

2026th meeting

Friday, 23 July 1976, at 3.30 p.m.

President: Mr. S. AKÉ (Ivory Coast)

E/SR.2026

In the absence of the President, Mr. R. Rivas (Colombia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

AGENDA ITEM 4

Regional co-operation (*continued*) (E/5607 and Corr.1 and E/5607/Add.1-2, E/5727 and Add.1-2, E/5781, E/5783-5786, E/5801, E/5832 (chap. III, sect. E), E/5835 and Corr.1 and E/5835/Add.1, E/5858)

1. Mr. SAADI (Jordan) said that his delegation shared the conviction of the Executive Secretary of ECWA that it was imperative to establish the new international economic order and bridge the gap separating developed from developing countries. Jordan's experience also confirmed his observation that inflationary pressures in the region were not due only to imported inflation but also to low levels of food production and increased public expenditure. The Jordanian Government had begun to combat inflation by giving rural production priority in its five-year plan and by subsidizing basic imported items in order to relieve the burden of imported inflation on the masses.

2. In the field of industrialization, the Commission had stressed the need for co-ordination and pointed out that the faster rate of industrialization had been partially nullified by the similarity of industrialization plans in the region. Jordan was seeking to complement the Commission's efforts by harmonizing its industrial programmes with the comprehensive guidelines approved by the Council of Arab Economic Unity of the League of Arab States.

3. Jordan wished to express its gratitude to the major donor countries of the region – Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar – which had also extended assistance to many developing countries in Asia and Africa, in accordance with the spirit of interregional co-operation among developing countries.

4. His delegation would like to see the regional commissions strengthened and assuming the task of supervising regional and subregional operational activities. It would also welcome a strengthening of regional co-operation, which had been one of the purposes of the Commission's third session, held in Qatar. The session had been overshadowed by Lebanon's continuing agony, which was a sad comment on the disproportion between man's technological capacity and his ability to live in peace with his fellows. He hoped, however, that bloodshed in Lebanon would soon cease and the unity and territorial integrity of the country be restored. At that time, the world community should give paramount priority to the reconstruction and development of the stricken country through ECWA.

5. The economic and social situation of the Palestinian people, many of whom were being obliged by conditions in the occupied territories to go elsewhere, carrying with them the seeds of hatred and revenge, also needed the assistance of the world community.

6. His delegation wished to reiterate its support for all the resolutions adopted by ECWA during its third session, in particular resolutions 31 (III) on co-operation with regional institutions, resolution 32 (III), calling for additional contributions to UNDP, and resolution 34 (III), calling on the Commission to co-operate with UNEP in the protection of the environment. It also supported the amendments to the Commission's programme of work and priorities for 1976-1977, and the broad outlines of the Commission's 1978-1981 medium-term plan, which would benefit a number of countries of the region in such areas as export promotion, manpower, agricultural development and irrigation (see E/5785, chaps. III and IV).

7. Mr. CARANICAS (Greece) said that the wealth of information in the commissions' reports made the Secretary-General's analytical summary (E/5835/Add.1) particularly useful. He also wished to commend the Secretary-General's report on regional structures of the United Nations system (E/5801) and agreed with the view that the regional commissions should be regarded as the appropriate forums for negotiations on regional matters. He drew attention, in particular, to the helpful observations on that point in paragraph 33 of that report and to the conclusions dealing with relations with the executive agencies (*ibid.*, chap. IV).

8. He agreed with the Executive Secretary of ECE that the signature of the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, in 1975, had been a landmark in the history of the Commission, and he hoped that it would prove beneficial not only to the signatories but to the world at large. His Government attached great importance to the implementation of all three parts of the Final Act, believing that economic and social progress should go hand in hand with advances in political understanding and security. Whether the hopes placed in the signature of the Act were justified would depend on the sincerity and goodwill of the signatories. ECE had been given particular responsibilities for the implementation of the Act, and its resolution 1 (XXXI) dealt with the future activities of the Commission in that regard (E/5781, part IV). His Government awaited with lively interest the progress report to be made to the meeting to be held at Belgrade in 1977. It was, however, not clear to him what was meant by the phrase "the manner in which the meeting ... will be informed" in operative paragraph 9 of the resolution, and he asked the Executive Secretary to clarify the point.

