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SECOND COMMITTEE

37th meeting

held on

Tuesday, 6 November 1984

at 3 p.m.

New York

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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 37th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. HARLAND (New Zealand)

later: Mr. de la TORRE (Argentina)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 80: DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION (continued)

(i) ENVIRONMENT (continued)

Draft resolution A/C.2/39/L.12

1. Mr. BORG (Malta), introducing the draft resolution entitled "Remnants of war" on behalf of the sponsoring countries indicated which had been joined by Algeria, Cape Verde, Egypt, Sierra Leone and Zimbabwe, said that unexploded war devices continued to pose a threat to life and property in many developing countries and to jeopardize their economic development programmes. It was high time for the countries which had been involved in the Second World War to join in clearing up the war debris for they alone had the necessary technology. Accordingly, he drew attention to paragraph 4, 5 and 6.

2. Mr. EL-NASR (Egypt), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77, said that the Group supported the draft resolution. The material remnants of war constituted further aggression against the people of the countries where they had been planted and hindered their economic and social development. He stressed the importance of enlisting the assistance of the appropriate organizations of the United Nations system, and the co-operation of States responsible for leaving remnants of war behind, in removing them. Such co-operation would reflect the interdependence of nations in international relations.

Draft resolution A/C.2/39/L.20

3. Mr. ACEMAH (Uganda), introducing the draft resolution entitled "Implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification" on behalf of Algeria, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, the Sudan, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia, said that the international community must adopt concrete measures to halt the desertification process. The draft resolution was intended to assist in the attainment of that goal. He drew particular attention to paragraphs 5, 6, 9 and 10 and expressed the hope that the text would be adopted unanimously.

4. The CHAIRMAN announced that Liberia and Yemen were co-sponsoring the draft resolution.

Draft resolution A/C.2/39/L.23

5. Mr. AROUNA (Niger), introducing the draft resolution entitled "Implementation, in the Sudano-Sahelian region, of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification", pointed out that, in paragraph 3, the words "expresses its satisfaction at" should be replaced by the word "welcomes". In paragraph 4, the first three lines should be changed to read as follows: "also welcomes the efficient and co-ordinated manner in which the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme and the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme have continued to develop this ...".

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(Mr. Arouna, Niger)

6. Despite its extremely limited resources the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office (UNSO) had achieved significant results. He therefore appealed to the international community to adopt the draft resolution and increase the resources of UNSO and UNEP.

7. The CHAIRMAN announced that Liberia and Senegal were co-sponsoring the draft resolution.

Draft resolution A/C.2/39/L.24

8. Ms. DANIELSEN (Norway), introducing the draft resolution entitled "International co-operation in the field of the environment", remarked that it was very similar to the one that her delegation and others had sponsored during the second regular session of the Economic and Social Council. Unfortunately, they had had to withdraw it because of the introduction of a controversial issue, not connected with the environment which would have made it necessary to put the text to the vote. She hoped that the new text would be adopted by consensus.

9. Mr. TUAN (Liberia) said that his delegation wished to co-sponsor the draft resolution.

(j) HUMAN SETTLEMENTS (continued)

Draft resolution A/C.2/39/L.21

10. Mr. GAJENTAAN (Netherlands), introducing the draft resolution entitled "Report of the Commission on Human Settlements" on behalf of the delegations of Gabon and Sri Lanka as well as those already listed as shown, drew attention to part A, paragraph 3, which contained a strong appeal for voluntary contributions to the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation, and to part B, paragraph 4, which referred to the necessity of full participation by the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) in all aspects of the work of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination. He trusted that the latter issue would soon be settled.

Draft resolution A/C.2/39/L.22

11. Mr. GAJENTAAN (Netherlands), introducing the draft resolution entitled "International Year of Shelter for the Homeless" on behalf of Canada, Colombia, India, Jamaica, Kenya, the Netherlands, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Uganda and Zambia, drew attention to the appeal in paragraph 3 to Governments that had not yet announced a voluntary contribution to do so, and expressed the hope that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

12. Mr. TUAN (Liberia) said that his delegation was joining in sponsoring the draft resolution.

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13. The CHAIRMAN announced that Tunisia had joined in sponsoring draft resolution A/C.2/39/L.11.

