



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 29th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. MURGESCU (Romania)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.40 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 59: OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT (continued)

1. Mr. MORSE (Administrator, United Nations Development Programme) said it seemed clearer than ever that the operational needs of development were closely tied to the precarious state of the world economy and to international negotiations for the resolution of economic problems. While the benefits which could be achieved through technical co-operation were obvious, the work, resources and potential dedicated to such activities were restricted at the operational level by inequitable international economic relationships which no longer served the interests of either rich or poor countries. The implementation of development at the operational level was hampered by imbalances in official development assistance flows - imbalances which failed to reflect the advances over the preceding decade in technical co-operation or the contribution to development made by the strengthening of technical, administrative, managerial and institutional capacities. Moreover, if the effects of inflation were taken into account, it was evident that no substantial real increase in official development assistance flows had been achieved during the decade despite the pledges of donor countries in that regard. As a result, many developing countries were pursuing their development efforts through massive increases in their debt burdens, which contributed further to their international economic dependence. Failure to meet undertakings to increase official development assistance flows could result in a future loss of confidence in the broader international economic consensus towards which Governments were struggling during the current session of the General Assembly.

2. It was against that background of constraint and disappointment that operational activities for development were taking place. UNDP, like other development assistance organizations and virtually all nations, was struggling to cope with macro-economic circumstances beyond its control. The Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation had put the matter in sharp focus in the Second Committee, observing that the potential for progress inherent in a number of decisions taken at recent United Nations conferences must be realized (A/C.2/34/4).

3. The proposed launching within the United Nations framework of a round of global negotiations on major issues in the North-South dialogue permitted the hope that the spirit of co-operation and agreement could yet prevail. People had become aware of the influence that each country had over the economic well-being of other countries and of the fact that national interests were complemented by an overriding international interest in the welfare of all.

4. Other grounds for optimism were the developments relating to an integrated fund for commodities, to an increase in economic and technical co-operation among the

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developing countries themselves, and to the special consideration for the needs of the least developed countries. The recent United Nations Conference on Science and Technology for Development in Vienna had recognized the need to strengthen the self-reliant research and development capacities of developing countries by means of additional financial support.

5. Over the past two decades, technical co-operation activities had undergone an almost revolutionary change. In 1975, the Committee had endorsed a programme of new dimensions in technical co-operation for UNDP, recognizing, among other things, that the intended results of technical co-operation must guide the design of projects and that the strengthening of technical, administrative, institutional and logistical capacities could make a direct and significant contribution to the development process. Both the United Nations Conference on Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries and the Conference on Science and Technology for Development had recognized the importance of technical co-operation for building national and collective self-reliance. The technical co-operation component of World Bank expenditures was rising steadily and currently exceeded \$350 million per year.

6. Everything pointed to the importance of human resources and the contributions which technical change could make to national economic growth. Nevertheless, implementation problems demonstrated that a proper balance in the resources devoted to development had yet to be struck. Most developing countries could not maintain a pipeline of projects to speed the flow of resources into food production and improved nutrition because of institutional, managerial or organizational constraints. The lack of effective implementation had resulted in slow disbursement of loans and credits as well as delays in the delivery of required equipment. Given the limited volume of the resources made available for development, it was extremely difficult to set priorities, and, precisely for that reason, every effort must be made to make development co-operation flows of every kind as effective as possible.

7. With respect to the operational activities of UNDP in 1978, expenditure in the field had increased by 28 per cent over the preceding year, rising to more than \$434 million. Projections for 1979 indicated an increase of more than 20 per cent in expenditure and the provision of services. The growth was being carefully monitored both for quality and in order to ensure that UNDP remained within the financial boundaries established under the second programming cycle. At the first unified pledging conference for operational development activities, pledges to UNDP for 1979 had increased by almost 16 per cent over the funds pledged for the previous year, bringing the total contributions pledged for the first three years of the second programming cycle to \$1.8 billion. In order to meet the planned target, additional contributions totalling \$1.6 billion would be needed for the following two years, and it was to be hoped that the second unified pledging conference would guarantee the increase in resources required to meet that goal. He appealed to Governments to indicate their contributions on a multi-year basis in order to facilitate the planning of UNDP expenditure, which was planned forward over a five year period.

(Mr. Morse, UNDP)

8. The Governing Council had begun to deliberate on the over-all shape and size of the third programming cycle, which would extend from 1982 to 1987. The result of its deliberations would to a large extent determine the scope and impact of UNDP's technical co-operation efforts in the coming decade. It was hoped during the third cycle to devote more than one third of country programming resources to the particular needs of the least developed countries, with more than three quarters devoted to the needs of countries with a per capita income of less than \$500.

9. UNDP maintained a network of development assistance field offices which, with the three new offices in Bhutan, Djibouti and the People's Republic of China, numbered 110. With regard to the Palestinian people, UNDP had held consultations with the parties concerned and would submit a report on its activities to the Governing Council at its twenty-seventh session. In addition to supporting more than 4,500 operational projects in 152 developing countries and territories, UNDP had supervisory responsibilities for 12 United Nations trust funds, which would become 13 if the General Assembly approved the recommendation of the Vienna Conference concerning the Interim Fund for Science and Technology for Development. Those funds demonstrated the scope and flexibility of the administrative apparatus of UNDP, which lent support to a wide variety of special development activities and co-ordinated them within a common framework.

