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New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 19th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. MURGESCU (Romania)

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18 October 1979

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The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

1. The CHAIRMAN said that, following consultations which the officers of the Committee had held with delegations, he would suggest the following deadlines for the submission of draft resolutions or proposals under agenda items covered by the general debate: item 12, 19 November; items 58, 62 and 63, 22 October; item 66, 9 November; item 67, 30 October; items 69 and 125, 2 November. In the case of item 55, subitems (b) and (f) were closely related to subitem (a), which was to be discussed in plenary meeting; he therefore suggested that no deadline should be set until the General Assembly had completed its consideration of subitem (a). For subitem (c), the deadline would be some date between 25 October and 2 November, when item 57 was to be taken up; for subitem (d), (e) and (g) the deadline would be 2 November, and for item 55 (h) it would be 19 November, provided that the relevant documents had been circulated by that date.

2. Mrs. SIKRI (India), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77, proposed that no deadline should be set for item 69, since the relevant documents had not yet been distributed.

3. Mr. ENOKI (Japan) noted, with regard to item 63, that the report called for under General Assembly resolution 33/108, paragraph 4, had not yet been issued and that members of the Committee would need time to study it. He asked whether the Secretariat could state when that report would be ready.

4. Mr. SEVAN (Deputy Secretary of the Committee) replied that the report would be submitted for processing on 26 October and would not be ready until early in November.

5. Mr. ENOKI (Japan) said that, in that case, the deadline should be decided on after the report had been issued.

6. The CHAIRMAN said he took it that, with the exception of items 63 and 69, the Committee accepted his suggestions regarding deadlines for the submission of proposals.

7. It was so decided.

8. The CHAIRMAN said that, in accordance with the time-table approved by the Committee, the second half of the following week, after completion of the consideration of item 55 (a) in plenary meeting, would be devoted to items 61 and 65. The Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) would make an introductory statement on item 65 on 24 October. Delegations wishing to participate in the discussion of those two items should inform the Secretariat as soon as possible, since he intended to close the list of speakers on 24 October at 6 p.m.

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AGENDA ITEM 124: ASSISTANCE FOR THE RECONSTRUCTION OF NICARAGUA (A/C.2/34/L.5)

9. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to consider draft resolution A/C.2/34/L.5, which had been introduced by the representative of Costa Rica on behalf of the sponsors at the 13th meeting.

10. Mr. XIFRA (Spain) said that his country had responded to Nicaragua's request for assistance and was therefore pleased to become a sponsor of the draft resolution.

11. Mr. BRECKER (United States of America) said that the United States fully supported the ECLA resolution recommended for endorsement by the General Assembly.

12. The needs of Nicaragua for assistance were particularly great because of the heavy destruction and many casualties in the months of fighting. The United States had given high priority to those needs, providing concessional assistance of various kinds at a level of about \$10 million a month. It had provided emergency grants of food and medicine and related services, a grant to the Nicaraguan Ministry of Housing for repair and rehabilitation of housing for the poor, a further grant to assist a major private institution in restoring small business and industry, and smaller grants for the provision of training and farmer education. It was also assisting private voluntary organizations in eight projects in the areas of health education co-operative development and economic recovery of the smallest businesses and cottage industries. Those assistance programmes, substantial though they were, consisted mainly of emergency relief and interim activities and modifications of continuing programmes. They did not, therefore, address fully the entire range of Nicaragua's reconstruction requirements. The United States was now developing a substantial bilateral assistance programme to be submitted for Congressional approval.

13. The balance-of-payments and financial situation in Nicaragua was extremely difficult, and the United States was prepared to discuss a multilateral official debt rescheduling as soon as the Nicaraguan Government was ready to do so.

14. The secretariat of ECLA merited commendation for quickly preparing useful documentation on Nicaragua's requirements for assistance (E/CEPAL/G/1091). The ECLA Committee of the Whole in turn was to be commended for its effective and timely action on the secretariat's study.

15. Mr. ZACHMANN (German Democratic Republic) said that the Nicaraguan people had won a heroic victory over the tyrannical Somoza régime and its supporters. The change that had taken place was an occasion for his delegation to extend a cordial welcome to the representatives of the new Nicaragua and to reassure them of the solidarity of the German Democratic Republic.

16. On the basis of the principles, embodied in its Constitution, of support for the struggle of oppressed peoples for national self-determination, freedom, democracy and social progress, the German Democratic Republic had been granting support and assistance to the new Nicaragua by sending food, medicines and medical equipment. Freedom fighters who had sustained heavy injuries were admitted to hospitals in the German Democratic Republic for medical treatment and care.

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(Mr. Zachmann, German Democratic Republic)

17. The German Democratic Republic had been among the first States to recognize the new Nicaragua officially. His delegation therefore gave its full support to the draft resolution.

