

were in arrears in the payment of their contributions. At its ninety-ninth session, the Executive Board of UNESCO had pointed out that non-payment of contributions constituted a breach of the obligations of member States under the financial regulations and had taken the view that harmonious international co-operation would be seriously jeopardized by yielding to the temptation of using it as a means of influencing the decisions of the Organization.

52. He wished to voice his concern at that situation not only because of the difficulties it caused to UNESCO or other organizations, but also because such an attitude

demonstrated that the spirit of concertation and the desire for general agreement, without which no effective results could be achieved, were not yet sufficiently prevalent in the work of legislative bodies. If the United Nations system were to remain worthy of its mission and capable of carrying it out, each State must feel itself responsible for the system as a whole and must be determined to strengthen its capacity and means. Only then could the secretariats devote all their efforts to the task which had been entrusted to them.

The meeting rose at 1.00 p.m.

2019th meeting

Thursday, 8 July 1976, at 3.35 p.m.

President: Mr. S. AKÉ (Ivory Coast)

E/SR.2019

In the absence of the President, Mr. E. Longerstaeve (Belgium), Vice-President, took the Chair.

AGENDA ITEM 3

General discussion of international economic and social policy, including regional and sectoral developments (continued) (E/5790 and Add.1, E/5806, E/5808, E/5823, E/5825/Rev.1, E/5827, E/5834)

1. Mr. ANTENEH (Ethiopia) said that the Council was meeting for the first time in Africa at a critical moment, for despite the fact that the peoples of Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Cape Verde, Comoros, Angola and the Seychelles had recently broken the shackles of colonialism, the fascist régime of South Africa continued to occupy Namibia and to practise its policy of *apartheid*. The recent outrageous killing of innocent Africans by that régime could not be tolerated.

2. The people of Africa, while struggling courageously for full political and economic decolonization, were playing an increasingly vital role in shaping international economic and social policies. Africa was demonstrating its confidence in the United Nations by making itself a forum for important international meetings, including the first part of the Council's sixty-first session. In that connexion, he expressed his delegation's gratitude to the people and Government of Ivory Coast for their hospitality.

3. Economic conditions in the world had been characterized by the coexistence of prosperity and crisis, of growth and stagnation, by the poor becoming poorer and the rich richer. That was the legacy of colonialism and the international system created after the Second World War. To change that system, which was designed to serve only the interests of the developed nations, should not be the responsibility of the victims but the obligation of the beneficiaries.

4. The developing countries had demanded a fundamental change in the international economic order so as to enable them to recover and control their natural resources and at last to own the means of their economic development. With the emergence of new nations the fulfilment of those demands had become inevitable.

5. The Fourth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned States, held at Algiers in September 1973, had called upon the United Nations to convene a meeting on problems of the developing countries. Since that time various measures had been undertaken, including the adoption of the Declaration on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order and the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States, which had ushered in a new era of understanding of the mutual responsibilities of all Member States to mankind and of the need for negotiation between developed and developing countries on the basis of equality, in order to mitigate the danger of confrontation.

6. The process begun at the sixth special session of the General Assembly had continued in other international forums, the most recent of which had been the fourth session of UNCTAD, which had not, however, achieved as much as had been hoped. Although consensus had been reached on the central points of the Integrated Programme for Commodities, it would be wrong to view that programme without the establishment of a common fund to finance buffer stocks; and the key to the Programme was finance. Postponement of the establishment of a common fund would frustrate the desire to improve the terms of trade of the developing countries and efforts should be made to implement those measures on which consensus had been reached without delay.

7. Despite the commendable efforts of the United Nations, the record of the Second United Nations Development Decade was disturbing. The targets set by the International Development Strategy had not been reached.

The economic ills of the early 1970s remained: inflation, stagnation, unemployment, commodity price fluctuation and deterioration in the terms of trade of the developing countries. The validity of the targets of the International Development Strategy remained unimpaired, but the underlying assumptions of the Strategy should be altered in the light of developments in international economic relations in recent years.

8. The problems of developing countries were increased by the fragmentation of those countries. The uneconomically small size of many developing countries made them vulnerable to the vicissitudes of market forces in the developed countries. Higher or depressed export prices affected domestic policies violently. Development plan targets had to be lowered, investment priorities altered whenever export prices dropped. One of the solutions to that problem was regional economic co-operation and economic integration, in which his Government was a firm believer.

