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SECOND COMMITTEE
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at 4 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 33rd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. HARLAND (New Zealand)

later: Mr. KAABACHI (Tunisia)

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The meeting was called to order at 4.05 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued)
(A/C.2/39/L.17, L.18 and L.19)

Draft decision A/C.2/39/L.17 and draft resolution A/C.2/39/L.18

1. Mr. FAREED (Pakistan), introducing the draft decision, recalled that in its resolution 38/144, the General Assembly had requested the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly to submit at its thirty-ninth session, through the Economic and Social Council, a detailed report on the resources exploited by the Israeli settlements and the Israeli-imposed regulations and policies hampering the economic development of the Palestinian territories. Unfortunately, it had not been possible to prepare that report because the representative of the Secretary-General had not been authorized to visit the occupied territories. He hoped that the Committee and the plenary Assembly would be able to adopt the draft decision unanimously.
2. Introducing draft resolution A/C.2/39/L.18, entitled "Economic development projects in the occupied Palestinian territories", on behalf of the sponsors, he said that the living conditions of the Palestinians in the occupied territories were well known. The sponsors considered that action should be taken to improve those conditions in order that, when the time came, the Palestinians could be truly economically independent.

Draft resolution A/C.2/39/L.19

3. Mr. HASSOU (Democratic Yemen), introducing the draft resolution entitled "Assistance to the Palestinian people" on behalf of his delegation and those of Algeria, Morocco and Yemen, said that the international community had come to recognize the need to help the Palestinian people who were victims of injustices of all kinds and whose lands and natural resources were being plundered by the Israelis. The very identity of the occupied territories was endangered by a policy intended to empty them of their inhabitants in order to integrate them more easily into a neighbouring State. All those facts were well known; to be convinced of them it was sufficient to consult the relevant reports submitted at the current session. The draft resolution before the Committee was a follow-up to resolution 38/145 adopted by the General Assembly at its thirty-eighth session.

AGENDA ITEM 80: DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION (continued)

(j) HUMAN SETTLEMENTS (continued) (A/C.2/39/L.11)

Draft resolution A/C.2/39/L.11

4. Mr. DIOP (Senegal) said that the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories had become well known since the General Assembly had decided to study the question. The draft resolution submitted by his delegation was not very different from the resolutions previously adopted on the subject and was based on the report of the Secretary-General (A/39/233-E/1984/79).

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AGENDA ITEM 141: COUNTRIES STRICKEN BY DESERTIFICATION AND DROUGHT (continued)
(A/C.2/39/L.16)

Draft resolution A/C.2/39/L.16

5. The CHAIRMAN announced that Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Cyprus, Greece, Ireland, Jordan, Kuwait, Malaysia, Romania, Spain, Suriname and Togo had become co-sponsors of the draft resolution.

6. Mr. BRODODININGRAT (Indonesia) requested the inclusion of his country in the list of sponsors of draft resolution A/C.2/39/L.16.

7. Mr. KAABACHI (Tunisia), reporting on the consultations he had held on the draft resolution, observed that they had been successful because of the spirit of co-operation shown by the sponsors, as well as by the other countries which had participated in drafting the text submitted. Paragraph 6 had been amended in order to specify the responsibilities of the competent United Nations bodies, as follows: "Takes note of decision 12/10 of 28 May 1984 on desertification, adopted by the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme, calls for its full and speedy implementation and requests the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme to have the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office establish, for the continuing implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification, specific biennial programmes to be submitted for the joint study and approval of the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme and the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme; and, lastly, stresses the urgent need for increased financial assistance from the international community for the activities of that Office and for the United Nations Environment Programme".* In conclusion, he expressed the hope that that draft resolution, which had no financial implications, could be adopted unanimously.

8. The CHAIRMAN stated that, if there was no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to adopt unanimously draft resolution A/C.2/39/L.16, as orally amended.

9. Draft resolution A/C.2/39/L.16, as orally amended, was adopted unanimously.

10. Mr. SARRE (Senegal) thanked the Committee on behalf of the sponsors of the draft resolution and the African countries which had participated in the Dakar Conference. He also thanked the officers of the Committee, especially Mr. Kaabachi, for their diligent work on the item which had resulted in the adoption of that important resolution.

AGENDA ITEM 83: SPECIAL ECONOMIC AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE (continued)
(A/39/3 (Parts I and II), 133, 236, 581; A/C.2/39/5)

(a) OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS DISASTER RELIEF CO-ORDINATOR: REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/39/267 and Corr.1 and Add.1 and 2)

* Provisional translation.

(b) SPECIAL PROGRAMMES OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE: REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/39/380-386, 388-392, 393 and Add.1, 394, 404, 598)

(c) IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MEDIUM-TERM AND LONG-TERM RECOVERY AND REHABILITATION PROGRAMME IN THE SUDANO-SAHELIAN REGION: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/39/211 and Add.1)

11. Mr. BORNA (Director of the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office), introducing the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Implementation of the medium-term and long-term recovery and rehabilitation programme in the Sudano-Sahelian region" (A/39/211), said that it had been clearly brought out in the recent discussions on agenda item 141 in the Committee that drought had become the most devastating blight in the African continent, affecting more than two thirds of the countries of the continent. Food supplies had become more and more scarce, creating a gulf between food production, which was increasing at 1.3 per cent per annum, and the rate of population growth, which was about 3 per cent.

12. Faced with this alarming situation, UNSO was acting in such areas as water resource management (construction of small earth dams, drilling, etc.), conservation of plant cover, the livestock sector, the search for alternative energy sources, the construction of secondary roads, and training in planning and drought and desertification control.