9. His delegation had made clear at the Commission's last session the importance it attached to a number of specific points in the ECE's programme of work, and he would, therefore, on the present occasion merely refer to the paragraphs in the annual report dealing with them: viz. paragraphs 144, 155, 156, 170, 172 (work areas 1, 3 and 5) and 217.

10. His Government was also especially interested in the Commission's work on trade promotion, covered in paragraphs 231-235 of the report and the subject of decision E (XXXI). He asked whether the Executive Secretary could provide information on the outcome of the second informal meeting of trade experts held on 26-28 May.

11. He noted that the Soviet delegation continued to press the proposal to hold all-European congresses on co-operation in the field of protection of the environment, development of transport, and energy, which was the subject of decision B (XXXI), and he would be grateful for any information the Executive Secretary could supply on progress made since the thirty-first session.

12. He had been impressed by what the Executive Secretary of ECE had said at the 2022nd meeting about the scale of the Commission's operations and agreed that it was right to concentrate on matters of real benefit to the participating Governments. In the ACABQ and elsewhere, his delegation had constantly opposed non-essential budgetary increases, but it supported the strengthening of the ECE secretariat, which it considered necessary to enable the Commission to deal with the considerable backlog of work that had built up and to continue its valuable activities; it would probably be necessary to recruit one or two more professional staff. The comment made in the last sentence of paragraph 48 of the Secretary-General's report on regional structures supported the provision of additional resources that he had in mind.

13. He wished to address two further questions to the Executive Secretary: the first concerned his statement that the purpose of the Commission's work in the promotion of East-West economic relations was co-operation and not convergence of the systems; it was not clear to his delegation why, if convergence proved feasible, it should be ruled out. His second question arose from the statement in paragraph 3 of the Secretary-General's report on the meetings of the executive secretaries of the regional commissions (E/5835) that there were clear signs that recovery from the recession was gaining strength in the leading developed market-economy countries. The statement in the first paragraph of the summary of the Economic Survey of Europe in 1975 (E/5823) that western European economies were running at some 10 per cent below their capacity and were at a stage where sustained recovery or stagnation hung in the balance seemed to him more accurate. The economies of a number of countries in eastern as well as western Europe were suffering from the adverse effects of inflation, which operated irrespective of economic systems and ideologies.

14. It was in the interests not only of the European region but of the world at large that ECE should be strengthened and enabled to carry out its work with

maximum efficiency, since the economic development of the developing countries was very much bound up with the prosperity of Europe; a specific example was provided by the ACP-EEC Lomé Convention. As the Secretary-General had said at the opening of the Council's current session (2006th meeting), an expanding world economy was essential for the promotion of international commerce in goods and services, and exports to world markets remained to fundamental importance to the developing countries.

15. The Executive Secretary of ESCAP had stressed (2022nd meeting) the importance of the integrated programme for rural development and the promotion of technical co-operation among developing countries. In his comment about disenchantment with traditional theories among the countries of the region, he had put his finger on a very important question, namely: had the development models failed? In trying to catch up with the developed countries, the developing countries had had to follow their pattern of growth, based on the assumption that the road to development was through a series of well defined stages already traversed in the past. Although rejected by most development theorists, that approach continued to guide the planning and development priorities of most developing countries and also of the international agencies concerned. The corollary was that development could be measured in terms of the GNP and that well-being could be quantified in terms of *per capita* income; but in reality the great majority of the world's people did not enjoy the income statistically ascribed to them and the quality of life of the masses could be deteriorating even as the GNP was rising. Although great efforts were being made in Asia to create the infrastructure of modern societies, the majority of the population lived in unbelievable and unnecessary squalor and misery. Owing primarily to population growth, every effort to overcome that situation came to nothing. Whatever the rate of savings, or investment or rise in the GNP, hunger, poverty and unemployment continued to increase.

