

United Nations
**GENERAL
ASSEMBLY**

FORTIETH SESSION

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SECOND COMMITTEE
18th meeting
held on
Monday, 28 October 1985
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 18th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. BIRIDO (Sudan)

later: Mr. BRODODININGRAT (Indonesia)

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AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

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Distr. GENERAL
A/C.2/40/SR.18
30 October 1985

85-57006 8444S (E)

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

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

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (A/40/3, 19, 108, 109, 173, 190, 276, 303, 321, 329, 340, 342, 347, 363 and Corr.1 and Add.1 and Corr.1, 363, 366, 367, 374, 381, 384, 392, 407, 409, 420 and Corr.1, 458, 476, 477, 489, 525, 534, 633 and Add.1, 735; A/C.2/40/L.2-L.6)

1. Mr. KOBAYASHI (Japan), speaking as President of the Economic and Social Council, said that in the Council's general debate on international economic and social policy, emphasis had been placed on international co-operation in the interdependent areas of money, finance, debt and trade and on the critical economic situation in Africa, which was regarded as a priority matter.

2. The discussions on Africa's critical economic situation had highlighted the efforts made by the African Governments to cope with the immediate effects of the crisis prior to drawing up medium- and long-term plans for rehabilitation and growth. The members of the Council had also recognized the essential role played by the international community, donor Governments and non-governmental organizations in assisting the African countries. The Council had welcomed United Nations initiatives to co-ordinate efficiently relief to Africa. The experience gained in that exercise should be extended to the system's efforts in the economic and social sectors.

3. In a statement to the Council in July, he had listed some of the main concerns of Governments, together with areas of agreement and disagreement with respect to money, finance, debt and trade. The issues discussed had included protectionism, a new round of trade negotiations, the debt problem with its political and social implications and the stability of the international monetary system. Developments since the second regular session of the Council had been encouraging. Pragmatic measures had been taken in preparing for a new round of multilateral trade negotiations. Additional means of financing had been proposed to alleviate the debt burden of the developing countries, and efforts had been made to stabilize international money markets.

4. In the general debate held in the Second Committee, many delegations had referred to the constructive discussions that had taken place in the Council and the positive measures which had been adopted at the meetings of the Committee on the Review and Appraisal of the Implementation of the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade, in UNCTAD in the framework of its mid-term review of the implementation of the Substantial New Programme of Action for the 1980s for the Least Developed Countries, in GATT and at the Seoul meetings of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. While the new climate of optimism was to be welcomed, the complex problems of the world economy, and of developing countries in particular, should not be minimized.

5. The Council would bear in mind the different views expressed on the specific roles to be assigned to the General Assembly and to the Council and how those roles should complement one another. With the new biennial work programmes, he was

(Mr. Kobayashi, Japan)

confident that the Council could more effectively assist the General Assembly by formulating suggestions on documentation and organization of work and making recommendations on measures to be taken with respect to substantive issues.

6. Mr. SAOUMA (Director-General, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) said that, although the recent crisis had struck the conscience of the international community, hunger in Africa was not a recent phenomenon and would not disappear merely because the rains had come again. Until such external constraints as an intolerable debt burden, protectionism, depressed raw materials prices and high interest rates were removed, any attempts at recovery by the African countries themselves would be to little or no avail.

7. An appreciable increase in food aid had made it possible to avert disaster and get through the most critical phase of the emergency. Fortunately, the rains had returned and prospects for the harvest were considerably improved. However, the situation continued to deteriorate in some countries, particularly in those where logistic difficulties delayed transport and distribution of food aid to remote areas. While it was important to speed up the dispatch of food aid and facilitate its distribution, the arrival of food consignments must not coincide with harvesting, which would cause additional storage problems and depress local producer prices. Consideration should also be given to using part of the marketable surpluses in some African countries to meet the cereal deficits in neighbouring countries.

8. In no circumstances, however, should the emergency be allowed to eclipse Africa's long-term development needs. Without food production, the continent would fall deeper and deeper into irreversible dependence on food aid. The solution lay in the intensification of agriculture and the use of such modern inputs as fertilizers, improved seeds and pesticides. In countries where agriculture was the major source of income, there could be no real economic or social development without a far-reaching modernization of the rural sector.

