

quired serious consideration. Transport difficulties had not yet been fully solved. The encroachment of the desert should be halted and desert land reclaimed. It was encouraging that the Special Sahelian Office had begun operations under the dynamic leadership of the Under-Secretary-General for Political and General Assembly Affairs. He asked for clarification regarding the recipient of the funds earmarked for rental of premises for the Special Sahelian Office in paragraph 20 of document A/9178, as it was his impression that the Secretariat could provide the facilities required. His delegation supported the draft resolution under consideration.

43. Mr. PAUL (Haiti) said that his delegation was pleased at the response of the international community to the plight of the drought victims and hoped that assistance would continue to be provided.

44. Mr. ZACHMANN (German Democratic Republic) said that his Government was sending high-quality food-stuffs and medicine, for which 4.1 million marks had been allocated, to Mali, the Upper Volta, Senegal and the Niger, in accordance with the request of the Secretary-General, and Economic and Social Council resolutions 1759 (LIV) and 1797 (LV).

45. The implementation of the proposal of the USSR that the military budgets of States permanent members of the Security Council should be reduced by 10 per cent and part of the funds thus saved should be utilized to provide assistance to developing countries would instantly provide funds for economic assistance, in the first instance, to countries afflicted by natural disasters. The proposal could therefore have a positive impact on the countries of the Sudano-Sahelian region.

46. His delegation was in general agreement with the main aims and suggestions of the draft resolution.

47. Mr. AL-EBRAHIM (Kuwait) expressed the hope that action to meet the needs of the afflicted area would continue. Natural disasters disrupted national de-

velopment plans and caused the gross national product to decline. It was the duty of all countries to alleviate the consequences of natural disasters. The United Nations initiative was commendable and should continue, for the Organization was the appropriate channel for organizing relief activities.

48. Mr. LAHLOU (Morocco) said that the Government and people of Morocco were deeply saddened by the effects of the drought in Africa and, although the disaster had affected Morocco's own crops, it had provided food aid within the limits of its capacity. Man should strive to conquer the forces of nature. His delegation wished to join the list of sponsors of the draft resolution.

49. Mr. VERCELES (Philippines) said that his delegation's full support for the draft resolution stemmed from its sympathy for the victims of natural disasters, to which the Philippines was also vulnerable. He commended the international community on its admirable response to the disasters which had struck the Sudano-Sahelian region and Pakistan a few months earlier.

50. The draft resolution was the most comprehensive of all those dealing with natural disasters. The United Nations, the specialized agencies and the countries concerned must co-ordinate their efforts and adopt a comprehensive approach in order to ensure that assistance produced maximum effect, particularly in the case of aid to the least developed countries, where various United Nations agencies had already launched projects.

51. He proposed that the names of the six affected countries—Chad, Mali, Mauritania, the Niger, Senegal and the Upper Volta—should be inserted after the words "Sudano-Sahelian region" in the first preambular paragraph of the draft resolution.

The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.

1532nd meeting

Thursday, 11 October 1973, at 10.50 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Zewde GABRE-SELLASSIE (Ethiopia).

A/C.2/SR.1532

In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Arvesen (Norway) took the Chair.

AGENDA ITEM 101

Consideration of the economic and social situation in the Sudano-Sahelian region stricken by drought and measures to be taken for the benefit of that region (continued) (A/9178, A/C.2/L.1290 and Corr.1)

1. The CHAIRMAN announced that the draft resolution (A/C.2/L.1290 and Corr.1) before the Committee was now sponsored by the following countries: Algeria, Argentina, Brazil, Chad, Colombia, Egypt, Gambia, Guatemala, Haiti, Indonesia, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Libyan Arab Republic, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Senegal, Sudan, Tunisia, Upper Volta and Yugoslavia.

2. Mr. MALHAN (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) said that, by the very nature of its competence, UNESCO's involvement in the drought problem in the Sudanese-Sahelian region would be in the medium-term and long-term activities. However, UNESCO, which had for the past 20 years been involved in the problems of arid and semi-arid territories surrounding the Sahara, also envisaged a number of research programmes on hydrological problems such as floods and droughts. A study of water resources in Chad had been conducted under UNDP financing, and a project concerned with the impact of human activities and of land use practices in semi-arid areas was being implemented in close co-operation with FAO.

3. In the field of social sciences, he mentioned a medium-term project related to interdisciplinary and

cross-national research on rural development and urbanization. Those two themes were of the utmost importance for the countries of the Sahel. A long-term project was to create a centre for co-ordination of social science research and documentation for Africa south of the Sahara; the centre, which would probably start functioning in 1974, would co-ordinate the ongoing social science research projects and initiate new ones. Some of those projects might be devoted to the specific problems of the countries of the Sahel, such as the process of social transformation from the nomadic to the sedentary way of life of the people living in that area.

