

REPORT
OF THE
WORLD FOOD COUNCIL
on the work of its seventh session

25-29 May 1981

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OFFICIAL RECORDS: THIRTY-SIXTH SESSION
SUPPLEMENT No. 19 (A/36/19)



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UNITED NATIONS

New York, 1981

NOTE

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACC	Administrative Committee on Co-ordination
ASEAN	Association of South-East Asian Nations
CGIAR	Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
CILSS	Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel
EEC	European Economic Community
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
FAC	Food Aid Convention
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GNP	Gross national product
IDA	International Development Association
IEFR	International Emergency Food Reserve
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISNAR	International Service for National Agricultural Research
ODA	Official development assistance
OPEC	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
SELA	Sistema Economico Latinoamericano
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Programme
WCARRD	World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development
WFC	World Food Council
WFP	World Food Programme

PART ONE

MATTERS BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE WORLD FOOD COUNCIL
AT ITS SEVENTH MINISTERIAL SESSION

1. The World Food Council of the United Nations met at ministerial level from 25 to 29 May 1981 at Novi Sad, Yugoslavia. The Council expressed its deep appreciation to the Government of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia for its inspiring solidarity with the Council in acting as host to the session and for its generous hospitality. It unanimously elected as President Mr. Francisco Merino Rábago, Secretary of Agriculture and Water Resources of the Government of Mexico.
2. The Council reviewed world food prospects in the context of the Universal Declaration on the Eradication of Hunger and Malnutrition adopted by the World Food Conference in 1974 ^{1/} and the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade adopted by the General Assembly resolution 35/56, annex, of 5 December 1980, and articulated specific priorities and comprehensive national and international measures to effectively realize the aims and objectives of the International Development Strategy.
3. For millions of people in developing countries, the food situation remains extremely precarious despite significant increases in production and improved distribution in some countries in the last year. Although some advances have been made, such as the recent inclusion of cereal import financing in the facilities of the International Monetary Fund, fully adequate and coherent measures for world food security have still to be adopted. Global production of cereals has fallen since 1978/79, and, according to estimates by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, world stocks of grain, as a proportion of consumption, are at their lowest level since 1975/76. While some developing countries have achieved notable gains in production, others, including some of the least developed and most seriously affected countries, have experienced a decrease in per capita food production. The external economic environment has become more and more difficult. Such factors as increasing costs for energy, fertilizer and other essential agricultural inputs, together with high interest rates, have seriously hampered efforts to accelerate food production.
4. There is a steadily increasing number of people suffering from chronic hunger and malnutrition in the low-income countries of the world, both because of the inadequacy of progress in meeting food and development needs and because of natural calamities and political upheavals leading to mass displacement of populations. These trends have brought great suffering, degradation and death to millions of people and have seriously inhibited national social and economic development. The situation in most of Africa has assumed major crisis proportions, as nutritional standards continue to deteriorate in absolute terms. Ministers note with appreciation the efforts made at the International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa held at Geneva on 9 and 10 April 1981, where important contributions were made to relieve the situation.

^{1/} Report of the World Food Conference, Rome, 5-16 November 1974, (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.75.II.A.3), chap. IV.

5. Reaffirming the views of the General Assembly as set out in paragraph 13 of the International Development Strategy, the Council is convinced that progress towards peace and disarmament, which should include, among other issues included in that paragraph, a reduction in military expenditure by all States and abstention from the threat or use of force against any State, is crucial for the international community to be able to develop its full capacity to feed a growing population. In this context, the Council reaffirms the continuing need for the international community to contribute substantially to the agricultural and food progress of the developing countries. Food for all may be difficult to achieve without peace, as much as peace will not be possible in the long run without food and development for all.

6. The Council deplures the fact that the goal of eradicating hunger within a decade, adopted at the World Food Conference, is now no longer feasible. The International Development Strategy now projects the achievement of this goal by the end of the century. The situation of growing mass hunger and malnutrition is an affront to humanity, and the Council calls on all Governments and agencies to redouble their efforts to eliminate hunger and lead the world to co-operative development for all peoples.

7. The Council sees some ground for hope in the widespread awareness of the magnitude of the hunger problem and the growing determination of Governments to address it effectively. Action by national Governments to encourage farmers to realize the potential for increasing food production, provide incentives and stable prices to producers, improve post-harvest processing and avoid losses and improve distribution in areas of greatest need is the fundamental basis of food security. This commitment of developing countries to solve their own food problems finds its strongest expression in the spreading conviction that political priority and integrated national action - within the framework of national plans through some form of food system, strategy or plan - are essential to effectively address food problems and to encourage increasing external support of such actions. In this context, the Council stresses the responsibility of the Governments concerned to implement agrarian reform and rural development in accordance with the recommendations of the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, as adopted. 2/ The situation with respect to the impact of trade on food problems, which is equally of major importance to the solution of food security and development issues and, owing to its complexity, needs to be kept under careful review, requires continuous concerted political efforts to promote adequate solutions.

National action and international support

8. The Council welcomes the increased recognition of the need for food strategies plans or systems to focus and integrate national efforts and to mobilize international support in favour of co-ordinated policies and programmes for the resolution of food problems in the areas of greatest need. Efforts in this direction must be stepped up and must receive the sustained support of the international community.

2/ See Report of the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development Rome, 12-20 July 1979 (WCARRD/REP), transmitted to the members of the General Assembly by a note by the Secretary-General (A/34/485).

9. The Council notes with satisfaction the growing number of countries adopting a more integrated food policy approach as the best basis to translate their own priority into effective action and also for mobilizing increased co-operation from assistance agencies. At meetings held for the African and Latin American regions, sponsored by the World Food Council, the relevance of and support for the food strategy approach was articulated, and Ministers express gratitude to the Governments of the Netherlands and Mexico and to the Inter-American Development Bank, which co-sponsored these meetings.

10. The Council will continue its support for the review of food efforts by Governments by arranging technical assistance and review meetings at national and regional levels when requested. It will work to facilitate the exchange of experience and ideas by elaborating possible lessons from a comparison of the different national strategies adopted and their effectiveness. The most important problems of implementation of food strategies, systems and plans, including mobilization of substantially increased external support, are a focal point of consideration by the World Food Council. The Council urges all countries to place emphasis on national action for which international support must be forthcoming.

11. Development assistance agencies, both bilateral and multilateral, have responded to requests for assistance in the preparation of food strategies. This support needs to be sustained on a constant basis and followed up quickly with investment assistance for the implementation of strategies, systems or plans. All serious endeavours by developing countries to grapple with their own food problems within a comprehensive framework deserve full support.

12. Within the framework of a national food strategy there may be certain areas in which improvements with relatively low investment requirements can yield large returns, often in the short run. Incentives to producers, together with the construction and improvement of transport and storage infrastructure, the provision of technological packages, the strengthening of input supply and technology-oriented shared risk, and the rational use of energy and alternate energy sources which avoid negative effects on the environment, should be actively explored and supported. The Council calls on development assistance agencies to renew their efforts in these directions and notably increase their support to developing country research and extension services. It also calls upon the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research to examine the possibility of extending its activities to additional areas of common interest and concern to a number of developing countries.

13. The lack of adequately-trained local personnel to formulate policies and plans, to identify and formulate projects, as well as manage them, could be a bottle-neck in the effective implementation of national food strategies. National and international efforts should be stepped up for the formation of skilled national staff. Maximum encouragement should be given to highly qualified agricultural specialists from developing countries to continue working in or to return to those countries, and steps should be considered to avoid the drain of such personnel to developed countries. More attention should be given to the education and training of people directly concerned with agriculture and rural development in recognition of the fact that rural development strategies can realize their full potential only through the active involvement of rural people at the grass-roots level. In this regard, the Council supports the contributions made by development agencies to the creation of centres for agricultural training and rural communication in developing countries.

14. The Council realizes that substantial new investment in infrastructure, particularly in land and water resources, will be essential to meet food production targets. Because such investments require substantial periods of time for their conception, preparation and implementation, action should be accelerated to prepare for these major projects, to be completed preferably by the end of the decade, as well as other investments. The Governments concerned and development assistance agencies need to gear up for such projects - undertaking the necessary preparatory work and taking account of the future funds required. The balance of comparative advantage may tilt in favour of agriculture in developing countries, particularly if those countries with demonstrated potential to rapidly increase food production are provided with the required external resources.

15. Policies and programmes which link production and consumption are essential to achieve a higher level of food self-sufficiency and the reduction of hunger and malnutrition. To achieve adequate food availability for all the people in developing countries, national food plans and strategies must mainly take into account peasants and small farmers, giving particular attention to the needs of women producers, and be geared to the creation of employment - by promoting co-operative forms of production, in particular, where appropriate - and, if necessary, to direct consumption intervention. Several important multilateral agencies are active in these areas, and the work needs to be further expanded.

Co-operation among developing countries

16. Strengthened economic and technical co-operation among developing countries is increasingly important. It can assist in building up a less dependent pattern of accelerated development, as well as contribute to restored growth in the global economy as a whole. Consequently, the international community should encourage and accord high priority to supporting the efforts of developing countries to strengthen and supplement their programmes of mutual co-operation in the field of food and agriculture.

17. There is a large potential for such co-operation in the sphere of food production and trade, including the potential of countries to expand their grain production, both for home consumption and for export, with the financial, management and technological resources of other developing countries in a position to assist them. Realization of this potential would benefit all developing countries concerned and also reduce the high and growing dependence on imports and diminish the potential dangers to long-term global food supply and security. The Council will be active in encouraging the exploration of appropriate modalities for bringing together physical, technological and financial resources to increase food production and trade among developing countries.

International trade

18. A substantial increase in the export earnings of developing countries is essential if they are to finance adequately their over-all economic development and their imports of food and agricultural inputs. Trade barriers constitute a serious handicap to the efforts of developing countries, in particular, to realize their economic potential and of the international community to overcome recession and inflation and expand over-all productivity. Trade protectionism can also produce tensions among nations, which it is the responsibility of the international community to avoid.

19. The Council fully recognizes the contribution that freer agricultural trade could make to food production, agricultural development and, thus, the enhancement of world food security. There are differing views as to the severity and impact of trade barriers, and particularly of new barriers erected over the recent past, but there is general agreement that they must be minimized as far and as quickly as possible, particularly those affecting the exports of developing countries. The Council therefore calls on all countries and the agencies concerned to make every possible effort to reduce trade barriers in all sectors, especially those affecting the agricultural trade of developing countries, for the benefit of all parties. It would be appropriate, in this context, for all industrialized countries to consider the adoption or extension of the general system of preferences, or other preferences to cover a wide range of suitable agricultural commodities, particularly semi-processed and processed ones. In this same context, the Council calls on all countries to inform the multilateral bodies concerned, on the action taken in pursuance of paragraph 64 of the International Development Strategy. These bodies might thereafter submit summarized reports to the Council.