9. FAO had recently proposed to donors a programme of agriculture and livestock rehabilitation for African countries affected by the crisis. Intended to serve as a catalyst for efforts on a larger scale, it was based on the provision of a package of agricultural inputs large enough to have an appreciable short-term impact on production. Donor response had been very encouraging, and FAO, for its part, had been able, exceptionally, to mobilize \$20 million from its own funds for the programme. FAO also intended to propose an agricultural inputs programme to ensure a continued flow of production inputs over a period of time and promote the establishment of local and regional production capacity.

10. Africa must also attack the underlying structural causes of the crisis. It was the only region in the world where population growth had outstripped food production: in 1984, per capita food and agricultural production had fallen in more than 30 countries. The crisis, although influenced by such factors as drought and lack of natural resources, was rather the result of a general sluggishness in development caused in part by a lack of infrastructure and trained staff.

(Mr. Saouma)

Governments must revise their policies so as to favour the small farmer, reconsider their priorities and avoid grandiose projects of dubious utility, and assign a higher priority to agriculture in their national budgets. It was not unusual for countries to allocate less than 10 per cent of their resources to agriculture, whereas the Economic Commission for Africa recommended a figure of 20 to 25 per cent. Investment must be redirected towards rural development and peasants must be enabled to produce, primarily by means of higher prices, easier access to inputs and the establishment of such institutions as agriculture co-operatives.

11. The recent meetings of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund at Seoul had made it obvious that structural adjustment policies were untenable in the absence of steady growth. Regardless of any internal reforms undertaken to rehabilitate national economies, long-term development in Africa was largely obstructed by external circumstances. African countries needed to trade in order to pay for their imports and pay off their debts. Unfortunately, the mechanisms of international trade were working against them: export prices for most agricultural commodities had begun to drop alarmingly in the past year, and in 1985 a further decline was expected in the African countries' terms of trade. Meanwhile, the prices of imported manufactured goods continued to rise, protectionist measures in the developed countries also chipped away at the markets of the developed countries and undermined their efforts to establish processing industries. It was not clear how the African countries would cope with their debt which represented over 40 per cent of their gross domestic product. So far, there had been a certain amount of rescheduling and even some cancellations, but more might be necessary. He welcomed what appeared to be a certain softening of positions regarding the debt during the Seoul meeting, as well as a greater understanding of the dangers inherent in a rigid stance.

12. FAO was attempting to give every possible support to help African countries lay the foundations for lasting and balanced rural and agricultural development. However, to solve problems of hunger and malnutrition, countries must redefine their priorities not only in agriculture, but in all other sectors of the economy as well. Africa required massive injections of aid to finance its development and, above all, fairer trading conditions and an easing of its debt burden. In that context, it was to be hoped that the General Assembly would endorse the proposal adopted by the OAU summit meeting in July 1985 to convene a special session of the General Assembly to discuss conditions for the long-term development of Africa.

13. Mr. LAZAREVIC (Yugoslavia), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77, said that the Group had been unanimous in its decision to consider the critical economic situation in Africa as a matter of priority during the second regular session of the Economic and Social Council in 1985. Specific measures were needed to meet both the immediate and the medium- and long-term needs for the rehabilitation and sustained development of the African economies. The international community must also take measures to address the structural causes of the critical economic situation in Africa and to prevent its recurrence by helping to implement the OAU priority programme for the economic recovery of Africa, and the Declaration on the Critical Economic Situation in Africa adopted by the General Assembly. The Group

(Mr. Lazarevic, Yugoslavia)

of 77 was confident that the General Assembly would respond positively to the appeal made by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of OAU for the convening of a special session of the General Assembly to consider the critical economic situation in Africa and the urgent convening of an international conference on Africa's external debt.

14. The debate in the Economic and Social Council on the interrelationship of money, finance, debt and trade had confirmed the crucial importance of those issues for both developing and developed countries. It was to be hoped that the numerous statements made concerning the devastating effects of the debt burden on developing countries would lead to the adoption of specific measures to solve those problems.