13. Climate and population growth, which were among the key factors contributing to overall economic deterioration in the countries of the Sahel, must be taken into account in weighing development options and strategies in the countries concerned. Emergency aid, vital as it was, had no more than a limited effect: it could not in any way eliminate the root causes of the problem, and there was therefore a need to formulate and implement medium-term and long-term programmes. Drought and desertification could be stopped, provided the root causes were addressed and their environmental, natural and economic effects reduced by the timely adoption of integrated development strategies and plans which included certain key elements such as the conservation and management of existing natural resources and measures against factors conducive to desertification, such as bushfires, overfarming, overgrazing, and the systematic destruction of forests for agricultural or industrial purposes. The strategies should also provide for the rational management of "water capital", the introduction of more drought-resistant plants and the restoration of plant cover.

14. UNSO had participated in the preparation of an action plan for the members of the Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS), which contained an overview of emergency and medium-term assistance measures. It had also participated in financing and organizing the Ministerial Conference on Desertification, held at Dakar. Since its establishment in 1973, UNSO had mobilized about \$225 million from bilateral and multilateral sources.

15. However, considering the magnitude of the problem, total bilateral and multilateral assistance was small, even inadequate. More often than not, the

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(Mr. Borna)

available resources made it possible to implement only limited projects partially covering the most pressing needs. The strategies and activities for lasting solutions to the problems of drought and desertification in Africa required major investments commensurate with the scale of the problems.

16. Some statistics showed that in the 1970s millions of dollars had been used for drought control projects with inconsequential results. Of course, statistics were not conclusive. However, account should be taken of the recent review by the CILSS countries of the results of the so-called first generation programmes. Those countries, clearly recognizing the mistakes made by Governments and stressing the positive aspects of the foreign assistance received, had criticized the exorbitant cost of foreign expertise, often amounting to more than half the funds available, the lack of experience of some experts who sometimes did not even have a command of the working language of the countries assisted, and the tendency to consider those countries as experimental areas. It was not for UNSO to make value judgements on those comments, but they must be taken into account. In its approach, UNSO sought to abide faithfully by the priorities of the Governments concerned and worked very closely with national experts and the population as well as with donors in formulating and implementing projects. Thus, UNSO had been able to achieve results which, on the whole, were very satisfactory. Mention might be made of the sand-dune fixation projects in Senegal and Somalia, reafforestation projects in Niger, Burkina Faso and Chad, and bushfire-control projects.

17. UNSO could have done more if it had had more resources available: its resources were meagre, even insignificant, in relation to the magnitude of its tasks. Without a massive, co-ordinated and generous response from the international community, the economic survival of certain countries stricken by drought and desertification would be jeopardized, and the positive results of projects completed or still under way would soon be covered by the sands.

18. Mr. CALDERON (Bolivia) said that all the features of the crisis besetting Latin America could be found in Bolivia. Its economy was suffering from an unprecedented recession: national per capita income had fallen 33 per cent in the previous two years; inflation had exceeded 300 per cent; and unemployment had doubled. Bolivia had also felt the backlash of the international crisis: the price of traditional exports had fallen while the price of imports had risen. In addition, food production had dropped 40 per cent owing to natural disasters.

19. The report of the Secretary-General (A/39/392) described the tragic effects of the natural disasters of 1982/83, a year in which 35 per cent of Bolivia had been stricken by drought, while 14 per cent had been devastated by floods. His Government was grateful to the Secretary-General for co-operating through his personal representative and to the Office of Secretariat Services for Economic and Social Matters and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for their assistance.

20. The situation was still difficult because economic recovery was slow. The damage caused by natural disasters amounted to \$836.5 million. Programmes and

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(Mr. Calderon, Bolivia)

projects totalling \$129.4 million had been identified for international funding. The assistance received (about \$50 million) amounted to 39 per cent of the minimum assistance programme, scarcely 6 per cent of total losses. National efforts for ensuring a minimum food supply were hampered for lack of resources. Because of insufficient resources, it was impossible to carry out projects and programmes for raising production to the desired level. International assistance was therefore essential, and Bolivia urged donor countries and international organizations to help it to weather an extremely difficult period of its history, which was made even worse by the world economic crisis.

21. Mr. Kaabachi (Tunisia) took the Chair.

22. Mr. HASSOU (Democratic Yemen) said that his country had been suffering for years from drought and serious water shortages and thanked the Secretary-General for his report (A/39/381), prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 38/206.

23. In March 1983, torrential rains had fallen on Democratic Yemen, resulting in floods that were even more destructive than those of 1981. Dams, roads, bridges, houses and cattle had been swept away by the water, and direct damage amounted to \$US 950 million. The floods had also caused indirect damage, which was reflected neither in the reports nor in official statistics, whereby vast agricultural areas had been transformed into non-arable land, as a result of soil erosion and the accumulation of debris borne by the water. Democratic Yemen had spared no effort to overcome the effects of that disaster. It had established a high-level governmental committee and had taken emergency action to house the flood victims in schools and official buildings. The international community had responded favourably to the Democratic Yemen's appeal for emergency assistance, as could be seen from table 1 of document A/39/381. In addition, Democratic Yemen had launched a long-term recovery programme. The assistance provided by donor countries and international organizations for implementing that programme was encouraging. His Government was grateful to the friendly Governments and the international organizations for their support and appealed to the international community to continue its assistance.

The meeting rose at 5.10 p.m.