18. Mr. ATAIDE (Mozambique) said that his delegation fully appreciated the situation in Nicaragua since it was quite similar to that in Mozambique. He therefore urged the Committee to adopt the draft resolution, of which Mozambique had become a sponsor.

19. Mr. ASTAFIEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that, in the ECLA Committee of the Whole, the observer for the USSR had expressed his country's solidarity with the heroic people of Nicaragua, who had won freedom through a bitter struggle. He hoped that the draft resolution, which his delegation fully supported, would be adopted in order to provide assistance in the arduous task of restoring the economy.

20. The CHAIRMAN announced that Chad, the Comoros, the Congo, Cyprus, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Jordan, Lesotho, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, the Syrian Arab Republic, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Yemen had become sponsors of the draft resolution.

21. Draft resolution A/C.2/34/L.5 was adopted without a vote.

22. Mr. BENDAÑA (Nicaragua) expressed thanks, on behalf of the people and Government of Nicaragua, to the ECLA/Committee of the Whole for its prompt action and to the Second Committee for adopting a draft resolution evidencing solidarity with the Nicaraguan people. The assistance to be provided should be viewed as not merely economic but also political support for the construction of the new Nicaragua and the creation of a society governed by the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

23. Mr. BASSIN (Finland), speaking on behalf of the delegation of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, said that the Governments of those countries had followed with deep sympathy the struggle of the Nicaraguan people to restore freedom and democracy. They had also taken practical measures to assist Nicaragua in the difficult task of healing the wounds of the recent civil war and rebuilding its economy. Against that background, their delegations had been pleased to join in the consensus on the draft resolution.

24. However, some recommendations in the resolution adopted by the ECLA Committee of the Whole needed careful further study by their Governments and might not lend themselves to immediate implementation in their countries for legislative or budgetary reasons. Meanwhile, the Governments would pursue their plans to assist Nicaragua in forms which some of their delegations had announced.

25. Mr. GREET (Australia) said that his delegation had been pleased to join in the consensus on the draft resolution. However, it too believed that the ECLA resolution contained extensive proposals that could not easily be implemented by the Australian Government under existing legislation.

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26. The CHAIRMAN announced that the Committee had completed its consideration of agenda item 124.

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued)

World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (continued) (A/34/485; A/C.2/34/L.6)

27. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to consider draft resolution A/C.2/34/L.6, as orally revised by the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania on behalf of the sponsors at the 16th meeting. He announced that Angola, Benin, Botswana, Cape Verde, Chad, the Congo, Cyprus, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea, India, the Ivory Coast, Liberia, Madagascar, Mali, Pakistan, Rwanda, Senegal, Somalia, the Sudan, Yugoslavia and Zaire had become sponsors of the draft resolution.

28. Mr. ASTAFIEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that agrarian reform was one of the most important means of carrying out progressive social and economic transformations in developing countries and facilitated their speedy achievement of economic dependence and the solution of such vital problems as increasing their production and eliminating hunger and poverty.

29. The World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development had brought forth many important measures which could advance the economic and social development of the developing countries. For that reason, the Soviet delegation at the Conference had fully supported the Declaration of Principles and the Programme of Action, but it had frankly stated that some of the Programme's provisions did not take sufficient account of real development needs and possibilities. For instance, the Programme should have stressed the need to abolish the private ownership of land, the exploitation of peasants by landowners and the persistence of money-lending and foreign monopolies. His delegation was disappointed that the Programme did not include concrete measures to protect and serve the interests of the peasants, such as measures to prevent the destruction of the peasantry and the concentration of land ownership and agrarian production in the hands of a few individuals. Poverty, hunger and social inequality would never be abolished unless such steps were taken.

30. His delegation wished to stress the importance of the development on a priority basis of the co-operative and State sectors in agriculture and related branches of the economy. The development of those sectors would facilitate the introduction of planned agriculture, the expansion of opportunities for attracting the resources required for production and the application of the latest achievements of science and technology.

31. His delegation fully supported the just demands of the developing countries addressed to the imperialist countries and their monopolies in the Programme of Action. The Soviet position on those questions was set forth in the joint statements by the socialist countries at the fifth session of UNCTAD (TD/249, TD/261, TD/262, TD/264, TD/266) and at the second session of the Committee of the Whole Established under General Assembly resolution 32/174). The Soviet Union assisted and would continue to assist the developing countries in the preparation and implementation of agrarian reform and the development of agriculture.

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(Mr. Astafiev, USSR)

32. With regard to the Secretary-General's note (A/34/485) concerning section III of the resolution on the follow-up adopted by the Conference, in which the governing bodies of the United Nations and other specialized agencies were invited to consider favourably the possibility of providing the necessary resources for complementary action, his delegation believed that the Secretariat should arrange to draw those resources from previously approved allocations.

