

1563rd meeting

Tuesday, 20 November 1973, at 10.50 a.m.

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

A/C.2/SR.1563

AGENDA ITEM 50

United Nations Environment Programme (A/9003 and Corr.1, chap. XIII; A/C.2/L.1305, A/C.2/L.1312):

- (a) **Report of the Governing Council (A/9025);**
- (b) **Criteria governing multilateral financing of housing and human settlements: report of the Secretary-General (A/9163, A/9238)**

1. The CHAIRMAN invited the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme to make an introductory statement.

2. Mr. STRONG (Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme) said that the present occasion was the first on which he had had the privilege of addressing the Committee in the capacity of Executive Director of UNEP. He was pleased to report that the secretariat set up to serve that new addition to the United Nations family was in operation at its headquarters in Nairobi, the first United Nations global headquarters in the developing world. He paid a tribute to the co-operation being received from the Government and people of Kenya, and said he was confident that the decision to establish the headquarters of UNEP at Nairobi would prove to be a wise one for the Programme's future and a happy one for those serving in its secretariat.

3. The first year of UNEP's existence had been a period of institution-building, of translating the recommendations of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, held at Stockholm in June 1972, into a practical and effective programme of work and, at the same time, establishing the staff and organization to carry it out. The support of the Secretary-General, of senior officials in New York and of UNDP had been of great help to UNEP in establishing the basic infrastructure of its new world headquarters, and significant progress had been made towards laying a sound basis for the Programme's future work.

4. During the past year it had been necessary to prepare for two sessions of the Governing Council of UNEP and two sessions of the Environment Co-ordination Board. The Board had been very helpful to the UNEP secretariat in developing its methods of work and its programme in close harmony with the related activities of other members of the United Nations system and with the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination. He was also pleased to note that the Second Committee, by adopting at its preceding meeting draft resolution A/C.2/L.1307, had recommended that the Executive Director of UNEP should be invited to participate in the meetings of the Inter-Agency Consultative Board. Several consultations had been held with Governments and with members of the United Nations family, and a series of meetings with regional intergovernmental organizations active in the environment field had been started. Broad consultations had been held with members of the scientific community

and a wide variety of non-governmental organizations. The initial contributions to the Fund of the United Nations Environment Programme had been put to work in the initial phases of developing the programme.

5. The highlight of the year had been the first session of the Governing Council of UNEP, whose report (A/9025) was before the Committee. The Council had been faced with the task of giving the Programme the policy basis and direction on which to start its work. In surmounting the difficulties encountered during the session, it had demonstrated that the environment could be a unifying issue.

6. In pursuance of General Assembly resolution 3002 (XXVII), the Governing Council had given special consideration to environmental measures and programmes that were a necessary part of the process of accelerating the economic development of the developing countries. As guidelines for the implementation of the programme, it had adopted general policy objectives, taken note of certain detailed objectives and decided upon priorities to guide the secretariat. Those priority areas were listed in paragraph 12 of decision 1 (I) of the Governing Council (see A/9025, annex I), in which the Council also authorized the Executive Director to provide assistance to Governments in dealing with their environmental concerns and to initiate work on the monitoring and information referral components of Earthwatch.

7. The Governing Council had adopted general procedures that provided a satisfactory basis for the operation of the Fund of the United Nations Environment Programme. It now remained for the General Assembly to give final approval to the administrative arrangements for the Fund. He was encouraged by the positive action already taken by the Fifth Committee on that matter. Thus far, total contributions of \$4.4 million had been paid into the Fund by 16 Governments. He thanked those Governments for their co-operation and urged others to join them. He stressed the importance of universal participation in the Fund, and said he had been encouraged by the interest shown by developing countries, several of which had already made contributions. Assuming that the United States Congress took favourable action on that country's contribution and that the Governments which had made pledges for one year would renew them for the remainder of the period 1973-1977, the initial target of \$100 million for that period would be exceeded, as indeed it should be if the needs of UNEP were to be fully met.

8. Preparatory work was under way for the second session of the Governing Council, to be held in March 1974 at Nairobi. Valuable assistance in preparing the documentation for that session had been given by the experts, representatives of members of the Council, who had attended an informal consultative meeting convened recently. He hoped that there would be more opportunities for consultations with Governments re-

garding the preparations for the second session, at which some members might be represented at the ministerial level.

9. He stressed that it would take time to build a programme of the required quality and scope. It would not be possible to move with equal speed on all the priorities. The tasks of establishing an effective administrative infrastructure and recruiting staff had not yet been completed. Furthermore, the amounts pledged to the Fund had been paid in rather slowly, with the result that all its resources were fully committed and the programme could not advance further until additional contributions were received.