10. The United Nations Capital Development Fund was primarily concerned with providing capital grants to least developed countries for small-scale development projects yielding direct social and economic benefits to low-income groups. Assistance by the Fund currently totalled more than \$100 million. Since its inception, the Fund had followed a policy of full funding of its commitments, which, coupled with a rapid increase in contributions and the normal lag in disbursements, had resulted in an accumulation of cash balances. The Governing Council had decided that the Fund should be permitted to adopt a new policy of partial funding for an experimental period, keeping not less than 20 per cent of its project commitments as an operational reserve. The Council had also decided that, until the Fund could assume the financing of its own administrative costs, it should reimburse UNDP for its administrative expenses as far as possible from its interest earnings. He hoped that the General Assembly would endorse those decisions.

11. The United Nations Volunteers programme had exceeded the target set by the General Assembly for a field establishment of 500 volunteers. The Governing Council had recommended to the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly a new target of 1,000 field volunteers for 1983. He hoped that the Committee would endorse that course of action, which of course was subject to the availability of required resources and the programme's ability to maintain its high quality.

12. With regard to the United Nations Revolving Fund for Natural Resources Exploration, he said that the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Administrator, was to establish an intergovernmental group of experts to assist the Economic and Social Council in carrying out a comprehensive review of the Fund's functions, institutional arrangements and repayment system. The group's

(Mr. Morse, UNDP)

report and recommendations would be submitted to the Governing Council at its twenty-eighth session and would then be transmitted to the Economic and Social Council for the necessary recommendations to the General Assembly.

13. He wished to stress the importance of the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office and its collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme in implementing the United Nations Plan of Action to Combat Desertification in the Sudano-Sahelian region. The United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office had consolidated its assessment of the desertification problem and had developed a portfolio of priority desertification control projects which would be submitted for the consideration of the international community.

14. In accordance with the Plan of Action adopted at the United Nations Conference on Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries in Buenos Aires, UNDP had taken steps to strengthen its Special Unit for TCDC and to support it in preparing various initial studies on the subject, including studies on financial arrangements for technical co-operation among developing countries and the role of transport and communications in that field.

15. UNDP was a flexible, dynamic, wide-ranging and deeply committed programme. The restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system was therefore of critical importance to it, not only because it would assist it in bringing its efforts into line with the demands of the new international economic order but also because it stressed the need for greater coherence, consolidation and efficiency in UNDP's operational activities for the benefit of the developing countries. UNDP supported the restructuring process and believed that the appointment by the Secretary-General of resident co-ordinators at the country level would have a positive effect and would further the objective of integrated development.

16. From its vantage point as the central funding organization for technical co-operation within the United Nations system, UNDP recognized the value of a more integrated approach to development programming. Examples of the practical implementation of that approach were the work of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (sponsored jointly with the World Bank and the Food and Agriculture Organization), co-sponsorship with WHO of the international campaign to eradicate six major tropical diseases, chairmanship of the Steering Committee for International Co-operative Action for Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation, chairmanship of the Steering Committee on Technical Assistance for the Caribbean Group of Nations, collaboration with UNCTAD on a project to further economic and technical co-operation among developing countries, and co-operation with various United Nations bodies in a national household survey capability programme designed to improve the data base of developing countries' statistical services. On the strength of that experience, UNDP put great faith in the restructuring process, which was certain to result in the improved efficiency of operational activities for development.

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17. UNDP's goal remained the strengthening of self-reliance capabilities among the countries participating in the Programme, and he felt that the latter was making a genuine contribution in that respect.

18. There was no need to recite the appalling statistics of hunger, disease and illiteracy in the world or the reasons why so many countries suffered from those scourges. The world community already recognized that the international economic order was not sufficiently orderly, economic or international to lead humanity safely out of the confusion, inequity, imbalance and division afflicting international economic relations. He hoped that the Committee would chart a new course of action and direction for international economic life, that division and distrust would be overcome and that it would not be forgotten that all countries' futures were interdependent. As William Faulkner had stated, mankind would not just endure - it would prevail. He hoped that the Committee's debate would lead to a determination to overcome pain, suffering and the unconscionable deprivation which had afflicted too many human beings for too long.

AGENDA ITEM 65: HUMAN SETTLEMENTS (continued)

19. Mr. WARAYANAN (India) said that the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements was one of the Organization's most fruitful enterprises; its work concerned one of mankind's basic and elementary requirements and was the focal point of a whole range of interconnected activities affecting not only man's economic and social well-being but also his cultural and aesthetic needs and requirements. It was a field in which interdisciplinary interaction and international co-operation were natural and necessary, and the Centre was making systematic efforts to involve a large variety of specialists and governmental and non-governmental agencies and bodies, both national and international, in formulating and implementing a comprehensive work programme with clear-cut objectives and priorities and well-defined linkages.

