

ber of principles on which the measures taken with regard to co-operation between States should be based. General Assembly resolutions 2995 (XXVII), 2996 (XXVII) and 2997 (XXVII), which related to co-operation between States on environmental matters, constituted a first step in the right direction, and at the current stage it would be appropriate to take another step, concerning the problem of natural resources shared by two or more States. In that connexion, the discussions on the subject at the Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries held at Algiers should be recalled.

72. The sponsors of the draft resolution felt that it was very simple and called for little explanation. It merely proposed the establishment between Governments of co-operation designed to enable them to solve common problems, and specified that such co-operation must be implemented within the framework of normal relations between States. Harmonious co-operation and exploitation of common resources must be conceived so as to benefit all concerned and avoid any harmful effects. Appropriate international norms should therefore be established. In order to give practical effect to the principles of the Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, the sponsors felt that co-operation between States should be based on a system of consultation within the framework of the normal relations existing between them. The draft resolution should be looked upon only as an expression of the sponsors' desire to see the establishment of fruitful co-operation in the matter of exploitation of common

resources. The adoption of the draft resolution would merely establish on more solid foundations a co-operation which already existed.

73. Paragraphs 3 and 4 dealt with procedure, and were aimed solely at the implementation of paragraphs 1 and 2. There could be no doubt that the Governing Council, which had already proved itself, would be capable of accomplishing the task entrusted to it.

74. The work relating to environmental matters had reached a stage where it was desirable to put into practice the principles which had been adopted, in particular principles 21, 22 and 24 of the Declaration, and those contained in the relevant General Assembly resolutions. The draft resolution was being submitted in a spirit of co-operation with a view to the effective solution of the problems of the environment, and it was to be hoped that the Second Committee would receive it in the same spirit and adopt it unanimously.

75. He pointed out the changes in the revised text of the draft resolution as compared with the original text. The title had been added; the words "and habitual" between the words "normal" and "relations" had been deleted from paragraph 1; in paragraph 2, the words "countries interested in the exploitation of such resources" had been replaced by the words "countries sharing such natural resources and interested in their exploitation". Finally, in paragraph 4 the words "to adjust their conduct to" had been replaced by the words "to take fully into account".

The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.

1565th meeting

Thursday, 22 November 1973, at 10.40 a.m.

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

A/C.2/SR.1565

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. UDOVENKO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) said it was clear that there was no international organization which was not involved to some degree in the study of environmental problems. UNEP and its Governing Council should play a leading role in co-ordinating international co-operation within the United Nations system to solve such problems. At its first session, the Governing Council had moved towards establishing the basis for such co-ordination. His delegation welcomed the steps taken by the Executive Director to establish liaison units which each of the regional economic commissions, particularly with ECE, and supported the views expressed in that respect in paragraph 18 of the Governing Council's report on its first session (A/9025).

2. The UNEP secretariat was to be congratulated on the fact that it had already produced proposals for the drafting of programmes. However, the Action Plan for the Human Environment set forth in the Governing Council's decision 1 (I) contained in annex 1 to the report was too general and did not include proposals for specific measures. The aim of UNEP should be to contribute to the practical solution of the most important environmental problems, such as the prevention of air and water pollution and the rational use of water resources, the recycling of wastes, the conservation and rational use of land resources, soil fertility and the development of low-waste and non-waste technology.

3. On the question of the United Nations Conference-Exposition on Human Settlements, his delegation noted the proposal concerning the composition of the preparatory committee contained in draft resolution A/C.2/L.1312. In the view of his delegation, the preparatory committee could more suitably be constituted as suggested in paragraph 106 of the Governing Council's report; the Population Commission's role as preparatory committee for the World Population Conference in that respect provided a precedent. The importance of following that suggestion could be seen

from the comments in paragraph 108 of the report. His delegation considered that the total sum requested for the Conference-Exposition in the note by the Secretary-General (A/9238) was extraordinarily high, particularly as experience of United Nations conferences showed that the final costs often exceeded the original estimates. Further, the note contained a request for staff at too high a level and gave insufficient information to justify the number of staff sought. Efforts should be made to reduce both the cost estimates and personnel requirements before document A/9238 was endorsed by the Second Committee. Concern had been expressed in several United Nations bodies in connexion with the exploitation of natural resources, particularly water resources, in frontier regions. It was generally recognized in international law and in such United Nations resolutions as Economic and Social Council resolution 1737 (LV) that a State had the right to dispose of all the resources of its own territory as it wished. The use of frontier rivers and lakes for industrial, agricultural or other purposes was already satisfactorily governed by bilateral agreements and should not be discussed by UNEP. His delegation agreed with the suggestions mentioned in paragraph 129 of the report concerning the flow of information on national environmental policies. Such information might be obtained through the annual submission of reports from Governments and through additional inquiries or questionnaires issued by the UNEP secretariat.

4. The Government of the Ukrainian SSR would continue its long-standing policy of attaching great importance to the study and prevention of environmental problems. It had recently adopted a decree setting new goals for the protection of the environment and defining responsibilities for various actions to that end. It had also evolved measures for the preservation and protection of flora, fauna and forests, the prevention of atmospheric pollution and the intensification of the campaign to reduce noise in industry and in the home.

