Government would examine what assistance it might be possible to offer in the context of specific harbour development plans, where it could be shown that wrecks and unexploded ordnance constituted hindrance to such plans. These words themselves constituted sufficient evidence of intent to delay on the part of the United Kingdom Government. His country had anticipated the wishes of the United Kingdom Government and, in 1979, it had presented that Government with documents and plans. It had also shown those documents to an independent commission set up by the Council of Europe. His country had also offered to take the case to the International Court of Justice - all to no avail.

32. From 2 to 14 September 1984, an expert from the Royal Navy had supervised a preliminary survey carried out by divers from the Malta task force. That survey, although conducted without sonar equipment, which would have made the survey more scientifically comprehensive, had provided ample evidence of the problems that existed. A number of specific obstacles, which impeded access to wharves and other facilities, had been pinpointed in the Grand Harbour. The British expert himself, having recognized that the lack of sonar had made the survey somewhat rudimentary, concluded his report by saying that the modern appearance of chart 974 belied its reliability in relation to underwater detail. The limited survey work carried out during the visit had shown that important differences existed, especially with

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respect to wrecks and other obstructions, and that before clearance work and dredging operations could be undertaken to open up approaches to Magazine Wharf and Crucifix Wharf, detailed hydrographic survey work would be necessary.

33. According to Malta's harbour development plans, all those facilities were supposed to come into full operation in January 1985. To achieve that, and bearing in mind the need to allow passage for vessels drawing 15 metres, it was essential to carry out a major dredging operation preceded and followed by various surveys. The obstacles encountered during the survey included an ammunition lighter partially buried in the sea-bed, as well as a section of a vessel with ribs protruding, which constituted a most hazardous obstacle, reducing passage to a depth of 10.4 metres when the desired objective was to secure unimpeded passage to a depth of at least 17 metres. Notwithstanding the irrefutable evidence of all those problems, Malta continued to hope for a positive response from the United Kingdom Government. The previous year, the resolution concerning war remnants had been overwhelmingly supported. A few countries still needed to provide a positive response, and the United Kingdom was one of them. The only proper response from that country would be the actual removal of all war debris by the end of the current year, so that at least one of its most valuable natural resources could be restored to Malta. That was the least the United Kingdom could do to contribute to the development of Malta, which for two centuries, and until very recently, had been used as a bastion for British interests.

34. Apart from the national importance of that matter to Malta, no one should underestimate its international significance, because Malta, situated at the very centre of world trade passing through the Mediterranean, was anxious fully to utilize its two natural harbours in the service of peace and international commerce.

35. Mr. FIELD (United Kingdom), exercising his right of reply, said that the United Kingdom delegation had noted the criticisms made by the representative of the Soviet Union concerning the assistance provided by Western countries to developing countries. The statement made by the representative of the Soviet Union concerning assistance provided by his own country made no mention of a number of points, including the amount of Soviet assistance to African countries. The figures produced by the representative of the Soviet Union on aid provided by his country appeared exaggerated by any standard. The Soviet Union had been repeatedly asked to explain the method used for calculating the volume of its assistance to developing countries and had not so far responded. In actual fact, the assistance provided by the Soviet Union appeared to be less than 2 per cent of its gross national product. Moreover, none of the CMEA countries appeared among the first 10 countries on the list of contributors to UNDP, nor did the Soviet Union figure prominently in the list of donor countries contained in the 1983 UNCTAD report.

The meeting rose at 4.50 p.m.