9. Another important problem of the developing countries was the production of sufficient food to meet immediate needs and the laying of a foundation for the future growth of food and industrial production. A major issue in agriculture was that of land reform. The Ethiopian land reform proclamation had now brought all rural land under the collective ownership of the people and would provide the necessary incentives for increasing agricultural productivity while abolishing the economic, political and social injustices inherent in the old feudal system of land tenure.

10. There were, however, factors beyond human control that adversely affected agricultural development, the most important of which was weather. Greater national and international efforts should be made to overcome such adverse factors. His delegation therefore attached great importance to the forthcoming United Nations Conference on Desertification.

11. International factors, too, had affected agricultural development in the developing countries. Together with violent price fluctuations for exportable raw materials, those countries faced ever-worsening terms of trade. The prices of agricultural inputs were intolerably high, with consequent adverse effects not only on agriculture but on industry, trade and transport. The developing countries also encountered bottlenecks in the development process because of lack of capital and technology. Those gaps were partially filled through financial and material assistance from bilateral and multilateral sources, some of which was granted on easier terms than ever before. None the less the requirements of some donors had become too hard to meet. The developing countries were bereft of the right to pursue their own policies and were told that changes fundamentally affecting existing patterns of economic relationships were unacceptable. The developing countries should be allowed to take their destiny into their own hands. Moreover, it should be borne in mind that the path travelled by nations now considered modern was not necessarily the path to be travelled by developing countries on their road to prosperity.

12. The developed and the developing countries were endowed with different resources of varying quantities and qualities. The demand of the developing countries was for an equitable combination of the resources originating from both groups, for the betterment of the vast majority of mankind. The developing countries were rich in human resources and raw materials, while the developed nations were rich in technology and capital. His delegation felt that an optimal combination of those resources was in the interests of both groups.

13. With regard to the transfer of resources, the three main issues were the real flow of official development assistance to developing countries, debt servicing, and monetary reform. With respect to the first question, although there had been a year-to-year increase of development assistance in current prices, real flow had declined. The problem was made more difficult by lack of progress in the lightening of the debt burden of the developing countries. The developed countries should reconsider the possibility of accepting the cancellation of and moratorium on debts if they seriously intended to establish the new international economic order. The customary practice of declaring commitment only on paper to growth and development on a global scale, to the elimination of poverty, disease and ignorance, to narrowing the increasing gaps between the rich and the poor countries must be altered. His delegation hoped that action would be taken in those directions as a result of the Council's deliberations.

14. Mr. MOUCKEYTOU (Gabon) paid a warm tribute to the President of the Republic of Ivory Coast, a great fighter highly esteemed throughout Africa for the great services which he had rendered for the cause of African peoples in general. There was no doubt that the words of wisdom in his opening statement (2006th meeting) would be a source of inspiration for the work of the Council both at Abidjan and at Geneva.

15. The sixty-first session of the Council was being held at a stage in the economic cycle described by most experts as a period of moderate recovery. While the signs of a return to normal conditions which could not but benefit the less developed countries were to be welcomed, it was important not to lose sight of the disturbances of the past few years or of the elements of a dangerous disequilibrium of prices and production, international trade and world finance, and the international monetary system.

16. The interdependence of nations meant that any political or economic action taken by one or more countries affected the economic and social development of others. The current session of the Council was therefore of special importance in that the type of economic development which characterized the present system had not always coincided with the social and human development that should be the fundamental objective of any economic growth. His delegation was convinced that the current session of the Council would be an important milestone in the process leading to the new international economic order.

17. The main point of a new international economic order was that there should be a restructuring of the world

economy which would go beyond expansion and growth, beyond improved control of cyclical fluctuations and even beyond traditional policies which had thus far constituted the agenda of international conferences.