20. India had been one of the original sponsors of the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation. With an enormous population to be provided with basic housing requirements, it was natural that India should be acutely conscious of the importance of housing and should give the matter its whole-hearted support. His delegation shared the view of the Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements that human settlement activities must form part of national development plans and that they had an important role to play in achieving the objectives of the new international economic order.

21. It was encouraging to note that in the work programme approved by the Commission on Human Settlements, emphasis had been placed on the urgent needs of the developing countries, particularly the least developed. Implementation of the crucial housing and human settlements programmes in those countries would help to conserve their resources and energy and would generate economic growth, while reducing social and economic inequalities. That was an ideal field for the constructive use of indigenous materials, labour-intensive methods and local

(Mr. Narayanan, India)

technology to meet the immediate needs of the people and the long-term strategy of development. Local and traditional technology could be adopted and upgraded and new technologies introduced in so far as they were suitable in particular cases. In the expert opinion of one town-planner, the poor and uneducated sectors of the population nevertheless had the right approach to housing, while that of the educated sectors of the population was often misguided, over-refined and divorced from reality. If lessons were learned from the ordinary man's experience, human settlements could be kept in touch with reality and full use could be made of resources and techniques available locally, thus promoting self-reliance in the solution of local problems.

22. In that connexion, the ideas of Mahatma Gandhi on the ideal village should be borne in mind. That village would have perfect sanitation; it would have houses built of materials available within a radius of five miles, with courtyards, gardens and accommodation for animals; it would have streets free of dust, wells which were sufficient for requirements and accessible to all, houses for worship, a central meeting place, a common for grazing cattle, a co-operative dairy, primary and secondary schools which would stress industrial education and a panchayat (village council) to settle disputes. If to that simple but comprehensive concept of a rural community were added the advantages of suitable small or intermediate technology, it would be possible to tackle successfully, with available resources, the colossal problems of human settlements in the developing countries with their teeming populations.

23. India had completed various programmes along those lines, had evolved conceptions and patterns suitable for developing countries whose conditions were similar, and was prepared to put its experience at the disposal of other countries and learn from them. Consequently, his delegation supported the idea that the regional commissions should collaborate with each other and with the Habitat Centre in the matter and that appropriate institutional links should be forged between all those bodies.

24. Although the delegation of India supported the decisions of the second session of the Commission on Human Settlements, he pointed out that adopting resolutions was not enough: adequate funds must be made available to implement the comprehensive work programme outlined by the Executive Director. His delegation joined in the appeal directed particularly to the developed countries to contribute voluntarily and generously to the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation at the forthcoming pledging conference. It was disappointing that the contributions of Member States did not yet amount to \$1 million, especially when the sum of \$13 million was needed for the work programme. The Indian Government, as in previous years, would contribute an annual amount of \$100,000 towards the work of the Centre.

25. With regard to the report on living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Arab territories (A/34/536), he expressed considerable concern at the rapid deterioration of the living and environmental conditions in the occupied territories. It was regrettable that the occupying authorities had denied access to those territories to a United Nations expert mission, thereby preventing compliance with resolution 33/110. His delegation urged the Israeli Government to accept a visiting mission.

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26. Mrs. TYERMAN (Canada) said that the report of the Commission on Human Settlements on the work of its second session (A/34/8) demonstrated that discussions on human settlements issues had been regularized within the United Nations system. Canada particularly welcomed the exchange of information about national experiences in human settlements in the Commission and the analysis of the relationship of physical planning to over-all development plans and, consequently, to the goals of the new international economic order. Issues had also been raised about how to utilize human settlements policies to accelerate national economic growth, to alleviate the poverty of disadvantaged groups of society and to establish patterns of migration, land use, transport and energy consumption. In her delegation's view that type of discussion, coupled with the research and technical assistance activities of the Centre, would contribute to the development of more effective solutions. The ability of human settlements policies to be both an effective agent for improvement in the lives of the people and a stimulant of economic growth based on local materials and technologies made those policies a basic ingredient for the new International Development Strategy.

27. Her delegation also welcomed the proposed work programme for the 1980-1981 biennium, as it covered the six areas of national action adopted at the Habitat Conference and represented a substantial achievement in implementing the resolutions of that Conference. It was a comprehensive, integrated and action-oriented programme which reflected the urgent needs of developing countries in particular.

28. Although her Government supported the work of the Centre, it was concerned that the work programme, while modest in relation to needs, was ambitious in relation to the resources available to the Centre. It was important for priorities to be set so that the most urgent tasks could be accomplished immediately and further work undertaken as resources became available. She recalled that the Commission had identified 10 criteria for the selection and scheduling of projects during the 1980-1981 biennium, and trusted that those criteria would help in the rationalization of the programme.