15. The developing countries had, individually and through the Group of 77, expressed their deep concern over the continuing decline of multilateralism and the ensuing weakening of the role of the United Nations. The importance of multilateral co-operation could not be ignored. The Group of 77 would pursue its efforts aimed at enhancing the central role of the United Nations as the only universal forum in which international economic and social problems could be negotiated and solved. One of the primary causes of the Organization's ineffectiveness was the unwillingness of some Member States to implement resolutions and deal with major issues confronting the world. The best way to improve the work of the Economic and Social Council and other organs of the United Nations was to adopt specific measures to solve the problems faced by all countries.

16. The General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council were essentially political forums, entrusted with certain duties by the Charter and various resolutions. However, the relevant provisions of the Charter and those resolutions often remained unimplemented. In that connection, the suggestions made by the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation on ways to improve the work of the Economic and Social Council should be considered very closely.

17. The Group of 77 considered that food and agricultural issues should be kept at the centre of the global agenda and that the food and agricultural problems of the developing countries, particularly in Africa, should be considered in a comprehensive manner. In that regard, an early conclusion of negotiations on the replenishment of the International Fund for Agricultural Development was of paramount importance. The Group of 77 also attached special importance to the United Nations code of conduct on transnational corporations and hoped that the Commission on Transnational Corporations would soon be able to complete its work on the code.

18. It was to be hoped that all countries concerned would implement the numerous resolutions adopted by the Economic and Social Council at its second regular session of 1985. The Group of 77 attached particular importance to the resolution relating to the Industrial Development Decade for Africa and requested the General Assembly to take budgetary measures to enable the Economic Commission for Africa and the Multinational Programming and Operational Centres to conduct consultations

(Mr. Lazarevic, Yugoslavia)

and negotiations on ways of implementing multilateral projects, including investment promotion.

19. The resolution on the activities of transnational corporations in South Africa and Namibia and their collaboration with the racist minority régime of South Africa also called for urgent implementation. Increased brutality in South Africa made it imperative for the United Nations to adopt measures to end all forms of collaboration of transnational corporations with the racist minority régime and to terminate their investment in South Africa. In view of the extreme gravity of the situation, he drew attention to the importance of the recently organized Public Hearings on the Activities of Transnational Corporations in South Africa and Namibia.

20. Mr. ZVEZDIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the Economic and Social Council at its second regular session of 1985 had adopted a number of useful and important resolutions and decisions, in particular the resolutions on the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and on the critical economic situation in Africa, a common factor in which was the need to promote economic independence. The Council had also adopted important resolutions on assistance to the Palestinian people, assistance for the reconstruction and development of Lebanon, economic development projects in the occupied Palestinian territories - resolutions whose objectives involving the participation of all interested parties, including the PLO - could best be served by convening an international conference on the Middle East to bring about a comprehensive settlement, permanent sovereignty over natural resources and transnational corporations.

21. The Public Hearings on the Activities of Transnational Corporations had met with a positive response throughout the world. In spite of the boycott and sabotage of those hearings by Western countries and their transnational corporations, a panel of eminent persons had prepared a detailed and objective final document containing recommendations on specific measures to end the support given by transnational corporations to the apartheid régime and its illegal occupation of Namibia. The implementation of those recommendations would be a major step in the economic isolation of the apartheid régime and a powerful lever for changing its inhuman and criminal policy. The Governments of the countries in which the transnational corporations in question were based should play a key role in that process, since those countries bore direct responsibility for encouraging the corporations' activities in South Africa and Namibia.

22. Because of the obstructionist position of certain Western countries, the Economic and Social Council had been unable at its second regular session of 1985 to adopt a number of important draft resolutions which many members of the Council had supported. In particular the draft resolution on food problems reflected the views of the majority of States Members of the United Nations, and there were no grounds for delaying its adoption.

(Mr. Zvezdin, USSR)

23. Recently, some delegations had been attempting to revive proposals for the restructuring of the Economic and Social Council. However, the Council's role could not be strengthened by purely procedural innovations. What was needed was a completely different approach. The Soviet Union believed that the role of the Council would be strengthened if it carried out its functions as laid down in the Charter of the United Nations, and focused its work on the consideration of key problems of world economic development.

