

1629th meeting

Tuesday, 12 November 1974, at 10.45 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Jihad KARAM (Iraq).

A/C.2/SR.1629

AGENDA ITEM 45

Operational activities for development (*concluded*)
(A/9603, chap. VI, sect. B; E/5466, E/5543/Rev.1:

- (a) United Nations Development Programme (DP/69, A/C.2/L.1349/Rev.4);
- (b) United Nations Capital Development Fund (E/5557 and Corr.1);
- (c) Technical co-operation activities undertaken by the Secretary-General;
- (d) United Nations Volunteers programme (E/5498 and Corr.1);
- (e) United Nations Fund for Population Activities;
- (f) United Nations Children's Fund (E/5528);
- (g) World Food Programme

1. Mr. BRITO (Brazil) expressed regret that it had not been possible to have a more thorough exchange of views on draft resolution A/C.2/L.1349/Rev.4 dealing with the question of decentralization of UNDP activities, to which the developing countries attached particular importance. The objective of the decisions adopted to implement the reforms called for in the 1970 Consensus (General Assembly resolution 2688 (XXV), annex) had been to speed up programme delivery. The establishment of UNDP regional offices in the field, which the sponsors of the draft resolution were advocating, might be desirable in some instances; however, it would impair a speedy response by the regional bureaux and was not the best way to bring about decentralization. Furthermore, although the regional economic commissions did have a role to play, particularly with respect to intercountry programming, the mere establishment of a link between them and UNDP regional offices in the field might slow down programme delivery.

2. He had accordingly suggested informally to the sponsors that the words "as appropriate, in accordance with the peculiarities of each region" might be inserted after the word "establishment" in paragraph 1. It would also be desirable to call for truly effective delegation of authority to the regional offices.

3. His delegation would not oppose the draft resolution but would be compelled to abstain if it was put to the vote.

At the request of the representative of the Upper Volta, a separate vote was taken by roll-call on the last preambular paragraph of draft resolution A/C.2/L.1349/Rev.4.

Senegal, having been drawn by lot by the Chairman, was called upon to vote first.

In favour: Senegal, Singapore, Spain, Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Uganda, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom

of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Upper Volta, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yugoslavia, Zaire, Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belgium, Bhutan, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burma, Burundi, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Canada, Central African Republic, Chile, China, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Dahomey, Democratic Yemen, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, German Democratic Republic, Germany (Federal Republic of), Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, India, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Ivory Coast, Japan, Jordan, Kuwait, Laos, Libyan Arab Republic, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Rwanda.

Against: None.

Abstaining: None.

The last preambular paragraph was adopted by 102 votes to none.¹

At the request of the representative of Brazil, a separate vote was taken on the words "in particular the establishment of UNDP regional offices in the field" in operative paragraph 1.

The words "in particular the establishment of UNDP regional offices in the field" were retained by 81 votes to none, with 26 abstentions.

The draft resolution as a whole, as orally revised, was adopted by 108 votes to none, with 2 abstentions.

4. Mr. NEUFELDT (Federal Republic of Germany) said that he had voted in favour of the last preambular paragraph and of the draft resolution as a whole, and had abstained from voting on paragraph 1. His delegation was grateful to the sponsors for accepting the inclusion in the first preambular paragraph of the words "and the need to ensure that UNDP continues to be a single unified programme", which were taken from the text of the decision of the Governing Council of UNDP establishing the four regional bureaux; the wording of the paragraph now made it clear that the General Assembly did not intend to make decentralization an aim in itself but that it regarded decentralization of UNDP activities as useful only if it contributed to an improvement in programme delivery. His

¹ The delegations of Sierra Leone and Turkey later informed the Secretariat that, had they been present during the voting, they would have voted in favour of the paragraph.

vote in favour of the last preambular paragraph did not imply any change in his delegation's view that managerial and administrative questions, such as the organization of the regional bureaux, were the exclusive responsibility of the Administrator and Governing Council of UNDP.

5. His delegation had abstained on paragraph 1 because, in its view, it infringed upon the responsibility of the Governing Council for formulating UNDP policy and reviewing its implementation both at the planning stage and in practice. The Governing Council had proved that it was able to provide effective guidance and solutions to problems confronting UNDP; for example, it had reached agreement on the indicative planning figures for the next programme cycle, and it had taken the initiative which had led to the reorganization of UNDP in 1970. His delegation was concerned at the tendency to transfer decision-making on questions regarding UNDP from the Governing Council to the General Assembly. A reasonable balance must be struck between the over-all responsibility of the General Assembly for matters of policy and the specific responsibility of the Governing Council for policy guidance with regard to the Programme. A continuation of the tendency he had mentioned would have an adverse effect on his Government's readiness to continue its support of UNDP.