4. But it was primarily in the field of applied research that UNESCO, particularly through the mechanisms of its international research programmes, could bring a useful contribution to the study and mitigation of the drought problem in the Sahel. Most of the problems encountered in the management of the semi-arid lands of the Sahel region were due to a lack of understanding of the complex interactions which took place in that very fragile ecosystem when traditional methods of land use were modified through imported technological developments. The central problem of the Sahelian region was therefore one of management of grazing lands under fluctuating climatic conditions, in a particular social, economic and cultural context.

5. UNESCO's involvement would concentrate on the following elements: implementation of the Intergovernmental Programme on Man and the Biosphere at the subregional level of the Sahel region, scientific assessment of available water resources, completion of certain ongoing projects concerning soil and hydrogeological maps, participation in further agro-climatological studies, socio-cultural studies to identify possibilities for requisite modifications in ecosystem management, and initiation of a number of projects in the field of education and training.

6. Mr. SHEMIRANI (Iran) noted with satisfaction that the international community seemed to appreciate the vital importance of mobilizing all its resources to help the countries of the Sahel. The problem of chronic drought in that region could be solved only by long-term measures, and he noted with satisfaction that that point had been taken into account in the programmes initiated by the United Nations and in the draft resolution before the Committee, particularly operative paragraphs 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10. His country had participated in the assistance efforts to the extent that its means allowed, and his delegation wished to become a sponsor of the draft resolution, which merited unanimous approval.

7. Mr. KUEN (Austria) said that his Government had been following developments in the Sahel with great concern. He was glad to learn that considerable efforts had already been exerted in order to bring relief to the population of the countries concerned. In reply to the appeal of the President of the Economic and Social Council, his Government had decided to contribute 3.2 million Austrian schillings, or approximately \$180,000, to the FAO trust fund and also to join in the European assistance programme to be initiated at the end of October. Where medium-term and long-term measures were concerned, the Austrian Government would study with great care the programme which had been

outlined to the Second Committee by the Minister of Agriculture of the Upper Volta.

8. As to the draft resolution under consideration, his delegation was in agreement with the main thrust of its provisions and hoped that it would be possible to arrive at a text which could be unanimously adopted.

9. Mr. WRIGSTAD (Sweden) said that his delegation had listened with great interest to the statements by the President of the Republic (2145th plenary meeting) and the Minister of Agriculture of the Upper Volta. The magnitude of the catastrophe in the Sudano-Sahelian region required an effective and co-ordinated action of the international community. He had been encouraged to learn about the response of many countries to the appeals for emergency relief measures. For its part, the Swedish Government had provided for assistance an amount of 8 million Swedish kronor—approximately \$2 million—of which 7 million kronor had been put at the disposal of the Director-General of FAO.

10. But equally as important as the short-term measures was the planning for medium-term and long-term assistance in order to prevent similar catastrophes in the future and gradually rehabilitate the economies of the different countries in the region. The Swedish Government was carefully studying the information it had received regarding that planning and the arrangements being worked out under the dynamic leadership of the Under-Secretary-General for Political and General Assembly Affairs. It was the opinion of his delegation that efforts should be made to secure close co-ordination between the Office for the Sahelian Relief Operation and the Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel and it was gratifying to note that discussions were going on regarding the relations between those two bodies.

11. His delegation was favourably disposed towards the draft resolution and hoped that the final wording would be adopted unanimously.

12. Mr. GEBRU (Ethiopia) noted with satisfaction that the catastrophic situation in the Sahelian region had been contained through the relief operation carried out by the organizations of the United Nations system. He also welcomed the establishment of a Special Sahelian Office under the supervision of the Under-Secretary-General for Political and General Assembly Affairs with the objective of formulating medium-term and long-term programmes for the region. If the programmes were implemented on a co-ordinated basis, the long-term drought problem affecting the region could be solved. Since 4 out of the 6 countries concerned belonged to the 25 hard-core least developed among the developing countries,¹ he agreed with the representative of the Philippines that there should be co-ordination between the drought-oriented projects and the projects under the action programme in favour of the less developed countries, and indeed he felt that the medium-term and long-term programmes should be integrated with the action programme so as to economize and to avoid duplication.

13. He was gratified to note that the international community had spared no effort in providing humanitarian assistance, but commitment to assistance should also be accompanied by the political will to

¹ See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Fifty-first Session, Supplement No. 7*, para. 66.

enhance the sustained economic development of the countries concerned, in accordance with the principle of collective economic security.

14. In conclusion, he commended the organizations of the United Nations system for the work they had done and said that he supported the draft resolution.