29. Her delegation supported the rationalization of the various components of the United Nations system concerned with human settlements into one integrated and effective unit, and it therefore also supported the functional integration of the Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation into the Centre so as to make full use of scarce available resources. Similarly, her delegation believed that the United Nations Audio-Visual Information Centre on Human Settlements (Vision Habitat) should be integrated into the Centre for Human Settlements. The excellence of the collection of audio-visual materials prepared for the Habitat Conference had been such that the General Assembly in resolution 31/115 had established an Audio-Visual Centre to ensure that those materials would not only be maintained and safeguarded but also used after the Conference in public information and training programmes. In March 1980 the agreement whereby the Canadian Government had financed the Audio-Visual Centre since its establishment would expire, and the logical next step would be for Vision Habitat to be incorporated fully into the Centre for Human Settlements so that such an exceptional effort and its regional extensions did not go to waste.

30. Mr. MUELLER (German Democratic Republic) said that his delegation approved the report of the Commission on Human Settlements on the work of its second session (A/34/8) and welcomed the start made on substantive activities. The second session of the Commission had revealed the great significance of habitat and the planning of human settlements in the implementation of the over-all socio-economic development strategies of States; the efforts of many countries to improve their human settlements situations had been highlighted.
31. Ever since it was founded, the German Democratic Republic had regarded the solution of human settlements problems as one of its principal tasks, and it considered that human settlements policies should aim at improving the quality of life. That presupposed certain prerequisites, such as the use of land in keeping with the national interests to the exclusion of any form of speculation, State management and planning of the development of settlements, and the allocation of a steadily increasing share of the total national income to the financing of social welfare.
32. The Commission on Human Settlements had affirmed once again that the ultimate prerequisite for the existence and preservation of human settlements was the consolidation of peace and the strengthening of international security. That meant greater efforts, than ever must be made to end the arms race and to achieve effective measures of disarmament.
33. The adoption by the Commission of a work programme for the biennium 1980-1981 and the fact that it was based on the areas identified for action by the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements was a measure of the success of the second session. However, it would be necessary for the work of the Commission and of the Centre to be concentrated on priority matters and, in order to do so, for use to be made of the criteria proposed by the Commission itself for the selection of projects.
34. As far as the Commission's future activities were concerned, the delegation of the German Democratic Republic felt that particular importance ought to be attached to developing international exchanges of experience in solving human settlements problems. In that connexion, it welcomed the Commission's recommendation that a global report on human settlements should be issued every five years. Such reports, aimed at promoting information, exchanges of experience and analytical work should duly reflect the experiences of the socialist States.
35. The discussions at the second session had indicated anew that building in rural areas and relationships between urban and rural areas were becoming increasingly significant. He therefore attached great importance to the inclusion of those topics in the agenda of the Commission's third session.
36. Mr. NELLI (Italy) said that his country attached great importance to United Nations activities in the field of human settlements, and had taken several steps which had already been reported in the debate at the second session of the Commission on Human Settlements. After carefully studying the Habitat Centre's

(Mr. Nelli, Italy)

programme of work and making a comparative analysis of the resources allocated to various programmes, the Italian delegation felt that the Centre's resources from the United Nations regular budget should be increased, and hoped that such a view would be reflected in the agreed conclusions emerging from the current debate.

37. Italy took a very positive view of the programme of work submitted to the Commission in Nairobi, which it found to be comprehensive, detailed and internally coherent. Although it had been agreed to give highest priority to subprogramme 3, on shelter, infrastructure and services, it should not be forgotten that all six subprogrammes were closely linked. The Italian delegation also considered that special emphasis should be given to technical co-operation activities concerned with human settlements - in particular, research activities, training of personnel at the national and regional levels, and dissemination of information - with a view to promoting national capabilities in that field. In technical co-operation activities, there should be no automatic transfer of solutions, experiences and methods from one country to another, but a search for local and national solutions utilizing local technologies and indigenous materials. In addition, the Centre should in general promote a deeper and wider involvement of citizens, political groups and local authorities in the planning and management of their homes and living environment, in recognition of people's mounting awareness of their right to a better quality of life and their consequent need to participate actively in decisions that affected their own daily lives. The Italian Government was contemplating the possibility of making a contribution to the Habitat Foundation so as to enhance its capacity to carry out its programme of work and provide increased technical assistance.

38. The Centre should act as the focal point for action in the field of human settlements and should co-operate closely not only with UNEP but also with UNDP, the regional commissions and the relevant specialized agencies, so as to avoid duplication of work and improve the effectiveness of the system as a whole. The regional commissions should establish the intergovernmental committees on human settlements envisaged in resolution 32/162, as a first step towards the necessary decentralization of human settlements activities.

39. Mr. GREET (Australia) expressed his appreciation of the satisfactory results of the second session of the Commission on Human Settlements, which had adopted a comprehensive programme of work, and of the operation of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements in Nairobi, as well as the preparations for the Commission's third session, to be held in Mexico. Australia would take an active part in that session and would be willing to serve on the Bureau if called upon.