6. Mr. DIALLO (Upper Volta) said that he had voted in favour of the last preambular paragraph because he believed that the views expressed at the seventeenth session of the Governing Council were still valid and that the Administrator should proceed with decentralization, taking account of the views of Member States. He hoped that the report called for in paragraph 1 would lead to effective decentralization and not to the creation of additional obstacles to communications between headquarters and field representatives. He also hoped that the report would suggest procedures for accelerating the transfer of responsibility for programmes to field representatives, in accordance with the consensus on reorganization.

7. Mr. EKBLOM (Finland) said that his delegation's vote in favour of the draft resolution did not imply any change in its view that a direct two-way link between the Administrator and resident representatives would be preferable to the establishment of regional offices in the field. The adoption of the draft resolution would, however, give the Governing Council an opportunity to consider the question again.

8. Mr. MOUSKY (United States of America) said that, while he had voted in favour of the draft resolution and welcomed further study of the question of decentralization, he had reservations as to the advisability of establishing regional offices in the field. He shared the views of the representative of the Federal Republic of Germany and felt that it would have been preferable for the Governing Council, rather than the General Assembly, to request a study of the question of decentralization of UNDP activities.

9. Mr. HOHLER (United Kingdom) said that his vote in favour of the draft resolution was without prejudice to the position his delegation would take at the twentieth session of the Governing Council on the issues referred to in paragraph 1.

10. Miss COURSON (France) said that, while she had voted in favour of the draft resolution as a whole, she had abstained in the separate vote on certain words in paragraph 1. Although her delegation was aware of the advantages of the regional approach, it was not convinced that the establishment of UNDP regional offices in the field would improve programme delivery, rather than simply increase administrative costs and reduce the expenditure on programmes. Moreover, decision-making and programme delivery would be delayed by the introduction of regional offices. The co-ordination sought by the sponsors of the draft resolution could, she felt, be provided by the regional economic commissions.

11. Mr. CURTIN (Australia) said that his delegation had voted in favour of the draft resolution as a whole and of the parts on which separate votes had been taken because it believed that the text was the best possible under the circumstances and took into account a wide range of views. The draft resolution referred to the 1970 Consensus and thus encompassed the philosophy developed during the twenty-fifth session of the General Assembly and during several sessions of the Governing Council of UNDP on the organization of UNDP and on the manner in which it should be decentralized. It also took full account of the views expressed at the seventeenth and eighteenth sessions of the Governing Council, and it made it clear that the question of decentralization, and the question of the establishment of regional offices in the field, would be discussed both in the Governing Council and in the General Assembly.

12. The essential element in the decentralization of UNDP activities should be the primary control exercised by countries over their own country programmes, and he hoped that that control would not be eroded. The proposal to establish regional offices in the field was, of course, bound up with the view that the present machinery of UNDP was failing to move projects quickly enough and that the introduction of stronger regional control would help to eliminate bottle-necks and generally to improve UNDP performance in delivery and implementation. His delegation had an open mind on that line of thinking and hoped that in 1975 the Governing Council would carefully consider the reasons for any failings in the UNDP machinery and reach a firm conclusion as to whether new regional machinery might improve the situation. Whatever conclusion was reached, he hoped that the current country programming procedures would not be put at risk and that any new regional machinery would not weaken the co-ordinating function of headquarters.

13. Mr. GATES (New Zealand) said that his delegation had voted for the retention of the words in paragraph 1 on which a separate vote had been taken because it believed that the Governing Council should discuss that aspect of decentralization. Its vote did not imply that his delegation would support the establishment of regional offices in the field; before doing so, it would need to be convinced that the countries in the region wanted regional offices and that the latter would in fact improve programme delivery, implementation and follow-up action on country programmes and regional and subregional projects.

14. Mr. CAKPO (Dahomey) said that he had voted for the retention of the last preambular paragraph and of the words

in paragraph 1 on which a vote had been taken, but had not participated in the vote on the draft resolution as a whole because it was not relevant to the region in which Dahomey was situated. While he was aware that consultations had been held and that some regions wanted decentralization, the Governing Council should not adopt a narrow approach to the question but should take account of the views of all Member States, particularly those receiving UNDP assistance, which were clearly in a good position to know how effective programme delivery was. The present structure of UNDP in Africa was not in question, as several representatives of developing countries had indicated. If, however, UNDP was to be reorganized, account should be taken of the comments made by the representative of the Upper Volta, and co-ordination and close relations with the regional economic commissions should be encouraged.