16. Perhaps the regional commissions, and especially ESCAP, should review the economic development strategies of the past 10 years and see how they had improved the lot of the poor. He noted in the summary of the economic and social survey of Asia and the Pacific, 1975, under the heading "Institutional reform" (E/5808, p. 16), that a new approach to rural development in the ESCAP region was now receiving considerable attention. It was surprising, however, that none of the executive secretaries had touched on the population problem. There were, of course, references to it in the reports, but there was no sense of urgency. Statistics just published by the ILO showed that between 1950 and 1975 the world population had risen from about 2,500 million to 4,000 million. With population outgrowing production in recent years and the resulting devastation of the environment and rapid depletion of the earth's resources, disaster might well lie ahead.

17. At the recent Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements attention had been drawn once again to the problem of mass migration to the towns, which affected the developing countries in particular, but he had heard nothing about population growth as such, which, with increasing urbanization and the threat of social disintegration, was a danger for poor and rich countries alike.

There was clearly a need for imaginative policies, at least in the ESCAP and ECLA regions. A lesson might be learnt from China, which in the 1950s had experienced the largest rural to urban movement in the history of mankind, its urban population rising from about 57 million to about 100 million in less than 10 years. In the face of increased urban unemployment and an influx of squatters, a sweeping change of policy had been made, the emphasis shifting to rural areas and small towns. As a result migration to the major cities had been reduced or even reversed. There was no need for the United Nations or Governments to despair: all that was needed was a sense of urgency.

18. He fully supported the draft resolution on development and economic co-operation submitted to the Economic Committee by Egypt on behalf of the Group of 77 (E/AC.63/L.1). In paragraph 11 of the Secretary-General's report on the meetings of the executive secretaries of the regional commissions the comments on the Paris Conference on International Economic Co-operation and the fourth session of UNCTAD seemed rather optimistic. The Paris Conference had reached a deadlock on the two main stumbling blocks: parity of purchasing power and the problem of indebtedness. As far as UNCTAD was concerned, optimism alone would not produce results. In point of fact growth prospects for both the developed and the developing countries for the remainder of the century seemed increasingly dependent on a broad new political consensus rather than the narrow conception of economic co-operation that had prevailed in the past. A recent World Bank study had concluded that no single set of measures in the field of trade, aid or internal development policy could restore the growth of the poor countries to anything like the Second United Nations Development Decade target of 6 per cent per annum. The alternative was to apply a combination of policies – including expansion of exports, import substitution, changes in consumption patterns and measures to promote the inflow of public and private capital – which could hardly be implemented as a purely economic matter. Only a comprehensive international policy could provide the necessary machinery, and in any such machinery the regional commissions and the Council had a vital role to play.

19. Mr. EHSASSI (Iran) considered that the most important decisions taken by ESCAP at its thirty-second session concerned the integrated programme for rural development and technical co-operation among developing countries. The Commission covered one of the most populous regions of the world and was faced with vast and complex problems of mass poverty in the rural areas. The development process should be directed towards meeting the needs of the rural population who were the vast majority, making their labour productive and enabling them to benefit from the process in their turn. In that context women and young people in the local communities had an important part to play. He welcomed the adoption of ESCAP resolution 165 (XXXII) on the establishment of the Asia and Pacific Centre for Women and Development and the acceptance of his Government's offer to be host to the Centre, which would help in women's participation in the process of development and in the establishment of the new international economic order.

20. The decisions under ESCAP resolution 161 (XXXII) concerning interagency consultations and the establishment of an interagency task force to prepare a programme of work on rural development and land reform in co-operation with the agencies and organizations concerned were of great importance and would have far-reaching results. He noted with satisfaction that ESCAP had paid particular attention to interregional co-operation by identifying practical programmes of action including the promotion of co-operation among developing countries. He hoped that the other regional commissions would co-operate with ESCAP in preparing a programme of work and priorities for co-operation among developing countries, with the assistance of agencies such as UNIDO, UNDP and UNCTAD.