40. As the Executive Director had said, the work programme of the Centre reflected the urgent needs of the developing countries, especially the least developed, and emphasized action at the national, regional and subregional levels, and also collaboration with the regional commissions. The regionalization of human settlements activities was of the utmost importance, given the very different situations prevailing within and between regions. The consultations that had been

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(Mr. Greet, Australia)

undertaken with the regional commissions in preparing the Centre's work programme should be encouraged to continue. Australia had always felt that the regions should have a larger role in the development and management of programmes, so that the Centre could concentrate on its co-ordinating and policy functions. In that connexion, the Secretary-General's intention to include a request for additional posts in the regional units in the programme budget proposals for 1980-1981 was to be welcomed.

41. Australia supported the human settlements activities of its own regional commission, ESCAP. In 1977-1978, it had provided \$7,500 towards strengthening the regional housing centres, and in 1978-1979, a further \$30,000 towards holding an expert meeting on human settlements. It regarded the early preparation of a regional programme on human settlements as a matter of importance.

42. It also welcomed the fact that a relatively satisfactory solution had been reached on the integration of the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation with the Centre. To make such an integration complete, the voluntary contributions raised by the Foundation should be made available to the Centre as a whole. Regarding the integration of the United Nations Audio-Visual Information Centre on Human Settlements into the Centre for Human Settlements, Australia, while appreciating the importance of the information programme, felt that it should not absorb too much of the Centre's limited resources.

43. The Australian delegation supported the three resolutions adopted at the Commission's second session for transmission to the General Assembly, on the process of global reporting, with the collaboration of non-governmental organizations, for a continuous assessment of achievements and needs, on the Audio-Visual Information Centre, and on the strengthening of human settlements activities.

44. Mr. STRAUS (Czechoslovakia) said that sufficient time had elapsed since the Vancouver Conference in 1976 for arrangements to have been made for important international co-operation in the field of human settlements. The developing countries hoped to be able to share the experience acquired by the developed countries in the building of settlements and infrastructure and, accordingly, were awaiting an analysis of the main problems in respect of settlements construction in developing countries and the formulation, on the basis of that analysis, of a programme that would be reflected in individual projects. Czechoslovakia considered that such a programme should include: co-ordination of international research with a view to training in the practical application of research results; projects to build up the material and technological production base and utilize domestic building materials; the training of specialists from developing countries to make use of the experience of the advanced countries in the field of investment planning and settlements construction; projects for organizing training programmes in building and town planning in teaching institutions; exhibitions of settlements building technologies and materials; projects for introducing an integrated information system for selecting the most

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(Mr. Strauss, Czechoslovakia)

suitable sites for the construction of settlements and manufacturing plants; and studies of the integrated development of population and its social and property structure in relation to housing and settlements needs and industrial investment projects.

45. His country, a member of the Commission on Human Settlements, was positive in its assessment of the second session of the Commission and the report contained in document A/34/8, as well as of the approach in preparing the work programme. As had been stated at Vancouver, the experience of all bodies and agencies in the United Nations system had to be utilized to the full in human settlements policies and in regional physical planning. The Centre for Human Settlements could make an effective contribution to that end.

46. In General Assembly resolution 33/110 the Secretary-General had been requested to prepare a report on the social and economic impact of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories. As stated in paragraphs 4 and 5 of the Secretary-General's report (A/34/536), it had not proved possible to send an expert mission because of the refusal of Israel to grant access to the occupied territories. Accordingly, his delegation wanted to reaffirm its support for the struggle of the Palestinian people and for negotiated settlement to the Middle East problem with the participation of all interested parties.

47. In conclusion, he made clear his delegation's readiness to participate actively in meetings and activities conducted by the Centre for Human Settlements, which could only be carried out successfully in an atmosphere of peace and international détente.

48. Mr. LIONTIAS (Greece) said that the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements had made important progress and that the report of the Commission on Human Settlements on the work of its second session (A/34/8) described a common approach, established priorities for the different subprogrammes and dealt with basic problems, such as the part to be played by activities in the human settlements sector in the new international development strategy. Industrialization efforts and infrastructural improvements in developing countries necessitated an adaptation of human settlements policies to match diversification in the production of infrastructure and an increase in employment prospects. Since they could provide a strong spur to economic development, activities in the sphere of human settlements had to be incorporated in the international development strategy. Special consideration should be given to the needs of less favoured groups who were in less of a position to benefit from market forces.

49. His country had already made a voluntary contribution to the Centre and hoped that it would soon have the necessary resources to carry out its mission without problems.

50. In human settlements activities, it was important to take advantage of the experience acquired by different countries and to promote co-operation between the

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(Mr. Liontas, Greece)

Centre and national and regional institutions and national and regional research centres. The competent bodies in Greece were ready to share their experience in construction and physical planning and to assist in achieving the Centre's programme objectives.

51. Finally, he said that the terms of reference of the Audio-Visual Information Centre should be defined and a degree of co-ordination should be established with the information services of other organizations with a view to the effective dissemination of information and the rational use of audio-visual techniques.

52. Mr. VAN GORKOM (Netherlands) said that his delegation noted with appreciation the agreement on a coherent and comprehensive programme that had been reached during the second session of the Commission on Human Settlements and felt that Habitat should be concerned primarily with the initiation, co-ordination and integration of activities related to human settlements in the broader context of the development process. Special priority should be given to projects that might open up new approaches, in energy conservation, for example.

