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SECOND COMMITTEE

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at 3 p.m.

New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 21st MEETING

Chairman: Mr. BRODODININGRAT (Indonesia)

later: Mr. BIRIDO (Sudan)

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

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The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued) (A/40/3, 19, 108, 109, 173, 190, 276, 303, 321, 329, 340, 342, 347, 353 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. TCHOUTA MOUSSA (Deputy Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa), speaking on behalf of the Executive Secretary of ECA, who had been unable to attend because of other commitments, said that the current emergency situation in Africa was only one manifestation of a more pervasive development crisis. The only hope of solving it was to attack the root cause of the development problem by means of structural measures based on the principles of the Lagos Plan of Action.

2. It was in that spirit that ECA had prepared a number of documents which had been adopted by the ECA Conference of Ministers and the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of OAU at its twenty-first ordinary session. Emphasis had been placed on the long-term requirements for the self-reliant development of the African economies.

3. It was encouraging to note that the international community, especially through the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, had adopted a positive attitude towards Africa's structural problems and the solutions advocated in the above-mentioned documents. Clearly Africa could not cope without the active financial, technical and material support of the international community. The African Heads of State and Government had therefore requested a special session of the General Assembly on the critical economic situation in Africa.

4. Africa's economic and social difficulties had, to a large extent, been reflected in the activities of ECA, which had as a result been restructured. For example, the eleventh meeting of the ECA Conference of Ministers, held in April 1985, had had as its theme "The African Economic and Social Crisis: Review, Prospects and Perspectives". The recommendations made on that occasion had been adopted by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of OAU at its twenty-first ordinary session and constituted the main inputs of the five-year priority programme.

5. The activities relating to the sectoral programme had focused on implementation of the 1984-1985 programme of work and also took into account the critical situation in Africa. Activities worthy of note were those concerning the Industrial Development Decade for Africa and the Transport and Communications Decade in Africa, and those concerning food and agriculture, human resources, public administration, resource management, international financial issues and external trade. Two areas which had received special attention were the implications of the external trade and debt structure and the establishment of an African monetary fund.

6. That work had led to the adoption of 29 resolutions, 10 of which had been adopted by the Economic and Social Council. ECA hoped that the General Assembly would continue to provide it with all necessary resources.

(Mr. Tchouta Moussa)

7. In conclusion, he stressed the importance of the active support of the international community, which was urgently needed in view of the size of the external debt of the African countries (\$US 170 billion by the end of 1985). The African Heads of State and Government advocated the holding of an international conference on the debt question and the Economic and Social Council had taken note of their proposal. It was the hope of ECA that the General Assembly would endorse that appeal.

8. Africa had clearly demonstrated its commitment to recovery and long-term development and had outlined the priorities needed to achieve that objective. He sincerely hoped that the international community would rise to that challenge and was confident that the fortieth session of the General Assembly and the proposed special session would set the tone for mobilizing support for Africa.

9. Mr. SCHUMANN (German Democratic Republic) said that he had noted positive trends in the debate of the Economic and Social Council at its second regular session of 1985. Numerous delegations had spoken out against coercive economic practices and the waste of resources expended on the arms race and had favoured constructive intergovernmental talks. Emphasis had also been placed on the interrelationship of trade, finance, debt and money. There had also been growing awareness that the democratic restructuring of economic relations and the campaign against underdevelopment could succeed only if they were linked with efforts to counter the militarization of outer space and the arms build-up.

10. Unfortunately, as in the past, those trends were rarely expressed in the Council's resolutions. The solutions advocated were not in line either with the Council's mandate or with present-day requirements. The relevant observations made on the indebtedness of the developing countries, the necessary democratization of international monetary and financial organizations, protectionism and the outflow of resources from the developing countries had not led to any specific decisions.

11. That situation had nothing to do with the structure of the Council. It was due to the attitude of some Western countries which wanted substantive economic questions to be discussed exclusively in the trade, financial and monetary organizations which they dominated, without taking into account the universal mandate of the United Nations system. Above all, full use must be made of the opportunities offered by the United Nations and its subsidiary bodies to shape equitable international economic relations. That need was crucial for revitalizing of the Council.

12. At the second regular session of the Council, his country had submitted a draft resolution, which had since been referred to the General Assembly (A/C.2/40/L.3), aimed at promoting constructive international economic negotiations and strengthening the role of the United Nations system as a universal forum. Its adoption would be highly appropriate on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations and would give impetus to the promotion of economic development and international co-operation. His delegation was open to considering any constructive proposal submitted for the same purpose. For example, it supported the draft resolutions on international economic security (A/C.2/40/L.2) and on long-term trends in economic development (A/C.2/40/L.10).