21. As far as strengthening the regional commissions was concerned, his delegation considered that the steady progress made so far should continue and that arrangements should be made with the UNDP Administrator to give the commissions an increasing role as executing agencies for subregional, regional and interregional projects. In order to make the commissions the focal point in co-ordinating the economic and social activities of the United Nations system, arrangements should be made to transfer to them the existing subregional and regional co-operation activities of the United Nations.

22. Mr. DABBAGH (Observer for Kuwait), speaking at the invitation of the President, congratulated the Executive Secretary of ECWA on the way in which he and his staff had carried on their work, despite the difficult circumstances caused by the tragic events in Lebanon. He hoped that the situation would soon improve and was encouraged to note that ECWA had already taken steps to help in the reconstruction of Lebanon.

23. The member States of ECWA had a vast economic potential, which they were keen to develop in the interests of the region, other developing countries and the whole world. Those who stressed the disparity in the GNPs in the region deliberately ignored the many forces making for greater integration and closer co-operation. Such co-operation, which had a cultural, historical and economic basis, was the only means of development for the countries of the region, which, whether rich or poor, were all developing countries. They believed that development was indivisible and that economic growth and better social standards should no longer be the privilege of a few nations. It was encouraging to note that the Executive Secretary of ECWA had recognized that trend and it was to be hoped that the policy of promoting projects aimed at closer economic integration among member States and between the region and other regions would be continued.

24. There were three points in the annual report of ECWA (E/5785) which were a source of encouragement. Firstly, there was a genuine interest in improving the economic and social status of the Palestinian nation, which had suffered atrocious injustice and damage as a result of the malignant determination of some colonial Powers to ignore its existence, and was entitled to ask for help from ECWA through the Palestine Liberation Organization. Secondly, ECWA had recognized the need for self-reliance and on that basis was pursuing its co-operation with

regional institutions such as the Council of Arab Economic Unity of the League of Arab States, which he hoped would be extended. Thirdly, ECWA would play a constructive role in achieving the objective of the Euro-Arab dialogue.

25. His country, like the other members of ECWA, felt the need to create a new international economic order, based on equal opportunity, consultation and a sense of international responsibility. When it had become independent in 1961, it had founded the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development to assist other developing Arab countries. The capital had increased from Kuwaiti dinars 50 million to Kuwaiti dinars 1,000 million in 1974 and the scope of operations had been expanded to cover all developing countries. Total commitments now exceeded Kuwaiti dinars 300 million, involving about 75 projects in 25 countries.

26. His country's total bilateral loan commitments had amounted to about \$750 million in 1974 — plus contributions of more than \$240 million to multilateral aid organizations — and had exceeded \$935 million in the first six months of 1975. Total aid represented about 3 per cent of the GNP, almost 10 times the average for the developed countries. The countries with so-called surplus income were aware of and ready to shoulder their responsibilities to other less fortunate countries in the area and to the developing countries in general.

27. Mr. MILLS (Jamaica) said he had noted the steps taken by all the regional commissions to bring their activities into line with the aims of the new international economic order and also as a logical development, to promote co-operation among developing countries. As the Executive Secretary of ECA had pointed out at the 2022nd meeting, economic terms did not have the same connotation in Africa as in advanced societies. His delegation had on various occasions urged that the United Nations, together with universities and research institutes, should re-examine the generally accepted theories in economics and related subjects. Developing countries themselves should also face up to the inadequacies of the theories on which they had so far based their national policies.