14. He also announced that, in connection with agenda item 12, Tunisia was co-sponsoring draft resolutions A/C.2/39/L.17, L.18 and L.19.

AGENDA ITEM 83: SPECIAL ECONOMIC AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE (continued)  
(A/39/3 (Parts I and II), A/39/133, 236, 581; A/C.2/39/5)

- (a) OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS DISASTER RELIEF CO-ORDINATOR (continued)  
(A/39/267 and Corr.1 and Add.1 and 2)
- (b) SPECIAL PROGRAMMES OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE (continued) (A/39/380-386, 388-392, 393 and Add.1, 394, 404, 598)
- (c) IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MEDIUM-TERM AND LONG-TERM RECOVERY AND REHABILITATION PROGRAMME IN THE SUDANO-SAHELIAN REGION (continued) (A/39/211 and Add.1)

15. Mr. AKHUND (United Nations Resident Co-ordinator of Assistance for the Reconstruction and Development of Lebanon) outlined the contents of the report of the Secretary-General on assistance for the reconstruction and development of Lebanon (A/39/390) and said that the implementation of the 1983 reconstruction programme had been affected by developments in Lebanon. The programme had envisaged a total expenditure of 7.7 billion Lebanese pounds spread over a four-year period, and had been approved by the Lebanese Government at the beginning of 1983. It had been interrupted by renewed fighting in September 1983 and February 1984. However, the Council for Reconstruction and Development had been able to implement about 25 per cent of the programme at a cost of LL600 million, and the Council expected to spend a total of about LL800 million in 1984.

16. Taking the programme for 1983 and 1984 together, the rate of implementation was about 27 per cent. Given the extremely adverse conditions which had prevailed, the fact that Lebanon had been able to execute projects worth some LL1.5 billion was proof of the determination and seriousness with which it viewed the task of reconstruction.

17. The Council was currently working on a new programme for 1985 and onwards which would provide for a total expenditure of LL3 billion and cover fields of activity not included in the 1983 programme. The reconstruction project, prepared in 1983 with the assistance of the World Bank, remained valid but would no doubt have to be revised to take account of the very considerable damage caused by repeated outbreaks of war and disorder in the past 12 to 15 months. The additional cost of the programme could also be ascribed to the fact that new projects had been added to the programme, and that the cost of many projects had had to be revised upwards, particularly because of inflation.

18. Although the reconstruction programme as such was to have been completed in a period of five to eight years, a recent study suggested that it might take 37 years before Lebanon could regain its pre-war trend in economic growth.

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(Mr. Akhund)

19. The Government of Lebanon believed that reconstruction should not await the restoration of security but should be a means of ensuring its return and consolidation. Despite the difficulties it had implemented a significant part of the reconstruction programme in the past 20 months, but Lebanon could not undo the devastation and setbacks caused by 10 years of war unaided, and the international community had accepted the responsibility to provide assistance.

20. The United Nations had remained on the scene throughout Lebanon's difficult period but it had had to curtail its activities because of the security situation and a variety of practical problems, such as the difficulty of recruiting experts, the absence of local counterparts and the inaccessibility of project sites. During that period, United Nations system activities had been mainly focused on providing emergency relief assistance to those affected by the disturbances.

21. After the fighting in the mountains in September 1983 and in the Beirut suburbs in February 1984, it was estimated that some 500,000 persons had been affected on each occasion. At the request of the Lebanese Government, the Secretary-General had issued appeals in September 1983 and February 1984 for international assistance to provide emergency relief to those affected. It had been estimated on each occasion that \$10 million would be needed in cash or kind to meet urgent humanitarian needs. Pending the receipt of fresh contributions, the balance remaining in the United Nations Trust Fund for Assistance to Lebanon had been used to provide immediate assistance to the affected persons.

22. The assistance received in response to the Secretary-General's appeals in 1983 and 1984 had been distributed under the auspices of the Lebanese Government's High Relief Committee. The United Nations Co-ordinating Committee had acted as the main forum for the co-ordination of international emergency relief assistance. Together with the International Committee of the Red Cross, the United Nations system had been the main channel for such assistance to Lebanon.