10. Despite those constraints, significant progress had been made and he was confident that the proposals submitted to the Governing Council at its second session would provide the ingredients for a dynamic and constructive programme of activities designed to meet the needs identified and the expectations engendered by the Stockholm Conference. Action had already been initiated in a number of important areas, including co-operation with the Special Sahelian Office to respond to the urgent needs and requests of the Governments of the stricken region of the Sahel for medium-term and long-term action to supplement the emergency relief operations already under way; the initiation of technical assistance and training activities; progress in developing the information referral and monitoring elements of Earthwatch; and support from the Fund for the environmental activities of a number of agencies.

11. When the programme proposals were published, it would be seen that an attempt had been made to strike a balance between the need to establish effective co-ordination of environmental activities within the United Nations system and the need to facilitate, as rapidly as possible, existing and planned activities; a balance between the need for a clear programmatic framework for activities and the need to support specific projects that were ready for action and would themselves contribute to the development of the programme. A process of consulting the scientific community to identify new priority areas had also been initiated.

12. Action had been taken on several of the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly at its twenty-seventh session. In response to resolution 2994 (XXVII), a number of activities had been organized in connexion with the first World Environment Day. A task force had been set up to conduct a study on the establishment of a fund for human settlements called for by resolution 2999 (XXVII), and a distinguished group of experts had been assembled to review the work done on that study. Consultations were being held with the Government of Iran on the means of implementing resolution 3003 (XXVII) by the institution of an annual environment prize.

13. He stressed the importance of the action taken in response to General Assembly resolution 3001 (XXVII). The United Nations Conference-Exposition on Human Settlements, to be held at Vancouver in 1976, would provide an opportunity for Governments to take practical steps to manifest their concern for the problems of human settlements. The Conference would be pragmatic and solution-oriented and the Exposition part of it would illustrate—through the display of demonstration projects—solutions and approaches that would constitute a pool of experience and technology

from which all participants would be able to draw. The Conference-Exposition and the preparations for it would be designed to increase awareness of the vast and growing need to provide suitable environments for people and of the importance of devoting more attention and more resources to meeting that need. The Governing Council of UNEP at its first session had considered the report of the Secretary-General on the plan for, and anticipated costs of, the Conference-Exposition, together with the report of a meeting of experts on the proposed subject-matter of the Conference. It had also adopted the recommendations contained in its decision 4 (I) (see A/9025, annex I), on the basis of which the Secretary-General had prepared a note on the administrative and financial implications of the Conference-Exposition (A/9238). The Council's recommendations emphasized the innovative aspects of the Conference and its role in ensuring the widest possible dissemination of new ideas and technologies in the field of human settlements. The collaboration of the United Nations family, including the regional economic commissions, and of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations would be needed in order to achieve that goal. The preparation of the Conference-Exposition would be a difficult task, since its dual format was an innovation in United Nations conferences. Preliminary planning on the basis of the objectives endorsed by the Governing Council had been undertaken by a secretariat preparatory group working in close collaboration with the Canadian Government and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. However, the time had now come to allocate to the preparations for the Conference-Exposition the priority and resources which were needed at both the secretariat and the intergovernmental levels. He trusted that the Committee would take decisive action in that connexion at the current session.

14. Looking back over the past year, he was encouraged by the evidence of a broadening and maturing of the interest of individuals and Governments in the environment issue and by the growing awareness that co-operation between nations was imperative in caring for the environment. The developing countries' interest in the question had risen rapidly; since the Stockholm Conference, most of those countries had taken action to deal with national environmental concerns and had become actively involved in international environmental activities. In the more industrialized countries, interest had moved from the general plane to a more realistic preoccupation with particular issues. New and stronger environmental legislation had been enacted in a number of those countries, and the environmental "backlash" was already in evidence in some of them. The energy crisis had created pressures for relaxation of environmental controls, but at the same time it brought home the central message of the environmental era, namely, that more care must be exercised in the exploitation and use of resources and that greater co-operation and sharing of both responsibilities and benefits was required in that regard.

15. The evidence was persuasive that there were "outer limits" to the physical capacity of the natural environment to carry the burdens of present and projected human activities, and that some of those limits were already being impinged upon. Environmental problems derived basically from imbalances in economic and social behaviour. Man could only suc-

ceed in managing successfully the critical relationships with the natural environment if he could succeed in modifying his economic and social attitudes and practices. Thus, the environment issue was inextricably linked with the issues of international development, economic and trade policy, social justice, human rights and preservation of peace. The Stockholm Conference had engendered general awareness of man's global interdependence. It was now the task of UNEP to help to provide the mechanisms and measures that would give practical effect to that interdependence. An important beginning had been made, and the Committee's deliberations would have a significant bearing on the future of that common task.