53. Problems related to human settlements had largely to be solved through national or regional action. For that reason, his delegation supported the Commission on Human Settlements in establishing or reinforcing regional co-operation structures, but considered that it would not be possible at the present stage to divert staff resources for the purpose.

54. The Netherlands welcomed the integration of the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation with the Centre and recalled that the Foundation's resources had been designed for the introduction and reinforcement of human settlements programmes in developing countries. His delegation likewise supported the resolution on the establishment of a unified information service to take over the functions and assets of the Audio-Visual Information Centre.

55. His delegation also sought to encourage co-operation between the Centre and non-governmental organizations whose Committee for Human Settlements could play an important part in implementing the Centre's programme of work.

56. Mr. HAMID (Observer, Palestine Liberation Organization) said that the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories" (A/34/536) was comprehensive in scope but could have been more detailed. Paragraph 21 of annex I contained certain errors: the first Palestinian war had taken place in 1948-1949, not in 1947-1948; the phrase "original homes" was incorrect because not all the Arabs who continued to live in Israel remained in their original homes since the Israeli authorities transferred some from one area to another; the population of the West Bank was more than 700,000 and not 350,000; finally, the population of the Gaza Strip was not "70,000-100,000" but more than 350,000. With regard to paragraph 23, the PLO believed that housing problems in refugee camps administered by UNRWA should be given serious attention and examined in greater detail.

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(Mr. Hamid Observer, PLO)

57. The creation and continuation of the conditions mentioned in the report, which constituted the habitat imposed on the occupied Territories, had come about through military rule, under which a set of laws termed the Defence Regulations were applied. Those laws had been enacted by the British Government in the Palestine of 1945 and earned the condemnation of Jewish leaders at the time. At a 1946 conference of the Jewish Lawyers' Association in Tel-Aviv, Ya'akou Shapira, subsequently an Israeli Minister of Justice, stated that the régime established in Palestine on the basis of the Defence Regulations had no parallel in any civilized nation and that even in Nazi Germany no such laws had existed. Yet Israel had applied the Defence Regulations against the Palestinian population inside Israel until 1966, and soon after the June 1967 war, put them into effect on the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip. The Regulations sanctioned many of the occupation authorities' repressive practices. Israel imposed punishments on individuals or groups for the acts of other individuals or groups, although such collective punishments or reprisals violated Article 33 of the Geneva Convention on the Protection of Civilians in Time of War. Regulation 119 of the Defence Regulations permitted the destruction not only of buildings where acts prohibited under the regulations had been committed but also of buildings in the same area. Demolitions were usually carried out at short notice and long before any judicial decision on the case. Such policies were not conducive to peace.

58. Mr. POGREBENKO (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the USSR had always paid particular attention to problems of town planning and housing. Recently, the second anniversary of the new Soviet Constitution had taken place. In it the right to housing was recognized as a fundamental human right for the first time in the world. In accordance with decisions taken at the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth Congresses of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, plans were introduced for the construction of housing with the aim of providing decent accommodation for the entire Soviet people. Under the present five-year plan (1976-1980), provision had been made for the allocation of 550 million square metres to the building of housing and the investment of 100,000 million rubles for that purpose. The rental control system established in 1928 had not been altered since, and rents did not normally exceed 3 per cent of family income.

59. The Soviet Union was engaged in bilateral and multilateral co-operation with other countries on programmes of town planning and housing within the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, which was a unique example of international co-operation for mutual advantage. The USSR was always ready to make its experience available to countries interested in such collaboration.

60. At the world level, the increase in population and its concentration in urban areas and the rising prices of land, construction materials and rents had created very serious conditions, particularly in the developing countries. The USSR attached great importance to the work of the Commission on Human Settlements in planning and co-ordinating international activities in that area. The documentation prepared by the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements for the second session of the Commission, despite some shortcomings, had aided the discussions during which delegations had made useful criticisms and proposals. Thus it had been stressed, as was noted in paragraph 33 of the report of the Commission (A/34/8), that the co-operation among member States in the field of

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(Mr. Pogrebenko, USSR)

human settlements was only possible under conditions of peace, and that reductions in military budgets would make it possible to redistribute resources to meet the needs of human settlements.

61. The USSR had drawn attention to the need for close co-operation between the Centre for Human Settlements and UNEP and for establishing a clear distinction between their activities in order to avoid the overlapping which still persisted. Similar considerations applied to co-operation between the Centre and the regional commissions, which must be developed on a clear basis. The Centre, for its part, should be provided as soon as possible with a clearly defined and permanent structure so that it would be able to devote itself to its specific task. It was to be hoped that the secretariat of the Centre would prepare the necessary documentation on that question so that delegations would be able to make observations at the next session of the Commission. In planning the structure of the Centre, it was essential to remain within the limits of existing resources and to make use of the voluntary contributions to UNDP and UNEP; with regard to personnel, the principle of equitable geographical distribution must be observed, particularly at the higher levels.