24. A positive aspect of the work of the Economic and Social Council was the detailed discussion of interdependence and international co-operation in such fields as money and finance, debt and trade. The discussion had revealed agreement among delegations that those issues had become more acute and required an urgent solution. His delegation believed that the General Assembly at its fortieth session could adopt specific decisions in that area.

25. The General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union had stressed that, as a result of inequality and discrimination in international economic relations and the use of economic and financial levers for political pressure a number of countries were in a disastrous situation and it was the duty of the world community to help them. The Soviet Union was not evading that duty, and was doing more than many other countries in that regard. His delegation actively supported the developing countries in their call for a restructuring of international economic relations and the establishment of a new economic international order based on the principles contained in the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States, the Declaration on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order and documents of the non-aligned movement and the Group of 77.

26. At the second regular session of 1985 of the Economic and Social Council, his delegation had submitted a draft resolution on the safeguarding of economic security, aimed at developing broad international co-operation in the interests of all countries. The maintenance of unfavourable external conditions for the development of many developing States, not only blocked their economic growth but threatened their economic, political and social stability. The promotion of the economic security of States through collective efforts to overcome the gap between the developed and developing States required the elimination of colonialism, apartheid and racial discrimination, the strengthening of international peace and security, the restoration of confidence in international economic relations and the elimination of measures incompatible with the Charter of the United Nations. Action was required to democratize the international monetary and financial system, liberalize trade and stop the flow of financial resources from the developing countries and the brain drain. His delegations's proposals to that end had elicited widespread comment and support, and consultations on the subject were continuing, taking into account the Council recommendation that the General Assembly at its fortieth session should consider the issues dealt with in the draft resolution (A/C.2/40/L.2).

(Mr. Zvezdin, USSR)

27. The Soviet Union supported the draft resolutions on conducting constructive and action-oriented international economic negotiations (A/C.2/40/L.3) and on the study of long-term trends in economic development (A/C.2/40/L.10).
28. In the Economic and Social Council, his delegation had taken an active part in the discussion of the draft programme-budget for the biennium 1986-1987. United Nations resources were not unlimited and should be used rationally and economically. Obsolete and marginally useful programmes, as well as parallelism and duplication of work in United Nations bodies and divisions of the Secretariat, should be eliminated so that additional resources could be allocated to new, urgent economic projects and programmes.
29. The USSR was preparing for the Twenty-seventh Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, which would establish the country's development goals for the next five years and make long-term projections to the year 2000. The countries of the world should clearly understand his Government's system of priorities. The Soviet people's principal concern - the development of the economy, social relations and democracy - determined the Soviet Union's foreign-policy interests, in particular its concern for peace and a stable international situation.
30. Most of the participants at the second regular session of the Economic and Social Council had correctly pointed out that the arms race posed a major obstacle to the improvement of international economic relations. Hardly anyone would dispute that the more funds were spent on the arms race, the less there remained for the socio-economic development of States, and that expenditure for preparations for war should be used for the economic progress of all countries. Unfortunately, the Council still paid too little attention to those problems. In particular, General Assembly resolutions 38/188 J and 39/151 E, in which the Assembly invited the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system to broaden their contribution to the cause of disarmament, still remained outside the Council's purview. The Soviet delegation had proposed that the Secretariat should submit to the Economic and Social Council at its second regular session of 1986 an information document regarding the implementation of those resolutions.
31. There could be no reasonable alternative to mutually advantageous co-operation based on the principles of peaceful coexistence. In their joint statement on the results of the second regular session of 1985 of the Economic and Social Council, the Socialist countries had indicated that they would consistently defend and develop the progressive principles worked out through the collective efforts of all States Members of the United Nations.
32. Mr. SEIF EL-NASR (Egypt) said that the Government of Israel had, in violation of the fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, for many years refused fact-finding missions permission to enter the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories. Such action was incompatible with international law and showed Israel's determination to obscure the extent of the repression to which the Palestinian people was subjected. A recent escalation of Israel's "iron fist" policy had demonstrated the urgent need for the international community to speak out in connection with that issue.