20. Access to food is a universal human right, reaffirmed by the General Assembly and the World Food Conference, which Governments endeavour to guarantee their population. In this connexion, many countries stress their belief in the general principle that food should not be used as an instrument of political pressure.

Building world food security

21. There is widespread acceptance that there is a need for a series of feasible measures which, taken together, comprise a world food security net to ensure international market stability and continuity of world food supplies, especially for developing countries, at reasonable prices and on conditions they can afford.

22. Viewing with concern the lack of progress in negotiations for a new Wheat Trade Convention and conscious of its importance to world food security, the Council urges that a new Wheat Trade Convention, including substantial economic provisions that safeguard the interests of both exporters and importers, and recognizing the need for special provisions for developing countries, should be concluded as soon as possible.

23. Assured access to food-grain supplies through open channels of trade during world production shortfalls is vital. Countries should avoid measures which could affect the capacity of developing countries to cover their essential needs for grains and lead to deterioration of human consumption in times of production shortfalls. General agreement to avoid such action in times of food crisis would be a powerful reinforcement of world food security. The Council therefore encourages consideration of these issues by the Governments of producing and consuming countries, and is prepared to review this issue at its next session.

24. The Food Aid Convention has been extended until June 1983 at a level of 7.6 million tons. Larger reliable food-aid flows must be safeguarded; increased efforts are required to raise this level to the 10-million-ton minimum target by renewing the Convention at that level for a longer period. For this purpose, the participation of new donors should be actively sought, while existing donors should consider increasing their contribution.

25. The Council affirms that a major effort should also be made to attain the agreed pledging target of \$US 1 billion for the World Food Programme for the current biennium and to make constant efforts to ensure that WFP deliveries are maintained at the maximum level possible; for this purpose, the participation of new donors is also needed. The International Emergency Food Reserve should be replenished to maintain the level of 500,000 tons per annum and assured commitments should be made to it, especially for increased multilateral food aid for emergencies. The Council encourages and supports the ongoing work of the Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes to achieve these objectives on the lines of the recommendations in paragraph 92 of the International Development Strategy, and stands ready to assist its endeavours.

26. Achievement of international food security requires the building up of national reserves by all countries, both exporters and importers, with the capacity to do so. For this purpose, many developing countries need to improve their distribution, transport and storage infrastructure as well as their reserve stock management. Additional assistance for these purposes should be ensured through existing bilateral and multilateral channels as appropriate, including the World Bank, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and all the FAO programmes related to food security and production, as well as by other measures such as multi-annual commitments of food aid to the extent possible, and the use of this aid to constitute national food security stocks and to reinforce agricultural and food development policies.

27. The Council welcomes the IMF decision in response to the proposal to broaden its financial facilities so as to provide additional assistance that will help member countries faced with payments problems caused by unexpected extra import costs for cereal. This action will be of substantial assistance to developing countries and is a heartening sign that progress on other aspects of food security can be achieved, given the necessary political will.

Mobilizing for an accelerated effort

28. The Council is concerned that, after encouraging increases in 1977 and 1978, official commitments to food and agriculture declined in 1979 as a result of lower commitments by multilateral agencies, while military expenditure grew apace. Against an earlier estimated requirement of \$US 8.3 billion in 1975 prices in external resource flows to food and agriculture, only \$US 4.3 billion in 1975 prices (\$US 6.2 billion in 1979 prices) was identifiably committed for this specific purpose in 1979. While the primary responsibility for solving their food problems rests with developing countries, massive increases in external commitments will be required, keeping in mind the FAO secretariat estimate that external assistance requirements will increase to \$US 12.7 billion (in 1975 prices) by 1990. In this connexion, the Council welcomes the planned increase in commitments to food and agriculture by multilateral agencies.

29. A number of developed countries have already achieved the official development assistance target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product ^{3/} and some have surpassed it; other countries have declared their intention to achieve substantial

^{3/} As adopted by the General Assembly at its seventh special session (resolution 3362 (S-VII)), and as stated in paragraph 20 of the Manila Communiqué, adopted by the Council at its third session (see Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-second Session, Supplement No. 19 (A/32/19)).

increases in their assistance. Furthermore, a number of OPEC members collectively and individually are devoting large proportions of their GNP to development assistance. All developed countries should show renewed resolve to meet the target of 0.7 per cent of GNP as soon as possible, and other donors should make further efforts to support food programmes in developing countries.

30. All must play their part in contributing to the elimination of hunger. To achieve this objective, the Council suggests that each country with a capacity to contribute should further strengthen its own national support strategy embracing all facets of world food problems, including development assistance, trade policies and world food security questions. In this connexion, these countries, and international agencies concerned, are encouraged to review their policies in support of the food and agricultural sectors of developing countries and to keep the Council informed in the matter. The formulation and implementation of these national support strategies would need to be backed by appropriate supporting arrangements within each Government.

31. Within the total assistance effort, special attention should be devoted to the needs of low-income food deficit countries and particularly the least developed countries. The food situation of these countries, especially in Africa, is a cause of serious concern, imposing great hardship on their populations and generating import demands that they are ill able to meet. The World Food Council should therefore endeavour to make a positive contribution to the forthcoming United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries.

32. Both IFAD and the International Development Association have been critically important in providing technical and capital investment to the food sector, especially in the low-income countries. In this period of growing food deficits and a contracting world economy, which limits the capacity of low-income countries to mobilize resources in other ways, the Council therefore calls on the international community to make the maximum effort to implement the adequate and timely replenishment of IFAD and IDA. In this context, the resources of IFAD should be replenished on a continuing and equitable basis, as and when recommended by its governing council, at a level sufficient to obtain its objectives, taking into account the increased needs of developing countries for external resources.

Role of the World Food Council

33. The Council recalls its mandate from the General Assembly to provide co-ordination and follow-up of policies concerning all aspects of matters relating to food, to review major problems and policy issues and the steps being proposed or taken to resolve them, and to recommend remedial action as appropriate. Conscious of this heavy responsibility, the Council is determined to pursue its role of co-ordinating and stimulating policy, in an effort to mobilize and sustain greater efforts in the struggle to overcome hunger.

34. Within its mandate, the Council instructs its secretariat to gather for the next meeting all information regarding the work performed by international bodies active in the agricultural sector in Africa, highlighting the adequacy of what is being done about Africa's food problem. The secretariat should make maximum use of studies already undertaken.

35. There is much that Governments and agencies can individually do to achieve the elimination of hunger. Also, much can be done by concerted action, for example, in support for national food strategies, plans or systems and in greatly strengthening food security arrangements. The Council will be active in placing food considerations to the fore in all the appropriate international meetings, including the forthcoming United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries. In this connexion, it requests those of its members whose countries will be attending the Meeting of Commonwealth Heads of Government, to be held in Australia later this year, to ensure that the conclusions contained in the present report are brought to the attention of the participants in that meeting, together with the conclusions of the Meeting of Commonwealth Agriculture Ministers, held at Dacca in February 1981.

36. Food objectives are intimately related to the total development strategy and closely affected by the international economic climate. Constructive action on food problems is an essential focus of the International Development Strategy: positive progress in this area could strongly influence the prospects for progress in other areas of the International Development Strategy and the global negotiations on international economic co-operation for development. Ministers therefore request the President of the Council to bring the conclusions contained in the present report to the attention of the North-South Summit to be held in Mexico later this year so that the urgency of food issues may receive full consideration in that forum.

PART TWO

PROCEEDINGS OF THE COUNCIL

CHAPTER I

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

A. Opening of the session

1. The seventh ministerial session of the World Food Council was held at Novi Sad, Yugoslavia, from 25 to 29 May 1981. It was preceded by a preparatory meeting in Rome, from 21 to 24 April 1981.

2. At the inaugural meeting of the session, held in the Serbian National Theatre on 25 May 1981, a statement was made by His Excellency Mr. Arturo R. Tanco, Jr., Minister of Agriculture of the Philippines, at the end of his term of office as President of the World Food Council. A welcoming statement was made by His Excellency Mr. Branislav Ikonić, Vice-President of the Federal Executive Council of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. His Excellency the Honourable Francisco Merino Rábago, Secretary of Agriculture and Water Resources of Mexico, made a statement as newly-elected President of the World Food Council. His Excellency Mr. Sergej Krajger, President of the Presidency of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, addressed the Council. A personal message from the Secretary-General of the United Nations was read by the Executive Director of the Council. His Excellency Mr. Sayed A. Marei, Assistant President of the Arab Republic of Egypt and the first President of the World Food Council, made a statement before the Council. A message to the Council from the Director-General of the International Labour Organisation was also read.

3. In his statement, Mr. Arturo R. Tanco, Jr. said that without food, there is no freedom, no human dignity, no celebration of the spirit. He deplored the fact that millions of human beings were still suffering from hunger and malnutrition and warned that there can be neither peace nor progress in a hungry world. He hoped that the voice of reason would prevail and food would not be used as a political weapon. He expressed his faith and confidence that progressively growing global political will would make possible the eradication of hunger and malnutrition by the end of the century.

4. The Vice-President of the Federal Executive Council of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, in welcoming the members of the World Food Council, referred to the little progress that had been made so far in achieving the goals set by the 1974 World Food Conference to alleviate hunger within a decade. He emphasized that co-operation should be developed in the spirit of the new international economic order.

5. In his statement, the newly-elected President of the World Food Council, Mr. Francisco Merino Rábago, said that very little progress had been made to alleviate poverty and malnutrition, which in one way or another now affected some two billion people in more than 100 countries. It was worrying that there was complacency in the face of a situation so alarming. He expressed the hope that, through a just collaboration among nations, self-sufficiency in food would become a reality for all peoples. Now was the moment, he said, to ratify the commitments made six years ago to eradicate hunger; for the poor of the world expected the

principles that were proclaimed then to be put into effect without further delay. He called for a substantial increase in the flow of resources, to back up those commitments, to bring about self-sufficiency and to reduce the growing dependency of developing countries on food imports.

6. The President of the Presidency of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, in his inaugural address, said that the Council session was taking place at a very difficult time, when the world, although nursing hopes for the future, was also highly apprehensive. It was difficult to comprehend, he observed, that while the human mind had the capacity to adapt the environment to the needs of man, there were still millions of people in today's world who were afflicted by hunger. The existence of hunger and the ever-deepening economic gap between developed and developing countries was a threat to peace. The resolution of the food problem was inseparably linked to the struggle to consolidate peace and strengthen international co-operation and to abolish the application of force in international relations; to the struggle against the vestiges of colonialism and apartheid, and interference in the affairs of other countries; and to the establishment of the new international economic order. He saw the arms race as an obstacle to economic development and increased food production, and called upon the international community to marshal all its forces and the necessary resources to eradicate hunger.