16. Mr. BENGTTSSON (Sweden) said that, having served as President of the Governing Council of UNEP at its first session, he would like to make a few general comments on the outcome. First, however, he wished to thank the Executive Director of UNEP for his introductory statement, which would form a valuable basis for the Committee's discussion.

17. The constructive spirit of international co-operation that had prevailed during the first session of the Governing Council augured well for the future. The results achieved were set out in its report (A/9025), which deserved strong support.

18. The interval between the establishment of the UNEP secretariat and the first session of the Governing Council had been very short. It had been necessary to recruit new staff and prepare a new type of documentation. UNEP was a new institution working in an area largely unknown until a few years previously. The Council's session had been the first major event signifying transition from the stage of expressing concern to that of translating such concern into practical action. Under those circumstances, the Council's efforts had naturally been somewhat tentative and uncertain.

19. It had been gratifying to hear that the move to Nairobi had been smooth, thanks to the admirable efforts of the Government of Kenya, and that preparations for the second session of the Council at Nairobi were under way.

20. The Governing Council's first task had been to formulate the main objectives of the programme. Emphasis had been placed on the improvement of national and international knowledge and understanding, the integration of environmental issues in development planning and management, and assistance to national environmental programmes.

21. The second task had been to give priority to the most urgent parts of the Action Plan for the Human Environment¹ adopted by the Stockholm Conference. As all the recommendations contained in the Action Plan were priorities and as they were also largely mutually interdependent, it had not been easy to agree on basic priorities for immediate action. Therefore, the consensus reached after extensive consultations among representatives from all groups of countries represented a major step forward.

22. The Council's third task had been to decide on the procedures governing the operation of the Fund of the United Nations Environment Programme. Although varying views had been expressed on that issue, it had been possible to reach a compromise solution. How-

ever, it was a matter of concern that payments to the Fund in accordance with earlier pledges were proceeding at a slow pace. The Fund was the key instrument for the implementation of an international environment programme, and the Executive Director must have the necessary resources at his disposal if he was to translate general recommendations into more concrete proposals. In his present capacity as President of the Council, he (Mr. Bengtsson) therefore urged States to follow up their commitments by making actual cash payments to the Fund.

23. The Governing Council's fourth task had been to adopt a recommendation to the General Assembly regarding the United Nations Conference-Exposition on Human Settlements. Its decision 4 (I) provided the Committee with a basis for moving forward towards the realization of the project.

24. The next step towards the establishment of a concrete programme of action would be the formulation by the Executive Director of suitable projects for submission to the Council at its second session, the initiation of action, and making the Fund operative. That was no easy task, since the opinions of Member States differed as to which problem should be tackled first, but he was convinced that the Executive Director would perform it successfully.

25. As the representative of Sweden, he would like to comment on the action to be taken in some of the priority areas. The Earthwatch programme was a key element in the global efforts to solve common environmental problems. In that connexion, he noted with satisfaction the Governing Council's decision that one of the first areas for the development of monitoring would be that of pollutants liable to affect weather and climate. He also supported the decision to convene a technical intergovernmental meeting in 1974 to assist in the identification of pollutants of international significance and of methods for monitoring those pollutants.

26. Turning to some of the urgent substantive fields covered by the priority action plan adopted by the Governing Council, he said that his Government felt deep concern about the threat of marine pollution, a concern which was shared by all States. Although the Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matters, concluded on 29 December 1972, was a good start, ways and means must also be found to control and stop other sources of marine pollution, whether land-based or from ships. Although the IMCO International Conference on Marine Pollution held in London from 8 October to 2 November 1973 had constituted a major step forward, the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, adopted at that Conference, regrettably did not envisage a total prohibition of intentional oil discharge in the seas as recommended by the Stockholm Conference and by the Governing Council. His Government intended to follow closely the further developments in that important field. In co-operation with the other States around the Baltic Sea, Sweden had worked out proposals for the protection of the Baltic covering dumping, pollution from ships and land-based pollution.

27. Environmental problems relating to human settlements were urgent, and his delegation welcomed the inclusion of human settlements in the global priority list adopted by the Governing Council. The forthcoming

¹ See A/CONF.48/14/Rev.1, chap. II.

Conference-Exposition on Human Settlements was of particular importance, and his delegation supported the recommendations by the Governing Council in that connexion. It also hoped that participating States would provide case studies of problems and solutions and other material as a basis for discussions at the Conference. Furthermore, adequate economic resources from the United Nations regular budget and adequate personnel resources must be set aside for the preparatory work. His delegation would wholeheartedly support a General Assembly resolution endorsing the results of the Governing Council's discussion on the subject.