(Mr. Seif El-Nasr, Egypt)

33. The systematic efforts of the occupation authorities to incorporate the economies of the occupied territories into that of Israel showed Israel's determination to convert those occupied territories into a consumer market for Israeli goods. Policies such as land expropriation, enforced control of water resources, and the imposition of restrictions on agricultural activities added a new and dangerous dimension to the situation. Although it was often stated that incomes were rising in the occupied territories, the fact remained that no local development was taking place and that Palestinians were excluded from economic decision-making. Moreover, a vast proportion of the gross national product was not generated in the local economy but reflected the volume of remittances from Palestinians overseas.

34. The General Assembly had stated in resolution 1803 (XVII) that "violation of the rights of peoples and nations to sovereignty over their natural wealth and resources is contrary to the spirit and principles of the Charter" and had reiterated the same principle in subsequent resolutions with specific reference to the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories.

35. Israeli practices in the occupied territories included the withholding of personal freedom, freedom of movement and freedom of expression, as well as frequent curfews, the closing of schools and universities, destruction of dwellings and forced evacuation. However, possibly the most dangerous practice was the policy of establishing settlements there, in violation of Security Council resolutions 446 (1979) and 465 (1980), the Hague Regulations of 1907 and the fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. That policy constituted one of the major obstacles to peace efforts in the Middle East, and showed Israel's determination to challenge the will of the international community, and isolate the original residents of the area by building a strong fence of illegal settlements around them. Both the report of the Secretary-General concerning the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories (A/39/233) and another study compiled by the West Bank Data Project showed that large areas of the occupied territories had been expropriated by Israel and that the only margin for expansion had been allocated for Jewish use.

36. There was a separate system of local government in the occupied territories serving the Israeli settlements, and its powers extended to planning and development in all areas outside the Palestinian towns and villages. Israeli law applied to the Israeli settlers, while Palestinians were subject to military law and to the military tribunals, against whose verdicts there was no appeal. The effect of such dualism was that the increasing number of settlements would gradually reduce the area under the jurisdiction of Palestinian towns and villages. Given that the settlements, through their councils, interfered in important decisions relating to law, security, land, water and infrastructure and that the settlers, through the Council of Jewish Settlements in Judea and Samaria, formed a pressure group that could influence the central Government, the extent to which the authority of the Palestinian towns and villages in such matters was being curtailed was clear.

(Mr. Seif El-Nasr, Egypt)

37. Obviously that dualism was an integral part of the Israeli strategy to derogate from the sovereignty of the Palestinian people over its occupied homeland. The international community could not allow the provisional nature of an occupation régime to become transformed into a fait accompli, since that would undermine one of the basic foundations of the international system.

38. While assiduously promoting efforts for peace, Egypt would adhere to its unshakeable position against all forms of oppression and violence practised by the Israeli occupation authorities in the occupied territories. Such methods had proved unable to destroy the Palestinians' will to live or their sense of national and historical commitment to their homeland. Whether they were subjected to violence in their places of exile or within the occupied territories, they were driven by undying hope for the restoration of their legitimate national rights.

39. The Palestine problem was truly the core of the Middle East conflict, and it was inconceivable that there could be lasting peace in the region without a just and comprehensive solution. Israeli policies and practices were completely irreconcilable with the goals of peace and reconciliation and would inevitably lead to a deepening of mutual antipathy and suspicion. Progress and prosperity could not be achieved under occupation, exploitation and domination, but only through the restoration of legitimate rights to those deprived of them. The international community must assume its responsibility towards the Palestinian people in order to enable it to attain its legitimate rights so that peace might return to Palestine.

40. Mr. LONATI (Secretary-General, World Tourism Organization) said that the various resolutions listed at the end of the Secretary-General's note on the implementation of the Manila Declaration and the Acapulco Document on World Tourism (A/40/363) delineated the scope of that document. The concept of tourism was assuming genuine global significance as a factor in development and economic growth. Viewing tourism in that way often revealed truths that contradicted some of the hypotheses on which tourism policies and strategies had been based. Holiday travel was often considered to be a frivolous activity, a view which had had its origin in the seventeenth century, when such travel had been reserved for the élite. However, the opening of the first trade routes between regions of the world had led to cultural and religious as well as commercial exchanges, and it was in that way that travel might ultimately promote development. Such an approach to tourism should be of particular benefit to the developing countries, and he suggested that an in-depth study should be conducted to measure the benefits which could and should result from a gradual and reasonable revision of the policies and strategies which had affected the growth of travel thus far.