15. Mr. RANKIN (Canada) said that he had himself witnessed a terrible drought in the Province of Saskatchewan before the Second World War. It was true that climatic conditions had been largely responsible for the catastrophe, but the unwise agricultural practices of the farmers of the area had also contributed to it. Canada had at that time realized the need for long-term measures to prevent a recurrence of such a disaster. Trees had been planted to prevent wind erosion and new varieties of seed had been introduced, with the result that Saskatchewan once again had a thriving economy. The experience which Canada had gained from those events could be of use to other countries finding themselves in the same situation.

16. In his address before the General Assembly on the previous day, the President of the Republic of the Upper Volta had clearly identified the need for action on the part of the international community to assist the countries of the region to recover from the drought in the near term, and to build an adequate infrastructure to combat future occurrences of that kind in the future. The Canadian Government had thus far provided the equivalent of \$10 million in total assistance and would continue to do all it could to provide for requirements of food, medical supplies and transport facilities in the region. Canada's contribution for 1974 would be based on the conclusions of the report of the FAO mission which was at present in the Sahel.

17. The international community could not rest satisfied with the emergency relief efforts undertaken in respect of the Sahel. The focus of its continuing attention must be the medium-term and long-term programmes for rehabilitation and infrastructure development. It was essential that its efforts should be closely co-ordinated to make the assistance provided as effective as possible; at the heart of co-ordination efforts was the participation of the Permanent Inter-State Committee. However, international efforts, while concentrating on the six countries of the Sahelian region, should not exclude consideration of the neighbouring countries also affected by the drought. The priorities established by recipient countries should provide the framework for assistance from the international community. While he appreciated the actions which had been taken by the United Nations to co-ordinate relief activities and medium-term and long-term activities, he believed that, in view of the importance of harmonizing activities not only among donors but also between them and the recipients, some co-ordinating machinery should be established, having its location in Africa and enjoying the participation of the agencies and organizations of the United Nations system, particularly UNDP.

18. In that spirit, the Canadian Government was ready to assist the Permanent Inter-State Committee to fulfil its co-ordinating role by providing it, if requested, with technical assistance for that purpose.

19. The Canadian International Development Agency was now preparing a number of programmes of

medium-term and long-term action for the Sahelian zone and was studying a number of projects which had been submitted to it by the Permanent Inter-State Committee. The projects concerned water resources and dams, development of farm and cattle production, improvement of transport systems and staving off the encroachment of the desert.

20. The Canadian delegation had studied the draft resolution with interest, and hoped that it would become the basis for a consensus and for further international action.

21. Mr. OFWONO (Uganda) said that the note by the Secretary-General (A/9178) had clearly brought out the problems facing the six countries of the Sudano-Sahelian region. Without a concerted effort by the international community, the situation could only worsen. Only a long-term programme of activities would prevent similar disasters in the future. Although drought was a chronic phenomenon in the Sahelian region, it appeared that the international community and the States concerned had been unable to adopt the necessary precautionary measures.

22. The cost of the short-term and long-term programme outlined by the six countries was in the region of \$1,000 million. That, in his delegation's view, was not an ambitious estimate. However, judging from voluntary contributions so far received, one could not be very optimistic about the volume of assistance which the countries of the region could receive and no doubt they would have to depend on their own efforts.

23. His delegation welcomed the establishment of the Permanent Inter-State Committee and of the Special Sahelian Office. It supported the draft resolution and would like to place particular emphasis on operative paragraph 6 because, if the countries concerned were not allowed to suspend the payment of their financial obligations, they would be unable to undertake the rehabilitation of their economies. For that reason, his delegation urged the French and United Kingdom delegations to accept the inclusion of paragraph 6 in the draft resolution, particularly since the measures outlined in that paragraph would be only provisional. Finally, he expressed the hope that the draft resolution would be unanimously adopted.

24. Mr. FERGUSON (United States of America) said that, in his statement to the General Assembly, the President of the Republic of the Upper Volta had spoken eloquently of the ravages caused by the drought in the countries of the Sahel and of the struggle those countries were waging for their survival.

25. The Government of the United States would continue to support the effort undertaken by the countries concerned and by international organizations to respond to the threat of famine and to begin the task of rebuilding. For that purpose, the United States Government had so far provided to the six countries of the Sahel assistance amounting to more than \$47 million, including \$40 million worth of food. That aid would continue and the United States Congress now had before it a bill calling for the allocation of an additional \$30 million for the Sahel.

26. However, relief assistance was not enough; attention must also be given to the economic rehabilitation of the countries concerned and their long-term development. Attention must also be paid to the protection of

natural resources, such as land and water, which were so crucial to development.

27. The United States Government had requested the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to undertake a systematic analysis of development options in the region. The results would be published in 1974.