7. A personal message to the Council from the Secretary-General of the United Nations was read by the Executive Director of the Council. The Secretary-General considered it vitally important that the World Food Council address itself at the beginning of the Third United Nations Development Decade to the adequacy of the global food strategy for reversing the mounting imbalances in the world's food production, consumption and trade, and for resolving the problems of growing hunger and malnutrition in developing countries. He therefore welcomed the Council's initiative in placing food in the context of the International Development Strategy as the main item of its agenda. He expressed concern about the decline in real terms in 1979 of concessional assistance to food and agriculture, but added that there was indeed a shared concern and a degree of international solidarity on food issues. Progress in resolving the food problem could certainly provide a timely impetus to the efforts to achieve the goals and objectives of the International Development Strategy and promote the establishment of a new international economic order. He emphasized the need for a sustained and coherent determination to pursue policies that would bring an end to the age-old scourge of hunger.

8. In his statement, Mr. Sayed A. Marei observed that the 1974 World Food Conference generated widespread interest and concern about the problem of hunger. It called for the establishment of a World Food Council for the effective follow-up of its resolutions, and the establishment of the International Fund for Agricultural Development and committees on food aid and food security. Although Governments were giving higher priority to food and agricultural problems, and some developing countries had achieved commendable progress, he noted that the broad picture remained disquieting, especially in Africa, and that targets set by the World Food Conference had not been fully realized. The real test of progress in the food area was whether the numbers of hungry people had decreased. He referred to the deadlock in the establishment of the new international economic order and the failure of the eleventh special session of the General Assembly. He called upon Governments to support the World Food Council in its endeavour to carry out the mission entrusted to it by the international community.

B. Members of the Council

9. At present, the Council consists of the following 36 States:

Argentina***	Japan***
Australia**	Liberia*
Bangladesh**	Mexico*
Barbados**	Nicaragua**
Botswana*	Norway***
Canada*	Pakistan***
Colombia*	Philippines**
Egypt***	Romania**
Ethiopia*	Rwanda***
France***	Senegal**
Germany, Federal Republic of**	Sudan**
Ghana**	Thailand*
Haiti***	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics**
Honduras**	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland*
Hungary***	United States of America*
India*	Yugoslavia*
Indonesia***	Zaire***
Iraq*	
Italy***	

* Term of office expires on 31 December 1981.

** Term of office expires on 31 December 1982.

*** Term of office expires on 31 December 1983.

C. Attendance

10. All members of the Council were present at the session except Barbados and Liberia.

11. In addition, the following States and organizations were represented:

States non-members of the Council

Afghanistan	Gambia
Algeria	German Democratic Republic
Angola	Greece
Belgium	Guatemala
Brazil	Guinea
Chile	Guyana
China	Holy See
Comoros	Iran
Congo	Kenya
Cuba	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya
Cyprus	Malawi
Denmark	Maldives
Finland	Morocco
	Netherlands

States non-members of the Council (continued)

Nigeria	Tunisia
Portugal	Uganda
Republic of Korea	United Republic of Cameroon
Samoa	United Republic of Tanzania
Sierra Leone	Venezuela
Somalia	Yemen
Sri Lanka	Zambia
Sweden	

United Nations

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
United Nations Industrial Development Organization
United Nations Environment Programme
United Nations Development Programme
World Food Programme
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Specialized agencies

International Labour Organisation
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
World Bank
International Fund for Agricultural Development

Intergovernmental organizations

African Development Bank
Arab Federation for Food Industries
European Economic Community
Inter-American Development Bank
Inter-American Institute for Co-operation on Agriculture
International Wheat Council
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel

Non-governmental organizations 4/

Church World Service
Industry Council for Development
International Federation of Agricultural Producers
International Federation for Home Economics
International Service for National Agricultural Research
World Youth Congress on Food and Development

4/ Several intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations were granted ad hoc observer status under the terms of rule 63 of the Council's rules of procedure.

D. Officers

12. At the 1st meeting of the session, on 25 May 1981, the following officers were elected by acclamation:

<u>President:</u>	Mr. Franciso Merino Rábago (Mexico)
<u>Vice-Presidents:</u>	Mr. Soedarsono Hadisapoetro (Indonesia) Mr. Robert Sagna (Senegal) Mr. Dumitru Vsiliu (Romania)
<u>Rapporteur:</u>	Mr. Aage Bothner (Norway)

E. Agenda

13. The Council adopted the following agenda (WFC/1981/2) for the session:

1. Opening of the session.
2. Election of officers.
3. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
4. Food in the context of the International Development Strategy: measures for accelerated implementation.
5. Role of the World Food Council and proposed future work.
6. Report of the Council to the General Assembly.

F. Documentation

14. The documents before the session are listed in annex II to the present report.

CHAPTER II

FOOD IN THE CONTEXT OF THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY: MEASURES FOR ACCELERATED IMPLEMENTATION

15. The World Food Council discussed agenda item 4 on the basis of policy documents WFC/1981/3 and Add.1 and a number of background documents listed in annex II. The Council's debate on how to accelerate the implementation of food measures in the context of the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade was introduced by the Executive Director of the Council.
16. The Executive Director pointed out that the Council's deliberations were taking place at a critical point in time. The outlook for the world economy was bleak. For large areas of the developing world, the food situation was precarious, with growing numbers of chronically malnourished people and, for most of Africa, it had assumed crisis proportions. Internationally-agreed objectives for food production and related investment flows were far from being achieved. Food security arrangements remained seriously inadequate and emergencies continued to multiply.
17. At the same time, there was a greater awareness and understanding of food as a central development issue. These needed to be translated into forceful action if the realization of the vision articulated at the World Food Conference - the eradication of hunger within a decade - was to be achieved even by the end of the century. To achieve that goal of the International Development Strategy, the Executive Director placed before the Ministers of the World Food Council a set of proposals for policy actions.
18. Based on the Council's past work in combating hunger, the approach to action has emerged along three principal lines:
- (a) More comprehensive national policy approaches for greater food self-reliance and more equitable distribution of food in areas of greatest need;
 - (b) Stepped-up and fully adequate supporting efforts and resources by all countries and agencies;
 - (c) An improved framework for world food security, both through more open channels of international trade and agreements on essential supporting measures.
19. The Executive Director pointed out that those policy approaches had been endorsed by the ACC Task Force on Long-Term Objectives and by the heads of agencies and organs of the United Nations system, as a basis for monitoring the implementation of the International Development Strategy. They provided a useful basis for consideration by Ministers in reaching conclusions and providing guidance on the resolution of food issues in the context both of the International Development Strategy and the global negotiations on international economic co-operation for development.

20. In the discussions on the item, agreement was generally expressed with the Executive Director's assessment of the world food problem and the constraints that made it difficult to effectively implement the new International Development Strategy. Delegates expressed their satisfaction at the increased priority being given to food issues by countries and agencies and the convergence of agreement that those issues could and must provide a point of entry to achieve the initial momentum required to launch the global negotiations, and felt that that could be an integrative focus for faster progress on all issues of the International Development Strategy.

21. Many delegates indicated their appreciation of the political role which the World Food Council was playing and its policy-oriented approach to the resolution of food problems.

22. The Council agreed that if the essential objective of the International Development Strategy to eradicate hunger by the end of the century was to be met, then there must be a redoubling of mutually supportive national and international actions. The attainment of that goal, and the building-up of world food security, the Council stressed, was first and foremost dependent on collectively building up national food security. The commitment of developing countries to solve their own food problems, it was felt, found its strongest expression in the spreading conviction of the need for high political priority for integrated national action through food strategies, systems or plans, increasing external support for such action. Together with such action, adequate international measures should be undertaken to resolve food security problems.

23. Many delegates felt that the Council should seek to provide a strong political impetus to the process of obtaining durable international agreements on a number of key issues which would provide for improved food security for the 1980s. Institutional and policy reforms by countries and development agencies and a restructuring of the framework of development and the international economy through the global negotiations were emphasized.

24. It was pointed out that many decisions made in fields that did not appear to be related to food and agriculture actually did have a significant impact on some aspects of those sectors.

25. There was consensus that the implementation of a global strategy to solve the world's food problems required the will and determination of all parties. Co-ordinated actions to mobilize and organize that will was itself a crucial part of the International Development Strategy and of the global negotiations. That, in a real sense, was the role of the World Food Council.

26. A number of delegates expressed support for the proposals made by the Group of 77, as annexed to the report of the preparatory meeting for the seventh session (WFC/1981/14, annex II).

A. Areas of critical national action

27. Focusing on the critical priorities of the International Development Strategy in the area of food production and national food security, the Executive Director recalled the initiatives taken by the World Food Council, at its

fourth 5/ and fifth 6/ sessions, held at Mexico and Ottawa, to encourage more integrated national food planning through some form of food strategy, plan or system. That approach was now widely accepted as a means for tackling food issues and directly linking investment decisions to the necessary policy adjustments for reaching longer-term objectives. National food strategies facilitated an increase in external resources, within a framework of priorities which kept the developing country - and its Government's perception of its food needs - at the centre of the development process.

28. The Council initiative had met a deeply felt need, at a time of growing dissatisfaction with over-fragmented, technical approaches and with general resolutions on broad and regional objectives which, however praiseworthy, did little in terms of national implementation. Such an integrated or systems approach by national Governments was seen as imperative for the solution of their food problems.

29. The widespread and positive response by over 40 developing countries, by some 20 developed countries and by development assistance agencies to its food strategy initiative reinforced the Council's conviction that it was on the right course for mustering appropriate policy and assistance efforts for resolution of national food and hunger problems.

30. In pursuance of a decision taken at its sixth session, held at Arusha, to guide that large-scale effort, the Council sponsored workshops at the level of Ministers and senior managers actively concerned with the preparation of food strategies. The Executive Director reported on a meeting for 20 African countries in November 1980, co-sponsored by the Government of the Netherlands, and a similar meeting in February 1981, co-sponsored by the Mexican Government and the Inter-American Development Bank, for 21 Latin American and Caribbean countries.

31. Speaking more strongly than the World Food Council itself, the Latin American Ministers had asserted at that meeting that "there can be no doubt that the solution to the food problem calls for the preparation by each country of an explicit and coherent national food strategy that will prevent the fragmentation of efforts and be the expression of the Government's political determination".

32. Essential to strategies for greater food self-reliance and the reduction of hunger and malnutrition were policies and programmes which linked production and consumption. The World Bank and IFAD continued to make progress in designing projects which helped small-scale producers and had the maximum impact on nutrition.

33. The Executive Director pointed out, however, that a much greater effort was needed to ensure adequate food availability for the large numbers of poor, malnourished people in rural and urban areas. Food strategies or plans must therefore take into account employment opportunities and direct intervention in consumption through food assistance and entitlement programmes and child-nutrition and supplementary feeding measures for the seriously malnourished.