28. With respect to technology, he stressed the great potential of product control, which included measures for the regulation, transport, handling and stockpiling of dangerous goods.

29. The Governing Council had requested the Executive Director to collect detailed information on the subject of energy for presentation at the next session of the Council. The main energy resources could no longer be considered inexhaustible, and new energy resources might not make a significant contribution until later than predicted. That period could be shortened through intensified research efforts, which should take environmental aspects into consideration. The energy problem was both a global and a national issue, and efforts must therefore be made to establish a long-term global energy policy. While that was a complex task, the study being prepared by the Executive Director could promote understanding of the issue. Similarly, natural resources were scarce and global policies might be necessary to ensure adequate supplies and just distribution of raw materials. The legitimate interests of countries producing raw materials must be taken into account. His delegation fully supported the Action Plan adopted by the Governing Council in its decision 1 (I) and was willing, within its possibilities, to contribute to its successful implementation.

30. The decisions of the Governing Council had been elaborated after extensive consultations between representatives of all groups and countries and thus represented a careful compromise between various interests. So far as action by the Assembly at its current session was concerned, the main part of a general resolution should be a general and strong endorsement of the conclusion reached by the Governing Council.

31. Mr. CROOKS (Director, Centre for Housing, Building and Planning), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on criteria governing multilateral financing of housing and human settlements (A/9163), recalled that the discussion of the human environment at the twenty-seventh session of the General Assembly, which had focused considerable attention on housing and human settlements, had led to the adoption of Assembly resolutions 2998 (XXVII), 2999 (XXVII) and 3001 (XXVII). The Department of Economic and Social Affairs had been given the responsibility of preparing the report called for in resolution 2998 (XXVII). Among its recommendations, that resolution had suggested that development assistance agencies such as UNDP and IBRD should give high priority to requests for assistance in housing and human settlements. It had recommended that the Bank should provide funds on a basis which took into account the unique character of housing and related infrastructure, that in establishing

criteria for loans to that sector the Bank should take into account such factors as unemployment levels, urban growth rates and general housing conditions in developing countries, and that the Bank should provide seed capital loans to assist in the establishment of domestic financial institutions to mobilize and allocate capital for housing and related investments.

32. In preparing the report (A/9163), the Department of Economic and Social Affairs had brought the resolution to the attention of the main development assistance agencies and requested information from them on their policies and programmes regarding assistance for housing and human settlements, the priorities, terms and conditions governing the provision of such assistance and the outlook for future policies in the sector. The report provided a summary of their replies, together with a brief statement of conclusions based on the information received. Excerpts from the replies themselves providing more detailed information were annexed to the report. Information had been collected through circular letters, questionnaires and a review of existing reports and other material, and personal contacts had been used where possible to supplement written information.

33. In a report dealing with a relatively new field of international interest, it was important to gain an impression of the attitudes influencing policy-makers, since those attitudes governed decisions and eventual policies. The impressions gained in the preparation of the report were summarized under the heading "Conclusions". While some of the figures for assistance were surprisingly high, especially in percentage terms, it was not always clear whether they represented a strong commitment to housing and human settlements by the agencies concerned or were more the result of *ex post* accounting procedures. Assistance for housing or housing-related institutions was small in comparison with total lending and even within the total amounts indicated for human settlements. Almost no assistance was being provided for a principal objective of General Assembly resolution 2998 (XXVII), namely, the establishment of domestic financial institutions to mobilize capital for investment in the sector. Most agencies had also been unable to spell out in detail their plans for future assistance to the housing sector. In fairness to them, it should be pointed out that international assistance programmes reflected the priorities and interests of national Governments as indicated in their requests for international assistance. On the basis of the replies received and of a general knowledge of governmental requests for international assistance, it would appear that the housing sector had not yet emerged as a priority concern in the minds of either national or international development officials.

34. It might be somewhat premature to try to evaluate the impact of General Assembly resolution 2998 (XXVII) on the criteria and operating policies of the various agencies in relation to housing. However, it was encouraging that all the agencies, as well as many Governments, had come to recognize the scope of the problem and were beginning to take constructive steps to solve it. Perhaps one of the most significant such steps was the General Assembly decision to hold the United Nations Conference-Exposition on Human Settlements in 1976. That Conference, and the preparations for it, could be expected to shed more light on the

causes and implications of the problems of human settlements throughout the world and to result in a more cohesive set of national and international programmes to mobilize the necessary resources, imagination and commitment.