28. An operation of the magnitude demanded by the circumstances could not be successful without effective co-ordination. Co-ordination implied co-operation and hence the establishment of the Permanent Inter-State Committee was a welcome sign. In addition, co-ordination was needed among donors, as well as between donors and recipients. The United Nations machinery which had been made responsible for co-ordinating the relief activities would be tested to determine whether it could really respond to the economic and social problems resulting from national disasters. His delegation therefore urged all Member States and all agencies to co-operate to the fullest with each other.

29. The Sahelian countries, once the crisis was over, would have to face the task of continuing their development in very difficult conditions. The United States Government pledged itself to participate to the full in the medium-term and long-term effort and saluted the courage and dignity constantly shown by the peoples of the region.

30. Mr. SCHWARTZ (Spain) said he was encouraged by the solidarity shown by the international community in providing emergency assistance to the countries of the Sahel. The community must now do everything possible, within a programme of medium-term and long-term measures, to help those countries rehabilitate their economies and avoid a repetition of such a catastrophe, as the Under-Secretary-General for Political and General Assembly Affairs and the representatives of the Upper Volta had pointed out. For its part, the Spanish Government was prepared to take part in such a programme.

31. His delegation supported the draft resolution which seemed an important and balanced document likely to facilitate the provision of the necessary aid to the countries of the Sahel. However, the wording of certain passages could be improved, particularly so as to dispel the doubts that might arise regarding their real meaning.

32. Mr. ROUGET (Federal Republic of Germany) said that his delegation had listened with keen interest to the statements made both in the Assembly and in the Second Committee on the situation in the Sudano-Sahelian region. He wished to take the opportunity to inform the Committee of the contributions which the Federal Republic of Germany had made or would make towards the solution of the short-term, medium-term and long-term problems of the region. The total contribution of the Federal Republic of Germany, including participation in the assistance provided by EEC, amounted to more than \$40 million, not counting the cost of the aircraft provided to transport goods to the drought-stricken areas. Part of the bilateral assistance had been channelled through FAO and his Government had also decided to contribute 1.8 million marks to the FAO trust fund. Furthermore, it was prepared to assist the Permanent Inter-State Committee in establishing the necessary organizational and administrative facilities by making available to it an amount of up to \$400,000.

33. The Minister for Economic Co-operation of the Federal Republic of Germany, Mr. Eppler, had visited the Upper Volta and the Niger, where he had been informed of the priorities set by the six States. The Government of the Federal Republic of Germany recognized the validity of the priorities which had been decided upon and would do their utmost to support the efforts to be made. It had already agreed to grant the Upper Volta and the Niger credits amounting to 20 million marks for each country, payable in 1973. The countries concerned could buy equipment in any country they wished. The Government of the Federal Republic of Germany was already supporting the programme launched under the leadership of WHO for the control of onchocerciasis.

34. With regard to the draft resolution under consideration, his delegation wished to associate itself with the remarks made by the representatives of France and the United Kingdom at the preceding meeting. The text of paragraph 6 should be reworded in order to make it more acceptable to a number of delegations. Furthermore, in order to bring paragraph 10 more into line with paragraph 8, he suggested that it might begin thus: "Requests the Governing Council of the United Nations Environmental Programme . . .".

35. Mr. HARTNACK (Denmark) said that the situation in the Sudano-Sahelian region was very grave. The Danish Government whole-heartedly supported the appeals for assistance made to the international community during the spring and summer of 1973. The plea of the Director-General of FAO and those contained in Economic and Social Council resolutions 1759 (LIV) and 1797 (LV) had focused due attention on the seriousness of the situation and on the need for immediate and long-term assistance. Fortunately, the international response to those appeals had been both extensive and prompt. In May 1973 the Danish Government had decided to make a special emergency contribution of 1 million kroner to FAO's assistance programme. That initial contribution had been followed by a further payment of 1 million kroner in July. Those contributions were in addition to the Danish Government's regular contribution to WFP. Sums which had not yet been utilized had been or would be given to Senegal, Chad, the Upper Volta and the Niger through the regular Danish Development Aid Programme as a contribution to the medium-term and long-term programme. Also, contributions had been made by private Danish organizations and by the European Development Fund, and the Commission of EEC had proposed making a substantial food contribution amounting to \$51 million.

36. However, in order to be able to restore conditions as they were a few years previously, concerted and well-organized efforts were essential. The services established under the auspices of the Secretary-General and under the supervision of the Under-Secretary-General for Political and General Assembly Affairs represented an important step forward in the field of co-ordination. The Danish Government agreed that co-ordination and organization should take place within existing international bodies.

37. It was to be hoped that the immediate problems of the Sahelian region would soon be solved but, as had already been pointed out, the fundamental problem was to make the deserts and other arid areas habitable. The

international community should not lose sight of that goal.

38. His delegation could support the draft resolution and hoped that certain amendments could be made to it so that it could be adopted by consensus.