41. While regional and subregional strategies for tourism were, of course, useful, there was a particular need for local efforts on a modest and realizable scale. He proposed as a useful example of such efforts the establishment of small- or medium-sized travel service enterprises which might promote travel to areas that were seldom frequented because they were remote or lacking in adequate facilities; such arrangements should respect local traditions, customs and life-styles. The establishment of such enterprises would have many financial, managerial and marketing benefits; above all, they would generate employment and help young people

(Mr. Lonati)

in developing countries move from family life into public service without lengthy or onerous training. Moreover, such an approach would foster the spirit of enterprise indispensable to economic progress in parts of the world where millions of people suffered the consequences of economic stagnation.

42. Recent data showed that each year some 4 billion tourists travelled within their own countries, while some 300 million persons travelled internationally. The income generated by international travellers was equal to 5 per cent of the value of all world trade. However, four times as many international travellers had as their destinations North America or Europe as travelled to the developing world. More than 80 per cent of all travel was on an intra-regional basis, and, in Europe, 50 per cent of such travel was taken in connection with paid leave.

43. Travel must be used to strengthen economic and trade relations, particularly involving those countries of the world which lacked equitable access to the world's wealth. While the expansion of tourism might not meet all development needs, it was linked with the dynamics of trade; it was therefore imperative that the conditions should be created to make such an expansion possible.

44. Mr. Brotodiningrat (Indonesia) took the Chair.

45. Mr. ABU KOASH (Observer, Palestine Liberation Organization) thanked those Governments, particularly the Government of Japan, that had provided assistance to Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon, but urged that, to facilitate the delivery of such assistance, it should be channelled through UNRWA, and not through any other United Nations agency.

46. General Assembly resolutions 38/145 and 39/224 contained references to a "co-ordinated programme of economic and social assistance to the Palestinian people"; however, the activities outlined in document A/40/353, entitled "Assistance to the Palestinian people", could hardly be qualified as an assistance programme at all, let alone a co-ordinated one. What was needed was a team or task force to organize the necessary interagency co-ordination, in consultation with the relevant United Nations bodies, as the PLO and Arab host countries had done in connection with the implementation of General Assembly resolution 33/147, and he urged the Secretary-General to adopt such a method.

47. Paragraph 5 of General Assembly resolution 39/224 drew attention to the need to disburse aid to the occupied Palestinian territories only for the benefit of the Palestinian people and not to serve the interests of the Israeli occupation authorities. Yet it was commonly known that the Israeli authorities diverted external aid intended for Palestinian development projects, thereby releasing Israeli funds for colonial settlements, and exerted pressure on the few United Nations bodies operating in the occupied territories to make them use the occupation authorities as intermediaries in the disbursement of aid. He therefore called upon all parties concerned to ensure that that practice was not continued. Furthermore, no Israeli goods or machinery should be used in aid efforts in the occupied territories, as that would only strengthen the occupation effort.

(Mr. Abu Koash, Observer, PLO)

48. Israel received massive amounts of foreign aid from the United States each year, yet blocked the flow of aid to the occupied territories. Palestinian firms and agricultural co-operatives were denied external aid, and elected Palestinian mayors were replaced with Israeli appointees, mostly military personnel, who prevented the municipalities in question from receiving the aid they required. Since 1979, UNDP had attempted without success to obtain the permission of the occupying authorities to implement projects in the occupied territories. Those authorities had also demonstrated their hostility to social and economic development in the occupied territories by refusing to permit the implementation of the projects specified in General Assembly resolution 39/223, namely, the establishment of a seaport and a citrus plant in the occupied Gaza Strip and a cement plant in the occupied West Bank.