28. Turning to the ECLA report (E/5784), he said that Jamaica was particularly interested in the development of the Latin American Economic System, the Caribbean Development and Co-operation Committee and the Central American Economic Co-operation Committee, as exemplifying the region's determination to find its own path; he was grateful to ECLA for assisting them. Although the region was classified as "middle income", the Executive Secretary of ECLA had produced figures showing that out of a \$100 increase in average *per capita* income during the 1960s, only \$2 had reached the poorest 20 per cent of the population and that nearly one third of the inhabitants of South America lived in extreme poverty. His own country was an excellent example of the results of attempting to develop along traditional lines: there had been perceptible progress in many sectors but the problem of poverty remained basically untouched. The Jamaican authorities, re-appraising their policies, were determined to make a direct attack on poverty, since with the conventional approach, the benefits of economic advance trickled down

too slowly to forestall social unrest; people were no longer prepared to wait and suffer as the populations of the western countries had done. He was gratified to note that the international system was showing greater concern at the problem of poverty, particularly the World Bank. Although no one formula could be generally applicable, it must be accepted that, like the global system the domestic system also required restructuring to bring about equitable conditions, taking into account political and social as well as economic factors. The degree of progress achieved by the Latin American countries should not be overstated: they had almost arrived at the point of disaster, in that they had developed their economies without satisfying the fundamental requirements of social development.

29. The United Nations, and particularly, perhaps, the United Nations University, should provide a forum for thorough discussion of economic ideas and development theories. The Council had not succeeded in making the integrated approach a reality and should reconsider its approach. Developing countries looked to the United Nations not only for innovative thinking but also for encouragement to undertake the radical action which was required.

30. Miss BALOGUN (Nigeria), expressing her admiration for the ability of the executive secretaries, noted the positive results achieved in the African region since the new Executive Secretary had taken over. She wished to mention in particular two documents, the revised Framework of Principles for the Implementation of the New International Economic Order in Africa¹ and ECA's Draft Medium-Term Plan for 1976-1981, based on those Principles.² The strategy contained in the former document had three aims, namely to promote an increasing measure of self-reliance; to encourage autonomous processes of growth and diversification, thus abandoning the traditional idea of foreign trade as the principal engine of growth; and to eliminate unemployment and mass poverty. In pursuance of that strategy, ECA had designated a number of priority areas, headed by agriculture and industry, and had identified specific projects in each of those areas for implementation at subregional, regional and interregional levels. Most of the projects had been designed to foster co-operation among the member countries of the region. Her delegation had noted with satisfaction the progress made in a number of projects, relating mainly to communications and trade, which had been assisted by various developed countries. The projects also included the establishment of the Africa Training and Research Centre for Women; ECA had been the first to recognize the need for such a centre, which was designed to improve the lot of both urban and rural women. Her delegation also appreciated the co-ordinating role played by ECA in connexion with the ACP-EEC Lomé Convention and the Treaty establishing the Economic Community of West African States. With regard to inter-agency co-operation, her delegation hoped that UNDP, UNESCO and the ILO would establish joint units in ECA's secretariat along the lines of those already set up by FAO and UNIDO.

¹ E/CN.14/ECO/90/Rev.3.

² E/CN.14/ECO/31/Rev.2.

31. Her delegation had studied the reports of the JIU (E/5607 and Corr.1 and E/5727) and the Secretary-General's report on the regional structures of the United Nations system. It warmly endorsed the recommendations for decentralization to the regional commissions, a considerable increase in the resources at their disposal, their designation as executing agencies for projects and the upgrading of the executive secretaries to a position equivalent to that of the executive heads of the specialized agencies. They should also have the right to present and defend their budgets in the ACABQ. The countries in the African region were unanimously in favour of decentralization. Her delegation also wished to record its appreciation of the assistance given to various economic groupings in Africa by the three multidisciplinary UNDATS and hoped that they would be strengthened. The recommendations of the *Ad Hoc* Committee on the Restructuring of the Economic and Social Sectors of the United Nations would be of crucial importance for the future activities of the regional commissions. Her delegation therefore hoped that the executive secretaries would be given an opportunity to make representations on the aspects of their work under examination by the *Ad Hoc* Committee, particularly in view of the comments made at the Council's 2023rd meeting by the Under Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs with regard to the sharing of work between the United Nations Secretariat and the regional commissions.