35. Mr. BASFORD (Canada) said it was gratifying to note that the UNEP secretariat was moving ahead with its complex programme in close consultation with Member States and organizations inside and outside the United Nations system. His delegation particularly welcomed the progress achieved in relation to the Earthwatch programme, which would provide the basis for further rational action in the environmental field at the national and international levels, including the activities of UNEP itself. Canada was participating fully in that programme, and fully supported it. In co-operation with other countries, it was sampling air in urban and hinterland regions and in the upper atmosphere in order to measure pollution. It was also extensively involved in the International Referral System, and had launched a supporting programme. As a nation with long coastlines, Canada placed great stress on the development of the UNEP programme for the marine environment. The registry of clean rivers was proceeding within the framework of that programme, and Canada had contributed to it a formal paper suggesting criteria for major rivers and clean rivers; an expert would be made available to UNEP to assist in the further development of those criteria.

36. The report of the Governing Council on its first session (A/9025) reflected a commendable achievement for so new an organization. The Stockholm Conference had established an international commitment to the preservation, restoration and protection of the human environment, and since then a major international effort had been made to confront environmental challenges of urgent concern to the international community. However, global action still had a long way to go. In particular, the world faced a period of unprecedented urban growth; by the year 2000, the urban populations of the developed countries might double to a figure of over 1,000 million, while the urban populations of developing countries were projected to quadruple to 1,500 million. Such rapid and enormous urban growth would create immense difficulties for individual nations and for the world. International action in the field of human settlements was therefore of critical importance. His delegation was encouraged by the broad international acceptance of human settlements as a priority environmental concern. The Governing Council of UNEP had viewed the Conference-Exposition on Human Settlements as a major vehicle for developing a programme for human settlements, and the imaginative and comprehensive proposals it had endorsed testified to the ability of UNEP to respond rapidly and actively to a major challenge. The Conference-Exposition would be the first of its kind; it would focus attention on available solutions to human settlements problems, would provide a pragmatic foundation for the active participation of Governments, would clarify various aspects of related policy issues, would generate a continuing process of identifying promising solutions to settlements problems and encourage nations to undertake programmes of demonstration projects that could become nuclei for rural and urban transformation, would stimulate innovation and allow for an exchange of experience, ideas and technology and would make recom-

mendations for an ongoing international settlements programme. The exhibition of solutions to human settlements problems from around the world would show how the problems were solved in various countries and would enable countries to learn from each other's failures as well as successes, to examine processes as well as products, techniques as well as technologies. Such an exchange was needed if the best available solutions were to be identified and brought to world attention. New insights were required, and a fresh analysis of the approaches available should stimulate new beginnings.

37. The international community must consider demonstrated results, not merely speculations. Accordingly, the Secretary-General's report called for a programme of demonstration projects around the world to serve as a basis for the Conference-Exposition. Some would be of national and others of regional interest, while those of universal importance as defined by United Nations criteria would be shown in Vancouver. The demonstration component of the Conference-Exposition, properly employed, could stimulate a process of innovation and activity within each country relevant to its own human settlements problems. The Canadian Government intended to follow the lead of the United Nations and initiate an ongoing programme of Canadian projects as a potentially effective means not only of getting necessary work started in particular areas, but also of identifying ideas and techniques worth transferring elsewhere. Mass movements to cities affected everyone in every country, and there was never enough housing or infrastructure to accommodate the numerous new arrivals whose movements followed no systematic pattern. Existing social, educational and administrative facilities were often taxed far beyond capacity. In some cases the consequences of urbanization were more severely felt in the depopulated rural areas, while elsewhere, especially in developing countries, the pressures of rapid growth frequently created squatter settlements without adequate water supply, sanitation or other necessities for a dignified life. However, the problems were not confined to developing countries; the more industrialized countries also suffered from inadequate housing supply, transportation systems and the like, and all countries had yet to find effective ways to cope with burgeoning populations.

38. The accelerating shifts in traditional patterns, and the unprecedented numbers of people involved, posed great problems, but the new awareness of the urgency of those problems also presented great opportunities. Successful solutions, found in different countries under various conditions, included the use of public policies such as financial incentives and disincentives; new towns and new communities to manage urban growth and distribution; innovative arrangements for financing, building and administering new communities; new methods of housing design, construction and development; maximization of limited resources, for example, through recycling; the development of solar energy and low-energy urban systems which were of particular relevance in the current energy situation; new methods of waste-water recycling; new experiments in metropolitan government; new legal and social arrangements in settlements; and the use of intermediate technologies and other innovations in urban transportation. Such solutions should be developed as demonstration projects for the Conference-Exposition. Other exhibits

might include a demonstration of how a waterfront or other urban area was redeveloped through the co-operative efforts of Government and individuals, or of how land could be used rationally so as to protect the environment while giving the inhabitants of a settlement maximum satisfaction from living there. The Conference-Exposition and the preparations for it could thus become new tools for identifying and selecting solutions in one country or region and evaluating their possible application in others. That process should continue after the Conference-Exposition.