5. The world was faced with the urgent need to establish a system for the rational use of natural resources to the maximum advantage of all mankind while preserving the environment as far as possible. UNEP, which, like all United Nations bodies, would be judged on its practical actions, should make a valuable contribution to that cause.

6. Mr. BONNICK (Jamaica) recalled that General Assembly resolution 2998 (XXVII) on criteria governing multilateral financing of housing and human settlements had been adopted by 99 votes to none, with 29 abstentions. Housing and human settlements had consistently been regarded by the majority of developing countries as an area demanding priority attention within the framework of environmental programmes. Regrettably, many industrialized countries did not share that view and had, with equal consistency, opposed any proposals concerning the improvement of housing and human settlements that had major financial implications or were likely to have such implications in the future. Nevertheless, the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, at Stockholm, had adopted far-reaching recommendations on that issue and the General Assembly had subsequently adopted its resolutions 2998 (XXVII) and 2999 (XXVII). Furthermore, human settlements had been given top priority at the first session of the Governing Council of UNEP.

7. It was disappointing to note that the report of the Secretary-General (A/9163) concerning the implementation of General Assembly resolution 2998 (XXVII) did not provide the sort of data or action envisaged under the resolution. The Centre for Housing, Building and Planning had been asked to implement the resolution within the limits of the resources available to it. It was interesting to note that the suggestion that implementation of the resolution had been hampered by the inadequacy of available funds had been made at a time when the United Nations had reported savings of nearly \$6 million during the financial year concerned. The question arose as to why no funds had been made available for implementation of a resolution of such importance to the developing countries when the Secretary-General had released substantial funds and personnel for environmental activities. Could the reason be that the developed countries had seen the financial implications of that far-reaching resolution?

8. The Secretary-General's report only provided information on the present practices of international agencies. It did not analyse criteria, nor did it recommend any policy changes. There seemed to have been a total lack of understanding for the desire of the developing countries that the international agencies or institutions concerned should develop new criteria based on the critical needs in that sector, which were reflected in the substantial shifts in governmental policies on housing and human settlements. Although the entire emphasis in General Assembly resolution 2998 (XXVII) was on criteria for interest rates, the word "criteria" did not appear once in the circular letter sent to international financial agencies (A/9163, annex I). Under those circumstances, it was not surprising that the response of the institutions to the resolution had been so limited. The professional answers to which the General Assembly was entitled in respect of the policy questions raised in its resolution 2998 (XXVII) had not been provided in the Secretary-General's report.

9. It had also been suggested that housing and human settlements had not yet emerged as a priority issue in developing countries. There was clearly a need for better understanding in that connexion, since there had, in fact, been significant shifts in the positions of developing countries since the time of the Stockholm Conference.

10. That was the background against which his delegation and those of Barbados and Guyana, subsequently joined by the Central African Republic delegation, had submitted draft resolution A/C.2/L.1314, which was designed to secure recognition of the importance attached by the developing countries to housing and human settlements as the highest-priority environmental issue, and which requested the Secretary-General to undertake the study envisaged in Assembly resolution 2998 (XXVII).

11. During consultations outside the Committee, it had been suggested that the operative part of resolution 2998 (XXVII) might have been misunderstood. In view of the discussions that had taken place both at the Stockholm Conference and in the Second Committee at the twenty-seventh session of the General Assembly, his delegation could not subscribe to that view. However, in order to ensure that there could be no possible misunderstanding in the future, paragraph 1 of the draft

resolution sought to spell out quite clearly what had been envisaged under resolution 2998 (XXVII).

12. Paragraph 2 of the draft resolution deserved special attention. Questions relating to urbanization, housing and human settlements were being given increasing attention by IBRD, and it was heartening to learn that the Board of the Bank would be giving further consideration to those questions early in 1974. It was also his delegation's understanding that the Governing Council of UNEP would consider the report on the implementation of resolution 2999 (XXVII) at its second session. The sponsors of the draft resolution therefore believed that, since the Secretary-General would now be required to undertake the comprehensive study envisaged under resolution 2998 (XXVII), the General Assembly should expand the criteria concept to encompass, in principle, any new institution or arrangement that might emanate from its resolution 2999 (XXVII). It would be inconsistent to ask international financial institutions to follow one set of criteria and at the same time to establish a new mechanism which might conceivably follow quite different criteria.

13. It was the sponsors' hope that the Secretary-General would spare no effort to ensure that the General Assembly would have before it at its twenty-ninth session a report that fully reflected both the letter and the spirit of the draft resolution.

14. Mr. CORDOVEZ (Secretary of the Committee) said that draft resolution A/C.2/L.1314 had financial implications. A written statement was being prepared and would be circulated shortly.