39. Mr. FRANCK (Belgium) said that, in the face of the Sahelian tragedy, Belgium, like many other countries, had tried, to the full extent of its resources, to make as practical as possible a contribution to the great movement of solidarity which had been displayed in favour of the Sahelian people.

40. In an effort to make its assistance as effective as possible, the Belgian Government had co-operated closely with the Permanent Inter-State Committee, the local authorities, FAO, EEC and the representatives of the European Development Fund. No doubt, the lack of pre-existing co-ordination machinery had been a serious handicap in the initial stage, but the arrangements now made were satisfactory. The Belgian Government had tried to co-ordinate its action with that of non-governmental organizations assisting development, both Belgian and international. Belgium's participation in the relief effort would be followed by a contribution to the medium-term and long-term projects intended for the benefit of the Sahelian peoples.

41. His delegation viewed with sympathy the general aim of the draft resolution but wondered whether paragraph 6, concerning the financial obligations of the countries concerned, really reflected the contractual nature of the relations envisaged. It felt that the text should be amended in order to make that clearer.

Mr. Gabre-Sellassie (Ethiopia) took the Chair.

42. Mr. SHIRAMANGA (Burundi) said he associated himself with the representatives who had supported the draft resolution (A/C.2/L.1290 and Corr.1). There was no point in describing further the extent of the disaster. The survival of millions of human beings was at stake and he welcomed the results already obtained through international solidarity. The supplies, medicaments and money which had been distributed to the population had enabled the number of victims to be reduced.

43. Problems still remained for 1973-1974 because of the uncertainty about the results of the coming harvest. It was therefore possible that further short-term aid would be necessary. However, in order to avoid a renewal of the disaster, the economies of the interested countries must be rehabilitated with the help of the international community. The programme adopted by the Ministers of the six Sahelian countries, at their meeting from 7 to 10 September 1973 at Ouagadougou, was substantial in terms of financial resources, but its serious and realistic approach was admirable also, for it sought to regain lost ground and to organize the prevention of disasters in the future. The appeal must therefore be heard with generosity by the countries of the whole world who should respond to it to the full extent of their possibilities.

44. The international financial institutions had shown great understanding. UNDP had described the work it had done in the region and his delegation urged it to adjust its plans, because at the time when they had been made, the situation had been quite different and the order of priorities had changed. The World Bank, in turn, had granted a favourable loan through IDA and was planning flexible measures for the six countries.

45. Some delegations had expressed the view in connexion with the draft resolution that problems existed with regard to the payment of the external debts of the stricken countries. It should be noted that what the draft resolution sought was not the cancellation of the debts, but merely that payment should be deferred until such time as the economies of the countries concerned recovered. Those countries were among the least developed of the developing countries and some of them were land-locked; it was for that reason that specially favourable measures were required. His delegation supported the draft resolution.

46. Mr. HAMID (Sudan) said that the problem of desert encroachment needed to be tackled as a matter of urgency. As the Sudanese Minister for Foreign Affairs had stated before the General Assembly on 5 October (2142nd plenary meeting), it was not a short-term ecological problem or even a problem which affected the region of the Sahel alone; it prevailed throughout the region extending from Senegal on the west to Ethiopia and Somalia on the east.

47. The draft resolution outlined all the factors of the situation. By supporting it unanimously, the international community would be expressing its solidarity with the six countries of the Sudano-Sahelian region.

48. His delegation found the note by the Secretary-General (A/9178) satisfactory. The choice of Mr. Morse to co-ordinate the activities of the United Nations system was an excellent one. The FAO, too, deserved the highest praise for the way in which it had co-ordinated emergency relief.

49. Although the Sudan itself had not been entirely spared, it had made an effort to contribute to the relief. It had concluded with Chad a co-operation agreement under which it would give Chad nationals technical training which should help that country to organize its livestock disease control campaign successfully. It had donated 1,000 tons of sorghum to Chad and Mauritania, and arranged for the transport and delivery of the sorghum to Chad. It was also planning to exempt from customs duty sorghum purchases by UNDP for its relief operations.

50. Mr. GARCIA BELAUNDE (Peru) said that only a few years earlier Peru had been hit by earthquakes which had caused 80,000 deaths. It had still not fully recovered from that disaster. At the time, however, international solidarity had manifested itself in generous assistance which had facilitated the rebuilding of the Peruvian economy. The countries of the Sahel had a similar need for international solidarity and the generosity of Governments.

51. The purpose of the draft resolution was not only to deal with the immediate needs, but to attack the root of the evil. It was a particularly propitious time for the international community to shoulder its responsibilities and contribute to the general development of the region. His delegation had decided to become a sponsor of the draft resolution, and hoped it would be adopted unanimously.