23. In Lebanon, tens of thousands would remain in need of some form of assistance for some time to come. Improvement in security would not obviate the need for programmes for rehabilitating housing and infrastructure and promoting income-generating activities. A major United Nations activity was the UNICEF project in the south for reconstructing schools, hospitals and water-supply systems. The project was financed partly by Arab countries and partly by UNICEF.

24. Lebanon's request for an increase in UNDP's rather modest indicative planning figure was still pending for want of reliable information on the GNP per capita. At all events, the total was likely to be small in comparison with Lebanon's needs and the United Nations system's capacity to assist. Lebanon hoped that the contributions promised would materialize and that suspended projects would be resumed. Given the insecurity in Lebanon and the steep decline of its economy in recent months, much of the pledged assistance had been suspended, and potential donors were inclined to wait for definite signs of improved security and of a genuine settlement of the crisis before making any decisions.

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25. Mr. BITAR (Lebanon) said that the Secretary-General's report provided an accurate account of the situation in Lebanon and an in-depth analysis of its current economic problems. The events since 1975 were well known; foreign forces had played a major role, but it was the Lebanese people who had paid the greatest price and they did not believe that they should bear the cost of rebuilding their country alone.

26. Lebanon did, however, assume full responsibility for organizing and implementing national reconstruction. He briefly outlined the history of that effort since the establishment of the Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR) in 1977. The Lebanese Government had originally based its reconstruction policy on the following principles: restoration of law and order in all parts of the country should not be a prerequisite for implementing the programme; the private sector should remain the principal generator of productive activity; and reconstruction should be financed largely by external loans and grants, with the Lebanese Government providing 20 to 25 per cent of the total, so that the programme could be implemented 8 to 9 years.

27. However, it had been necessary to include additional projects in the programme to deal with new destruction; at the same time, the prevailing security situation in Lebanon precluded full implementation. Furthermore, the Government did not want to delay reconstruction until all the anticipated external resources were available and consequently resorted to deficit financing. Finally, little technical assistance was provided through UNDP. The disruption of statistical services in 1975 and the consequent discontinuation of the official national income series meant that the IPF for the third UNDP programming cycle continued to be based on Lebanon's GDP for 1974, even though its current GDP was probably much less. His delegation hoped that a more realistic IPF could be used for the next cycle.

28. His Government was determined to regain sovereignty over all Lebanese territory, to deal severely with the illegal practices that had diminished its revenues, and to take appropriate steps to build the economy and confidence in the future. At no time had it halted the reconstruction programme or the financing of its projects. It had recently taken the courageous step of stopping the entry of contraband through the illegal ports that had sprung up all along the coastline; if successful, that would substantially increase internal revenues.

29. Reconstruction remained one of the Government's top priorities and he hoped that the international community would continue to provide the necessary assistance to accelerate Lebanon's recovery.

30. Ms. OOANE (Lesotho) said that the report of the Secretary-General contained all the elements which her delegation had requested at the thirty-eighth session. Because of its steadfast adherence to the principles of the Charter, Lesotho had been subjected to coercive and punitive actions which had exposed its vulnerability as a small, weak, least-developed and land-locked country that depended on, and was completely surrounded by, a militarily and economically powerful neighbour whose policies were diametrically opposed to its own.

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(Ms. Qoane, Lesotho)

31. South Africa's punitive measures over the years were all intended to pressure Lesotho into condoning the system of apartheid and it would have been very difficult for Lesotho to withstand the pressure without the support of the international community. She reviewed the evolution of the special programme of economic assistance and the subsequent accelerated development programme for her country, adding that the international community's response to emergencies in Lesotho had been very encouraging.

32. Much remained to be done, however, to place the country on a sound footing, particularly since some projects in both programmes had not yet been funded. The unfunded projects had been among those submitted to the donor's conference held in Lesotho in 1984 with UNDP assistance under the Substantial New Programme of Action. The projects were basically designed to establish a sound economic base for Lesotho which still depended heavily on South Africa for capital and consumer goods, a substantial portion of its grain supply and the employment of more than 40 per cent of its labour force.

33. While supporting the view that responsibility for economic development lay with individual Governments, she emphasized the importance of external assistance for countries with limited natural resources. Lesotho's third Five-Year Plan focused on agricultural productivity and import substitution industries, but weak economic and financial management and manpower shortages had inhibited the country's development.