18. The EEC representative had referred to the dependence of the EEC countries vis-à-vis the countries of Africa. Consideration must also be given to the dependence of African countries vis-à-vis the industrialized countries. Indeed, growth in the developing countries was closely linked to economic conditions in the industrialized States. When the developed countries experienced high or even normal growth rates, primary commodity exports from the countries of the third world could be maintained at a relatively high level, but when there was a recession in the industrialized countries, the countries of the third world suffered a reduction in the volume of their exports and a deterioration in their terms of trade. That dependence of the developing countries was the result of the economic structure imposed on them in the past. His delegation therefore considered that the transfer of resources for development purposes should be increased substantially to compensate the developing countries for the losses they had sustained as a result of a depression for which they were in no way responsible.

19. At the meeting of IMF at Kingston, the Ministers of the member countries had noted a substantial decline in the flow of public assistance from the countries members of the DAC, a situation which ran counter to the objectives of the International Development Strategy. Moreover, the relative proportion of World Bank loans to medium-income developing countries had declined considerably. The importance of ensuring that the developing countries had access to the financial markets of the developed countries could not be too strongly emphasized. With regard to SDRs, which had been intended to play an important role in development financing, it had been found that the mechanism of the system worked in favour of the rich countries. Indeed, SDRs allocated to developing countries did not exceed 25 per cent of the total reserves of the countries members of IMF. The developing countries therefore stressed the need for a link between the creation of SDRs and the real requirements of development financing.

20. His country supported resolution 93 (IV), adopted at the fourth session of UNCTAD, concerning the holding before March 1977 of a negotiating conference for the establishment of a common fund to co-ordinate the financing of buffer stocks.

21. With regard to the transfer of technology and industrialization in general, one of the most important tasks was the adoption of an international code of conduct to facilitate the transfer of technology on acceptable financial terms.

22. The goals pursued by the so-called multinational corporations, mainly the accumulation of profits, did not necessarily coincide with the development goals of the host countries. His country supported any initiative designed to regulate the activities of transnational corporations and to protect the interests of the developing countries. His country therefore called on the Economic and Social

Council to ensure that the United Nations conference to draw up an international code of conduct on transfer of technology, decided upon at the fourth session of UNCTAD (resolution 89 (IV)), was held as scheduled during 1977.

23. One of the roles assigned to the Council was that of promoting social justice and human dignity throughout the world, as the only guarantees of peace and international security. His country therefore reaffirmed its total support for its brethren struggling for the recognition of their legitimate rights. Consequently it condemned colonialism, racism, *apartheid* and all forms of oppression.

24. In conclusion, he expressed his delegation's sincere gratitude to the people and Government of Ivory Coast for the warm welcome extended to the Council.

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

25. Mr. FASLA (Algeria) said that the holding of the first part of the Council's sixty-first session at Abidjan was a tribute to the whole African continent. After long years of colonial domination and the plundering of their resources, the African people had risen to throw off the foreign military, political, economic and racial yoke and to regain the dignity that was the right of every human being.

26. The countries of the third world were at an important turning point in their history which would affect the international community. The imperative need for change, whatever the sacrifice, had given them new force to pursue a realistic struggle for freedom and a democratic society based on social justice and economic progress, which would guard their people against the hazards of development and the dangers that the aftermath of colonialism and the system of foreign stranglehold sought to perpetuate. Their common objectives of liberation and change had led the third world countries to examine the international political and economic situation carefully, with a view to removing the wrongs they suffered and hastening, through their solidarity, the new era of justice and equity in relations between States irrespective of their political, economic and social systems.

27. Africa and the third world had become the place where the contradictions of the present world were sharpest and where imperialist forces were redoubling their efforts to maintain their economic domination over the natural resources and wealth of the third world.

28. The economic and social development of man, with which the Council was concerned, presupposed man's freedom from humiliation and bondage and from exploitation by colonialism, foreign occupation, racial discrimination, *apartheid* and aggression. The third world had noted the declarations by certain developed countries of goodwill towards Africa but it was difficult to believe in their sincerity, for it was obvious that South Africa and Southern Rhodesia could not continue to defy the international community without assistance from the countries which carried on prosperous trade with them through transnational corporations and provided them with arms for use against Africans. Moreover, such statements were hardly credible when they came from countries which opposed the

admission of the People's Republic of Angola to membership of the United Nations.

29. Development presupposed recognition of the right to self-determination in Africa, the Middle East and elsewhere. There could be no peace or economic development in the Middle East as long as Israel continued its arrogant defiance of the international community, ignoring the rights of the Palestinian people, with the connivance of western countries. The latest Israeli aggression against Uganda was an aggression against the whole of Africa. It had been condemned unequivocally by the recent OAU Summit Conference and by the United Nations Secretary-General; the Council should likewise condemn it.