52. Mr. VAN GORKOM (Netherlands) said that the response of the international community to the appeal of the Economic and Social Council had been quick and, in the circumstances, successful, since its intervention had reduced the loss of life and property. Tribute should be paid to the Governments of the six

countries concerned and, among aid-giving agencies, to FAO above all. His Government had contributed to the relief operations both bilaterally and through FAO and EEC.

53. The emergency phase over, the medium-term and long-term requirements of the countries concerned had to be assessed. To that end, the causes of the disaster should be investigated and efforts made to prevent its recurrence. It should be borne in mind at all times that the primary responsibility for long-term rehabilitation and development, and for the co-ordination of external assistance rested with the Governments concerned. Those Governments had, in fact, fully assumed that responsibility at the Conference of the Heads of State of the six countries affected by drought, held at Ouagadougou on 11 and 12 September, as the establishment of the Permanent Inter-State Committee and the drawing-up of a first list of medium-term and long-term national and subregional projects to overcome the causes of the drought showed.

54. Whatever institutional or other arrangements the six countries might make, the assistance to be provided to them should fit in with existing development plans. The United Nations, and in particular UNDP, FAO, the World Bank Group and other specialized agencies, could and should play an important role in the assessment and long-term rehabilitation phase. His delegation hoped that the United Nations co-ordination machinery, particularly the Special Sahelian Office, would ensure a well co-ordinated approach, and it would be particularly interested in seeing how, in due course, the responsibility for the implementation of projects was turned over to other United Nations organizations and programmes. UNDP might well prove to be the best qualified agency to provide co-ordination in view of the presence in the area of the resident representatives, who could supervise the formulation and execution of projects. Close co-operation would be required with the European Development Fund and IBRD. The list of medium-term and long-term national and subregional projects drawn up by the Permanent Inter-State Committee should serve as the point of departure for the efforts of the organizations of the United Nations system. Those projects should be incorporated into the national country programmes and existing regional programmes. As far as the financing of those projects was concerned, his delegation would prefer the use of existing funds and programmes, such as the European Development Fund, the World Bank and the African Development Bank, UNDP and, possibly in the near future, the United Nations Capital Development Fund.

55. Mr. KONGSIRI (Thailand) said that the suffering of the countries of the Sudano-Sahelian region was doubly hard in that four of them fell within the category of the least developed of the developing countries. His delegation had been relieved to learn that some rain had recently fallen. Thanks to the commendable measures taken by the international community, the situation was not as critical as it had earlier been. However, there was still much to be done, and it was to be hoped that the measures to be taken with a view to avoiding an emergency situation in 1974 would be fully supported by Member States and be successful.

56. The draft resolution covered medium-term and long-term measures. His delegation attached special importance to paragraph 8, which requested the Gov-

erning Council of UNDP to give high priority during the 1970s to regional development programmes directly or indirectly concerned with the drought problem, because many countries, including Thailand, were suffering from the same scourge.

57. His delegation supported the general thrust and aims of the draft resolution. Moreover, his Government had recently decided to contribute \$10,000 to the FAO trust fund for relief operations in the Sahel, in response to the appeals made in Economic and Social Council resolutions 1759 (LIV) and 1797 (LV) and by the Director-General of FAO.

58. Mr. AL-TAJIR (United Arab Emirates) said that the tragedy which had struck the Sudano-Sahelian region was of great concern to his Government, which pledged its support to any international effort to solve that grave problem. His Government had announced at the Conference of Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Countries at Algiers (5-9 September) that it would contribute \$3 million for the rehabilitation of the region.

59. His delegation was a sponsor of the draft resolution and hoped it would be adopted unanimously.

60. Mr. ELIASHIV (Israel) said that his delegation fully supported the programme of action and priorities in favour of people threatened with famine and malnutrition.

61. His country had made a contribution to the special trust fund set up by FAO and had supplied direct aid, in the form of expert services in the sphere of forestry and the development of water resources. Israel had acquired considerable experience in those fields because of its own harsh geographical conditions.

62. Mr. CAVAGLIERI (Italy) said that his country had taken immediate practical measures to aid the countries of the Sudano-Sahelian region. Medicines, vaccines and food-stuffs had been shipped to Ouagadougou; two aircraft and a helicopter had been used to transport the goods and his country had given financial assistance through FAO and EEC.

63. His delegation had noted with appreciation the close co-operation between the Governments of the six countries, and approved the action taken by FAO and the United Nations in New York and at Ouagadougou to co-ordinate the assistance provided by the institutions of the United Nations system. The summary of that action given in the Secretary-General's note (A/9178) was eloquent, and all future efforts deserved encouragement.

64. His delegation therefore looked favourably on the draft resolution before the Committee. It agreed with a large part of its contents, but felt that certain assistance measures could only be considered at the request of the Governments concerned, and could only be undertaken through direct agreements. That comment applied in particular to paragraphs 5 and 6 of the draft resolution, which required clearer and more precise language.