5/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-third Session, Supplement No. 19 (A/33/19 and Corr.1).

6/ Ibid., Thirty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 19 (A/34/19).

34. Further work on food entitlement measures was recommended by the World Food Council at its sixth session and endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 34/68 of 5 December 1980. The secretariat was continuing to explore with interested Governments effective ways of improving the availability of food for the hungry in the context of expanded national production efforts. Only by such means could the growing dependency on food imports and food aid be reversed. Tendencies to exaggerate or underplay estimates of food aid requirements for the 1980s, independently of analysis of the impact on national production incentive and programmes, were not in the interest of developing countries. A more comprehensive approach to that problem is greatly needed.

35. He further stressed that, within the framework of a food systems approach, national efforts and international support should focus on technological development and related policy and investment measures that could yield relatively early returns, while preparing for the large-scale infrastructure development required in many countries, especially in Africa.

36. The Executive Director pointed out that those necessary national actions were at the heart of the food security problem and the first priority was for developing countries to accelerate their food production in areas of greatest need, improve distribution, and eliminate hunger and malnutrition.

37. It was not a simple task and the developing countries would need all possible encouragement and specific support for its completion. That meant stepped-up material support for developing country food strategies and investment projects, as well as stepped-up efforts in relevant training to carry the plans ahead and manage the project. In particular, development assistance for food and agriculture should be sustained, in order to minimize the effects of the 1979 decline; and it should be steadily increased by those countries that were able to do so, as part of their over-all development assistance programme. Stepped-up efforts for the least developed countries were a major priority, which should receive the support of all countries and organizations in a position to help.

38. The Council expressed satisfaction at the wide support being given by Governments and agencies to national food strategies, plans or systems as a fully integrated part of national development efforts. There was satisfaction regarding the regional workshops on the preparation and implementation of national food strategies. Several delegates suggested that the Council should organize such workshops in other regions also, focusing on predominant food issues and food sector planning and economic needs. That would, they felt, facilitate the exchange of experience and the assessment of progress with different national strategies and ensure their effective support. The concept of country by country food strategies was fully backed by the European Economic Community, which was also in general agreement with the main thrust of the Council's policy proposals.

39. Many delegates stressed that, while developing countries were able to increase food production through harmonized policy and programme measures - and a number were already introducing measures to do so - their efforts could not succeed without increased external assistance support. Other delegates felt that the preparation of national food strategies would facilitate an increased flow of external resources.

40. The majority of delegates felt that the eradication of large-scale hunger and malnutrition would require a clear commitment by all countries to step up

their investment and assistance to the food sector. A significant number of developed country delegations expressed their intention of further stepping up their resource assistance levels, with growing proportions to be allocated to food production efforts of the developing countries. One delegate emphasized the need for such stepped-up efforts even if it meant re-ordering priorities and diverting scarce resources from other sectors.

41. Discussions focused on a number of key policy measures that could contribute to an increase in food production and to improved consumption in the short run. The need for large-scale capital investment for the longer-term solution of the hunger problem was also stressed. Many delegates suggested that production of basic food crops for domestic consumption could and must be increased, through incentive price-policies and resource and technical assistance to farmers. That would involve technology packages backed by the necessary production inputs and credit, technology-oriented shared-risk programmes and related government services, such as extension services and improved marketing infrastructure.

42. With regard to the need for sustained food production growth in developing regions over the medium and the long term, many delegates pointed out that that could be achieved only through socio-economic transformation of traditional production systems, providing access to land, reorganizing obsolete land-tenure systems, and giving particular attention to small farmers and to the needs of women producers. That had already been recognized in several countries, which had taken serious reform measures leading to higher participation by small farmers and production co-operatives.

43. It was stressed by a number of delegates that challenging national policy measures for that purpose - especially in land and water development - would need to be accompanied by new and large-scale investments in infrastructure. Some delegates drew attention to the FAO estimates for such investment requirements: over \$US 28 billion annually by 1990. Total external assistance requirements for food and agriculture were estimated in the same study at \$US 12.7 billion (in 1975 prices) by 1990.

44. A number of delegations drew attention to the impact of energy cost on food production, particularly as related to fertilizer and other inputs. Expanding developing-country food production would require substantial availability of energy and energy-based inputs at reasonable prices. Several delegates called the attention of the Council to examining measures for international action to make essential production inputs available at reasonable prices.

45. Several delegations pointed out that the decisions of the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development 7 were based on the fundamental social situation from which food production and nutritional conditions arose. Therefore, the follow-up of the Conference was relevant for countries considering the preparation of national food strategies.

46. Further expansion of national agricultural research capabilities, it was felt, was a vital necessity to support agricultural development. Many delegations welcomed the establishment of the International Service for National Agricultural Research, and looked forward to its contribution to increased research efforts in

7/ See foot-note 2.

developing countries. In that connexion, members called upon CGIAR to examine the possibility of extending its activities to other areas of interest to developing countries.

47. A few delegations called for greater priority for research in crop production other than wheat and rice, for example, maize, cassava and sorghum.

48. Closely related to that issue, most delegates felt a need for stepped-up national and international efforts for training national staff in food policy formulation and project preparation and implementation. There was support for the further strengthening of food and agricultural management training, grass-roots extension service and rural communication centres, especially in Africa. The UNDP representative highlighted the importance of expanded technical assistance to training and institution-building in the food and agricultural sector.

49. A few delegates pointed out that every effort should be made to avoid the current drain of qualified agricultural experts from developing countries to the developed countries.

50. The Council discussed the need to give high priority to food consumption and nutrition policies, as called for in the International Development Strategy, which states that food production and distribution efforts should ensure that food supplies are available for those whose caloric intake is inadequate. A number of delegates stressed the importance of exploring policies for consumer price subsidies to more directly influence the reduction of hunger. There was general recognition that it was essential to interrelate all social and economic policy considerations and measures affecting food production, consumption and distribution, as well as income and employment. Several delegates saw an adjustment in the terms of trade between the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors as essential for the stimulation of food production and rural development.

51. Many delegates stressed that improved food availability and the distribution of food supplies call for important investments in transport, storage and related food security infrastructure. The International Development Strategy called for additional programmes and resources in those areas, and there was general support for that.

52. Representatives from developed countries and development assistance agencies reiterated their support for the integrated planning approach to food as a practical mechanism for channelling investments. Many delegates saw a central role for the Council in ensuring that the necessary external support would be forthcoming.

53. In his message to the Council at the session, the Director-General of ILO strongly supported the pivotal role of national food strategies and systems in the implementation of the International Development Strategy, combining policies and programme measures in food production, distribution and consumption with employment generation and a wider distribution of incomes. He pointed out that the Governing Body of ILO had recently stressed the need for both improved linkages between investment, food and technical support and for mobilizing additional development resources for the eradication of hunger and poverty, and had endorsed ILO participation in national food strategy reviews.

54. The representative of FAO pointed out that the lasting basis of world food security lay in accelerating food production in developing countries. The ability

of the developing countries to mobilize and invest resources in agriculture was crucial to the task of accelerating food production and FAO, through its Investment Centre, identified investment projects in food and agriculture and helped mobilize the sources to fund them. He further pointed out that the organization, through its planning assistance service, was assisting countries to improve their national capacity for planning, policy-making and formulation of food and agricultural strategies.

55. The representative of UNEP stated that sustainable increases in food production in the food-deficit countries required greatly increased international co-operation for environmental management and for assessment, monitoring, conservation and restoration of soil, water, grasslands and forests as an important basis for any food system.

B. International trade and world food security

International trade

56. The President of the Council, in his opening statement, emphasized international trade as an important element of the world food problem. Noting the complexity of food trade issues, which were influenced by factors that went beyond the food problem itself, he further stressed the added difficulties brought into the picture by the threat of using food as a political weapon, something that could not be accepted.

57. The Executive Director of the Council reiterated the view that expansion of developing country exports, both of agricultural and other products, was of great importance for the economic growth of those countries and for the solution of their food problems, as it provided them with the means to finance their own development. In view of that, he proposed that the Council recommend that new efforts should be undertaken in the appropriate negotiating bodies to liberalize imports of developing country products, particularly of those products which had a potential for efficient production at competitive prices.

58. There was general agreement that protectionism negatively affected the ability of developing countries to expand their exports and to finance their economic development. It was pointed out that one third of the exports of North America and Europe, and one half of those from Japan were currently attracted to developing countries, which were increasingly to be considered as the future markets for the developed countries. Enlightened self-interest and common sense, according to a majority of delegations, dictated freer and reliable access for exports from developing countries to the markets of developed countries. This could be the fundamental factor in expanding international trade for the benefit of all countries during the years to come. Instead, as countries from the various groups maintained, increased protectionism was constraining efficient production and generating inflation and unemployment world-wide. A large majority of delegations wanted concrete and practical steps taken to allow comparative advantages to operate in the growth of world trade, in order to stimulate investment and productivity. Failure to do so would, in the view of those delegations, condemn the international community to institutionalizing an inefficient allocation of resources, with a consequent impact over its growth potential.

59. Various speakers from developed and developing countries were of the opinion that the latest round of GATT multilateral trade negotiations had not succeeded in achieving significant results on the liberalization of trade, and particularly of agricultural trade, and were therefore perceived by some of those delegations as a lost opportunity for the international community. Other Council members and the representative of EEC were, however, of the opinion that the multilateral trade negotiations had accomplished an important task and were satisfied with their results.

60. Some countries proposed that the Council should recommend the launching of new trade negotiations focusing on agricultural trade matters, and that countries and the appropriate international bodies should explore new ways to reduce trade barriers and those affecting agricultural trade and the trade of developing countries in particular. Other delegations, however, were of the view that there was no need for engaging in new multilateral trade negotiations as a long and complex round had only recently been completed. They also affirmed that the main benefits of trade concessions in agriculture would accrue to developed countries, since they were the major exporters.

61. Several delegations drew attention to the research findings of the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and the UNCTAD secretariat, which concluded that a reduction of trade barriers, affecting agricultural products, in industrialized countries would result in a large and measurable increase in exports from developing countries. A number of delegations found the document prepared by UNCTAD to be helpful. They remarked that agricultural protectionism had increased very significantly over the past 20 years, introducing discrimination and serious distortions in world patterns of production and trade. Various delegations indicated the negative effect of trade barriers on specific products for which they had an export potential, and called on the countries and groups of countries imposing such restrictions to lift them.

62. The observer from EEC questioned the methodology and conclusions of the document prepared by the UNCTAD secretariat that which had been quoted by various members. He pointed out that EEC was the largest agricultural importer and absorbed a rapidly-growing flow of agricultural products from developing countries in particular. The Lomé Convention of 28 February 1975, signed between EEC and 61 developing countries of Africa, the Pacific and the Caribbean was, in his view, a further example of the EEC contribution to the expansion and stabilization of world-wide trade, providing financial compensation for export shortfalls through the STABEX system and free access to EEC markets for the African, Caribbean and Pacific developing countries. He also pointed out that the typical European agricultural products had to be reasonably protected, adding that the field of complementarity between the Community and the developing countries was very wide. In commenting on the EEC Common Agricultural Policy, the representative pointed out that it had contributed significantly to increasing and stabilizing food production in Europe and thus had to be seen as an important contribution to world food security.