30. The economic crisis which had disrupted the world economy in 1974 and 1975 had perhaps been salutary in that it had helped the international community to see more clearly the interdependence of the rich and poor economies and to move towards genuine co-operation, and had encouraged a large part of the developed world to make a tentative start towards change in the approach to the problems of co-operation and development aid. The sixth special session of the General Assembly had marked an important stage in the development of world political and economic ideas, since for the first time the developing countries had been heard as equal partners with real, albeit limited, negotiating power. In adopting by consensus the Declaration and Programme of Action (resolutions 3201 (VI) and 3202 (VI)), it had defined the basis of the new international economic order for which the developing countries were clamouring. Since then there had been a series of international meetings in pursuance of the concerted effort to promote international co-operation, including the World Population Conference, the World Food Conference, the Second General Conference of UNIDO, Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, the seventh special session of the General Assembly, the fourth session of UNCTAD and the Paris Conference on International Economic Co-operation.

31. The time had come to consider whether the dialogue that was universally extolled was based on a real political will to make the structural changes in the world economy which the developing countries needed for their development and to establish equitable economic relations, or whether it was a tactical ploy designed to curb the struggle of the third world for economic freedom and to postpone indefinitely the solution of the developing countries' urgent problems. While the developed world had managed to overcome the economic crisis and was starting up its growth again, the developing countries continued to suffer from the adverse effects of inflation, recession and falling imports in the developed countries and were still struggling to preserve their bare subsistence. Despite some improvement in a few of the developing countries, most of them had not increased their growth rates in real terms and the situation in the most seriously affected countries of Africa was a cause for grave concern.

32. The reluctance of some developed countries to implement the modest objectives of the International Development Strategy – which would have to be revised in the light of the demands of the new international economic

order – the reduction in real terms in the transfer of resources to the developing countries, the ever-growing burden of external debt, the steady deterioration in the terms of trade and the lack of genuine monetary reform were serious obstacles to the legitimate aspirations of the developing countries and the implementation of the new international economic order.

33. Some developed countries still refused to make the necessary changes in international economic relations and continued to proclaim the merits of absolute liberalism in the world economy. There could be no harmonious world development without regulation of international trade. Yet the transnational corporations and the banks, which were the pillars of the market economy, were well equipped to arrange for the sharing of markets, to fix import and export commodity prices and to manipulate currencies. There could be no change in relations between developed and developing countries in the framework of the existing structures which enabled the rich countries to remain masters of the sources of wealth.

34. The Paris Conference on International Economic Co-operation seemed to be marking time and the latest declaration by the group of 19, representing the developing countries at Paris, made on the eve of the fourth session of UNCTAD, was not encouraging. At its fourth session UNCTAD had not fully responded to the reasonable demands made by the developing countries in the Declaration of Manila. Some progress had been made, notably on commodities, but the results were not commensurate with the problems. The common fund for financing buffer stocks of commodities had not yet been accepted by the rich countries. Consideration of the crucial debt problem had been postponed.

35. His country believed in international co-operation based on the permanent sovereignty of States over their natural resources, equitable participation by developing countries in decisions concerning the world economy, an end to injustice in international economic relations, in particular by stabilization of prices of raw materials, maintenance of the purchasing power of the developing countries' exports, and access to modern technology on favourable terms. In accordance with the Charter on Economic Rights and Duties of States, such co-operation must also recognize the rights of all countries to regulate foreign investment in the national interest and the urgent need for a code of conduct for transnational corporations.

36. Development was above all a national task, which required the mobilization of all available resources. It called for an equitable distribution of wealth among all members of the nation and efforts to improve the lot of the poorest members. True development meant social, cultural, economic and agrarian reform, for the benefit of the worker, the peasant and the man in the street.

37. Co-operation between developing countries was an essential part of the new international economic order. Over the past few years a multiform regional, subregional and interregional co-operation had been growing, particularly among the non-aligned countries, enabling them gradually to gain control of their natural resources and to

exploit them, for example by setting up producers' associations. Valuable assistance was being given by the OPEC countries.

