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Item 7 (c) of the provisional agenda

Third United Nations Development Decade

In accordance with Resolution 76(VI), adopted during ECWA's sixth session, which was held in Baghdad, Iraq, between 28 April and 2 May 1979, it was requested that an Intergovernmental Committee of Development Experts from the member States of ECWA be set up for the purpose of preparing, in collaboration with the secretariat of the Commission, a report on the views of the ECWA region on the International Development Strategy for the Third Development Decade.

Subsequently, a meeting of Government Development Experts was convened in Beirut, Lebanon, between 29 and 31 August 1979, in order to enable the Executive Secretary of ECWA to make available the contribution of the Commission to the Preparatory Committee of the General Assembly entrusted with the preparation of a draft strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade at its meetings in September 1979. Present at the meeting were delegates of the following member States of ECWA: The State of Bahrain, the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Republic of Iraq, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the State of Kuwait, the Republic of Lebanon and the United Arab Emirates. Also present were representatives from a number of United Nations organizations and specialized agencies, and from regional and governmental organizations.

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The Executive Secretary of ECWA made a statement in which he welcomed the distinguished delegates and pointed out the important place which the Meeting of Government Development Experts occupied in the elaboration of the New International Development Strategy for the eighties. The meeting was a major link, he stressed, in the series of activities which different United Nations organizations were carrying out in that regard. Then, the Chief of the Development Planning Division of ECWA made a statement in which he reviewed the evolution of the International Development Strategy at the United Nations and the emerging developments which gave the Strategy for the Third Development Decade a new look and a special significance. He then made a brief presentation of the efforts that were being made within the United Nations system towards the preparation of the new Development Strategy.

The draft working paper that the ECWA secretariat prepared for that Meeting on "Development Strategy for the ECWA Region in the Third United Nations Development Decade" was presented to the Committee for discussion. This paper contained ideas on the objectives and strategy of development in the region of the Economic Commission for Western Asia during the Third Development Decade, drawn from the analysis of the current and recent economic situation, and the study of development trends in the second decade and earlier, concentrating primarily on the qualitative aspects of the analysis, with reference, whenever needed, to quantitative aspects.

The Committee held several meetings in which it discussed the different sections of the draft working paper. These meetings generated a number of observations and proposals to develop the working paper further and to put it into final form as a statement of the views of the States of the region. The Committee also adopted a number of recommendations concerning the International Development Strategy and requested the ECWA secretariat to submit them to the Preparatory Committee of the General Assembly at its meeting in September 1979, supplemented by the final working paper.

The main elements of the strategy for the Third Development Decade in the ECWA region, as proposed by the Committee, covered inter alia (a) accelerating GDP growth rates in agricultural and industrial production, with a view to enhancing structural changes (i.e., external trade patterns, industrial sector,

agricultural sector and services) necessary for development; (b) building an integrated industrial base capable of supporting sustained development and self-reliance through the establishment of new industrial projects, in which the region has a definite comparative advantage, and expanding existing ones to include all stages of the industrial process and provide the highest value added and employment opportunities possible; (c) asserting national sovereignty over domestic natural resources, and control over all stages of the industrialization process; (d) increasing agricultural productivity and production in order to ensure food security and alleviate food deficits; and (e) stimulating intraregional and interregional transactions and formulating commercial and financial policies and measures designed to catch up with the deterioration in exchange values and external indebtedness, and link the prices of imported manufactured goods to exported raw materials. Thus, the International Strategy should aim, inter alia, at affecting basic reform in the patterns of commercial exchange between developed and developing countries. It should also embody recognition of the principle of preferential treatment for industrial goods manufactured by developing countries.

The ECWA secretariat acted upon the request of the Committee and submitted to the Preparatory Committee of the General Assembly, in September 1979, the Development Strategy for the Region of the Economic Commission for Western Asia in the Third United Nations Development Decade prepared by the Committee of Government Development Experts.

The Committee for Development Planning (CDP), an advisory body to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), met in New York between 7 and 16 January 1980 and deliberated on the general principles and basic objectives of an International Strategy for the Third Development Decade. The priority areas for action were set to include agriculture (food, nutrition and trade); industry and trade, energy; financial and monetary issues; science and technology; education, health, employment and population; and disarmament.

After the International Strategy for the Third Development Decade is formulated and the ECWA Governments translate these targets into their own specific development priorities and objectives, the ECWA secretariat may be invited to monitor the

implementation of the member countries' development performances. In particular, the ECWA secretariat may be called upon to advise the Governments in relation to issues having important bearing on the Region: the problems of petrodollar recycling, including production and investment policies; conflict between accelerated economic development and preservation of traditional values; major regional development issues and bottlenecks, such as the scarcity of skilled and high-level manpower and the paucity of scientific and technological know-how; intraregional migration; and anti-desertification.

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