34. Lesotho's agriculture had been seriously affected by prolonged drought. She expressed her gratitude to the donors who had responded to the food emergency declaration by her Prime Minister and appealed for further assistance to enable Lesotho to attain its development goals.

35. Mr. FERNANDEZ (Philippines) said that disaster relief was of special importance to the Philippines, a country prone to natural disasters, the frequency of which had led the Government to co-ordinate national and international assistance with local efforts. The primary responsibility for disaster relief lay with the disaster-stricken countries themselves. Consequently, while relief expertise should be developed at the international level, it was equally important to help promote it at the national and local levels.

36. It was reassuring to know that the international community had an efficient procedure for mobilizing and co-ordinating international relief when national efforts were inadequate. The Philippines had had occasion to receive such assistance in September 1984, when two typhoons had struck it in succession. UNDR0, UNDP, the Red Cross and UNICEF in particular had co-ordinated and mobilized the international assistance which had amounted to approximately \$8 million.

37. With regard to disaster prevention, he expressed gratitude for the co-operation extended by UNDR0 and the League of Red Cross Societies to ASEAN in its consideration proposals for establishing a regional disaster research and training centre in the Philippines. His delegation also supported the

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(Mr. Fernandez, Philippines)

Secretary-General's proposals for strengthening the capacity of the United Nations system to respond to natural disasters and other disaster situations.

38. Concerning inter-agency co-operation, his delegation believed that flexibility should be maintained with regard to the allocation of responsibilities to the various agencies. For example, agencies with representatives at the site of a disaster might represent UNDRO vis-à-vis the Governments concerned and accept their requests for assistance. In certain circumstances, it might also be desirable to designate such representatives as lead co-ordinators to co-operate with national co-ordinators.

39. In cases of disaster, greater efforts were generally made in the area of relief than that of rehabilitation. UNSO, which was involved in ambitious rehabilitation activities, was overwhelmed by desertification problems. More time should be allowed to those considering the draft convention on expediting the delivery of emergency relief (A/39/267/Add.2) and UNDRO and other international organizations active in disaster relief should participate.

40. The Philippines attached great importance to economic and humanitarian assistance to the least developed countries and to rehabilitation programmes for the Sudano-Sahelian region. It had provided assistance to those countries, particularly in Africa, within the limits of its modest resources and called for vigorous and concerted action by the international community.

41. Mr. SANGARE (Mali) said that the virtually permanent drought prevailing in his country since the farm year 1972-73 had had a disastrous impact on its agricultural sector. The past three years, particularly 1983-84, had shown a net food deficit. Famine was ravaging the northwest and east of the country and the hungry were migrating to urban centres.

42. In August 1984, his Government had appealed for international emergency assistance for the human and livestock populations. While it was too early to calculate Mali's food needs for 1985 precisely, FAO estimated them at 200,000 tonnes; further aid was thus required. Mali was doing what it could to deal with the situation but was unable to meet its needs by itself and therefore appealed to the international community for assistance.

43. Mr. YAGAO-NGAMA (Central African Republic) said that, since 1980, the General Assembly had adopted resolutions appealing to the international community to contribute to the reconstruction, rehabilitation and development of his country and thanked all those who had responded. He hoped that the General Assembly would adopt a similar resolution at the current session.

44. As a result of his Government's efforts, the national budget deficit had been reduced from 12 billion to 7 billion CFA francs in 1984. Moreover, the Government's operating expenses in 1984 had been covered by revenues, with external assistance used solely for investment. Despite the 1982-1983 drought, there had been a significant increase in agricultural production. In addition, 80 per cent

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(Mr. Yagao-Ngama, Central  
African Republic)

of the rural roads had been rehabilitated, thus facilitating the marketing of farm produce.

45. Notwithstanding such signs of recovery, his country faced enormous difficulties in implementing its socio-economic development programmes and required assistance from the international community. A round table would be organized by his Government in 1985, with the assistance of UNDP and the participation of donor countries and agencies. A conference of co-financers would also be held at Bangui in November 1984 to consider financing possibilities for five major projects.

46. Mr. ABDOUL (Chad) said that the General Assembly had for a number of years adopted resolutions appealing to the international community to provide Chad with emergency assistance and aid for its reconstruction and development. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 36/210, a pledging conference on assistance to Chad had been held at Geneva on 29 and 30 November 1982, at which his Government had put forward a programme of action and national recovery.