38. His country believed in man's capacity to solve the problems of poverty, hunger, illiteracy and disease and it hoped that it would not be disappointed.

39. Mr. BELKHODJA (Tunisia) said that, in accepting the generous invitation of Ivory Coast to hold the first part of the Council's session at Abidjan, the member States had enhanced the prestige of the Council.

40. While he noted with pride that most of the countries of the third world had won the battle for independence, it must not be forgotten that others, particularly in Africa and the Middle East, were still suffering under colonialism, aggression, foreign occupation, racial discrimination and *apartheid*. The Council should once again denounce the situation of the Palestinian people, who had for years been subjected to a form of colonialism which amounted to genocide. It should also condemn Israel's military operation against Uganda, which constituted a violation of sovereignty and a dangerous precedent for the safety of countries and Governments. Those forms of colonization, aggression and oppression were a violation of people's rights, an affront to their dignity, a threat to world peace and an encouragement to the arms race. They were an obstacle to the development of the third world countries, which were forced against their will to spend money on security which would be better spent on development.

41. The assessment of the results of the first half of the Second United Nations Development Decade had shown that the objectives had not been achieved. The progress which the developing countries had expected had not been made and in some cases even the meagre gains of the First Decade had been jeopardized.

42. The deterioration in the world economic situation resulting from the recession in the industrialized countries had had disastrous effects on the economies of the developing countries and on their payment capacity, particularly in Africa which accounted for 28 of the 45 countries most seriously affected. In the past five years the average annual growth rate in the developing countries had been 5.5 per cent, which, although slightly higher than the rate in the 1960s, was well below the target of 6 per cent set for the present decade. Although some countries had achieved a slightly higher rate, production in more than one third of them had at the most merely kept pace with population growth. It was particularly disturbing that agricultural production had increased by only 2 per cent compared with a target of 4 per cent.

43. The situation had had disastrous effects on the trade of the developing countries, in particular on their exports of commodities. The brief rise in certain commodity prices in 1974 had been followed by a fall in the prices of a number of export products, most of which were the main source of foreign earnings for developing countries, whereas prices of capital goods had steadily increased. As a result, the balance-of-payments deficit of the developing countries had tripled between 1970 and 1974 and had necessitated

short-term loans on hard terms. With the growing deterioration in the economies of those countries, there was an urgent need for the international community to increase its financial, technical and cultural aid to the developing countries, and particularly to the most disadvantaged.

44. The new international economic order was designed to bring about a more equitable sharing of world revenue, instead of an economy based on wastage of resources and unequal sharing of wealth and goods. It was also designed to reshape economic relations and to give the developing countries a more active part in decision making in the conduct of world affairs. It was no longer acceptable for major trade and monetary decisions to be taken by bodies open to a few developed countries and closed to the developing countries which would be affected by such decisions.

45. There was as yet little sign of the international solidarity and concerted effort on which the gradual establishment of the new international economic order depended. The results of the fourth session of UNCTAD had not come up to the expectations of the developing countries. Some progress had admittedly been made: agreement had been reached on certain problems and the industrialized countries, which had recognized the need to give serious attention to the problems of commodities and the transfer of resources, seemed ready to negotiate. He hoped that the limited progress made would pave the way for broader agreements in a spirit of solidarity.

46. One of the main objectives of the new concept of international economic development should be to meet the essential needs of the people of the developing countries and to improve their economic, social and cultural life. The developing countries must bear in mind that the basis of development was the betterment of man. There was an urgent need for multisectoral development programmes to increase food production by modern methods and new techniques, with due regard to preserving the national heritage by combating erosion, by reafforestation and by water management, and to establish and improve road networks, housing, health and sanitary conditions, education, water supply and all aspects of life. He hoped that IFAD would be operating by the end of the year, to finance projects for increasing world food production.

47. The new concept also involved the need to review the structure of trade between developing and developed countries. With the economic instability of the rich countries and the shortcomings of the international monetary system, there was no machinery for price indexing or compensation to enable the developing countries to safeguard the real value of their export earnings. The Integrated Programme for Commodities included measures to that end. A vital issue was that of access for the agricultural products of the developing countries to the developed countries' markets, in view of increasing tariff and non-tariff barriers.