39. Attention must also be given to such neglected areas as how to save historic cities. While the emergency steps now being taken in some places to preserve great monuments before pollutants completely destroyed them were a laudable example, they might be too little and too late. Restriction of motor vehicles in ancient city centres might be the only way to rescue remnants of a more tranquil tradition, but such efforts were strenuously resisted. New settlements must be centres of civilization, and not mere containers for living surrounded by a polluted atmosphere. Many of the political and social conditions which some countries were urgently trying to rectify could be avoided through careful planning. The Conference-Exposition might promote some of those ideas, and could also stimulate other badly needed new approaches. His delegation hoped that it would be the watershed for solid international commitment to human settlements, as the Stockholm Conference had been for the environment as a whole. While the Conference-Exposition followed logically from the Stockholm Conference, it should not be thought of as the second conference on the human environment.

40. Preparation for the Conference-Exposition was necessary in order both to identify the key issues and to define recommendations for required action at the national, regional and international levels. The preparatory process had already begun with the meeting of experts held at Vancouver in May 1973. The ideas which had emerged from that meeting reflected a very broad spectrum of opinion, and should enable the Preparatory Committee to elaborate final themes and establish expert groups in which most of the work would be done. Early agreement on the criteria for selecting demonstration projects should also be possible.

41. Since the first session of the Governing Council, an important clarification of the nature of the Exposition had been achieved. His Government would have been unable to accept a "world fair" comprising large national pavilions in which elaborate exhibits of products and technical achievement were displayed. The Conference-Exposition should not be an exercise in public relations, but should contain a carefully delineated number of exhibits designed to illustrate the substance of the discussions rather than to serve as showcases for design techniques.

42. The Governing Council had unanimously recommended that the General Assembly should accept the Secretary-General's report, as well as the report of the meeting of experts. It had also recommended that the costs of the Conference and preparations for it should be borne by the regular budget of the United Nations, while a portion of the cost of the Exposition and the preparatory process should come out of the Fund of UNEP. The Secretary-General's note (A/9238) speci-

cally proposed the Fund as a source of finance for the Exposition and its preparatory process, and in the view of his delegation the mandate of the Fund covered that activity. The Exposition was designed to generate a programme of action in the field of human settlements and to stimulate solutions to the environmental problems of human settlements. However, his delegation appreciated that the final decision on the question rested with the Governing Council, which would consider the matter at its next session.

43. His delegation fully supported the Governing Council's report, and recommended its acceptance by the General Assembly. The programmes which might emerge as a result of the Conference-Exposition would be a rational and logical confluence of environmental issues, both natural and man-made.

44. Introducing draft resolution A/C.2/L.1312 on behalf of the sponsors, he said that it constituted the enabling legislation which would permit the planning and financing of the Conference-Exposition to go forward. The first four preambular paragraphs were self-explanatory. The fifth preambular paragraph contained the essential elements underlying international concern for the preservation and improvement of the human environment, and touched on two major factors affecting the quality of that environment, namely, urbanization and rural depopulation. Together with the sixth paragraph, it voiced the essential concerns and themes which should be the focal points of the Conference-Exposition. The seventh preambular paragraph recorded the sponsors' appreciation of the co-operation between UNEP and the Centre for Housing, Building and Planning, which they considered to be an excellent example of the collective efforts of the United Nations system to achieve a common goal and which they hoped would continue.

45. The whole question of human settlements was a very broad one, and the sponsors had felt that important contributions to the Conference-Exposition could be made by other international conferences to be held before 1976, such as that on the use of water resources to be held in Argentina and the Conference on the Law of the Sea to be held in Venezuela. The eighth preambular paragraph included a general provision relating to such conferences and also referred specifically to the World Population Conference, whose work would be the most closely related to that of the Conference-Exposition.

46. The need for operative paragraph 1, setting the date of the Conference-Exposition as 31 May-11 June 1976, arose from the Secretary-General's note verbale of 2 February 1973 explaining the difficulties of convening it in the latter half of 1975, as envisaged in General Assembly resolution 3001 (XXVII), and suggesting that it should be postponed until the late spring of 1976. A further note verbale of 19 March 1973 had indicated that there appeared to be no objection from Member States to that proposal, subject to formal confirmation at the twenty-eighth session of the General Assembly.