15. Mr. HASSAN (Sudan) paid a tribute to the Government of Kenya for the co-operation it had extended to the UNEP secretariat. The decision to locate the secretariat in a developing country had indeed been a wise one. The active interest taken by the developing countries in environmental issues was illustrated by the fact that several of them had already contributed to the Fund of the United Nations Environment Programme. The slowness with which the amounts pledged to the Fund were being paid up might be an impediment to programme development and could be detrimental not only to the attainment of the \$100 million target for the period 1973-1977 but also to the future flow of contributions. The fact that realistic programmes were needed to ensure a steady flow of contributions and that such programmes could not be set on foot unless adequate resources were available constituted a vicious circle which must be broken at all costs. The resources available during 1973-1977 should therefore be used first and foremost to build up the UNEP image in the eyes of the world and to formulate realistic, practical and constructive programmes.

16. His delegation supported the convening of the United Nations Conference-Exposition on Human Settlements, which should serve as a launching pad for future practical programmes aimed at achieving the objectives spelt out in the recommendations of the Stockholm Conference. The vitally important question of rural depopulation and its socio-economic effects was receiving special attention in the Sudan, whose modest efforts to solve the related problems needed to be supplemented by international assistance. The Conference-Exposition would provide the Sudanese Government with an opportunity to share its experience in that field with other countries.

17. He welcomed the action initiated in collaboration with the Special Sahelian Office to respond to the urgent needs and requests of the Governments of the stricken Sahel region. The desertification process and the irretrievable loss of soil and vegetation due to erosion or pollution were environmental tragedies that called for urgent action at the national, regional and international levels. The western part of the Sudan had suffered from the recent drought, and efforts to combat the encroachment of the desert were impeded by the inadequacy of resources and the inadequacy of international assistance. It was gratifying to note that the programme priorities made provision for action to support the efforts undertaken by the Governments of the Sudano-Sahelian zone to solve land, water and desertification problems.

18. The active interest shown by the developing countries in environmental questions stemmed from their belief that development programmes and environmental measures were not incompatible. Protection of the environment and economic advancement were issues of equal importance and concern to the world. Paragraph 12 (d) of decision I (I) of the Governing Council (see A/9025, annex I) on trade, economics, technology and the transfer of technology explicitly dealt with the various aspects of that question and the manner in which the Council should approach it after rightly identifying it as the field that merited priority action.

19. The environment was a novel issue, and there was no past experience of international action from which to draw lessons. The role of the Governing Council of UNEP should be to watch over the interests of the developing countries; in doing so, it should be guided by the spirit and purpose of General Assembly resolutions 3000 (XXVII) and 3002 (XXVII). The Council's responsibilities would be heavy, particularly in respect of programmes entrusted to other agencies for implementation. In that respect, the creation of a global "early warning" system to provide notice to countries whose trade might be affected by environmental measures being planned by others was particularly important. His country, having its coasts on a closed and heavily trafficked sea that was particularly prone to pollution by oil discharges and man-made pollutants, attached great importance to problems affecting the marine environment. The Sudanese Government would seek guidance and help from the UNEP secretariat in respect of the action it was envisaging in that connexion. His delegation had noted with satisfaction the reference in the report of the Governing Council to the codification of environmental laws. It considered that UNEP should play a more active role than that of an observer in the forthcoming United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea and should give due attention to the question of the codification of any environmental laws that emerged from the Conference.

20. Turning to the question of the co-ordination of environmental activities, he said that the workload of the Environment Co-ordination Board, set up in accordance with General Assembly resolution 2997 (XXVII), could be considerably lightened by the establishment of machinery that enabled the possibility of duplication or overlapping to be eliminated or reduced at the initial stage of programme planning. A representative of the Executive Director well versed in interagency affairs

would be of tremendous help to the governing bodies of various agencies in arriving at decisions on environmental activities with a minimal risk of duplication.

21. Mr. ELIASHIV (Israel) said that the Stockholm Conference had crystallized the concern about man's relationship with his environment and had spelt out a number of basic values and goals that would influence national and international action for many years to come. It had furthered a more universal awareness of the interdependence of social and economic issues, and of the fact that poverty and degradation were perhaps a greater threat to universal peace and a stronger affront to human dignity than any threat arising from pollution caused by industrial activity or ecological imprudence. Man's right to live in a beneficial environment and his responsibility to protect and improve that environment for future generations had been clearly defined in the Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment.¹

22. His delegation welcomed the establishment of UNEP, its secretariat, its Governing Council, the Environment Co-ordination Board and the Fund of the United Nations Environment Programme. It hoped that the Governing Council would lay down a sound basis for translating words into deeds through practical programmes drawn up on the basis of the main objectives and priorities formulated at its first session. The aim must be to find methods and approaches that enabled development to be reconciled with the preservation of man's natural heritage.

23. Some of the environmental problems which Israel faced also confronted many other countries. The protection and maintenance of available water supplies were given high priority; a national policy had been developed for water conservation and the recovery of waste water, and an intensive research programme was under way for reducing and controlling water pollution and for processing and recycling polluted water. Ordinary sources of water were supplemented by means of desalination. Israel's experience in respect of the utilization of existing water supplies and the treatment and recycling of waste water was of particular relevance to a number of other developing countries.

24. Israel was a pioneer in some fields of arid-zone research and improvement, and would be pleased to intensify further its international information exchange and co-operation activities with other countries in that problem area.