65. Mr. AL-KHUDHAIRY (Iraq) noted with satisfaction that the concerted efforts of the international community had borne fruit and that the lot of the Sudano-Sahelian population was being bettered. Iraq, for its part, had participated in what had been done by making a financial contribution in response to the appeal issued by FAO. While the collective efforts of the

countries affected by the drought, as well as the programmes undertaken under United Nations auspices to remedy the effects of the disaster, were welcome, his delegation could not help but be uneasy at the long-term prospects of finding remedies for such natural disasters. In its view, stress should be placed on medium-term and long-term measures, the success of which would rest essentially on the willingness of the rich countries to contribute, in cash and in kind. In that context, it was to be hoped that proposal made by the Soviet Union at the 2126th plenary meeting for a reduction of the military budgets of States permanent members of the Security Council by 10 per cent and utilization of part of the funds thus saved to provide assistance to developing countries would be adopted by the developed countries.

66. Natural disasters of the type which had afflicted the Sudano-Sahelian region were not confined to that region alone; in the Arab countries, for example, the desert was continually encroaching. His delegation therefore proposed an amendment to the draft resolution involving the addition in paragraph 10 of the words "and other areas with similar geographical conditions" after the words "countries bordering on the Sahara". He hoped that the sponsors would accept that amendment, and his delegation would like to become a sponsor of the draft resolution.

67. Mr. YUSUF (Nigeria) said that the drought which had struck the Sudano-Sahelian zone was in fact not confined to the six countries most often mentioned. Indeed, there was hardly a country in the western part of Africa which had not been affected in one way or another. For example, the southern region of Nigeria had also been afflicted by drought, which had had catastrophic effects on stockbreeding and agriculture.

68. Nevertheless, despite its own difficulties, Nigeria had offered a modest financial contribution to the neighbouring countries as part of the emergency assistance effort. The current need was for medium-term and long-term measures, and Nigeria associated itself with the appeal to the international community to co-operate fully with the Secretary-General in the implementation of the plan described in his note (A/9178). That international co-operation was all the more necessary in that most of the countries in the region were members of the group of least developed countries, and therefore needed special assistance. It was encouraging to note that those countries had taken immediate steps to set up a Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel, and all United Nations efforts should be co-ordinated and synchronized with the activities of that Committee. Finally, his delegation wished to become a sponsor of the draft resolution.

69. Mr. OGISO (Japan) said he deeply sympathized with the peoples and Governments of the countries affected by drought. Thanks to the praiseworthy efforts of Governments, in particular those of the affected countries themselves, and of international organizations, in particular FAO, the worst was now over. For its part, the Japanese Government had made a contribution of approximately \$1 million through the special Office for the Sahelian Relief Operation. It felt that it would now be appropriate to assess needs for 1974, and that the report by the multi-donor mission sponsored by FAO would be very useful for that purpose.

70. Medium-term and long-term activities would be extremely important not only to avoid a recurrence of the situation, but also in the whole context of the development of the Sudano-Sahelian region. Development planning should therefore include measures to prevent natural disasters.

71. His delegation felt that the expertise of UNDP and ECA should be made full use of in implementing the projects agreed on by the Meeting of Ministers of the six Sahelian countries at Ouagadougou. The process of rehabilitating the region must be a part of development programmes, which required great emphasis on rural and regional development.

72. His delegation hoped that the draft resolution could be adopted by consensus, and that the sponsors could study carefully the comments made by various delegations, in particular those of France and the United Kingdom, on paragraph 6.

73. Mr. SIDDIQ (Afghanistan) welcomed the effectiveness of the assistance rendered by the United Nations organizations to the countries in the Sudano-Sahelian region, and he felt it should continue. Afghanistan, which had a few years previously experienced a similar disaster, was aware of all its effects and wished to convey its profound sympathy to the populations affected.

74. His delegation supported the draft resolution, and hoped that it would be adopted unanimously, so that the countries afflicted by drought could be given long-term assistance which would enable them to overcome that crisis.

75. Mr. MBÉDO (Central African Republic) said that the international community should henceforth abandon the attitude which meant that it acted only after disasters had occurred, instead of forestalling them. In the present instance, numerous warnings had been given by scientific circles. Experts had in fact shown that in the region under consideration the desert was advancing at a rate of two kilometres a year, and that every year an area equal to Switzerland was transformed into desert. As far back as 1962, FAO had been warning against the conditions which caused soil erosion, the disappearance of water and finally the death of animals and men. However, Governments and international organizations had not heeded that alarm, and not until the disaster had occurred had the machinery finally been put into operation. Fortunately, the reaction had then been rapid, and effective efforts had been made; however, it was none the less true that much still remained to be done.