47. Although the outcome of the Conference in respect of emergency food assistance had been quite satisfactory, the same was not true in respect of the national economy, partly because donors were reluctant to contribute generously owing to the resumed hostilities. Chad had nevertheless shown some signs of recovery, but the situation described in the report of the Secretary-General (A/39/392) called for a continuation of special economic assistance.

48. His country, with the assistance of UNDP, would hold a round table of donors in late 1985 which would focus on its medium-term and long-term needs covering such aspects as the development of agricultural production and the diversification and processing of commodities.

49. Assistance must also be given to persons displaced by war and drought: the resettlement of hundreds of thousands who had fled their homes as a result of the drought would be a costly operation for which his Government requested special assistance.

50. Mr. EL HASSAN (Sudan), said that, according to the report of the Secretary-General on the work of UNDRO (A/39/267) there had been an increase in relief activities throughout the world. It was therefore important to increase the capacity of UNDRO to respond efficiently and rapidly to emergency situations. Among the specific areas covered in the addendum to that report (A/39/267/Add.1), his Government was very interested in the delivery of relief supplies to and within disaster-stricken countries. In Africa's case, for example, the problem was not a shortage of relief supplies but rather distribution within the stricken areas. His delegation supported the proposal of the Secretary-General to give cash grants, in addition to contributions in kind, to cover the transport and distribution of relief goods. Cash grants might also be given to representatives of donor countries and voluntary organizations to enable them to solve transport problems rapidly. His delegation also supported the Secretary-General's proposal that UNDRO

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(Mr. El Hassan, Sudan)

should ensure the necessary transition from the relief phase into the rehabilitation and reconstruction phase. With regard to the proposal that developing countries should be provided with assistance to set up administrative structures to deal with disaster preparedness and prevention, his Government had decided to establish a national commission for the co-ordination of relief operations.

51. The six countries of East Africa had agreed to convene a ministerial meeting at Djibouti in mid-January 1985 to complete arrangements for the establishment of a regional organization for combating drought. It was to be hoped that, with United Nations help and international support, they would thus be able to co-ordinate regional and national activities for that purpose.

52. Mr. de la Torre (Argentina) took the Chair.

53. Mr. FLEMING (United States of America) said that his country had a strong interest in the overall international co-ordination of disaster relief efforts in order to avoid duplication, waste and mismanagement. The development of an effective international programme to combat desertification had also been one of its priority interests since the 1977 Conference on Desertification. Implementation of the United Nations medium-term and long-term recovery and rehabilitation programme for the Sahelian region would help to raise the effectiveness of donor assistance in anti-desertification activities.

54. With regard to the remarks of the UNDRO Co-ordinator concerning the report of the Secretary-General (A/39/267), his delegation realized that the increased need for relief mobilization and co-ordination activities had repeatedly tested the capacity of UNDRO. It was gratifying that UNDRO had been able to respond to that need as a result of tighter management controls and an enhanced information system. Although it agreed that priority should be given to solving inland transport problems, his delegation was unable to take action at present on the proposed draft convention on expediting the delivery of emergency relief. Nevertheless, it welcomed the adoption by consensus in the Economic and Social Council of resolution 1984/60, which recognized the needs and importance of the UNDRO Co-ordinator, and hoped that a similar resolution would be adopted by the Committee.

55. It also concurred with the JIU recommendation on UNSO activities and urged UNSO to increase its co-ordination and collaboration with regional organizations and with other donors and to strengthen its information and technical base with a view to maintaining and improving the quality of its studies and project designs. Priority attention should be given to the maintenance of infrastructure, in accordance with the 1983 CILSS/UNSO resolution, and more collaboration was necessary to implement the improved cooking stoves programme.

56. With regard to special programmes of economic assistance for countries in need, resolutions calling the attention of the international community to such situations could help to mobilize new resources within the system. The primary

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(Mr. Fleming, United States)

concern of his delegation, however, was that the special economic assistance process should result in real resource transfers and effective programmes. Mechanisms existed within such organizations as UNDRO, UNICEF and UNDP to provide disaster relief and there was a danger that, with so many items labelled "special appeal", the phrase could begin to lose its "special" connotation.