(Mr. Schumann, German Democratic Republic)

13. After eight years of negotiations, it was time to adopt the draft code of conduct on transnational corporations which was without a doubt central to the democratization of international economic relations. The principles on which agreement had largely been reached should no longer be called into question. The mandate had always been unambiguous: the code must be an effective instrument for governing the activities of transnational corporations and eliminating the adverse effects of those activities, especially in developing countries. His country strongly opposed the attempts of some Western States to attach an altogether different meaning to the objectives of the code, to couple its drafting with the demand for favourable conditions for exported private capital, to break up the "package deal", and to enforce on a selective basis advance decisions designed to change the meaning of the code. However, the new negotiations scheduled for January 1986 might be successful. There had been no lack of flexibility on the part of his country which was ready to respond to any serious proposal.

14. His delegation was in favour of the immediate implementation of Council resolution 1985/72 on the activities of transnational corporations in South Africa and Namibia and their collaboration with the racist minority régime of that region. In view of the escalating terror applied by that régime, it was more than ever imperative for the United Nations to take effective measures to stop all forms of collaboration between transnational corporations and South Africa and to put an end to their investments in that country. Implementation of the recommendations resulting from the public hearings on the activities of transnational corporations in South Africa and Namibia, especially with regard to terminating investments and military co-operation, would be an important element in the campaign against the criminal policy of apartheid. He therefore supported the proposal made by the Nigerian delegation to consider the report on the public hearings during the current session of the General Assembly.

15. His country strongly supported the right of the Palestinian and other Arab peoples to permanent sovereignty over their natural resources in the occupied territories. At the current session it would advocate that all measures should be taken in support of the just struggle of the Palestinian people, and hoped that the United Nations system would intensify its activities to assist the peoples of the occupied territories.

16. His delegation was in favour of implementing 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 further their contribution to the cause of arms limitation and disarmament, and supported the proposal that the Secretariat should inform the Council at its second regular session of 1986 on the activities undertaken in implementation of those resolutions. Furthermore, the Secretariat should prepare a report on the main issues to be dealt with at the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development, so that the Council could consider it at its first regular session of 1986. Such a move would be expedient because the Council was not just authorized but even obliged under the Charter to consider questions which had implications for the world economy. Economic co-operation and development could only be achieved in peace.



17. Mr. MARTIN (Luxembourg) speaking on behalf of the States of the European Economic Community, said that the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations had brought into relief the concern of Member States and the Secretariat to make the Organization more effective. It should in fact be a powerhouse generating new ideas and policies.

18. The European Community had already expressed its views on the questions dealt with by the Economic and Social Council. However, it wished to reaffirm the importance which it attached to the adoption by consensus of Council resolution 1985/80 on the critical economic situation in Africa. It hoped that the decisions taken at the twenty-first regular session of the Conference of Heads of State and Government of OAU would help to provide a lasting solution for Africa's major problems. In that context, it welcomed the way in which the objectives of the World Food Programme had recently been defined and was following with interest the launching of the second phase of the Transport and Communications Decade in Africa. The policies initiated should be resolutely supported by the international community.

19. The section of the Council's report devoted to transnational corporations did not reflect the complexity of the discussions sufficiently and the Community would like its authors to make the necessary changes. The Community had expressed its concern about the future of the United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations and had decided not to take part in the vote, noting that the Council had been unable to make further headway.

20. The conclusions drawn by the President of the Council at the end of the second regular session (A/40/525), which reflected points of agreement and points of disagreement alike, had made it possible to weigh the chances of dialogue and compromise. That approach had also proved useful in the consideration of the International Development Strategy and could be applied to good purpose in future to encourage broader consensus on complex questions requiring maximum flexibility.

21. Co-ordination in the United Nations system was very important and had several aspects. First of all, there was the general co-ordination of the policies and activities of the specialized agencies with which the United Nations was concerned, and the implementation of medium-term programmes, which came under the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (CPC). In order to allow CPC to make its recommendations in good time, reports intended for it should be submitted promptly and should provide a sufficiently analytical appraisal of the programmes undertaken. It was inadmissible that the influence brought to bear by United Nations agencies and institutions should sometimes lead to a watering down of the substance of reports even before they were submitted to CPC. Furthermore, the CPC's recommendations should be implemented systematically.

22. The Community drew attention to Council resolution 1985/77 which stressed the need for more vigorous observance of the responsibilities laid down in the Charter and the agreements between the United Nations and the specialized agencies having regard to the pressing need for effective co-ordination, especially between the United Nations and the specialized agencies. Furthermore, the reports submitted to the Council under Articles 63 and 64 of the Charter should be drawn up regularly and constitute one of the tools for co-ordination.

(Mr. Martin, Luxembourg)

23. The co-ordination of operational activities was another aspect of co-ordination and one of the top priorities. The action taken by the United Nations to rectify the catastrophic situation in Africa south of the Sahara was an excellent example thereof. The experience acquired should be put to good use in any future emergency. But co-ordination was also necessary in the area of long-term development, especially for technical co-operation, for which UNDP should be given all the support it needed to perform its co-ordinating role.

24. Co-ordination could not be decreed. It should follow from applying a common approach. Accordingly, UNDP's participation in the formulation and evaluation of country programmes gave concrete meaning to the notion of co-ordination and enabled UNDP to play a central role. That was the kind of approach which the Committee could and should encourage in order to solve the problems submitted to it.