62. His delegation had no objection to the report of the Commission on Human Settlements (A/34/8), and took note of it.

63. The report on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories (A/34/536), whose preparation the Government of Israel had tried to impede by prohibiting entry to the representatives of the United Nations Secretariat, revealed the privations and suffering imposed on the Palestinian people by the occupying authorities. The USSR called for a just and comprehensive solution to the problem of the Middle East which recognized the rights of the Palestinian people, whose sole legitimate representative was the Palestine Liberation Organization. If peace was to prevail in the region, the indispensable conditions were the withdrawal of the Israeli forces from all the territories occupied in 1967 and the guarantee of the rights of Palestinians, including the right to return to their territories and the right to self-determination and the formation of their own national State.

64. Mr. OKWARO (Kenya) said that it was a matter of great satisfaction to his Government that, after the short period of one year, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements had been established and was operational at its headquarters in Nairobi. It was to be hoped that the process of recruiting the required staff for the research branch of the Centre would soon be completed.

65. Problems in the sphere of human settlements were very acute in the developing countries and were especially pronounced in the African region. In general, those problems were a reflection of the level of economic development of those countries. Issues such as infrastructure, education, health facilities, water supply and employment opportunities were all relevant to the problems of human settlements; consequently, those problems could not be solved in isolation from other developmental issues. In that regard, his delegation supported the inclusion of

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(Mr. Okwaro, Kenya)

human settlements questions in the formulation of the new international development strategy as well as within the process of establishing the new international economic order.

66. His delegation agreed with the special emphasis placed in the programme on questions relating to building materials and construction technologies, infrastructure and services, rural settlements and energy and human settlements. With regard to building materials and construction technologies, the Centre should support the use of local building materials and technologies and contribute to solving the practical problems of their use. His delegation also welcomed the role assigned to training in the efforts to achieve self-reliance in the technical aspects of human settlements in developing countries. The Government of Belgium was to be commended for having sponsored the first training programme for housing officials. It was to be hoped that other countries would follow its example and that consideration would also be given to the establishment or strengthening of national or regional training institutions in the developing countries. In that respect, a very important role could be played by technical co-operation among developing countries.

67. The co-operation between the Centre for Human Settlements and other bodies of the United Nations system, and in particular with UNEP, was considerably facilitated in the latter case by the fact that both bodies had their headquarters at Nairobi. The efforts of the Executive Director in establishing full co-operation with regional commissions were important steps in implementing General Assembly resolution 32/162.

68. At the opening meeting of the second session of the Commission on Human Settlements at Nairobi, the President of Kenya, Mr. Daniel T. Arap Moi, had said that in the past the human settlements sector, especially housing, had been neglected both in international programmes and in the national budgets of developing countries. Human settlements programmes deserved and required urgent investment which could not be derived solely from existing resources in the developing countries; bilateral and multilateral assistance were vital for the success of those programmes. Thus his delegation urged the Governments with the necessary financial capacity, and especially those of the developed countries, to contribute generously during the Pledging Conference to be held in the following week.

69. His delegation fully endorsed the three resolutions which the Commission had recommended for adoption by the General Assembly. With regard to the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories, his delegation expressed the hope that the Government concerned would allow the United Nations mission to carry out its mandate as set up by the General Assembly.

70. Mr. SVENSON (Sweden), speaking on behalf of the delegations of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, expressed satisfaction at the results of the second session of the Commission on Human Settlements which had produced a consolidated and comprehensive programme for United Nations activities in the sphere of human settlements. The Nordic delegations fully approved the report of the Commission (A/34/8).

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(Mr. Svenson, Sweden)

71. The work programme of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements was based on the recognition that human settlements problems must be tackled at the national level. The work programme had therefore been designed to support, assist and stimulate countries in their national endeavours, although the importance of international co-operation, which should evolve as much as possible at the regional level, was also recognized. The Centre should redeploy resources to the regions to supplement their existing resources.

72. The work programme of the Centre laid particular stress upon the problems of human settlements in developing countries and focused attention on the most disadvantaged groups of the population. In order to carry out that work, nationally as well as internationally, additional financial resources would be required.

73. Integrated training activities, which constituted a major aspect of the work of the Centre, were basic to the achievement of self-reliance in the technical aspects of human settlements programming and implementation. Another important aspect of the work programme was the role which could be played by investment in the human settlements field in order to stimulate economic development. That investment should to a great extent be based on indigenous resources if the proper technologies were to be developed. Therefore, its impact on the balance of payments in the long run was normally limited. It was to be hoped that knowledge of those factors would increase the understanding of the importance of human settlements strategies and policies in the formulation of programmes for economic development. In that context, the work programme of the Centre could provide a major input for the new international development strategy.

74. The Nordic delegations supported the adoption of the resolutions submitted by the Commission on Human Settlements through the Economic and Social Council, especially those concerning the work programme for the period 1980-1981 and the resolution entitled "Strengthening of human settlements activities". In the operative paragraphs of that resolution, Member States were urged to devote a larger share of national resources to the strengthening of human settlements activities as vehicles of economic and social change. It was further suggested that Member States should examine multilateral and bilateral co-operation programmes, particularly those financed by UNDP, to determine whether an increased allocation could be made to the human settlements sector.