63. There was general support for the Common Fund established within the framework of the UNCTAD Integrated Programme for Commodities, and several developed and developing members emphasized the need for the Fund to be adequately endowed. Some delegates also called on countries which had already pledged contributions to the Fund to make them available shortly. Several delegations urged effective measures to moderate instability in international markets of agricultural commodities, which discouraged farmers and prevented rational investment policies.

64. The potential for extending the scope of the generalized system of preferences in many developed countries to cover agricultural raw materials, as well as processed and semi-processed goods, was stressed by a number of delegations from developing countries, which called for such action as a matter of urgency and a sign of international co-operation. It was also pointed out by some speakers that all industrialized countries should provide trade preferences to developing countries, whether through their generalized systems of preferences or through other modalities, as appropriate to their trading systems.

65. A number of delegates expressed their concern and their unequivocal condemnation of the use of food exports or food aid as an instrument of political pressure. The representative of Nicaragua pointed out that the population of his country, already hit by poverty and economic disruption as a consequence of recent civil strife, was being subjected to restrictions of wheat exports from the United States, its traditional supplier, because of reasons of a purely political nature. That cut, he stated, was having serious effects on the diet of ordinary people and he called for assistance from the international community to overcome both the immediate and the structural food problems of his country, which - he affirmed - had the potential for very large increases in food production.

66. In replying to the intervention by Nicaragua, the United States representative affirmed that there had been no cancellation of assistance under Public Law 480, nor termination of an existing Title I agreement with that country. The United States, he affirmed, was continuing to provide humanitarian food assistance under that legislation to needy people in Nicaragua, which would amount of \$US 10 million in the current year. As a sovereign State, he further pointed out, the United States had the responsibility of determining which countries would be the recipients of its assistance, after careful deliberation in which humanitarian concerns played a pivotal role. The United States believed its record on the matter was good.

67. The Council, after some discussion, affirmed that access to food constituted a fundamental human right, as expressed by the General Assembly and the World Food Conference. However, unanimity was not reached on the affirmation of the principle that no country should restrict or threaten to restrict access to food as an instrument of political pressure, whatever the reason. Many delegations endorsed such a principle, while others declared that they had no competence to discuss the matter. One representative, while accepting the principle as a general rule, indicated that commercial restrictions might sometimes be considered, although only under extreme circumstances.

Building a world food security net

68. The President of the Council recalled that the Council had been created in 1974 as an urgent response by Governments to the 1973/74 world food crisis. Improved food production and high levels of self-sufficiency were fundamental to food security in developing countries. Contingencies, however, would always threaten food security in the short term and, unless adequate provisions were made to cope with them, they could give rise to violent situations going beyond the food issue.

69. The Executive Director recalled the Council's achievements in the world food security field, including among others the separation of negotiations for a new Food Aid Convention from the suspended talks on a new wheat agreement, which had

resulted in a reinforced FAC of 7.6 million tons. Also, he pointed out, work initiated by the Council in 1978 on a food financing facility, in which the Council joined forces with FAO, IMF and the Brandt Commission, crystallized last week in the establishment of the facility within IMF. New ground was also broken by the Council on the subject of food crisis contingency planning, later followed up by FAO and the Committee on World Food Security. The Executive Director emphasized progress on those issues as examples of a co-operative United Nations effort. The Council had stimulated policy action and followed through politically to gain support for it, while other appropriate organizations responded by carrying out and negotiating the operational means for implementation. That, he pointed out, was what the World Food Conference and the General Assembly intended for the World Food Council. The Executive Director placed due importance on the energetic leadership and encouragement of the Council's recent President, Mr. Arturo Tanco, for his effective work in advancing world food security measures.

70. The Executive Director reiterated that no single scheme or measure currently conceivable could be sufficient on its own to ensure over-all grain-market stability, world food security and reliable access to food supplies by developing countries on terms they could always afford. Instead, those objectives could be pursued effectively with a combination of measures, all of which, considered politically feasible or at least negotiable, could together provide a strong world food security net.

71. There was broad support from the Council for the concept of a food security net and most delegations endorsed in principle all eight measures proposed in the document under consideration (WFC/1981/3 and Add.1) as follows:

(a) Conclusion of a new Wheat Trade Convention on the basis of the approach currently being considered by the International Wheat Council, for a measure of international grain-market stability and co-operation;

(b) Acceleration of the construction of a food infrastructure in developing countries for storage, transport and related projects to improve their security;

(c) Establishment of an IMF food facility to assist the balance of payments of developing countries forced to suddenly increase their food import costs for reasons beyond their control;

(d) Renewing the Food Aid Convention for a five-year period and at a 10-million-ton level to guarantee a minimum food aid flow in times of market stress;

(e) Achieving an annual replenishment of 500,000 tons to the International Emergency Food Reserve and reviewing its nature and modalities to ensure reliable and multilateral food aid for emergency situations;

(f) Strengthening the World Food Programme with a world-wide campaign to achieve its programmed target and ensure its subsequent replenishments;

(g) Agreement on a set of food crisis contingency measures by which countries would agree on which trade and other measures to adopt as helpful and which to avoid as harmful to over-all market supply and stability if a world-wide crisis became imminent;

(h) Establishment of a food crisis contingency reserve - isolated from market forces - to be released only as a "last resort" in the event of the imminent prospect of a global physical food shortage.

The delegation of the United States, however, reserved the position of its Government on the net, on the grounds that the concept was not comprehensive enough and some of the suggested measures still needed clarification and analysis.

72. The conclusion of a new Wheat Trade Convention as soon as possible on the lines currently under discussion by the International Wheat Council, containing substantive and binding economic provisions for reserve stocks, a consultative mechanism for their accumulation and release, and special provisions to assist those developing countries that undertook obligations under it, was supported by most members. Some of those countries also requested Council support for setting up a specific time-table for the conclusion of a new Convention. The Council generally accepted that a Wheat Trade Convention as currently conceived was not in conflict with the principles of free trade in the international grain market.

73. The delegation of the United States, while reserving its position on a new Wheat Trade Convention, suggested that other developed countries, and developing countries whenever possible, should follow its example and establish domestic reserve mechanisms and not wait for international agreements to provide them with permanent food security. Various delegations, including those of some major producing countries, were of the opinion that the position above expressed did not contradict the general consensus on the need for a new and practical international wheat trade agreement to be concluded shortly. Most delegates considered that such an international agreement would give improved security to individual producers, to consumers and to their respective countries, and that enhanced international market stability was bound to improve investment decisions and resource allocation. Some delegates pointed out that the large wheat crop expected in the current year provided a good opportunity for establishing the new agreement's initial reserves.

74. One delegation proposed that the Council should follow closely the next session of the International Wheat Council, to take place in Madrid in June 1981, and said it should be viewed as a last attempt on the part of that body to announce serious negotiations on a new Wheat Trade Convention, failing which, the Council should consider the FAO Five-Point Plan of Action on World Food Security as a continuing framework to guide all countries in their policies to achieve world food security. The representative of FAO also proposed the Plan of Action as a continuing framework to achieve such objectives.

75. The delegation of France proposed the establishment of a working group to study the interaction and relationships between global grain supply and global demand on a commercial basis, with a view to improving the availability of grain to low-income developing countries.

76. The matter of a food contingency reserve was addressed by various delegations, some of whom supported its establishment as a complementary measure in view of the modest approach which, in their view, was now being followed by the International Wheat Council to a new Wheat Trade Convention. A contingency reserve was also supported by some, as an alternative to be considered because the Wheat Trade Convention did not seem likely, in their view, to be concluded in the foreseeable

future. Various delegations, however, did not support the establishment of a contingency reserve, pointing out that its cost would not be justified by the benefits it might provide, or indicating doubts about the feasibility of negotiating the modalities and cost-sharing of such a reserve.

77. Strong support was given by the Council to the proposal for stepping up the construction of a food security infrastructure in developing countries, some delegations being of the view that that was the most important of the eight measures included in the proposed net. Improved storage and transport facilities at the local and national level were considered a powerful stimulus to increasing food production, as well as to ensuring continuity of supplies. Most delegations called for increased investments to finance the construction of such an infrastructure. It was suggested that the Council should recommend that substantial additional resources be made available for this purpose. Several donor countries pointed out that increased resources for the purpose were being channelled bilaterally, as well as multilaterally, through the World Bank and other institutions. The representative of FAO indicated, however, that its Food Security Assistance Scheme lacked sufficient resources to advance its programmes and urged the Council to recommend increased assistance.

78. The Council, in supporting the call for additional assistance for the construction or improvement of storage, transport and related food security infrastructure, directed that the assistance should be ensured through existing bilateral and multilateral channels, including the World Bank, IFAD and all relevant FAO programmes as well as through other special measures such as multi-annual commitments of food aid and its use for constituting national food security stocks and reinforcing agricultural and food development policies. One delegation, while supporting the general call, pointed out that established legislation in its country made multi-annual food aid commitments difficult.

79. The Council was unanimous in commending IMF, its Interim Committee of the Board of Governors on the International Monetary System and its Managing Director and staff for successfully following up the Council's recommendation to establish a food financing facility. It was recognized that that positive decision on the part of IMF would help member countries to prevent cereal consumption levels from falling in the face of surges in import costs caused by factors essentially beyond their control. The facility was to be operated as an enlargement of the current Compensatory Financing Facility (CFF), integrating compensation for excesses in the cost of cereal imports with that for shortfalls in receipts from exports. An excess in the cost of cereal imports will be calculated as the costs of these imports in the given year less their average cost for the five years centred on that year. Drawings to compensate for the excess cost of cereal imports will be subject to a limit of 100 per cent of quota. While the integrated facility will be available to all members of IMF, it is expected that, in the spirit of the communiqué of the Interim Committee, it will be of particular benefit to low-income countries susceptible to balance-of-payments disruption from crop shortfalls or sharp increases in import prices of cereals.

80. The Council commended the IMF action as an example that concrete progress in solving world food problems is possible given the will and determination. It authorized the President and the Executive Director to communicate its satisfaction to the authorities of IMF.