32. On the subject of interregional co-operation, her delegation had noted the undertaking given by the Executive Secretary of ECE to explore ways and means of co-operation between ECE and the other regional commissions. It called on the latter to consult the Executive Secretary of ECE in order to secure from the European countries aid consistent with the requirements of the Programme of Action on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order. The executive secretaries should also make a contribution to the two important meetings on co-operation to be held in the forthcoming months - the summit meeting of the Group of 77 in Mexico and the United Nations Conference on Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries at Buenos Aires. After those two meetings, and the Fifth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries at Colombo, which was also to discuss international co-operation, the executive secretaries should submit to their respective commissions proposals for further economic and technical co-operation among member States.

33. In conclusion, answering the accusation that members of OPEC were not doing enough to help other developing countries, she referred to the statement made by the leader of her delegation at the Council's 2006th meeting. He had listed a number of ways in which Nigeria had assisted other developing countries but had at the same time pointed out that it was incorrect to say that Nigeria was wealthy in relation to the size of its population and that it therefore required no assistance from developed countries. She added that in addition to the projects mentioned previously Nigeria was also co-operating in a number of subregional projects within the framework of the Economic Community of West African States, relating to waterways.

34. Mr. BELHOCINE (Algeria) said that his delegation welcomed the increasingly important role played by the regional commissions in the formulation and implementation of United Nations policies and programmes. The regional commissions' work constituted one of the basic spheres of international co-operation. Striking examples of their success were ECA's achievements in, for example, agricultural development planning and integrated rural development and its work in preparation for the ECA/OAU/UNIDO Conference of Ministers of Industry, which had adopted important decisions on inter-African co-operation and industrial development in the period 1976-1981. The African Ministers of Trade, meeting at Algiers in November 1975, had adopted a programme of action for inter-African trade and economic co-operation including a recommendation for the establishment of an African trade and development organization and a multilateral payments system. His delegation paid a tribute to the Executive Secretary of ECA for the way in which he had directed ECA's activities. It welcomed the secretariat's decision to set up a special department for matters involving regional and interregional co-operation, the medium-term and long-term measures to avoid desertification and the medium-term development plan submitted to the recent OAU summit meeting.

35. The economic situation, as noted in the Secretary-General's report on the meetings of the executive secretaries of the regional commissions, remained serious; African countries were still handicapped by balance-of-payments deficits, debt burdens, deteriorating terms of trade and the harsh legacies of colonial domination. In the latter connexion, Algeria was pleased that more countries had now gained their freedom and sovereignty. The African continent contained the largest number of least developed countries and was the most prone to natural disasters; it was therefore essential to make the best use of the continent's resources.

36. The regional commissions' basic role should be to promote regional co-operation and to harmonize the implementation of United Nations programmes - as suggested at many international conferences including UNCTAD and recommended by the General Assembly at its sixth and seventh special sessions. The encouragement of co-operation among the developing countries had been recommended at the Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries and the recent Ministerial Meetings of the Group of 77.

37. The regional commissions should be given increased authority and financial resources commensurate with their growing responsibilities and should be empowered to collaborate directly with the various bodies of the United Nations system, such as UNDP, on regional projects. His delegation agreed with the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs that the aim should be to enable the regional commissions to contribute more effectively to the economic and social development of their regions while maintaining due co-ordination with the central organs of the United Nations.

38. Mr. MYERSON (United States of America) said that the executive secretaries' reports showed the useful role

played by the regional commissions. It was noteworthy that, faced with widely differing problems, they produced a variety of original solutions, from which others could learn much.

39. Some of their conclusions, however — for example, at least one resolution in the annual report of ECWA — could not be endorsed by his delegation, for reasons given on other occasions.