15. Mr. LINDORES (Canada) said that he had voted in favour of the draft resolution as a whole, and for the last preambular paragraph and the words in paragraph 1 on which a vote had been taken. His vote on paragraph 1 was without prejudice to the position his delegation would take in the debate on decentralization in the Governing Council, which should be the main forum for consideration of that question.

16. Mr. CHELLE (Uruguay) said that his delegation had voted in favour of the draft resolution because it considered it premature to take a decision on decentralization and believed that further study was necessary before the question was considered by the General Assembly.

17. Mr. KANDÉ (Senegal) said that he had voted for the draft resolution as a whole, for the last preambular paragraph and for the words in paragraph 1 on which a vote had been taken. Its vote on the latter in no way implied that the Governing Council should agree to the establishment of UNDP regional offices in the field. He was not opposed to the legitimate aspirations of countries in other regions but he felt, like the representatives of the Upper Volta and Dahomey, that account should be taken of the interests of his region.

18. Miss GARCIA (Ecuador) said that her delegation had voted in favour of the draft resolution as a whole because it believed that it would be useful for the Governing Council to consider the question of decentralization of UNDP activities. She had abstained in the vote on certain words in paragraph 1 for the same reasons as the representative of Brazil and also because she was somewhat sceptical about the introduction of new machinery which might affect the nature of UNDP activities.

AGENDA ITEM 46

United Nations Environment Programme (*continued*)
(A/9603, chap. VI, sect. C; A/C.2/292):

- (a) Report of the Governing Council (A/9625, A/C.2/L.1368);
- (b) United Nations Conference-Exposition on Human Settlements: report of the Secretary-General (A/9729, A/C.2/L.1369);

(c) Criteria governing multilateral financing of housing and human settlements: report of the Secretary-General (A/9575, A/9790)

19. Mr. FLEMING (Argentina) said that draft resolution A/C.2/L.1368, of which Argentina was a sponsor, dealt with a large number of substantive issues and merited very serious consideration. He therefore urged delegations to seek instructions from their Governments in order to expedite consultations aimed at producing a generally acceptable decision on those issues.

20. The CHAIRMAN announced that Oman, Uganda and Zaire had become sponsors of the draft resolution.

21. Mr. KLEIN (United States of America) said that he had not yet received final instructions from his Government concerning the proposal, and requested that the Committee should defer further consideration of it until more detailed consultations had been possible.

It was so decided.

22. The CHAIRMAN suggested that, if there was no objection, draft resolution A/C.2/L.1369 should be adopted without a vote.

The draft resolution was adopted.

AGENDA ITEM 12

Report of the Economic and Social Council [chapters II, III (sections A to D), IV, VI (sections A to D and G) and VII (sections 1 to 3)] (A/9588, A/9592, A/9599, A/9633, A/9648, A/9649, A/9656, A/9699, A/9716 and Corr.1, A/9761, A/9813, A/C.2/289, A/C.2/291, A/C.2/L.1342, E/5425 and Corr.1 and Add.1, E/5467, E/5473, E/5499, E/5501, E/5519, E/5585 and Corr.1, E/C.8/21)

23. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee would begin its consideration of agenda item 12. He invited the members of the Committee to consider the draft resolutions submitted under this item.

ROLE OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR IN PROMOTING THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (A/C.2/L.1355)

24. Mr. NARKHUU (Mongolia), introducing draft resolution A/C.2/L.1355 on behalf of the sponsors, pointed out that the public sector was expanding and increasing its share of investment in developed market-economy countries as well as in developing countries, and the advantages it offered in the operation of vital enterprises were being increasingly appreciated. In developing countries, the State was assuming a more active role in reshaping the colonial structure of the economy, promoting industrialization and stimulating rapid economic and social progress. The competence of the State administration to cope with that task virtually determined the economic future of those countries.