48. Measures were urgently needed to increase financial assistance, without applying criteria such as *per capita* income to exclude countries which had acquired a degree of development. Special action was needed for countries with

special difficulties, but all the developing countries still needed help from the international community. An equally important problem was that of external debt, which had become a major obstacle to economic progress in the developing countries. A more appropriate system was needed for repayment of loans and improvement of the conditions for access to financial markets with a view to increasing the flow of official development aid.

49. Two further important factors in the new international economic order were industrial expansion of the developing countries and the strengthening of economic co-operation among them. In order to increase and diversify the trade of the developing countries it was necessary to increase not only the volume of commodity production and export but also their share in world industrial production. That would be possible only through a policy of industrialization based on autonomy, creating new possibilities and new needs, and strengthening the technological capacity of the countries in question. Obstacles to the development of trade in industrial products must be removed and international legislation on the transfer of technology recast. The adoption of a new code of conduct for the transfer of technology should strengthen the technical capacity of the developing countries and release them from technological dependence.

50. It was imperative that the developing countries should increase their co-operation among themselves on the basis of collective autonomy, by extending their systems of regional and subregional co-operation and increasing their trade on a priority and preferential basis. They should also improve the flow of information on the individual possibilities of each country. His country was constantly increasing its co-operation with African countries.

51. He hoped that the present session would help towards the implementation of the objectives of the Declaration and Programme of Action on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order, thus strengthening the role of the United Nations and especially the role of the Council as an effective instrument of international economic and social co-operation.

52. Mr. RIVAS (Colombia) said that the fact that the Council was holding the first part of its session on African soil had three important aspects. Firstly, it was a tribute to the African continent, which was playing an increasingly significant role in world affairs after so many years of colonial dependence. Secondly, it was an eloquent recognition of the status of the Republic of Ivory Coast in Africa and of the eminent qualities of statesmanship of its President. Thirdly, it was a recognition of the intelligent work and personal qualities of Mr. Aké, the President of the Economic and Social Council.

53. A general discussion of international economic and social policy was an ambitious undertaking in view of the manifold aspects of the economic and social life of peoples and of the rapid developments in the modern world. One subject of great concern to the developing countries was that of commodities and raw materials. Those countries depended on the international price of a few products, whose sudden fluctuations in international markets made it

very difficult to prepare and carry out medium- and long-term development plans. It was therefore essential for the international community to create a system which would ensure relative stability in commodity prices, for without such a system the world economy would continue to show the disquieting signs of disorder which had been evident in recent years.

54. A closely related subject was the question of the access of the products of developing countries to the international market. Preferential treatment had been granted in recent years, but only for certain groups of countries that had historic links with the former metropolitan countries. Such preferential schemes were obstacles to the trade of various regions and unjustly restricted the access of other countries to important markets which represented a necessary outlet for many developing economies. It was essential that such differences imposed on the non-industrialized countries should disappear gradually and that the developed countries should open up their markets to the developing countries on favourable terms without any discrimination whatever.

55. The developing world had long stressed the urgent need to guarantee the transfer of increasing resources from the industrialized to the developing countries, which was one of the central points for the establishment of the new international economic order. So far, the countries which controlled by far the greatest part of the world's financial resources had shown little interest in achieving the targets set by the international community. The joint action of the developing countries would have to induce the rich countries to expedite the establishment of machinery providing for such a transfer of resources, for the world did not accept the widening gap between the wealthy countries and the vast majority of under-developed societies. His delegation felt that the proposal by the United States of America with regard to an international resources bank deserved more serious attention than it had received at the fourth session of UNCTAD.

56. While his delegation did not hold the multinational corporations responsible for all the evils of under-development, it felt that an international code regulating their activities and guaranteeing respect for the legal and moral standards of the countries in which they operated was urgently needed. The activities of those companies constituted an international problem which could be solved only through international measures, notwithstanding the efforts of some industrialized countries to regard any rules for their multinational enterprises as a matter of domestic jurisdiction.

57. Owing to a number of factors, including poor administration in the past, UNDP was facing a difficult financial situation, which was imperilling the programmes of countries which had based their development plans partly on the possibility of obtaining international technical assistance. In addition to the inadequate contributions of the industrialized countries, which were far below the targets set in the International Development Strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade, there were the disturbing effects of the inflation afflicting the market economies and a dangerous tendency to discrimi-

nate between developing countries. He stressed the need for the multilateral assistance system to be based on the full recognition of the right of each State to determine its own development policies and its social priorities.