25. The problem of regional development in Israel was being approached through major research projects on such subjects as rural-urban relationships, regional co-operation and the role of new towns and immigrant absorption in developing regions. A study completed recently by the Settlement Study Centre of Israel stressed that agriculture offered the greatest potential for environmental improvement and urged the establishment of co-ordinated programmes to stimulate a rapid acceleration of food production while safeguarding human well-being. That strategy was based in part on field work carried out by Israeli specialists in a number of developing countries, and it started from the assumption that healthy national development was impossible unless agricultural growth was assured. The study also proposed a somewhat revolutionary strategy for indus-

trial development, based on the tenet that industry should be developed concomitantly with agriculture and dispersed throughout the country in both urban and rural areas. The emphasis in industrial development should be shifted from the large urban centres to a network of rural towns.

26. UNEP should give particular emphasis and high priority to all those problems. Israel had learned from experience that the prerequisite for effective environmental action was a broad understanding by all groups within a society of the dilemmas, choices and costs involved in combating pollution.

27. His delegation welcomed the United Nations Conference-Exposition on Human Settlements scheduled to take place at Vancouver in 1976, and fully supported the idea contained in draft resolution A/C.2/L.1312.

28. Mr. CURTIN (Australia) said the Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment had made it clear that, despite the original pessimism, environmental improvement and economic growth should and could go hand in hand. However, the developing countries needed to be reassured that there would be no discrimination against their exports and that industrial development would not become more costly as a result of environmental standards set by industrialized countries. His delegation had noted the views of the Group of 77 in that respect, but also felt it had been shown that concern for the environment could be of benefit to the developing countries. For example, their economies could be strengthened by the increased use of natural materials rather than synthetics and by the transfer of certain industries from high-pollution to low-pollution areas. His delegation also respected the view that the environmental problems of the third world were essentially the human problems of extreme poverty, protein deficiency and inadequate housing. He recalled in that connexion that the Governing Council of UNEP had decided, at its first session, in its Action Plan for the Human Environment, that the quality of human life must constitute the central concern of UNEP.

29. If some of the momentum generated at Stockholm had been lost, it was because environment meant different things to different people, so that the formulation of an agreed programme was not easy. While there should be flexible interpretation of the tasks to be accomplished by UNEP, the human resources of its secretariat and especially the financial resources of the Fund should not be spread over too large a number of projects in the early stages. UNEP should pay due attention to the development needs of the developing countries and should also tackle global projects such as Earthwatch and the threat posed by pollution to human life and well-being. It having been made clear at the first session of the Governing Council that human settlements should occupy an important place in UNEP's activities, his delegation supported draft resolution A/C.2/L.1312.

30. Australia had made a contribution of \$US 2.5 million to the Fund of UNEP and was also financing the establishment in Australia of a base-line atmospheric monitoring station and a network of associated stations as part of the highly important Earthwatch project. It had also participated actively in the IMCO International Conference on Marine Pollution, held in London

¹ See A/CONF.48/14/Rev.1, chap. I.

from 8 October to 2 November 1973, and hoped that the new International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships would be able to strengthen control over ship-generated pollution not only from oil but also from other substances. The international community must come to grips with the problem of marine pollution, and Australia believed that the principle that responsibility lay with the polluter was sound and well-founded in international law.

31. Australia had wide experience in both urban and rural environment problems. Industry and labour unions alike were increasingly concerned at the dangers of pollution, and the protection of the human and natural environment was a key component of the over-all policy of the Government. Australia had developed agricultural techniques for use in areas affected by water shortage, pests and soil erosion, and believed that it and the developing countries would benefit by sharing their experience in that respect.

32. Australia, like many other countries, believed that nuclear weapons testing constituted a serious challenge to man's living and working environment. It strongly supported the condemnations of the use and testing of nuclear weapons contained in principle 26 of the Declaration adopted at Stockholm and resolution 3 (I) of the Stockholm Conference.²

33. Mr. HOVEYDA (Iran) welcomed the positive progress made since the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, including the establishment, with the help of Kenya, of a headquarters for UNEP, and the elaboration of the initial elements of a programme. The Executive Director and his staff were to be congratulated.

34. His country, as a member of the Governing Council of UNEP, in general approved the report of the Council, its recommendations, the objectives set, and the rules for the management of the Fund, to which his Government had been one of the first to contribute. However, he did have reservations. In paragraph 30 of the report, some well-known historically established geographical terms had been changed, and he appealed to the secretariat to correct that deficiency in the future.

35. His delegation agreed with the general reasoning of the Executive Director, but felt that a distinction should be made between realities and attempts at projection. It was of course useful to consider how far nature could withstand human activities, but such speculation should not be alarmist to the point of arresting human progress, particularly in the developing countries. It would be avoiding the issue to blame all man's environmental problems on modern technology. Research on the effects of human activities was still chaotic and incomplete, and it was important to adopt an approach of scientific objectivity. Modern technology should not be rejected, but rather new technology developed. However, man's behaviour and its effects on his environment were relatively well known, in the sense that efforts were continually being made in the United Nations system to promote, for example, an international division of labour, a fairer commercial order and the closing of the gap between developed and developing countries. UNEP should, therefore, concentrate its efforts on its own particular field while remaining constantly in contact with other United Na-

tions bodies. In that way duplication of effort could be avoided and efficiency promoted. Internal co-operation among United Nations bodies did not mean the mutual assumption of each other's tasks. There must be a strict division of responsibilities because the study of the environment covered problems as varied as town planning, pollution, and even culture and education.