25. The objective of draft resolution A/C.2/L.1355 was to focus the attention of the competent organs of the United Nations on the role of the public sector as a catalyst of economic and social development in the developing coun-

tries with a view to working out ways and means of enhancing its effectiveness. An expanded and more effective public sector was essential in order to achieve the goals of the Declaration on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order (General Assembly resolution 3201 (S-VI)) and the International Development Strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade (resolution 2626 (XXV)). While his delegation welcomed the work relating to the public sector already accomplished by the United Nations, it considered it inadequate. The Economic and Social Council was the body most competent to consider the question further on the basis of a report, to be prepared by the Secretary-General in consultation with the countries concerned, reviewing that work and charting future activities.

INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION (A/C.2/L.1370)

26. Mr. DIALLO (Upper Volta), introducing draft resolution A/C.2/L.1370 on behalf of the sponsors, said that the purpose of the proposed intergovernmental conference on desertification under the auspices of the United Nations would be to draw the attention of the international community to the magnitude of the problem of desertification on all continents and to mobilize all available knowledge and experience in preparing a programme of action to combat it.

27. In reviewing the provisions of the draft resolution, he placed particular emphasis on the second, third, fifth and sixth preambular paragraphs. Since present knowledge of the phenomenon of the spread of deserts was limited and was not very scientific or sufficiently practical, notwithstanding the *ad hoc* solutions being envisaged for arid and semi-arid lands, his delegation hoped that the energies of public and private national agencies dealing with the problem, and the experience of the competent United Nations bodies and of the specialized agencies concerned, could be harnessed in preparing a conference which would generate effective and detailed joint action. Implementation of paragraph 2 of the draft resolution would ensure adequate preparation and full participation by United Nations bodies in the essential preparatory work. Without prejudice to the objectives of the draft resolution, his delegation was prepared to consult with others with a view to improving the text.

28. The CHAIRMAN announced that the following had become sponsors of draft resolution A/C.2/L.1370: Brazil, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Dahomey, Ecuador, Egypt, Fiji, Guinea, Jordan, Pakistan, Rwanda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Cameroon, United Republic of Tanzania, and Yemen.

AGENDA ITEM 49

Economic co-operation among developing countries: report of the Secretary-General (A/9760, A/C.2/L.1351)

29. Mr. BENN (Guyana), introducing draft resolution A/C.2/L.1351 on behalf of the sponsors, which had been joined by Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Bolivia, the Central African Republic, Chad, Cyprus, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Jamaica, Malaysia, Peru, Sri Lanka, the Sudan,

Trinidad and Tobago, the United Republic of Tanzania, and Zambia, said that it was particularly important to take into account the relevant decision of the Fourth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries held at Algiers in September 1973, because no less than 75 States Members of the United Nations had participated in its deliberations. With regard to the fifth preambular paragraph, he noted that, despite general recognition of the importance of the principle of international economic interdependence, the existing international economic system was characterized by the predominance of vertical links between developed and developing countries, with a virtual absence of horizontal links among the developing countries themselves. The programme of economic co-operation among developing countries merely sought to establish such links as a necessary element in the creation of a truly interdependent international economic order.

30. Paragraph 1 took note of the report (A/9760) which had been prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 3177 (XXVIII). Paragraph 2 was based in particular on paragraphs 1 and 2 of decision 121 (XIV) of the Trade and Development Board.

31. No country which genuinely desired the creation of a truly interdependent international economic order should find it difficult to support the draft resolution, particularly since acceptance of it would not prejudice the reservations expressed by delegations concerning General Assembly resolution 3177 (XXVIII), paragraph 1, subparagraphs (b), (d) and (e). The sponsors hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted without a vote.

32. The CHAIRMAN announced that Colombia, Dahomey, Mali and Rwanda had also become sponsors of draft resolution A/C.2/L.1351.

33. Miss GHOSE (India), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the Second Committee was hardly the forum for statements of the kind made by the representative of Pakistan at the preceding meeting, when he had claimed that his country had been affected by radio-active fall-out from the nuclear experiment conducted by India within its own territory. Pakistan representatives had made similar charges in other forums also, and it seemed that they did not accept the scientific evidence contradicting such charges. The Atomic Energy Commission of India had already denied that there had been any venting from the explosion; even if there had been, the wind current at the time had been such that the debris would have travelled eastward into the state of Rajasthan, and not westward towards Pakistan.

34. India had signed and ratified the Partial Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty and was committed to respect its provisions. A country which was not a party to the Treaty was ill-placed to take advantage of it. Her Government emphatically denied Pakistan's allegation that India had violated the Treaty.

35. She urged the Pakistan delegation not to introduce extraneous issues into the debate.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.