47. Paragraph 2 simply endorsed in general terms the recommendations on the Conference-Exposition contained in the report of the Governing Council; the question of financing, which was also included in that paragraph, was further amplified in the note by the Secretary-General (A/9238).

48. Paragraph 3 represented the crux of what the Conference-Exposition should be. It would serve two main objectives: first, the exchange of information on solutions to environmental problems of human settlements should assist Governments in coming to grips with those problems; and, secondly, the Conference would serve as a catalyst for the formation of an ongoing action programme in that vital area.

49. Paragraph 4 represented a generally accepted formula in the organization of United Nations conferences. Paragraph 5 provided for the necessary Preparatory Committee to guide Secretariat preparations for the Conference-Exposition; the composition of the Preparatory Committee would take into account equitable geographical distribution, possibly along the same lines as in the Governing Council of UNEP.

50. Paragraph 6 was drawn directly from the fifth recommendation made by the Governing Council in its decision 4 (I), with the exception that reference was made to the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, rather than simply to the Centre for Housing, Building and Planning. Experience in the preliminary stages had revealed that, while the Centre had a major contribution to make, other areas of the Department could also contribute valuable inputs.

51. The ultimate success of the Conference-Exposition would depend on the co-operative efforts of all parts of the United Nations system, as well as bodies outside it; that was the reason for the inclusion of paragraphs 7 and 8.

52. Paragraph 9 was a response to the Governing Council's call for a vigorous information programme as an integral part of the Conference-Exposition. Paragraph 10 would enable the General Assembly to review and comment on the preparations for the Conference-Exposition.

53. In view of the wide support the idea had received at the twenty-seventh session of the General Assembly, the sponsors hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus. His Government looked forward to welcoming the participants in the Conference-Exposition, since it believed it was only by the united effort of all countries that the problems of human settlements throughout the world could be solved.

54. Mr. MUHOHO (Kenya) thanked the Executive Director of UNEP for his remarks on the sound relationship between UNEP and Kenya, and the representative of Sweden, in his capacity as President of the Governing Council of UNEP, for his kind words about Kenya's efforts to help UNEP to settle at Nairobi. His Government would continue to accord UNEP maximum co-operation for its effective functioning. The year which had passed since the establishment of UNEP was too brief a period to assess its accomplishments, particularly since the Governing Council had not laid down its guidelines to the Executive Director until June 1973, the recruitment of staff had had to be approached gingerly, and the transfer from Geneva to Nairobi had had to be carried out. Nevertheless, the youngest member of the United Nations family had, thanks to the dynamic leadership of its Executive Director, faced the challenges with no small measure of success. The Governing Council had met at Geneva and had prepared a development plan of priorities to be

further elaborated by the Executive Director for its detailed consideration at future sessions. A realistic approach to the present capabilities of UNEP had been maintained. The report of the Governing Council (A/9025) attested to the success of UNEP.

55. In preparing for the second session of the Governing Council, UNEP must bear in mind that the international community expected results, now that the Programme was firmly set on the path towards implementing the recommendations of the Stockholm Conference. Only necessary studies should be prepared; action should not be held up, for in many areas UNEP could pursue its tasks without delay. In carrying out the recommendations of the Stockholm Conference, inspiring the specialized agencies, Governments and organizations to take action, and monitoring the environment, UNEP would naturally work in close collaboration with the specialized agencies. His delegation noted with satisfaction that the agencies were co-operating with UNEP and presenting proposals in the Environment Co-ordination Board. UNEP should also initiate action, or become involved, in any area which it deemed important and to which other agencies had not addressed themselves. Bearing in mind its potential role as an initiator, UNEP should develop its own expertise which, together with consultations with governmental and other experts, could assist it in evaluating situations and projects.

56. The priorities adopted by the Governing Council, which could be changed from time to time, should be viewed as a UNEP development plan of unspecified duration. The priorities reflected the interests of developed and developing countries alike, and thus of the global constituency of the Programme. Both remedial and preventive action was required. The Executive Director should bear that in mind when presenting his proposals and should pay particular heed to the special needs of the developing countries.

57. The developing countries recognized that they must enhance and preserve their environment and at the same time promote development and industrial growth in order to meet the needs of their peoples. While the choices and priorities were their own, they could be expected to take into account the guidelines developed by UNEP and such advice as UNEP might provide at their request. Kenya had continued to give the question of environment and development serious thought, and for the first time environmental considerations would be specifically incorporated in its revised development plan for 1974-1978, taking fully into account the impact of national objectives on the environment. The approach thus adopted would intensify local education and understanding of the environment. His delegation appreciated the efforts of UNEP to promote seminars for senior government planners to exchange experience on the interrelationship of development and environment. Such seminars would help to improve the environment of the developing countries and would have crucial implications for economic and social development. His remarks in no way diminished the concern of the developing countries that aid from the developed countries and certain agencies should not be reduced or used to impose foreign ideas on them.