57. Miss BROWN (Jamaica) said that, according to the report of the Secretary-General (A/39/267), requests for relief assistance had increased over the past year, which indicated that the developing countries were finding it more and more difficult to cope with emergency situations.

58. UNDRO was called upon to co-ordinate disaster assistance and, equally important, to develop infrastructure for preparedness in disaster-prone countries. While emphasis must be placed on emergency relief, her country continued to accord high priority to longer-term programmes for maintaining readiness. Recognizing that the impact of impending disasters could be lessened by accurate forecasting and efficiently co-ordinated activity, Jamaica, through its Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Relief Co-ordination, would host an international conference on disaster mitigation programmes from 12 to 16 November 1984.

59. It fully supported the operations of the Pan-Caribbean Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Project which provided assistance to some 28 countries. Jamaica's well co-ordinated national emergency relief system received valuable assistance from UNDRO and had benefited from UNDRO-sponsored workshops and seminars. She therefore reaffirmed her country's strong support for UNDRO's technical co-operation activities. While her delegation required more time to consider the draft convention on expediting the delivery of emergency relief, it supported the initiative in principle.

60. Mr. FARAH DIRIR (Djibouti) said that among the key environmental concerns of the international community were the phenomena of drought and desertification; they had assumed alarming proportions in Africa which had been suffering unprecedented environmental deterioration, for two decades.

61. Despite dedicated national, regional and international efforts to combat drought and desertification, as evidenced by the 1977 Conference on Desertification, those phenomena had continued their inexorable advance to the point that Africa was experiencing critical climatic and environmental changes, threatening the lives of millions.

62. Recurrent drought had plagued East Africa for more than a decade. In 1980 it had struck Djibouti, decimating one half of the livestock and leaving one third of the rural population without means of subsistence. The countries affected had neither the financial nor the technological means to tackle the problem by themselves. Although the Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) had achieved positive results, the crisis was too severe for one regional organization to handle.

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(Mr. Farah Dirir, Djibouti)

63. Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, the Sudan, Uganda and Djibouti had taken initial steps, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 35/90 and subsequent resolutions, to establish an intergovernmental body with the responsibility of co-ordinating and supporting the countries' efforts to combat the effects of drought and other natural disasters and to deal with the problem of medium-term and long-term recovery and rehabilitation. The arrangements would be finalized in January 1985.

64. Djibouti's precarious economic situation was being aggravated by another spell of generalized drought. His country was small, had no known resources, its agricultural development was negligible, and it had to import most of its food. A substantial proportion of the population were nomads, deriving their subsistence from livestock which was subject to the vagaries of the climate. Djibouti was also suffering from the negative impact of the international economic situation, although it had spared no effort to make maximum use of its available resources. The Government had launched an economic and social development programme for the period 1983-1989, the main goals of which were to develop Djibouti as an international maritime city, combat poverty, reduce dependence on outside sources of food, encourage industrialization and exploit geothermal energy.

65. As his Government could not accomplish those objectives by itself, it had convened a donors' conference in November 1983 which had been attended by 39 countries and 46 international organizations and he trusted that the bilateral and multilateral pledges and commitments made at that conference would be honoured.

66. Mr. HAMBAYI (Zambia) said that the frequent natural disasters of recent years had retarded economic and social progress, with a consequent increase in human suffering, but international awareness of the need for co-operative international action to counter them was encouraging. Considering the limited resources at its disposal, UNDRO was doing a commendable job.

67. The input contributed by various international organizations to any disaster relief operation should be co-ordinated by a single agency, and his delegation therefore supported measures for enhancing UNDRO's operations in regard to disaster relief co-ordination and disaster preparedness, prevention and information. Because the timely delivery of relief assistance was necessary to avoid loss of life and undue suffering, the international community, and Member States in particular, should remove impediments to the expeditious movement of relief assistance. Accordingly, his delegation supported the general principles of the draft convention on expediting the delivery of emergency relief (A/39/267/Add.2).

68. Lastly, attention must also be paid to the prompt preparation of plans for economic recovery and reconstruction following a natural disaster, which called for co-ordinated action by the Governments of the countries concerned, the specialized agencies and the international community as a whole.

The meeting rose at 6.35 p.m.