36. Meetings to discuss all related topics and to exchange views should, however, be organized, and the assistance of institutes and foundations in such meetings would be extremely important. The reports of seminars of that type would be beneficial not only for the Programme but also for all work concerning development.

37. The activities of UNEP should concern mainly the conservation and development of the environment. His delegation was gratified to see that those two aspects had been broadly reflected in the decisions of the first session of the Governing Council and in the activities of its secretariat. It was encouraging to see how the Executive Director took into account the interests of the developing countries as well as the problems of the industrialized countries. Conservation was important in that there was a need to close the gap between the rich and the not-so-rich and at the same time an effort must be made to achieve a better and fairer exploitation of natural and technological resources. UNEP had made significant progress in that respect. Furthermore, meetings such as the United Nations Conference-Exposition on Human Settlements offered exceptional opportunities for resolving major problems, and his delegation supported the proposals of the Executive Director in that respect, particularly since all activity in that field was oriented towards development problems.

38. He felt that all the parts of the Programme deserved support and that UNEP filled a gap in the United Nations activities for development, since development was inextricably related to the natural and human environment.

39. Mr. SMIRNOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the problems of preserving the environment and making appropriate use of natural resources occupied an important place in the Peace Programme approved by the Twenty-fourth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. It had further been stressed, in a statement by the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union at the recent World Congress of Peace Forces in Moscow, from 25 to 31 October 1973, that the solution of such problems as energy resources and the environment, the exploitation of marine resources and the elimination of mass famine and disease required wide-ranging co-operation among all States on the basis of equality, mutual benefit and non-interference in internal affairs. Mr. Brezhnev had also emphasized that the first requirement for such co-operation was the establishment of peace.

40. The vast scale of present and future industrial production made it necessary to adopt measures for the rational use and replenishment of natural resources and the preservation of the environment. Such measures had already been included in the short-term and long-term plans for national economic development of the Soviet Union, and substantial resources were devoted to their implementation. The experience of the Soviet Union showed that, given the socialist system of soci-

² *Ibid.*, chap. IV.

ety and State ownership of natural resources, it was already economically and technologically feasible to overcome the environmental problems resulting from rapid, large-scale economic development. Efforts to preserve the environment were also being pursued at the international level, through a programme of increased co-operation with the CMEA countries and through the draft joint declaration submitted by the socialist countries to the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, in July 1973.

41. The Soviet Union considered that the Action Plan for the Human Environment adopted at the first session of the Governing Council to whose formulation it had contributed, could serve as a basis for international co-operation in environmental matters. However, he pointed out that the Plan had been drafted on the basis of recommendations of the Stockholm Conference, in which the socialist countries had not participated for well-known political reasons. He recalled the areas for co-operative action which the Soviet Union had proposed should be included in the Action Plan. Priority should be given to those areas within the context of the basic guidelines for UNEP activities approved at the first session of the Governing Council.

42. Where water resources were concerned, there were two urgent problems which should be resolved with the help of UNEP, namely, that of eutrophication and that of preserving and improving water quality. Failure to tackle those problems forthwith would mean the expenditure of vast sums at a later date in order to provide adequate supplies of drinking-water. Where air pollution was concerned, the developing energy crisis made it all the more essential to find ways of removing sulphur from liquid and solid fuels. Attention should also be given to the problem of toxic emissions from internal combustion engines. All those problems were universal, affecting both developed and developing countries. UNEP resources should not be spread over too wide a range of projects, such as the compilation of a register of clean rivers.

43. Many projects could be undertaken on a regional basis. Thus, it was premature for UNEP to envisage action to combat pollution in internal, closed and semi-closed seas, such as the Baltic and Black Seas. The Programme should participate in such regional or subregional projects only when asked to do so by the coastal States concerned or by the international or regional organizations empowered by those States to make such a request.

44. He reiterated the position expressed by his delegation at the first session of the Governing Council concerning the funding of action on human settlements within UNEP. His delegation was not opposed to action by UNEP on the ecological aspects of the problems of human settlements.

45. It was essential to co-ordinate the activities of UNEP, other United Nations bodies and the specialized agencies as soon as possible in order to avoid duplication of effort. UNEP should concentrate entirely on matters that were important and urgent and must, therefore, receive and transmit information on what all other United Nations bodies were doing, allocate to them programmes appropriate to their fields of competence and form working groups or make use of national institutions where appropriate.

46. As stated at the first session of the Governing Council, his delegation believed that the Council should play a leading role in all activities of UNEP, approving projects and their financing from the Fund of UNEP and monitoring the activities of the Executive Director and the secretariat. Governments themselves must be free to determine the form and nature of their contributions to the Fund, so that voluntary contributions could be made in any form and in any currency.