58. The problem of the growing external debt of developing countries had a serious negative effect on their development efforts. While the variety of cases and the different situations of the debtor countries might make it advisable to deal with the problem pragmatically for the present, he thought that it would be necessary at some future date to reach agreement on general principles, based on criteria drawn up by the international community, that could serve as a guideline to deal with serious cases of debt.

59. One of the most important steps taken recently in the field of international co-operation was undoubtedly the establishment of IFAD. The current crisis had shown the urgent need to give the agricultural sector priority consideration, since the efforts of the developing world to industrialize could not succeed unless agriculture was modernized and made more productive. The third world hoped that the important initiative taken to pool the financial, human and technical resources of the community of nations in order to promote agricultural progress would not be threatened by financial difficulties or institutional rivalries.

60. The solidarity of the developing countries had made it possible to put forward bold and imaginative formulae to open the way to a new international order that would reflect the new realities of the modern world. He considered that a careful study should be made of the current situation and the immediate prospects for action by the developing countries. In that connexion he drew attention to the offer by the Government of Pakistan to act as host to a conference of the leaders of the third world. That idea would certainly deserve the attention of all the countries concerned, which would not fail to take due note of it in determining their future strategy.

61. The experience gained by the international community in intensifying its efforts to reach global agreements, which were at times counter-productive because of their hasty and emotional nature, seemed to indicate that the fact that they were taken simultaneously and were not sufficiently specific was partly to blame for the unsatisfactory results. It was not possible to hold a number of meetings at one and the same time, all discussing the same problems, when, moreover, it was possible for those meetings to discuss more general political aspects which were liable to give rise to controversy. He did not deny the importance of political discussions, for without them no international agreement could be successful, but it was essential to agree upon certain rules that would limit political discussions to forums which, by their nature, were the most appropriate for that purpose. In that way, members could be certain that meetings held to negotiate specific issues, on the basis of policies expressed by Governments in the appropriate forums, would produce more tangible and satisfactory results. The justice of the position adopted by the developing countries would lose nothing through the adoption of such rules, which would also help to enhance the prestige of the United Nations throughout the world.

62. Mr. SOFFER (Observer for Israel), speaking at the invitation of the President, expressed his delegation's gratitude to the President, the Government and the people of Ivory Coast for the hospitality extended to the Council.

63. It would be hard for him to add anything new to the sombre picture, painted by practically every previous speaker, of the present state of the developing countries. He would, however, attempt to draw some limited conclusions from the wealth of information provided to the Council.

64. The Council was meeting on African soil not only to pay a tribute to the emerging States of the continent, which had become such a vital force in world politics and in the United Nations, but also to pay particular attention to the problems of the economies of those countries which fell within the Council's competence.

65. The first conclusion was that the depressed areas in general, and central Africa in particular, had not on the whole benefited from the global policies planned for promoting economic and social progress in the developing world. It was essential, therefore, that in future special policies should be drawn up to ensure that those regions, which encompassed the least-developed and the land-locked countries, did not forever remain on the margin of the world's development effort. They must become the principal beneficiaries of an integrated development policy tailored to their needs.

66. In that connexion it was somewhat surprising that little reference had so far been made to UNCTAD resolution 98 (IV), which dealt with the least developed among the developing countries, developing island countries and developing land-locked countries. That resolution contained the seeds of effective action in favour of those who most deserved the assistance of the international community. It dealt with the flow of assistance and its terms, commercial policy, transfer of technology, transport and other points. Only on debt relief had the UNCTAD negotiators failed to reach agreement concerning the least developed countries and top priority was to be accorded to that point at the next session of the Trade and Development Board. He urged the Council to make its authority felt in order to ensure a rapid solution of that problem.

67. Nineteen of the 29 countries defined as least developed were at the same time land-locked or island countries. That suggested a causal connexion and perhaps one of the means for solving the problems of the least developed countries might lie in overcoming their geographic handicaps. There were promising possibilities in applying the latest technological developments in air transport to the needs of those countries cut off from the world's main transport routes, including containerized air transport, which had made giant technical strides and promised to become cheaper with time.