81. There was general support for the need to conclude a minimum 10-million-ton Food Aid Convention in accordance with the target set in 1974 by the World Food Conference. Some current food aid donors, while agreeing on the need for a 10-million-ton FAC, called on new donors, in particular oil-exporting and socialist countries, to contribute to the efforts to reach the objective. Some other delegations were of the view that food aid commitments in commodity terms should be easier fulfilled by surplus-producing countries. Many delegations supported a five-year extension of the Food Aid Convention on grounds of continuity and reliability. While that proposal found little opposition in principle, some speakers pointed out that they viewed the Convention as an instrument associated with the Wheat Trade Convention within the framework of the International Wheat Agreement. In the view of some of those delegations, the duration of both conventions had to be related. Other delegations considered that, since the World Food Council itself had recommended that negotiation of the two conventions should no longer be limited and that the recommendation had been followed up by the Food Aid Committee, the question of reverting to parallel negotiations need not arise again.

82. The question of food aid requirements for the decade ahead was addressed by various speakers. The Executive Director, in his introductory remarks, stated that tendencies to exaggerate or under-play estimates of food aid requirements for the 1980s, irrespective of the analysis of the impact on national production incentive programmes, were not in the interest of developing countries, and called for a more comprehensive approach to that problem. One representative, however, proposed that the food aid target be revised from 10 million to 17 to 18 million tons, to be reached by mid-1980s, in view of mounting food aid needs in low-income developing countries. According to some delegates the use of food aid, while fully justified for emergencies, could, if provided in isolation from producer incentives, affect food production and generate dependency. It was felt that the whole question of food aid requirements needed to be looked at in depth, with due concern for the cost of food aid vis-à-vis its cash equivalent as an investment resource.

83. The Council received and took note of the sixth annual report of the Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes covering the year 1980. The need to achieve the World Food Programme's proposed target of \$US 1 billion for the current biennium was viewed by the Council as vitally important and worthy of special effort. In that regard, some of the main contributors to the programme proposed that new donors, including oil exporters and socialist countries, should make available cash contributions to assist in meeting the current gap between pledges and the proposed target. The Acting Executive Director of the Programme explained his proposal for a \$US 1.2 billion budget for the biennium 1983-1984 as a zero-growth budget in real terms and urged all countries to approve it at the next session of the Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes, to be held in October 1981. The proposal was supported by a large number of delegations.

84. The matter of World Food Programme targets brought up the issue of the competence of the World Food Council in providing policy guidance in the matter. Most delegations were of the view that one of the Council's essential roles was to assist in unblocking matters and giving guidance in difficult cases such as the one in question. Others indicated that as the Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes had only very recently discussed the issue and had not been able to reach agreement, the Council could not expect to interfere successfully with the Committee's work.

85. There was general agreement that multilateral emergency food aid was an important element of the world food security net and that means had to be found to reinforce its reliability and continuity. In that context, a number of delegations proposed that the International Emergency Food Reserve of 500,000 tons should be converted into a legally binding convention. Others, however, were not prepared to consider a separate convention of that nature and some considered that such an outcome was likely to discourage donor participation. However, all delegations indicated willingness to consider improved modalities to strengthen IEFRR and ensure its continuing replenishment at a level of 500,000 tons. Progress in that direction, it was pointed out by some, could more readily be made if there were a clearer understanding of definitions and criteria for emergency food aid and for food aid destined to improve the condition of the urban and rural poor over time. Both uses of food aid were important, but meeting them effectively required different modalities. Again, some representatives of traditional food-aid donor countries insisted on new donors being encouraged to make contributions to IEFRR. Some delegates expressed the view that the question of enlarging IEFRR beyond its current target should be considered in view of the grim food outlook and the need for increasing food aid for emergencies in the world.

86. The representative of a non-governmental organization drew the attention of the Council to the serious and widespread malnutrition in Viet Nam and the need for food assistance. He asked the Council to express its concern for those imperilled by natural disasters in Viet Nam.

87. The Executive Director, in his presentation, reiterated the need for an understanding on what action to take or to avoid in the event of a world food crisis. For that purpose, he suggested the consideration of arrangements to ensure access to grain supplies for all countries, at all times, and to ensure that major grain-producing and grain-consuming countries would not cast the burden of adjustment to world production shortfalls on others by resorting to restrictive trade measures. Normal adjustments of grain use in times of crisis was prevented as developed countries tended to react to global shortages by isolating their markets through restricting exports and subsidizing imports, consumption and livestock feeding. Livestock feeding, he observed, was allowed to proceed almost as if nothing were happening outside the national borders. The main objective of contingency food crisis provisions was to seek co-operative international sharing of the burden of adjustment to a global shortfall in cereal production by all countries, including developed and socialist countries. The Council agreed that access to food grain supplies through open channels of trade during world production shortfalls was vital and encouraged Governments of producing and consuming countries to consider the issue; it expected to review the matter at its next session.

88. The Council also had before it the report of the sixth session of the Committee on World Food Security containing - among other important matters - the report of the Ad Hoc Working Party on Preparedness for Acute and Large-Scale Food Shortages. This report was referred to by various delegations which commended the results of the Committee's work, drawing attention to: the formulation of objective national and global indicators to signal food shortages; ways of improving national preparedness to meet food shortages; the evaluation of logistical factors; and arrangements for consultation and co-ordination in crises.

89. Throughout the discussion on world food security, delegations generally emphasized the basic importance of increasing food production in the developing countries as the key to their own and to world food security. While the need to establish suitable international mechanisms to ensure grain-market stability, international food security and continuity of access to imported grain supplies on terms that developing countries could afford at all times was considered of the greatest importance, expansion of domestic food production and strengthened national infrastructure were still viewed by all members as the key elements to food security.

C. Potential for economic co-operation
among developing countries

90. The International Development Strategy recognizes that expanded economic co-operation among developing countries could be a "dynamic and vital component of an effective restructuring of international economic relations". Elaborating on that, document WFC/1981/3 pointed out that there was large potential and a recognized need for co-operation among developing countries on food production, trade and food security issues, and that the World Food Council should encourage such co-operation. It suggested that the efforts of GATT and UNCTAD to promote preferential schemes for developing countries should be supported. Particular attention might be given to trade preferences in food commodities generally and to finding multilaterally viable schemes to deal with periodic food deficits and surpluses of individual developing countries. Developing countries that had balance-of-payments surpluses and were now channelling their external investments primarily to the developed world might give more consideration to investment opportunities in other developing countries. Food production was an obvious outlet for that type of co-operation. Some developing countries had established, or were considering, co-operative food security arrangements - notably the ASEAN countries, the Sahel countries members of CILSS and the countries of southern Africa. In Latin America, SELA and some other groups had also discussed proposals for co-operation in food trade and security. Other co-operative schemes, including the establishment of an interregional reserve fund, were being considered by the non-aligned countries. Although experience was relatively limited, those initiatives had strong economic and political merits.

91. There was general consensus on the desirability of encouraging co-operative actions among developing countries in order to improve their food situation.

92. The delegate from India observed that collective self-reliance was becoming a watchword in the third world and developing countries were showing increasing keenness to pool their resources and to share surpluses. He stated that his country had made available to countries afflicted by shortages nearly 500,000 tons of wheat and 200,000 tons of rice on easy terms, which was testimony to its willingness to play its role in the global campaign against hunger.

93. The delegate of Mexico referred to the firm steps taken by his country in addressing its food problems through the adoption of the Mexican Food System, and stated that his country was ready to share with others its experiences in tackling food problems in an integrated manner.

94. The delegate of Argentina stated that his country was ready to offer all assistance possible in terms of resources and technology.

95. The delegate of Yugoslavia stated that, in spite of serious economic difficulties, his country would increase its support to the endeavours of the developing countries, including assistance through international development institutions.

96. Some delegates particularly emphasized that developing countries with balance-of-payment surpluses should seriously consider making investments in joint ventures in the other developing countries to improve their food situation. One delegate suggested that those countries should report progress in that regard at the Council's next session.

97. The delegate of Iraq observed that his country was engaged in large-scale investments aimed at increasing its agricultural production, in order to enhance its ability to assist its Arab neighbours and other developing countries. Instances were cited of co-operative arrangements in food and related sectors in ASEAN countries. These included an ASEAN rice reserve, undertakings for dealing with natural disasters, an ASEAN urea plant currently under construction, and the projected establishment of an ASEAN pesticides plant.

98. The delegates asked that the Council be active in encouraging the exploration of appropriate arrangements for bringing together physical, technological and financial resources to increase food production and trade among developing countries.

D. Mobilizing for an accelerated effort

99. In his introductory statement, the Executive Director emphasized the need for stepped-up material support for food strategies, systems and plans and related investment projects in developing countries, including expanded efforts in the relevant training to carry the plans ahead and manage the projects, and for the strengthening of political support for such efforts.

100. Specifically, he proposed that development assistance for food and agriculture should be sustained, to compensate for the decline in 1979, and that it should be gradually increased by each country with the capacity to do so, as part of its over-all development assistance programme. He urged special support to the least developed countries on a priority basis. The Executive Director further suggested that, within the framework of a food systems approach, national efforts and international support should focus on technological development and related policy and investment measures that can yield relatively early returns, while simultaneously preparing for the large-scale infrastructure development required in many countries, especially in Africa.

101. The Executive Director pointed out that the eradication of hunger and malnutrition would require a clear commitment by all countries to step up their investment in and assistance for the food sector, as well as to review the contribution of their domestic policies to world food security and international trade. In order to sustain that commitment, he called for the formulation of a national support strategy by each country in a position to provide assistance.

102. The Executive Director stressed that resolving the world's food problems required the political will and determination of all parties, and that co-ordinated action to mobilize that will was itself a crucial part of the

International Development Strategy. That, in a real sense, was the role of the World Food Council. The Council had the unique responsibility of providing political guidance for a broad international effort for the solution of important unresolved issues bearing on more effective food security for nations and for people. A truly major effort to eradicate hunger was a political imperative for building world co-operation and solidarity among nations.

103. The Council noted that some progress had been achieved in the area of food: most developing countries had increased their priority for food, some having achieved impressive production growth rates, and food problems had been placed squarely on the international agenda. Major achievements were the establishment of IFAD and, most recently, the decision by the IMF Board of Governors, meeting in Gabon in May, to create a food financing facility. But most delegations expressed disappointment that most of the agreed targets relating to external resource flows, over-all aid to food and agriculture, food production growth in developing countries, and world food-security measures had not been achieved; and that the World Food Conference goal of eradicating hunger by the mid-1980s could no longer be considered within reach.

104. The Council noted that there was wide agreement on the elements of an accelerated effort and that the main issue was to move from words to action and close the gap between what was agreed as desirable and what was actually implemented. That would include efforts by the developing countries to achieve food production growth rates of 4 per cent annually and efforts by donor countries to achieve the over-all official development assistance target of 0.7 per cent of GNP, to increase external assistance to the food sector to \$US 8.3 billion annually now, and to meet increased external resource requirements estimated to amount to some \$US 12.5 billion by 1990 (both figures in 1975 prices). Of immediate urgency was the adequate and equitable replenishment of IFAD and IDA.