47. Research into the interrelationship between continued economic development and environmental problems was still in its infancy. The greatest care should therefore be exercised in making judgements and, in particular, recommendations concerning the development prospects of individual countries. His delegation objected to the sensationalism of bourgeois literature in prophesying an inevitable ecological disaster. The Soviet Union had an optimistic approach to the problems of protecting the environment. The "global equilibrium" theory, which proposed the retention of material production capacity in developed countries, a halt to industrialization in developing countries and the universal mandatory limitation of growth, was at once reactionary and Utopian. The idea that economic development in the industrialized capitalist and socialist countries was the main cause of the deterioration in the environment in those countries was unacceptable, as was the theory that poverty and misery in the developing countries were even more "polluting".

48. Related to the problem of protecting the environment were the problems of the use of natural resources and the exercise by States of their sovereignty over them. His delegation was opposed to any attempt to introduce a so-called "supranational" approach to environmental problems and to the internationalization of natural resources. The duty of States Members of the United Nations was not to revise the principle of the inalienable sovereignty of States over their natural resources but, on the contrary, to adhere strictly to it.

49. The task of protecting and improving the environment required the efforts of all Governments and peoples. The best way for mankind to take advantage of the great opportunity which it now had to fulfil that task while ensuring further social and economic progress was to undertake the planned development of national economies and institute control by society over the means of production. The measures necessary for society to exert conscious control over the interrelationship between itself and nature would be most effective under conditions of peaceful coexistence among States with different social systems. The Soviet Union was ready to accept mutually beneficial and equitable international co-operation.

50. Solution of the environmental problems facing mankind would require vast sums, far exceeding the resources of the United Nations or any of the associated funds and programmes. The money for UNEP activities would, therefore, have to come mainly from the \$220 thousand million which the United Nations calculated were now spent on armaments each year. In that connexion, the World Disarmament Conference already approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 3183 (XXVIII) should be convened as soon as possible, and attention should be given as a matter of priority to the Soviet Union's proposal 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 (agenda item 102). The adoption of that proposal would constitute a major contribution to the social and economic development of all countries, particularly the developing countries, in addition to the assistance provided through existing channels.

51. Mr. ORTIZ DE ROZAS (Argentina) commended the Executive Director on his important statement at the 1563rd meeting. Argentina was highly gratified that the establishment of UNEP headquarters in Kenya had been completed; its functioning there was symbolic of the growing participation of developing countries in the search for solutions to major world problems.

52. Argentina had attached high priority to environmental problems ever since they had been brought to the attention of the international community, being fully aware that man could no longer be considered as detached from the natural and the man-made environment. For that reason, it had joined whole-heartedly in the effort to formulate a series of fundamental principles as a pattern for international conduct and responsibilities. The Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment adopted at Stockholm, the concrete expression of that effort, was an exemplary statement of the international consensus on environmental ethics. The Action Plan for the Human Environment, also adopted at the Stockholm Conference, represented an effort to enhance and promote those principles through a basic structure and recommendations designed to guide national and international activities in a transcendent undertaking grounded in co-operation. Environmental problems could be tackled only if selfish attitudes were set aside in that new, interdisciplinary, global approach. The most recent development in the undertaking was not so much the realization of its implications as an acceptance of the fact that a transitional stage had been reached in the search for solutions which would reconcile private interests with the broader concerns of the community at large. In that, as in many others areas, the discarding of old ideas seemed to be more difficult than the adoption of new ones.

53. As a member of the Governing Council, Argentina had actively participated in the adoption of the decisions of its first session, contained in annex I of its report (A/9025). As to the general rules to be applied in the operation of the Fund of the United Nations Environment Programme, it considered that decision 2 (I) was a balanced reflection of the views of Member States, particularly with regard to the division of responsibility between the Governing Council and the Executive Director in the formulation and approval of projects. With regard to project execution, Argentina was gratified by the way in which article XI of that decision stressed the possibilities of using the services of developing countries. That approach would enable such countries to derive maximum benefit from the execution of environmental projects. It was in that expanded context that Argentina supported the concept of "eco-development", in that it encouraged an awareness on the part of States of the need to deploy the natural and human resources available in their own immediate environment. It must be clearly understood that, for the developing countries at least and within the foreseeable future, the obstacles to development were

not material but rather socio-political. Such difficulties were also engendered by the completely artificial and intrinsically destructive transplanting of systems of values incompatible with the environment in which human energies were to be deployed.

54. As to decision 3 (I) on the review and approval of the Fund Programme for 1973-1974, the Argentine delegation considered that there was a sound balance in the allocation of funds for the various items and projects. It would have preferred the assignment of somewhat greater resources to areas relating to trade, economics and technology and transfer of technology.

55. Turning to the execution and priorities of the Action Plan for the Human Environment, in decision 1 (I), he said that the Argentine Government fully endorsed the main policy objectives in that they subsumed the fundamental ideas of the entire environmental problem as they appeared from the guiding principles of the Declaration adopted at Stockholm. Those principles must be kept as a permanent reference point, serving as indicators in the context of policies already adopted, as well as informing activities relating to the identification and evaluation of environment problems and to the organization of the environment. The Argentine delegation supported the priorities set forth in the decision of the Council but the establishment of priorities must be a continuing process based on needs and opportunities arising in a context which was essentially dynamic. They must be constantly kept up to date in the light of the Action Plan. His Government attached special importance to the identification and evaluation of the problems and to the measures adopted to organize the environment. He believed that co-operation among States could be assured if, at the international level, general principles were laid down to guide the actions of individual Governments and, by extension, of the community as a whole. Argentina believed that the Governing Council was the appropriate body to study and analyse such general criteria, given its function in promoting international co-operation on the environment and recommending policies to that end—as set forth in General Assembly resolution 2997 (XXVII). It was United Nations practice to assign powers within the fields of their competence to specialized bodies and organs of the General Assembly so that they could report upon ways in which resolutions could be implemented. That was also the rule in the case of the Economic and Social Council, and there had never been any suggestion of conferring any supranational powers upon that body.