68. One advantage of air transport was that the infrastructure cost of airport construction was much lower than that of combined road-rail-port networks. Those considerations were relevant not only for the least developed land-locked countries but also for remote parts of other developing countries which did have an outlet to the sea. Most third

world countries were situated at a great distance from their markets in developed countries and speedy transport could lessen distances and thus make for more competitive products. Transport by air of a growing part of the exports of developing countries deserved closer study by the competent international organs.

69. The present debate was the first economic discussion in the Council since the adoption of resolution 3362 (S-VII) on development and international co-operation by the General Assembly. That resolution had been a turning point: instead of confrontation, developed and developing countries had chosen the path of negotiation and consensus. Economic problems could not be resolved through majority votes, and the seventh special session had provided the impetus for an important step towards negotiation. That was of particular importance to the countries of Africa, which depended so greatly on the assurance of stable prices which were remunerative and just to producers and equitable to consumers. In Africa the volume of foreign exchange earnings from commodity exports determined not only current standards of living but also the fate of development plans and the possibility of executing development projects. For that reason UNCTAD resolution 93 (IV) on commodities provided for preparatory meetings for international commodity negotiations on individual products from September 1976. It was particularly interesting that countries like Israel, which were developing importing countries lacking in natural resources and which might be adversely affected by measures under the Integrated Programme for Commodities, would be protected by means of appropriate differential and remedial measures.

70. Co-operation among developing countries, being based on national self-reliance, was the core of the development process. The experience of one developing country was in many cases directly relevant to others and combining their efforts would strengthen the developing

countries as a whole. The importance of that principle was now recognized throughout the United Nations system.

71. As an illustration he mentioned the country-wide water management system in Israel, which harnessed all existing resources and apportioned their use under an over-all plan based on the national Water Law. Israel's experience in that field was much in demand; hundreds of trainees from all parts of the developing world had studied the different methods of water exploration and management in Israel and the ultra-economic methods of irrigation developed by Israeli experts.

72. Abundance of sunshine, too, had inspired research and for many years domestic solar water heaters had been a familiar sight in the Israeli landscape. As a cheap source of energy that technology was obviously of immediate interest to the developing world.

73. The scope of such co-operation was only now being fully recognized, and Israel continued to explore further fields for fruitful exchanges of experience with countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

74. His delegation had been saddened to see yet another United Nations body subjected once again to slanderous statements against Israel by certain delegations. Delegations of Israel to the proper United Nations forums had refuted all such false and slanderous allegations and he would not waste the Council's time upon them. Rather would he heed the counsel of President Houphouët-Boigny, whose inspiring leadership of Ivory Coast had enabled that country to make optimum use of its human and natural potential. His delegation saluted the President as a great statesman and thanked him for his constructive and original contribution to the work of the Economic and Social Council.

The meeting rose at 5.20 p.m.

2020th meeting

Friday, 9 July 1976, at 10.40 a.m.

President: Mr. S. AKÉ (Ivory Coast)

E/SR.2020

AGENDA ITEM 3

General discussion of international economic and social policy, including regional and sectoral developments (*concluded*) (E/5790 and Add.1. E/5806, E/5808, E/5823, E/5825/Rev.1, E/5827, E/5834, E/L.1728, E/L.1729)

1. Mr. MILI (Secretary-General, International Telecommunication Union) said he would describe the ways in which ITU co-operated, within its spheres of competence, in the solution of the problems of development and international economic co-operation.

2. In accordance with its terms of reference under the International Telecommunication Convention, ITU has

fostered the creation, development and improvement of telecommunication equipment and networks in the developing countries, especially by participating in the appropriate programmes of the United Nations. ITU had quickly become aware that the development of telecommunications required close co-operation on a world-wide scale, in particular for the purpose of ensuring the rational exploitation of such limited natural resources as the radio frequency spectrum and the geostationary satellite orbit. That was why it organized so many meetings, such as the World Administrative Maritime Radio Conference (1974), which had made it possible to rearrange the radio frequencies allocated to the maritime mobile services, and the Regional Administrative LF/MF Broadcasting Conference (1975) at which an integrated plan for the use of the radio frequency spectrum had been prepared affecting more than