40. The United States participated directly in the work of ECE, ECLA and ESCAP as well as attending the other commissions' sessions as an observer; the importance his country attached to the commissions' work was therefore clear, and it was convinced that they had a contribution to make to international co-operation and development in general. At the 1974 meeting of the UNDP Governing Council, the United States had proposed that the regional commissions should be considered as executing agencies. The strengthening of the regional commissions was of the greatest importance for the future of the over-all United Nations system, and they would have to play an important role in the formulation, co-ordination and implementation of programmes at the regional level. It was essential to define that role carefully and strike the proper balance between the regional commissions on the one hand and United Nations headquarters and the specialized agencies on the other, particularly between the commissions and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. His delegation recognized the soundness of the view that the present balance should be reconsidered in the light of the commissions' expanded role and their need to respond to new situations. It was not a matter to be acted on precipitately or in isolation, however, and he felt that it would be as well to wait until the Council had seen the recommendations of the *Ad hoc* Committee on the Restructuring of the Economic and Social Sectors of the United Nations System. That was not to say that discussion should meanwhile be suspended; problems would continue to arise, and current business would naturally have to be dealt with.

Mr. S. Aké (Ivory Coast) took the Chair.

41. Mr. RIVAS (Colombia) said that his delegation greatly appreciated the work of the regional commissions and their executive secretaries in endeavouring to overcome international problems in their various spheres, especially in regard to the developing countries. In particular, he referred to the role of ECLA as a centre for co-operation at the national and international level in efforts to promote the establishment of a new international economic order and to assist the countries of the region in their own efforts to overcome the present international economic situation.

42. One disquieting feature of that situation was the breakdown of the basic philosophy of international economic co-operation. As the Executive Secretary of ECLA had shown, the external accounts of many Latin American countries continued to be extremely vulnerable; they would continue to be so unless the principle of universality was applied unrestrictedly in the sharing of international resources and in international collaboration. The Executive Secretary had pointed out that because of certain international forces, many countries were unable, by export capacity alone, to make headway against their external debt

problems, which, added to inflationary trends, explained their low rate of capital formation. In paragraph 43 of his report (E/5784), he had drawn attention to proposals for financial co-operation within the Latin American region.

43. His delegation was pleased to note the development of ECLA's activities relating to the establishment of multinational production and trade organizations at the formulation of strategies for agriculture and transport. His country appreciated the permanent collaboration established between the commission and the Colombian public and private sector in the fields of population and finance and in the establishment of a model for macroeconomic projections.

44. Mr. LICHILANA (Zambia) expressed his delegation's appreciation for the work of the Executive Secretary of ECA. He reminded the Council that his delegation's interest in the present agenda item had been fully expressed during the first part of the session (2010th meeting). He now wished to endorse the Kenyan representative's views concerning the multidisciplinary UNDATS. Zambia welcomed the establishment of such a team for eastern and southern Africa; although the team had encountered many difficulties, his Government and others in the subregion felt that the project had been a success. His delegation therefore requested the Executive Secretary of ECA and the Administrator of UNDP to do their utmost to ensure its continuation.

45. Mr. MUTOMBO TSHITAMBWE (Zaire) said that the documents before the Council had shown the years 1975 and 1976 to be a turning point in the establishment of a new international economic order. The countries of the third world firmly intended to maintain progress in all aspects of development and to work increasingly for that purpose in all forums. His delegation applauded ECA's role in many fields of regional co-operation and was pleased to note its orientation towards specific projects.

46. His delegation welcomed the JIU's report on the regional structures of the United Nations system (E/5727). It had always felt that the regional commissions should be regarded as executing agencies. If they were to take on a more operational role, they would have to be given resources commensurate with their responsibilities.

47. As stated in the Secretary-General's report on regional structures of the United Nations system, the African subregional offices ought to be strengthened, particularly in the light of their growing responsibility for co-ordinating activities of the United Nations system, and his delegation hoped that the ECA secretariat would take measures to bring about suitable reforms as soon as possible.

48. As an instance of regional co-operation, the transport study carried out by ECA was particularly welcome to the land-locked countries of the region concerned. The best way to promote co-operation among developing countries was to establish such regional co-operation from the outset, and the ECA Executive Secretary's emphasis of that point was appreciated by his delegation.