56. At the first session of the Governing Council it had been suggested that the General Assembly should be invited to consider the matter of normative progress in the environmental field. The Executive Director had also recalled that the United Nations had a role to play in that process, for which the Stockholm Declaration was a basis. One area in which such progress was most acutely and imperatively needed was that of the exploitation of natural resources shared by two or more States. The Stockholm Declaration had been only the point of departure for the solution of the complex questions of the environment, and the important principles it contained, far from being exhaustive, served to spur the elaboration of further complementary norms and principles. Aware of that, the Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned countries, at their historic Summit Conference held at Algiers from 5 to 9 September

1973, had dealt with the important question of shared natural resources and had agreed upon formulae based upon international co-operation to avoid problems that might arise from their irrational use. Section XII of the Economic Declaration³ adopted unanimously at Algiers was devoted to the human environment and its provisions were clear and equitable. The text referred only to resources common to two or more States, in other words, it dealt with one of the categories recognized in the questionnaire circulated to Governments prior to the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment. Under consideration, therefore, was a specific aspect of the wider spectrum of the human environment and it was necessary to be very clear and categorical in that connexion, since it was obvious that, by means of overt subterfuges, an effort had been made to introduce confusion into the debate. The natural resources over which a State possessed exclusive sovereignty and inalienable rights to use and protect them against any form of aggression were one thing, while shared natural resources were quite another. As to the first category of resources, the Algiers Declaration contained crystal-clear provisions which had the unlimited support of the Argentine delegation. Argentina had joined in the promotion of the principles ultimately proclaimed in General Assembly resolutions 2880 (XXVII) and 2993 (XXVII), and had wholeheartedly supported resolution 3016 (XXVII).

57. As to the second category, that of shared natural resources, the non-aligned countries which had taken part in the Algiers Conference, and which needed no lessons as to ways of defending their sovereign rights, had decided to provide for different treatment by means of the necessary co-operation among equally sovereign States in order to prevent the exploitation of such resources from giving rise to conflict between countries forming part of the same natural ecological system. The implicit justice of that concept required no further elaboration. The right of one State to develop itself could not infringe upon the identical right to development of another State sharing the same natural resources. The use of shared natural resources could not be enjoyed by one State at the expense or to the detriment of another. The aspirations or interests of one State could not prevail unjustly over those of others; they must be duly considered and combined with them to the benefit of all. To that end, the Heads of State or Government at Algiers had considered that the co-operation of the countries concerned in the exploitation of such resources should be developed on the basis of a system of prior information and consultation, within the wider context of the normal relations existing among them. That approach was an irrefutable proof of respect for law and justice and fully consonant with the purposes of the United Nations system. It derived from the fundamental operation of assessing situations in order to prevent possible disputes and was a viable embodiment of the concept of collective security in the economic field—which was one of the most ambitious initiatives under consideration by the Economic and Social Council.

58. In that connexion, he pointed out that operative paragraphs 1 and 2 of draft resolution A/C.2/L.1305/Rev.1—of which his delegation was a sponsor—reproduced the self-same principles that the Algiers Conference had approved. There was no ques-

tion of affirming in that text the sovereignty of each country in the exclusive exploitation of its own natural resources, nor the concurrent obligation to avoid causing damage to the environment of other States or to zones beyond its national jurisdiction, because those principles had been unequivocally endorsed in resolutions 2995 (XXVII) and 2996 (XXVII). In the specific field of natural resources shared by two or more States, there was a need to ensure that the exercise of sovereignty and the rights deriving from it on the part of one State should not hinder or infringe the exercise of the same rights over the same natural resources on the part of another State or States. Accordingly, the principle of the avoidance of damage should be complemented by the adoption of measures for effective co-operation to allow the rational and equitable use of such resources. It was obvious that the system set forth in the Algiers Declaration lent itself to co-operation in that it was the natural corollary of principles already enshrined in environmental philosophy and General Assembly resolutions. From that standpoint, the system of prior information and consultation in the context of shared natural resources implied the consolidation of a norm of general conduct—a concrete guideline for national, regional or international action in the field of the human environment. It represented a principle for co-operative conduct and was a reasonable norm which could serve, in the future development of environmental international law, for the achievement of more detailed norms or procedures for more effective co-operation. Thus, to speak in that context of coercion was not only deliberately to sow confusion as to the meaning of the subject under discussion, but also to distort the underlying normative intentions. The recognition of that concept of co-operation in the environmental field was of concern to the entire international community—as witness the numerous treaties and agreements on various natural resources in which it was embodied as a basic principle governing the conduct of States and encouraging understanding between them.