76. The disaster might now recur elsewhere, since the land which constituted man's heritage was being eroded day by day as a result of the encroachment of the desert. Consequently, emergency measures were insufficient, and a long-term plan must be adopted. In that connexion, his delegation unreservedly supported the six-country programme and wished to stress the importance of the time factor; it also supported the appeal made by the Upper Volta to the international financing organizations to make their procedures simpler and more flexible.

77. His delegation wished to become a sponsor of the draft resolution, and hoped it would be adopted unanimously.

78. Mr. ABHYANKAR (India) said he supported the draft resolution and would vote for it. The gravity of the situation required a unanimous decision by the international community, and it was therefore to be hoped that the sponsors would be in a position to take into account the reservations expressed by certain delegations.

79. Mr. HACHANI (Tunisia) said that the purpose of the draft resolution was to give the six countries of the Sudano-Sahelian region the means of undertaking long-term measures, the extreme necessity of which all were aware of. It also aimed at solving not only the problems of the region, but also the problem of drought in general, which afflicted many countries, especially those bordering on the Sahara. It was thus appropriate to stress in particular operative paragraphs 8 and 10, which went to the root of the problem.

80. Mr. DIAW (Mali) emphasized the efforts made by each country of the Sahel even before the arrival of relief. In Mali, for example, emergency measures had been taken very quickly, and a national committee for assistance to the victims of the drought had been entrusted with the task of estimating the damage and collecting, channelling and distributing relief supplies. In each region, a sub-committee had been established along the lines of the national committee, for the purpose of channelling assistance to the actual distribution centres.

81. At the subregional level, the creation of the Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel showed the determination of the six countries to cope with the disaster. Their efforts had not been in vain, especially since the international community had responded to the appeal made by FAO. His delegation wished to express its heartfelt thanks to all the countries and international, governmental and non-governmental organizations that had shown such active solidarity. It also thanked the delegations that had supported the draft resolution and hoped that it would be adopted unanimously.

82. Mr. ROTHERMEL (Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Political and General Assembly Affairs), replying to remarks that had been made concerning the cost estimates for the Special Sahelian Office (A/9178, para. 20), said that every effort had been made to keep those costs down to a minimum, particularly staff costs, by calling for volunteers and by se-

conding professional staff from other services. Under the heading "Rental of premises", the amount for 1974 was distinctly higher than that for 1973 because in 1973 office space had been rented for only three months, whereas in 1974 the rental would be for the entire year. On the other hand, the amount for office supplies and miscellaneous costs was higher for 1973 than for 1974 because some expenditures were incurred only once.

83. Mr. DIALLO (Upper Volta) said he wished, on behalf of the six countries of the Sahel, to thank the delegations which had shown their support and their sympathy and had undertaken to contribute to the recovery effort. The countries of the Sudano-Sahelian region had taken careful note of the measures suggested by some countries, in the light of their own experience. They had gained the impression, from what had been done or said, that there was nothing which the international community could not undertake through international co-operation.

84. His delegation hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted unanimously. Some of its provisions, and especially paragraph 6, particularly reflected the major concerns of the six countries. It was therefore to be hoped that consultations would make it possible to devise a formula that would meet those concerns as well as those of the developed countries.

85. Some delegations had made proposals that would strengthen and broaden the draft resolution, and it was therefore to be hoped that the other sponsors would accept them. It was also to be hoped that the preliminary response to the appeal made to the international community, and in particular to the developed countries and international financing institutions, would be followed by action suited to the extent of the need. He stressed the moderate nature of the requests made and hoped that the most urgent needs would be met, particularly in the field of water resources and transport. In that connexion, he recalled that all too often requests for assistance in the field of road transport, submitted to international organizations, were refused for reasons of economic expediency.

86. The CHAIRMAN announced that the delegations of Bolivia, Botswana, Guyana, Lesotho, Malaysia and Paraguay had also become sponsors of draft resolution A/C.2/L.1290 and Corr.1.

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.

1533rd meeting

Thursday, 11 October 1973, at 4.50 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Zewde GABRE-SELLASSIE (Ethiopia).

A/C.2/SR.1533

AGENDA ITEM 101

Consideration of the economic and social situation in the Sudano-Sahelian region stricken by drought and measures to be taken for the benefit of that region (concluded) (A/9178, A/C.2/L.1290 and Corr.1)

1. Mr. DIALLO (Upper Volta) said that the sponsors and interested delegations had held consultations con-

cerning draft resolution A/C.2/L.1290 and Corr.1 and had made certain changes which they hoped would be acceptable to all delegations. He thanked all those who had participated in the consultations for their constructive suggestions and announced that Ethiopia and Guinea had joined the list of sponsors.

2. Paragraph 6 of the draft resolution, as revised, reflected the statement by the President of the Republic of