105. Several delegations emphasized the need for priority assistance to the least developed countries. In one country's view, priority should also be given to developing countries with high potential for rapid expansion of food production. One delegation proposed that assistance to least developed countries should be given on a grant basis and that other developing countries should receive assistance on highly concessional terms. The delegation also suggested that the Council should bring to the attention of the Secretary-General of the United Nations the recommendation in paragraph 110 of the International Development Strategy that the proposal for a world development fund should be examined by him, so that a report could be submitted to the General Assembly at the latest at its thirty-sixth session.

106. Several developed countries pointed to substantial increases in their official development assistance. The Federal Republic of Germany had increased its ODA by 30 per cent in 1979, raising it to 0.44 per cent of GNP. In 1980, its ODA increased by another 5 per cent and, for the period 1981-1984, annual increases of 10 per cent, about twice the growth rate of the total Federal budget, were envisaged. Private development aid added over 10 per cent to ODA flows. The delegation of France said that meeting the 0.7 per cent target was a vital obligation and stated that the ODA level of France had increased from 0.59 per cent of GNP in 1979 to 0.62 per cent in 1980. Since 1976, Norway had allocated 1 per cent of its GNP to ODA and the Government's long-term programme for 1982-1985

called for gradual increases to 1.3 per cent. The representative of Italy stated that his country was endeavouring to reach the ODA target of 0.7 per cent of GNP, with special emphasis on assistance to food and agriculture. The United States delegation pointed out that its food-related technical assistance last year amounted to \$US 4 billion for multilateral organizations and \$US 1.5 billion in bilateral programmes. The delegation of Japan stated that, within the first half of the 1980s, its Government intended to more than double its ODA, as compared to aid levels in the latter half of the last decade.

107. The delegation of the Soviet Union outlined its co-operation with developing countries, emphasizing the importance of long-term agreements and programmes which would allow developing countries to implement long-range plans and permit greater stability in co-operation. It also emphasized its co-operation with many United Nations agencies, including ESCAP and UNIDO.

108. The delegation of Iraq, which currently spent 3.6 per cent of its GNP on development assistance, offered to participate, with other OPEC member countries, in a world-wide programme to eradicate hunger and malnutrition, provided the developed countries reached at least the 0.7 per cent target.

109. The World Bank representative pointed out that World Bank loans for agricultural production will have reached \$US 3.5 billion by the end of its fiscal year in June 1981. He stated that multilateral lending had not decreased in the last few years as some had indicated. The representative of IFAD reported that his organization had committed \$US 990 million for projects and programmes designed to alleviate hunger, malnutrition and rural poverty in 70 member States; the estimated total cost of these activities was in excess of \$US 4 billion. The target for the IFAD operational programme for 1981 had been set at \$US 1.5 billion, and agreement on the shares of replenishment contributions by various categories of countries was expected to be reached by mid-1981. The representative of UNDP pointed out that 80 per cent of UNDP resources devoted to country programmes in the third cycle would go to low-income countries, including all food-deficit countries, which would have the opportunity of devoting considerably more UNDP resources to food programmes, if they so wished.

110. With reference to paragraph 29 of the conclusions and recommendations, the delegate of the United Kingdom recalled and reaffirmed the statements made by his country at the Fifth Session of UNCTAD and upon the adoption of the International Development Strategy, in relation to progress towards the target of 0.7 per cent of GNP in aid.

111. A few delegations emphasized the importance of intercountry joint ventures, at the public or private level, as an additional means of increasing resource flows.

112. The representative of the World Food Programme pointed out that only about 75 per cent of the WFP target of \$US 1 billion for the biennium 1980-1981 had so far been met, and that prospects for its achievement did not look particularly encouraging. For the following biennium, a target of \$US 1.2 billion had been proposed, which was a "no-growth target" in real terms. He also pointed out that food aid requirements for project aid could sharply increase by 1985, with additional requirements amounting to some 4.5 million to 5 million tons annually.

113. Many delegations also emphasized the need for greater assistance efforts in the provision of agricultural production inputs, including stepped-up fertilizer aid to reach the World Food Conference target of 1 million tons of nutrients annually. There was also wide support for greater investment in agricultural research, extension and training.

114. There was support for the proposal that a support strategy should be formulated by individual donor countries, to adequately back up national food strategies in developing countries. However, some countries felt that that concept had not been made sufficiently clear, that existing arrangements were adequate, or that the imposition of such an obligation on donors might be undesirable. A number of countries felt that support strategies embracing all facets of world food problems, including development assistance, trade policies and world food security questions, should be adopted by all countries. With reference to paragraph 30 of the conclusions and recommendations, the United Kingdom, on behalf of the European Economic Community and its member States, wished to place on record that they regarded the suggestions in that paragraph as being addressed to all countries.

115. Some delegations referred to the importance of peace and détente in the interests of improving world food security, and reference was made to the Programme of Action for Peace submitted to the Twenty-sixth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union a few weeks previously. There was concern for stopping the arms race and taking steps for disarmament. Disarmament was seen as an important resource for people's prosperity. One delegation called for greater attention to those issues in Council recommendations.

116. Many representatives underlined the importance, in an increasingly interdependent world, of joint efforts by all peoples and countries to eliminate hunger and underdevelopment. There was broadly-based agreement on the need for greater political determination and bolder policies to move towards the achievement of the food and nutrition objectives of the new International Development Strategy. This appeared particularly important in the light of the bleak outlook for the world economy in the years ahead and the current difficulties in international co-operation. In that situation, the Council needed to become, in one delegate's view, an example of firm political determination and unclouded vision.

CHAPTER III

ROLE OF THE WORLD FOOD COUNCIL AND PROPOSED FUTURE WORK

A. Role of the World Food Council

117. In his message to the Council at its seventh session, the Secretary-General of the United Nations noted that the Council had placed the International Development Strategy squarely at the centre of its agenda in the first year of the decade of the 1980s. The United Nations, he said, looked to the World Food Council, as provided by its own mandate, to play an important role during the decade in the review and appraisal of the strategy.

118. In their deliberations regarding the role of the Council, members agreed that it should continue to assert its primary role, as the only expressly ministerial body of the United Nations, to focus on the political process of mobilizing support to resolve world food problems. That view was also reflected in the statements of the President of the Council and those of its two past Presidents, who addressed the session.

119. In his farewell address as the outgoing President, Mr. Arturo R. Tanco, Jr. underlined the fact that the Council was an explicit recognition of the fact that the issue of food was of the highest global concern.

120. The newly-elected President of the Council, Mr. Francisco Merino Rábago, noted that the Council was created in 1974 as an urgent response by Governments to the concern aroused by the 1973-1974 food crisis. The World Food Council, he said, had a very important role to play, for the satisfaction of world-wide food requirements was linked to many of the problems that affected humanity in different guises. The Council was an affirmation of the will of the international community to resolve problems that had neither frontiers nor nationality.

121. The first President of the Council, and Secretary-General of the 1974 World Food Conference, Mr. Sayed Marei, stated that the World Food Council "was not created to function as a mere talk-shop where business ends with the delivery of statements"; it was the standing follow-up mechanism to the World Food Conference. He urged Governments to endow it with their committed support.

122. The Council recognized that it was uniquely placed at the centre of the political process in relation to food and that the greatest use should be made of the presence of its Ministers to foster, through frank and free exchange of views, a dynamic response of the international community in resolving world food problems.

123. Delegations agreed that the Council could best carry out its mandate through policy rather than administrative co-ordination. At the same time, it was recognized that there was a requirement, under the Council's terms of reference, for it to address the efforts of the United Nations system as a whole in matters involving food.

124. One delegation proposed that the Council's sessions in the future should be more concentrated on strictly policy issues and therefore could be somewhat shortened. Another country stated the view that frank discussions should take place in the Council, with due consideration of the specific responsibilities of other forums. Another delegation also proposed that the President of the Council should, between sessions, use his prestige to enlist support for the Council's recommendations.

125. One representative acknowledged that it was difficult to assess in quantifiable terms achievements of a policy co-ordinating body such as the World Food Council. Its policy recommendations might attract some resistance and some criticism but its existence was essential in the interests of the United Nations system. The World Food Council, he said, was not only valuable, it was essential precisely because it was the one forum in existence where Ministers could examine policy without having to become involved in operational mandates or territorial disputes between operational agencies. It was only at the World Food Council that Ministers could objectively look at the totality of the world food picture without having to worry about protecting the particular interest of any individual organization and in full recognition of the fact that food issues could not be dealt with in isolation from the significant impact that other sectors of the economy had on the problem of hunger and malnutrition. Ministers should also feel free to examine the interrelationships between agencies of the United Nations system and the manner in which the activities of one agency affected those of another. He strongly believed that the Council must carry out its instructions to periodically review major problems and policy issues affecting the world food situation and further recommend remedial action as appropriate, without being intimidated, even if its recommendations proved to be unpopular. He felt that his remarks on the subject to the previous session were not accurately reflected in the report of that session.

126. Some delegations felt that the co-ordinating role of the Council in terms of the United Nations system needed to be further clarified and that it was subject to differing interpretations. Some questioned the extent to which the Council, with its small staff, could carry out co-ordination, in the area of food and food-related issues, of the activities of the large family of United Nations agencies concerned.

127. It was agreed that the Council had no operational responsibility and that it was in the best interests of the international community that it concentrate on policy issues which called for the collective exercise of political will in resolving world food problems.

128. Close collaboration between the World Food Council and FAO was emphasized by a number of delegations. One delegation also stressed the particular importance of adequate co-ordination of activities between the four food-related organizations located in Rome. Another delegation suggested that the Council should discuss the recommendations of the FAC study, "Agriculture: Towards 2000", and support the fundamental work that FAO was doing in that field.

129. The Bureau and the secretariat were considered to have important roles in the work of the Council. One delegation suggested that the President of the Council could take an active part in the replenishment of IFAD. He also suggested that, for its part, the secretariat should continue to base the preparation of its documents on objectivity, clarity, frankness and a sense of realism.

B. Contribution of preparatory meetings

130. With regard to the nature and character of the Council's preparatory meetings, there was praise for the manner in which the Acting President, Mr. José Leviste, had conducted the work of the preparatory meeting for the current session. Some delegations stated that the procedure adopted for that meeting was a useful model for the conduct of future preparatory meetings. Some others felt that it was not in conformity with established United Nations procedures and that the preparatory meeting should adopt its own report. Not doing so, they believed, seriously weakened the effectiveness of the preparatory meeting. Some delegations held the view that the preparatory meeting should be held at least two months before the ministerial meeting, for a period of five days and convene a drafting committee for preparation of the report. Some delegations suggested that preparatory meetings should formulate recommendations or identify areas of convergence or divergence for the consideration of Ministers, who would be free to accept, amend or reject them.

131. One delegation felt that the report of the previous preparatory meeting did not adequately reflect the views of developing countries.

