

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.

1533rd meeting

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

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

A/C.2/SR.1533

AGENDA ITEM 101

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

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

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

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

Zaire in the General Assembly, at the 2140th plenary meeting, and the programme drawn up by the six countries of the Sudano-Sahelian region (see A/9178, annex V). The new text read as follows:

"6. *Invites* the Governments of developed countries and the international financial institutions to adapt the terms and volume of their assistance to the countries of the Sudano-Sahelian region to the needs of those countries, their financial situation and their external indebtedness, not excluding the consolidation of debts in the multilateral sphere".

3. In paragraph 7, the words "regional development banks" had been replaced by the words "African Development Bank". In paragraph 9, the words "the Governing Council of" had been added after the word "*Invites*", and the words "national and regional institutions" had been substituted for the words "a national or regional research infrastructure". In paragraph 10, the words "the Governing Council of" had been added after the word "*Requests*" and the words "and other areas with similar geographical conditions" had been added after the word "Sahara".

4. A new paragraph 11 had been added reading as follows:

"11. *Requests* the developed countries and the specialized agencies of the United Nations to grant those countries affected by the drought which do not enjoy them benefits similar to those given to the least developed countries with respect to the specific consequences of the drought and until those consequences are eliminated".

5. Lastly, in paragraph 13 of the original text, the words "the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the International Development Association" had been inserted after the words "Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations".

6. The sponsors hoped that the revised text would be adopted unanimously.

7. Mr. IPOTO (Zaire) said that Zaire had been a sponsor of the resolution on the same subject adopted at the fifty-fifth session of the Economic and Social Council (resolution 1797 (LV)) and had expressed its intention to aid the drought-stricken region within the limits of its capacity. His delegation welcomed the response of the international community to the disaster. The revised version of paragraphs 6 and 7 of the draft resolution did not go far enough in reflecting the proposal of the President of the Republic of Zaire in the General Assembly. His delegation suggested that paragraph 6 should be replaced by a text in which the Governments of developed countries were invited to remit the debts of the countries affected and that in paragraph 7 all the international financing institutions and the African Development Bank should be invited to grant the countries concerned a suspension of repayments of their financial obligations until they had recovered an optimum economic and financial equilibrium and to intensify their assistance to those countries in the manner described in paragraph 7 of the revised text.

8. Although he acknowledged the contractual nature of the obligations of parties to a loan, sacrifices sometimes were necessary. The international community should do more to alleviate the plight of the drought-stricken countries, a plight to which the tenth ordinary

session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of OAU, meeting in Addis Ababa from 27 to 29 May 1973, had devoted special attention. The situation gave Member States the opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to the principles of international assistance. He hoped that the arrangements he had proposed would serve as a basis for the bilateral negotiations between the countries concerned—which were unlikely ever to be able to eliminate their current debt burden—and their creditors.

9. In the interests of ensuring that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus, he would not press his proposals to a vote.

10. Mr. DIALLO (Upper Volta) thanked the representative of Zaire for not pressing his proposals to a vote. He assured him that the countries concerned would take them into account in their negotiations with creditors on the consolidation of their debts.

11. Mr. FERGUSON (United States of America) said that, although his delegation was impressed by the spirit behind the proposals of the representative of Zaire, he was compelled to state in all candour that they were completely unacceptable to his delegation. His delegation hoped that the draft resolution could be adopted unanimously. It had had some difficulty with the original version of paragraph 6 and, although it had some reservations regarding the revised text, they would not prevent it from supporting the draft resolution. His delegation was not opposed to the ultimate objective; however, debts were contractual obligations which could not be arbitrarily waived as, in his country at any rate, they involved private entities.

12. Mr. IPOTO (Zaire) said he had been careful to say that, in order to facilitate the adoption of the draft resolution by consensus, he would not press his proposals. The United States had the right to think what it pleased about Zaire's proposals; he wished to make it clear, however, that they had been drawn up in a realistic spirit, with a view to ensuring that the six countries concerned would not be forced "to jump out of the frying pan into the fire". Nobody could say when those countries would be in a position to meet the costs arising from their external obligations. The sole purpose of his delegation's proposals was to give them some practical help. He would not press his proposals to a vote, but he asked that they should be recorded in the summary record of the meeting.

13. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the draft resolution A/C.2/L.1290 and Corr.1, as orally revised, was adopted by consensus.

It was so decided.