75. Miss LOECKX (Belgium) said that her delegation had noted with satisfaction that, when the Commission on Human Settlements had adopted its work programme for the biennium 1980-1981, it had given the highest priority to building, infrastructure, equipment and services, in other words, to action-oriented activities; it was to be hoped that the poorest population groups in the developing countries would thus benefit more directly, especially in view of the importance attached to the use of indigenous materials, simple techniques and labour-intensive systems.

76. Her delegation attached great importance to the question of training. As the Executive Director of the Centre had already reported, the Catholic University of Louvain had organized a series of seminars for officials and housing experts from approximately 15 developing countries.

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(Miss Loeckx, Belgium)

77. It was worthy of note that the transfer of the headquarters of the Centre to Nairobi had been completed successfully. It was desirable that the secretariat in Nairobi should not be expanded unnecessarily and that its efficiency should be increased. In that connexion she considered that it would not be desirable that links with the regional commissions should become too heavy a burden on the Centre. She reminded the Committee that the Secretary-General, in document A/34/6, had stated that it would not be appropriate at the present time to propose the establishment of new posts for human settlements activities in the regional commissions. Furthermore, the approach of the regional commissions was fundamentally different from that of the Centre: the former was regional, whereas the Centre was primarily concerned with national plans.

78. In the same spirit, the delegation of Belgium hoped that the transfer of the functions and assets of the United Nations Audio-Visual Information Centre on Human Settlements did not imply a substantial increase in the secretariat in Nairobi. The Audio-Visual Information Centre already had six subcentres; those should not be converted into small-scale replicas of the Commission on Human Settlements. It would perhaps be more efficient for the Centre to arrange for mobile exhibits of its audio-visual programmes so as to give the best possible service at the local level.

79. Her delegation hoped that its comments would be borne in mind when the question of the restructuring of the Centre arose; it fully supported the current Executive Director of the Centre and his management.

80. Miss CHICOYE (France) said that on the whole her delegation shared the views expressed by the Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements in regard to the importance of the item and the role which the Centre could play in that connexion. The work of the Commission on Human Settlements during its second session had been constructive and had been accomplished in a spirit of complete co-operation; the Commission had dealt with the problem of defining precisely what the functions of the Centre should be, so that it could furnish useful advice, efficient technical assistance, especially to developing countries, and staff training. It would nevertheless be necessary to make further efforts to identify even more clearly the priorities of the Centre's programmes and subprogrammes. It was equally important to delineate clearly the functions of the United Nations Environment Programme in relation to the Centre. The subject of the environment covered a very wide field and certainly had an impact on human settlements. It was therefore essential that the two organs should co-operate closely with one another and co-ordinate their programmes with a view to avoiding overlapping.

81. There were a number of inaccuracies in the report of the Commission on Human Settlements on the work of its second session (A/34/8), which should be corrected. The statement in paragraph 130 to the effect that the order of priority of the Centre's collaboration with other organizations should be, first, with United Nations agencies, second, with the intergovernmental organizations outside the United Nations system, and third, with non-governmental organizations, should

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(Miss Chicoye, France)

indicate that non-governmental organizations were those having consultative status, as had been agreed during the meetings held in Nairobi. Paragraph 3 of the French text of resolution 2/6 should, as agreed in Nairobi, read "prie les Etats membres d'informer chaque année" instead of "prie les Etats membres de faire rapport chaque année".

82. On the question of the Audio-Visual Information Centre, her delegation hoped that additional information would be provided regarding the needs of countries for audio-visual material. There was a danger that the magnitude of the expenditure required for the operation of the Centre would not be proportionate to its usefulness.

83. In regard to the implementation of General Assembly resolution 33/110, she reminded the Committee that her delegation had abstained during the vote; it was a matter for regret that elements of a political nature had been introduced into an area which was essentially technical and should remain so.

84. She reminded the Committee that it was the responsibility of the Fifth Committee to deal with the establishment of new posts in the Centre and expressed doubts as to whether the effectiveness of an organization could be measured by the number of its staff; she considered that it was not advisable at that time to increase the Centre's staff and would inform the Fifth Committee of that view. In conclusion she said that her delegation fully supported the work of the Executive Director of the Centre.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

85. The CHAIRMAN said that, in view of the large number of speakers on each agenda item and of the fact that the Committee was behind in its work, he would appeal to speakers to limit the length of their statements so that it would not be necessary to apply rule 106 of the rules of procedure.

86. Mr. RAMONDT (Netherlands) requested that the time-limit for the submission of draft resolutions on agenda item 55 (g) should be postponed until 6 p.m. on Wednesday, 7 November, so that unofficial consultations could be concluded.

87. It was so decided.

88. The CHAIRMAN announced that the list of speakers on agenda item 64, Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator, would be closed on Friday, 29 November, at 6 p.m.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.