132. Another delegation stated that the Council should continue to hold its preparatory meetings in Rome where most Governments had representatives, observing that meeting away from Rome might result in an imbalance in representation.

133. Ministers considered that preparatory meetings were advisory in nature and must not in any way impinge on their prerogatives to make decisions on behalf of their Governments. There was consensus that the procedures of the preparatory meeting for the seventh ministerial session, should be followed for the preparatory meeting of the Council's next session in Bangladesh.

C. Future programme of work

134. In his statement to the Council, the Executive Director said that the impetus given by Governments to review and, where necessary, revise policies to increase resources in support of resolving food problems, by all groups without exception and by all countries in a position to do so, was at the core of the efforts of the World Food Council and would be a substantial part of its next agenda. As the General Assembly would undertake the first review and appraisal of the implementation of the International Development Strategy in 1984, the eighth session of the Council would provide a significant opportunity for an initial review of the steps taken by Governments and international agencies to orient their policies and programmes towards the achievement of the goals and objectives of the International Development Strategy. That would include assessments of the progress made with national food strategies and development of national food-entitlement measures.

135. Referring to the draft medium-term plan of the Council for 1984-1989 - part of the over-all United Nations medium-term planning - which he had earlier circulated to Ministers for review, the Executive Director stated that the deliberations and conclusions of the current session on the International Development Strategy for the 1980s and the related role of the Council provided valuable guidance for revising the draft before sending it on to the General Assembly.

136. Several delegations supported the idea that the secretariat should keep under review progress on food sector strategies and report thereon to the Council at subsequent sessions, thus responding to the stated concern that there should be adequate follow-up to that important initiative. There was agreement that the Council should continue to organize regional and subregional consultations in mobilizing support for food production efforts in developing countries and fruitful exchanges of experience among them.

137. One delegation noted that it would be of interest to member countries to be informed about the role that food strategies would play in relation to the activities of transnational corporations in the field of food. The assessment of the balance of risks and benefits to development objectives of such activities, he stated, would have to be made by the individual countries. But the World Food Council might serve as a forum for a more general assessment based on the experiences of individual countries.

138. Another delegation suggested that the Council should examine the issue of transnational corporations and their relation to food issues more closely, focusing on, inter alia, the behaviour of transnational corporations in developing countries and the code of conduct for transnational corporations once it came into existence.

139. The representative of one delegation observed that, in order for the Council to assist Governments in examining the actions of agencies relevant to food and contribute to a solution of world food problems, the compendium of principal organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, while useful, was only a first step. He proposed that the secretariat should undertake more analytical work by preparing, as an adjunct to the compendium, a report describing the relationship of their work to national and international strategies and with each other. He suggested that that exercise should first focus on Africa as the region most seriously affected by hunger and malnutrition.

140. Reacting to that proposal, the representative of another delegation pointed out that the Joint Inspection Unit of the United Nations was supposed to examine matters of the relationship between the responsibilities of various international organizations and such work should be entrusted to that body. The previous speaker, however, replied that that did not meet the need for an over-all policy-oriented examination of those issues.

141. Another delegation felt that a review of that nature would be more appropriately undertaken by the countries involved.

142. The Council decided that, within its mandate, it would instruct its secretariat to gather for the next meeting all information regarding the work performed by international bodies active in the agricultural sector in Africa,

highlighting the adequacy of what was being done about Africa's food problem. The secretariat should make maximum use of studies already undertaken.

143. Another delegation proposed that, for the purpose of assisting the Council to determine the progress made since the World Food Conference, the secretariat should prepare a report which would list the principal proposals of that Conference and identify the progress or lack of progress reached in the implementation of each, along with specific recommendations for their solution.

144. One delegation proposed that the secretariat prepare a report to the next session on trade liberalization.

145. Subject to the above observations and depending on future developments, there was general agreement on the topics proposed for the Council's eighth session in 1982 at Dacca, Bangladesh, including resource support to the efforts of developing countries to achieve food self-sufficiency, review of policy actions by Governments and agencies to accelerate implementation of national food programmes, and world food security objectives, programmes and prospects.

146. One delegation suggested that resources and national efforts should be considered together. Another delegation proposed that world food security objectives should include consideration of achievements, programmes and prospects. And a third delegation proposed that availability of essential production inputs should also be included.

D. Date and place of the next sessions

147. The Council decided that it would convene its eighth ministerial session at Dacca, Bangladesh, in the week beginning 20 September 1982, at the invitation of the Bangladesh Government. Ministers were informed of the decision in paragraph 24 of General Assembly decision 34/400, taken in 1979, requiring subsidiary organs of the Assembly to complete their work at the latest by 1 September of each year but decided to request an exception to this rule for the purpose of the holding of its 1982 session.

148. The Council received offers from the Governments of Argentina and Nicaragua to act as host to the ninth session, in 1983.

CHAPTER IV

REPORT OF THE COUNCIL TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

A. Organization of work

149. At the 5th meeting of the session, the Council established a Working Group to draft the conclusions and recommendations. The Group was composed of Argentina and Nicaragua (Latin America); Sudan and Zaire (Africa); Pakistan and the Philippines (Asia); Hungary and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (Socialist States of Eastern Europe); the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America (Western European and other States). The representatives of Japan, Yugoslavia and the European Economic Community also participated in the work of the Group. The President appointed Mr. Abelardo Amaya Brondo (Mexico) as his personal representative to act as Chairman of the Working Group.

150. At the 7th meeting of the session, the draft was considered by the Council, amended and adopted as a whole, without a vote.

B. Positions and observations on the conclusions and recommendations

151. Upon the adoption of the conclusions and recommendations of the World Food Council, various delegations made comments, observations or reservations as follows:

(a) The representative of Canada wished to place on record that, in relation to paragraph 8 of the conclusions, he was of the firm belief that integrated national efforts of developing countries must be stepped up and must receive sustained international support even if it meant reordering priorities and reallocating scarce resources from other sources.

(b) The delegation of the United States of America reserved its position on paragraph 21 of the conclusions. The United States believed that it would be more productive for the Council to concentrate its efforts on finding appropriate measures which would contribute to enhancing world food security rather than concern itself with the amalgamation of those measures into a "package" or "net". Such a package would only serve to detract attention from the fundamental problem, which was production. In addition, it believed that "reasonable prices and conditions they can afford" could not be defined internationally in any meaningful way since each interested party tended to have a unique notion about what "reasonable prices and conditions" meant.

(c) With regard to paragraph 22, the representative of the United States reserved his position thus: the United States strongly believed in the importance to world food security of adequate reserve stocks. The United States was unique in having developed reserve policies to meet domestic objectives and international needs, including the establishment of a food security reserve. It urged that other

countries now begin to establish their own reserve programmes instead of waiting for a new wheat trade convention or other international action.

(d) The delegate of the United States also wished to make the following reservation with regard to paragraph 30 of the conclusions: the concept of national support strategies was discussed only in a very preliminary manner; the relevant issues and their implications needed to be clearly defined before a decision can be taken on the proposal.

(e) The Canadian representative wished it to be placed on record, in relation to paragraph 34, that it was the responsibility of the Council, in accordance with its co-ordinating role in the food area, and in the light of the serious deterioration of the food situation in Africa, to give an independent assessment of the effectiveness of multilateral assistance programmes to increase food production and eradicate hunger and malnutrition in Africa, so as to know what was being done by whom, what the problems were and whether agencies overlapped or supported each other. The purpose of that exercise should be to recommend action.

(f) The delegation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, while accepting the conclusions and recommendations of this Council session, deemed it necessary to add the following declaration: with regard to the provisions relating to international action and participation in world food security arrangements and to assisting developing countries in the fields of food and agriculture, the USSR delegation reaffirmed its basic position as stated in the Joint Declaration of the Socialist Countries at the eleventh special session of the General Assembly of the United Nations (A/S-11/AC.1/4 of 3 September 1980) regarding its contribution to the implementation of the objectives of the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade as well as its position as stated in the Declaration of the Socialist Countries of 5 December 1980 in connexion with adoption of the Strategy by the General Assembly at its thirty-fifth session. The Soviet Union would continue to render economic and technical assistance in various areas to interested developing countries, including assistance in the fields of agriculture and food production; that assistance would be provided in forms which corresponded to the social and economic structures of the Soviet Union and which had demonstrated their practical effectiveness.

ANNEX I

Expression of gratitude to the Government and people
of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia a/

The World Food Council,

Having convened its seventh ministerial session at Novi Sad, at the kind invitation of the Government of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia,

Appreciative of the excellent arrangements made, which enabled the Council's work to proceed with efficiency and smoothness,

Deeply grateful for the outstanding generosity and warmth of welcome accorded to all Ministers, Plenipotentiaries and other delegates and observers,

1. Applauds the Government and people of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia for the enormous efforts they have devoted to the preparation and organization of the seventh ministerial session and for the outstanding success of those efforts;

2. Records its profound appreciation of the generous hospitality and universal friendship accorded to participants by the people of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia;

3. Requests the President of the Council to express the Council's deep gratitude to the President of the Presidency of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, His Excellency Mr. Sergej Krajger, and, through him, to the Government and the people of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

a/ Adopted by acclamation at the 7th meeting of the seventh ministerial session, having been proposed by Mr. Peter Vandor of Hungary.

ANNEX II

List of documents before the Council at its
seventh ministerial session

<u>Document symbol</u>	<u>Agenda item</u>	<u>Title</u>
WFC/1981/1	2	Letter dated 17 November 1980 from the Chargé d'Affaires of Mexico addressed to the Executive Director
WFC/1981/2	3	Provisional agenda with annotations
WFC/1981/3 and Add.1	4	Food in the context of the International Development Strategy
WFC/1981/4	5	Role of the World Food Council and proposed future work
WFC/1981/5 and Add.1		Current world food situation
WFC/1981/6		Progress report 1980/81
WFC/1981/7 and Add.1		Principal organizations and bodies of the United Nations system concerned with food and food-related problems
WFC/1981/8		Report of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
WFC/1981/9		Report of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
WFC/1981/10		Report of the International Service for National Agricultural Research
WFC/1981/11		Sixth annual report of the Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes
WFC/1981/12		Report of the Committee on World Food Security on the work of its sixth session
WFC/1981/13	2	Proposed candidature for the post of Rapporteur of the World Food Council
WFC/1981/14		Report of the preparatory meeting for the seventh session

<u>Document symbol</u>	<u>Agenda item</u>	<u>Title</u>
WFC/1981/15	2	Letter dated 30 April 1981 from the Ambassador of the Republic of Senegal to the Executive Director
WFC/1981/16	2	Note verbale dated 13 May 1981 from the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia to the World Food Council
WFC/1981/INF/5		List of documents before the seventh ministerial session of the Council
WFC/1981/INF/6		List of participants at the seventh ministerial session

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