14. Mr. MITIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the Soviet Union was concerned at the serious situation in which more than 25 million inhabitants of the Sudano-Sahelian region found themselves as a result of drought, and had taken practical steps to alleviate that situation. Over the past two years, it had donated substantial amounts of food, medicines and transport, and had paid for their shipment to the region.

15. His delegation had been in favour of the draft resolution just adopted, since it was designed to fulfil the humanitarian purpose of alleviating the situation of populations affected by a serious natural disaster. That the Committee should have discussed the economic

and social situation in the region and adopted the resolution at the beginning of its work indicated how seriously it viewed the problem. His delegation did not interpret operative paragraph 6 as indicating that the Soviet Union or any country agreed to change the terms of the bilateral agreements it had concluded with the countries of the region. His delegation also assumed that the cost of implementing the resolution would be met, not from the regular budgets of the United Nations and the specialized agencies, but through voluntary contributions, as was specified in paragraphs 18 and 19 of the note by the Secretary-General (A/9178). Operative paragraphs 3, 15 and 17 of the draft resolution referred to the need to co-ordinate the provision of assistance to the countries in the Sudano-Sahelian region, and in particular to the role in that co-ordination of the United Nations Secretariat and other organizations of the United Nations system. The Soviet Union's position of principle was that the countries receiving assistance had a sovereign right to decide on the aims, nature and direction of assistance, the selection of projects and the co-ordination of assistance programmes. The provision of assistance to any country with the participation of the United Nations Secretariat or other organizations in the United Nations system should not serve as a pretext for interference in the internal affairs of the country or violation of its sovereign rights. The Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel, consisting of representatives of the countries of the region, could play a leading role in co-ordinating assistance programmes.

16. The needs of the countries affected were so great that they could not be met through any resources avail-

able to the United Nations or the specialized agencies, including the various voluntary funds. Accordingly, his delegation, like those of the German Democratic Republic, Guinea and Iraq, drew attention to the proposal of the USSR, which had already been submitted at the twenty-seventh session (2040th plenary meeting) by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the USSR, Mr. Gromyko, for a reduction of the military budgets of States permanent members of the Security Council by 10 per cent and the utilization of part of the funds thus saved for assistance to developing countries. The proposal provided for use of part of those funds primarily for assistance to those countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America which, as a result of serious natural disasters, found it difficult to implement urgent economic and social development projects. A decision by the General Assembly at its current session would not only alleviate the difficulties of the countries of the Sudano-Sahelian region, but would provide an ideal solution to the problems of assisting the economic development of the developing countries.

17. Mr. DIALLO (Upper Volta) said that in view of the reference by the representative of the Soviet Union to voluntary contributions, he wished to state that it was the understanding of the sponsors of the draft resolution that Member States, which had unanimously adopted it, should be prepared to make available to the Secretary-General the resources necessary for implementation of the activities it referred to. There should be no deviation from the letter or the spirit of the text.

The meeting rose at 5.40 p.m.

1534th meeting

Friday, 12 October 1973, at 3.20 p.m.

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

A/C.2/SR.1534

*Organization of the Committee's work (continued)** (A/C.2/L.1289)

AGENDA ITEM 46

Review and appraisal of the objectives and policies of the International Development Strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade (A/9003 and Corr.1, chap. III; A/C.2/L.1287)

ESTABLISHMENT OF A WORKING PARTY ON REVIEW AND APPRAISAL

1. The CHAIRMAN recalled that at the 1515th meeting, during the organization of the Committee's work, the representative of the Netherlands had made a formal proposal to establish a working party on review and appraisal which would consider item 46 and report to the Committee later in the session. The Committee had agreed that a decision on the Netherlands proposal should be postponed so that delegations could have

informal consultations on the proposal and the substance of the item. At the 1526th meeting the Committee had agreed that a decision should be taken on the establishment of a working party on 12 October. He intended to deal, for the moment, with only the procedural aspects of item 46. He had received the following information regarding the outcome of the informal consultations: first, there seemed to be a consensus that the most practical procedure was to establish a working party of the Committee, the membership of which would be open to all members. Secondly, he understood that, since the positions of the various groups on the substance of the item had not as yet been definitely formulated, it would be advisable to allow consultations to proceed for a few days longer—perhaps until the end of the resumed fifty-fifth session of the Economic and Social Council.

2. In order to facilitate the Committee's work, he wished to make three suggestions. First, he urged the Committee to decide at the current meeting to set up a working party, the membership of which would be open to all delegations, to consider item 46 and to report to

* Resumed from the 1526th meeting.