59. In that connexion, special mention must be made of the laudable, constructive efforts of the African States. The latter had given proof of a maturity of spirit worthy of emulation in other regions, showing an unwavering eagerness to reconcile their problems through machinery for co-operation. In southern Africa, however, where the survival of unjust and anachronistic colonial forms was an impediment to understanding and co-operation, conflict surrounded the use of natural resources, which was inevitable in view of the situation in the area. Co-operation as defined in the Algiers Declaration presupposed the existence of free and sovereign States, respectful of each other's rights. Irrefutable proof of such maturity of spirit was to be found in the African Convention on the conservation of nature and natural resources concluded on 16 September 1968 at the OAU meeting at Algiers—four years before the Stockholm Conference. That Convention adopted the principle of prior information and consultation in a number of explicit provisions regarding the exploitation of natural resources common to a number of States. Relevant in the same context was the agreement concerning the River Niger concluded in 1963 and that on the Senegal River in 1964—both of which set forth the same principle. Many other similar examples could also be cited, the most recent being the EEC proposals for environmental action of April 1973.

³ See A/9330, p. 57.

60. The International Law Commission's study of the non-navigational uses of international watercourses⁴ was concerned with only one aspect of the field covered by the draft resolution before the Committee. Consequently, there was no justification whatever for invoking the decision taken in that connexion by the Sixth Committee to support the contention that the matter was *sub judice*, thereby preventing the Assembly from acting to establish general norms for international conduct in the field of the environment and shared natural resources. The fact that the International Law Commission had been requested to begin codification in the field in question could not hinder the adoption of resolutions related to it, for that was part of the progressive development of the law—a task which the Assembly could not avoid. The Commission had been concerned with the question of State responsibility for some 18 years—but that had not prevented the adoption of resolutions on the subject. There was an evident and increasing desire among peoples to seek formulae for understanding and co-operation which was making itself felt in all fields. The days when one country could impose its will on others were gone for ever and that was especially true in the field of the human environment, where peoples must either co-exist in concord or succumb in discord. Reference had been made in the Committee to the sense of history; for those who used that phrase, acting with the sense of history should have meant casting an affirmative vote for resolution 3066 (XXVIII), adopted on 15 November at the 2167th plenary meeting, precisely for the establishment of a system of co-operation between the United Nations and OAU. Co-operation was the ideal which justified the very existence of the United Nations. Co-operation was the word most frequently used in the Charter, along with peace and security. That, in fact, was the trilogy on which the best hopes of the world rested. The Stockholm Conference had been a milestone on the road to co-operation. So, in its own way, had been the Algiers

⁴ See A/CN.4/270.

Conference for a substantial majority of States Members of the United Nations had proclaimed there principles of justice and equity in international relations—values from which the gigantic undertaking of the united countries of the third world known as non-alignment drew its inspiration and sustenance. He hoped that the draft resolution before the Committee would be another step in the same direction.

61. The Argentine delegation felt that the United Nations Conference-Exposition on Human Settlements would be an important source of guidelines for action and policy-making by Governments and international organizations. It also welcomed draft resolution A/C.2/L.1314 and agreed that the problems of human settlements, particularly those of urbanization and the adequate distribution of population, deserved specific attention from the developing countries.

Organization of the Committee's work

62. Mr. KITCHEN (United States of America) proposed that the afternoon meeting of the Committee should be cancelled, in view of the fact that Thanksgiving Day was an important national holiday in the United States.

63. The CHAIRMAN said that, if the afternoon meeting was cancelled, it might be necessary to hold Saturday or night meetings to enable the Committee to complete its work by the agreed date.

64. Mr. CORDOVEZ (Secretary of the Committee) drew attention to the financial implications of Saturday or night meetings.

65. After a brief discussion, the CHAIRMAN said he took it that the members of the Committee wished to cancel the afternoon meeting.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 1.30 p.m.

1566th meeting

Friday, 23 November 1973, at 10.35 a.m.

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

A/C.2/SR.1566

AGENDA ITEM 50

United Nations Environment Programme (*continued*)
(A/9003 and Corr.1, chap. XII; A/C.2/L.1305/Rev.1, A/C.2/L.1312, A/C.2/L.1316):

- (a) Report of the Governing Council (A/9025, A/C.2/L.1315);
- (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. JABER (Jordan) said it was gratifying to note the considerable progress that had already been achieved in formulating the objectives and priorities of UNEP, laying down procedures for operating the Fund of the United Nations Environment Programme, carrying out General Assembly resolutions on the environ-

ment, recruiting staff and making contacts with organizations of the United Nations system. The establishment of regional UNEP units in close co-operation with the regional economic commissions and the United Nations Economic and Social Office in Beirut was also a welcome arrangement.

2. Jordan considered that, since the environment underwent substantial changes in the process of development, defined objectives and specific policies and projects related to the environment should be integrated in development plans. Accordingly, the Jordanian three-year plan that it had begun to implement in 1973 included objectives, policies and projects concerning such aspects of environment as human settlements, internal migration, rural development, location of new industries, afforestation, utilization of water resources, im-