58. The application of scientific knowledge and criteria was essential for rational management of the environment and for development. To the extent that

UNEP initiated the transfer and application of technology, it should do so in close collaboration with the recipient countries. The developing countries should themselves exchange such technology as they possessed for, irrespective of their stage of development, such technology might be more relevant to their situation than that derived from sophisticated developed sources. Poorly-tested, obsolete and unusable technology should not be foisted on the developing countries merely because they did not themselves have something better. UNEP should play the role of watch-dog in that respect.

59. The question of human settlements, to which the Governing Council had accorded high priority, was global in scope. Although the problems were prevalent in the developed countries, they were chronic in the developing countries, in both urban and rural areas. Immediate action was required to overcome the housing, sanitation and water quality problems facing the countries of the third world. The Governing Council accordingly was studying the proposals for the establishment of a fund to alleviate the problems and would pay constant attention to the question of human settlements. Proposals from UNEP in that priority area were naturally awaited with interest.

60. His delegation welcomed the readiness of the Canadian Government and the preparations it had already undertaken to serve as host to the United Nations Conference-Exposition on Human Settlements. Such a Conference could mirror appropriate technology immediately applicable to the problems of mankind, particularly in the developing countries. His delegation looked forward to participating fully in the preparatory work and in the Conference itself. The General Assembly must establish a preparatory committee of 58, appropriately constituted, to direct the preparatory work. Immediate consultations should be undertaken with a view to agreeing on the name of the Assistant Secretary-General to head the secretariat which would service the preparatory committee.

61. The marine environment was an important area of concern for UNEP. The fact that the environment as a whole was arbitrarily demarcated demonstrated the need for UNEP to be actively involved in the preparatory work for the forthcoming Conference on the Law of the Sea and to be more than marginally involved with the work of the Conference itself. His delegation rejected the efforts of certain developed countries to undercut the Conference on the Law of the Sea and deny UNEP the possibility of playing a central role in the preservation of the marine environment. The outcome of that Conference must not be prejudged in any respect, nor should delegations manipulate situations to ensure a role for a given United Nations body according to the control which they exercised in that body.

62. His delegation welcomed the fact that the Governing Council, the Environment Co-ordination Board, the UNEP secretariat and the Fund of UNEP were operational and were gradually discharging their responsibilities in accordance with the enabling resolution and the groundwork laid down following the first session of the Governing Council. It looked forward to taking an active part in the second session of the Governing Council at Nairobi in March 1974 and to participating with others in working out a suitable resolution based on the various issues arising from the debate and the report of the Governing Council.

63. The CHAIRMAN announced that the list of speakers on the item under consideration would be closed at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, 21 November. The deadline for the submission of draft resolutions would be 6 p.m. on Thursday, 22 November.

64. He said that Haiti and Costa Rica had been included by mistake in the list of sponsors of draft resolution A/C.2/L.1305, and that Botswana, Dahomey, Denmark, Ethiopia, Indonesia, the Libyan Arab Republic, Mali, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Swaziland should be added to the list.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.

1564th meeting

Wednesday, 21 November 1973, at 3.20 p.m.

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

A/C.2/SR.1564

AGENDA ITEM 50

United Nations Environment Programme (*continued*)
(A/9003 and Corr.1, chap. XIII; A/C.2/L.1305/Rev.1, A/C.2/L.1312):

- (a) Report of the Governing Council (A/9025);
- (b) Criteria governing multilateral financing of housing and human settlements: report of the Secretary-General (A/9163, A/9238, A/C.2/L.1314)

1. Mr. ZACHMANN (German Democratic Republic) said he was convinced that success in the environment field depended above all on the determination of States themselves to make the establishment of conditions conducive to the dignity of life a primary aim. His

delegation could not accept the view that the deterioration of the environment was the inevitable price of progress, and considered that a balance must be found between the environment, technology and the economy. The primary responsibility for solving environmental problems lay with each State. However, States could act only on their own territory, and it was to be hoped that the protection of the environment would not be hampered by illegal political action. The process of political détente and peaceful co-operation provided an opportunity for real progress in that area. All States, whatever their social system, their size or their level of development, should co-operate on the basis of the principle of the sovereign equality of all States, in implementing international measures to protect the environment. But such measures could be ap-