49. He was aware that some delegations had abstained in the vote on that resolution on the grounds that no feasibility studies had been made available for the projects in question. However, every nation had the right to implement the projects it considered necessary to its national development, and the PLO did not expect any country to question its right to do so in the case of Palestine. The Gaza Strip was Palestine's only outlet to the sea, and the country consequently needed a seaport. Naturally, the Israeli occupation authorities were opposed to such a major development project, as it might threaten Israel's dominance of trade in the region.

50. The growing of citrus fruits was the main source of livelihood of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. More than one quarter of a million tons were produced annually, 30 per cent of which was consumed locally. The Israeli occupation authorities forbade the export of excess Palestinian citrus fruit, especially when they were destined for markets which imported Israeli citrus fruit. Palestinians were even forbidden to export their fruit to neighbouring Arab countries so that, as a result, much of their produce was left to rot. An Italian firm based in Milan had ascertained the feasibility of building a citrus-processing plant in the Gaza Strip, yet the Israeli occupation authorities had blocked the construction of such a plant.

51. A German company based in Essen had recommended the construction of a cement plant in Hebron in the West Bank, but the Israel authorities had stopped the implementation of that project. In his letter to the Secretary-General, the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations had alleged that Israel had done the Palestinians a favour by blocking the implementation of those development projects. Perhaps Israel also wanted the international community to believe that it was doing the Palestinians a favour by occupying their land. That logic was not new. There had been a certain tyrant who had claimed to be doing the world a favour by attempting to exterminate the adherents of a certain religion. The racist régime in South Africa claimed that apartheid fostered "separate development". Both Israel and South Africa resorted to similar methods of brutality in an attempt to suppress uprisings against their tyranny.

(Mr. Abu Koash, Observer, PLO)

52. Israel had so far appropriated more than 60 per cent of the occupied Palestinian territories and 90 per cent of their water resources. The process of land confiscation and expropriation was continuing on a large scale, and Israel had established about 170 colonies in the occupied territories. The Israeli colonies were intended to facilitate the annexation of those territories, isolate them from adjacent Arab countries, disrupt the unity of the Palestinian people, cut off towns and villages from each other and prevent the achievement of a just peace. Israeli colonies created a general feeling of insecurity among the Palestinians, and several Palestinians had been killed by the residents of those colonies. Such crimes had been deliberate and were intended to urge Palestinians to emigrate or soften their attitudes towards the Israeli occupation authorities. Israeli practices were not limited to the occupied Palestinian territories but extended also to the Syrian Golan Heights which had been annexed by Israel. In all of those territories, the Israeli occupation authorities resorted to deportation, mass arrests, imprisonment, torture and collective punishment, shooting at civilians, demolition of houses and, in the Syrian Golan Heights, setting fire to crops in order to impose Israeli nationality on Syrians who refused it.

53. It was a strange state of affairs that it was a crime for a Palestinian in his own land to say that he was a Palestinian, or for a Syrian to say he was a Syrian. Such assertions were punishable by law. What Palestinians and Syrians were experiencing was not much different from what the Jews had experienced in Nazi Germany. It was indeed an irony that the Zionist Jews were implementing the same policy of suffering which they themselves had suffered. Israel's continued occupation of Palestinian, Syrian and other Arab territories, and its conduct in them, had no legal validity. Under international law, Israel was a belligerent occupier, bound to observe the relevant provisions of that law. Instead, Israel had chosen to call itself "administrator", which was something novel in international law. The so-called "administrator" had not limited itself to mere administration but had gone on to annex East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights, and had acted as if it were entitled to full sovereignty over those territories. An Israeli representative had claimed, at the second regular session of 1985 of the Economic and Social Council, that Jordan was part of Israel. Israel had dreams of occupying not only Jordan but other Arab territories as well. According to the Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949 (Fourth Geneva Convention) relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, the occupation of territories in wartime was essentially a temporary, de facto situation and could not imply any right whatever to dispose of occupied territory. Israel had confiscated land and water resources in violation of articles 46, 55 and 56 of the Hague Convention of 18 October 1907 concerning laws and customs of war on land, and its creation of colonies was in violation of article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention. Permanent sovereignty over the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories, including their resources, rested with the Palestinian and the Syrian peoples, who were entitled to be free of Israeli occupation and to exercise their rights which had been recognized by the United Nations.

The meeting rose at 1.00 p.m.