33. Draft resolution A/C.2/34/L.6 was adopted without a vote.

34. Mr. FREYRE (Argentina) said that, if a vote had been taken on the draft resolution, his delegation would have abstained because of its Government's serious reservations concerning some aspects of the Programme of Action. On the basis of experience in Argentina, his Government considered the assertion that agrarian reform was a critical component of rural development very dubious and did not, therefore, believe that the Programme of Action was applicable to Argentina. His delegation would spell out its reservations when the draft resolution came before the plenary Assembly.

35. Mr. BODDENS HOSANG (Netherlands) said that his delegation had been able to join in the consensus on the draft resolution. It would even have been able to co-sponsor the draft resolution if the role of ACC in the implementation of the Declaration of Principles and the Programme of Action had been highlighted in operative paragraph 3 or in an additional paragraph. His delegation hoped that the various organizations of the United Nations system would take an active part in co-ordinating their activities in that field, and it expected to be informed at the appropriate time, through ACC, of the follow-up to the Declaration of Principles and the Programme of Action.

36. Mr. LIPATOV (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic), speaking on behalf of the delegations of Bulgaria, the Byelorussian SSR, Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Poland, the Ukrainian SSR and the USSR, reaffirmed the position taken by those delegations at the Conference with regard to the Declaration of Principles and the Programme of Action.

37. Mr. VELLOSO (Brazil) said that his delegation wished to reiterate the reservations it had already made at the Conference concerning the Declaration of Principles and the Programme of Action. Although Brazil could accept the general thrust of the Declaration and the Programme, it felt that the concepts they contained were too broad to be applied in their entirety to a country such as Brazil with its own distinctive socio-economic structure. His delegation had joined in the consensus on the draft resolution, on the clear understanding that every country was free to apply in accordance with its own development policies and priorities recommendations adopted at the international level.

38. Mr. ALLEN (United States of America) said that his delegation had supported the revised version of the draft resolution on the understanding that the words "as adopted" in paragraph 1 referred not only to the Declaration of Principles and the Programme of Action, but also to the reservations expressed at the Conference. The draft resolution made a major omission in failing to address itself to the problem of co-ordination within the United Nations system.

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39. Mr. EHRMAN (United Kingdom) said that, although his delegation had joined in the consensus on the draft resolution, it still had reservations concerning the Declaration of Principles and the Programme of Action.

40. Mr. PONCET (France) said that, while his delegation had not stood in the way of the consensus, it still had reservations concerning various documents adopted at the Conference, particularly the Declaration of Principles. It wished to reiterate the need for co-ordination between FAO and other United Nations bodies and the importance of drawing solely on existing resources for the financing of special programmes. Without wishing to minimize the results of the Conference, it felt that better results would have been achieved if certain conditions of form had been met.

41. Mr. ENOKI (Japan) said that his delegation had joined in the consensus but wished to reiterate its reservations concerning the Declaration of Principles and the Programme of Action. The acceptance of chapter VIII, section A, paragraph (i), of the Programme of Action should not be interpreted as implying that the negotiations under the Tokyo round should be resumed.

42. Mr. SANTA CRUZ (Secretary-General, World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development) said he was pleased that the Committee had adopted draft resolution A/C.2/34/L.6 by consensus, and he appreciated the expressions of praise for the way in which FAO had organized the Conference. In the Second Committee, as at the Conference, only a few developing countries had expressed reservations in connexion with the Declaration of Principles and the Programme of Action, while some of the developed countries had reiterated the reservations they had voiced during the Conference itself. In the interests of fairness, FAO had issued an annex to the report of the Conference setting out some of the reservations which had been made, but it was confident that in the long run the misgivings underlying those reservations would be dispelled.

43. The Conference had invited the General Assembly to endorse the Declaration of Principles and the Programme of Action, firstly, in recognition of the fact that, although FAO had a special responsibility in respect of agrarian reform and rural development, many United Nations bodies dealing with development also had a responsibility in that area, and, secondly, in the hope that endorsement by the Assembly would make it possible to study the vital problem of agrarian reform and rural development in greater depth and would broaden the impact of the Conference. At the current session of the Assembly, a renewed political will to tackle squarely the problems of poverty in the developing countries, including problems of agrarian reform and rural development, was apparent. It was increasingly being recognized that such problems could not be resolved through isolated small-scale actions.

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(Mr. Santa Cruz)

44. Several delegations had referred to the question of co-ordination within the United Nations system. No organization was more interested than FAO in that question. Immediately after the Conference, it had convened the ACC Task Force on Rural Development and had noted a definite commitment to strengthen co-ordination. The problems of agrarian reform and rural development would be solved only through the broadest participation of Governments and United Nations bodies. He was confident that the Second Committee, which had an excellent record in breaking new ground in the economic and social sector, would continue on that course.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.