49. Mr. SLIPCHENKO (Observer for the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic), speaking at the invitation of the President, said that the question of co-operation within the United Nations system was many-sided. The regional commissions had an important role in matters directly related to the economic and social development tasks of the countries in their regions. Their familiarity with the practical problems put the commissions in a unique position to suggest improvements in United Nations social and economic activities, bringing them more into line with immediate development needs and with the objectives of a new international economic order based on justice, equality and peace.

50. His delegation in general endorsed the ECE report (E/5781). The Commission's activities had helped to promote détente and peaceful relations among States, and his delegation welcomed the Executive Secretary's statement referring to the Helsinki Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe and his emphasis on the task of implementing its historic Final Act, which should govern activities in all the relevant spheres of international co-operation. In that connexion the proposal for three all-

European congresses on questions of co-operation in the field of protection of the environment, development of transport, and energy was particularly significant, and ECE could play a vitally useful role in organizing such gatherings.

51. The future work programme of ECE should concentrate on the development of mutual trade and on economic and technical co-operation between countries with differing social and economic systems, in order to promote equitable relations and remove political obstacles.

52. The machinery of ECE was basically suitable for such tasks. However, his delegation recognized the need to consider the possible restructuring of the regional commissions; the ultimate aim was, of course, to improve the means of tackling international economic problems, whose solution, as the Executive Secretary of ECE had said in his report, would help to eliminate political difficulties and strengthen world peace.

The meeting rose at 6.p.m.

2027th meeting

Monday, 26 July 1976, at 10.50 a.m.

President: Mr. S. AKÉ (Ivory Coast)

E/SR.2027

AGENDA ITEM 30

Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (E/5853 and Corr.1, E/L.1730)

1. Prince Sadruddin AGA KHAN (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) introduced his report (E/5853 and Corr.1), whose presentation had been modified to give effect to General Assembly resolution 3271 (XXIX), in which the Assembly had requested the High Commissioner to report on the special operations of his Office in the same manner as he reported on other activities. Tracing the institutional evolution of his Office since its inception, he said that UNHCR had had to intervene, primarily for humanitarian reasons, on behalf of displaced persons who, strictly speaking, did not come within the terms of its 1950 mandate and to co-ordinate the humanitarian action of the United Nations by acting as "focal point". That system of co-ordination had often been used since 1971, and UNHCR's mandate to participate in humanitarian activities of a more general nature had been confirmed by the General Assembly in its resolutions 2956 (XXVII) and 3454 (XXX). The humanitarian actions resulting from the expanded functions of UNHCR, which were known as "special operations", were often undertaken to follow up international agreements or treaties ending conflicts or situations of extreme internal or external tension (the Addis Ababa agreement of March 1972 relating to "returnees and displaced persons" in the southern Sudan, the New Delhi agreement of August 1973 on the transfer of

population groups from Pakistan to Bangladesh and from Bangladesh and Nepal to Pakistan and UNHCR assistance to displaced persons in Indo-China following the 1973 Paris and Vientiane agreements). The programme for co-ordinating United Nations humanitarian assistance for Cyprus had not resulted from an agreement or international treaty but was intended to make it possible to assist the people affected pending a negotiated solution to the conflict.

2. Some of UNHCR's activities following the extension of its original mandate were intended to assist repatriated persons to resettle in their country of origin (Algerian refugees returning from Tunisia and Morocco, the South Sudan operation in 1972, and more recently the assistance given to repatriated refugees and to displaced persons in Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and Angola).

3. The many activities in question required administrative and financial resources. Happily, Governments had always provided UNHCR with adequate means to accomplish its task and to meet requirements, which had increased more than 200 per cent in the past three years. During the five-year period starting in 1971, the programmes of material assistance had required a total input of \$60 million. Contributions in cash and kind to UNHCR for its special humanitarian tasks on behalf of refugees and displaced persons had risen during the same period to over \$350 million. Those figures showed the importance attached by the international community to the needs of