25. Joint meetings of CPC and the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC) were likewise useful for enhancing co-ordination within the United Nations system, and the Community welcomed the signs of improvement in the dialogue between those two committees and shared the view that their meetings should not become occasions for self-congratulation on the part of the specialized agencies. Furthermore, the Community was gratified that the Secretary-General would ensure that the Council's resolutions concerning CPC and its joint activities were properly implemented. It had also followed with interest the introductory statements made in the Fifth and Second Committees by the Secretary-General on the one hand and by the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation on the other, in which they had spoken of the co-ordination of activities within the United Nations system. The European Community advocated that co-ordination in the economic and social fields should be enhanced by profiting from the lessons of the emergency in Africa when dealing with future emergencies and long-term development. It also advocated that the consistency of general recommendations formulated by various institutions of the system on comparable questions should be ensured by compiling basic data better, especially when dealing with complex questions. Finally, it advocated that the Council's co-ordinating role should be evaluated with the participation of the specialized agencies.

26. Rationalization of the work of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council should be carried further by ensuring strict adherence to the biennial work programme.

27. In order to improve the process of negotiation, there should be more informal consultations before any draft resolution was drawn up, and more different kinds of text should be produced: they could be akin to statements or brief decisions or resolutions, depending on their purpose.

28. Mr. Birido (Sudan) took the Chair.

29. Mr. ZOLLER (Australia) welcomed the adoption of a biennial work programme for the Committee; the aim of achieving greater co-ordination in the work of the Council and the Committee deserved support. The experiment provided the Council

(Mr. Zoller, Australia)

with a great opportunity to come into its own again and to make more of the recently introduced proposals for its revitalization. In particular, the Council should be able to analyse the specific priority issues which it selected each year in greater depth and its cross-organizational reviews could also benefit from more probing analysis. The second regular session of the Council had already demonstrated some of the benefits that could result from pruning its workload, and there was every reason to welcome the consensus achieved on the review of the immediate and long-term aspects of the critical economic situation in Africa.

30. The summaries drawn up by the President of the Council could also be a valuable instrument. In some cases, deliberations led to a convergence of views of which account should be taken, even if they did not result in consensus. The progress thus obtained should be recorded in the President's summaries, which the Council could then consider at subsequent meetings, thus ensuring that the efforts made were not wasted. However, caution should be exercised in using the summaries which should not become an easy option when negotiations appeared difficult. They were a final option when time or other factors did not allow consensus; they must not become a substitute for the normal negotiating process, which should remain the primary aim.

31. One of the key responsibilities of the Economic and Social Council was to co-ordinate and monitor subsidiary bodies, the most significant of which were the regional commissions. As an active member of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Australia considered that the regional commissions would benefit considerably from the implementation of the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit, particularly as they concerned greater decentralization of decision-making powers to regional headquarters. The regional commissions should have more autonomy in making appointments to senior posts. The concentration of decision-making in New York had created a situation in which important posts had remained vacant for long periods, resulting in serious consequences for the efficiency of the Organization and delays in the execution of work programmes. His delegation hoped that the Secretary-General would hasten to take action to decentralize decision-making to the regional commissions, as called for by the General Assembly.

32. The Economic and Social Council also had a responsibility to monitor the budgetary efficiency of the activities of the regional commissions. It should also give careful and honest consideration to the relative merits of competing demands. If it was to carry out its mandate correctly, it must be prepared to be governed in its decisions less by political expediency and more by the prospective benefits of alternative proposals for the use of the limited resources available to the system.

33. Australia regarded food problems as a major priority issue and hoped that the Council would in future give more critical and closer examination to the reports of its subsidiary bodies on that question. Certain points in the report of the World Food Council, for example, deserved greater consideration. Australia questioned whether the world Food Council's own policy co-ordinating role had been adequately addressed and welcomed the initiative to establish a panel to carry out a review of the Council's effectiveness.

(Mr. Zoller, Australia)

34. It was a matter of concern that the Economic and Social Council had not been able to agree on a resolution on food problems, particularly since a proliferation of similar cases would have adverse implications for the biennial work programme. Australia had not found all aspects of the paragraphs which had been agreed in the Council entirely to its satisfaction but nevertheless believed that the General Assembly should respect the Council's competence and limit itself to a re-examination of the paragraphs which had not been resolved. The resolution on food problems should not become an omnibus text in which to place references to any and all international economic problems. His delegation acknowledged that the issue of food problems was interdependent with many others, but would question whether a paragraph specifically addressing the question of debt was directly relevant in a resolution on food problems.

35. Much more pertinent was the question of agricultural protectionism; in that connection, Australia strongly supported current efforts to achieve greater freedom of international trade in agricultural products. Such efforts must, however, be comprehensive. It would not be possible to address protectionism efficiently in a new round of multilateral negotiations without ensuring that agricultural protectionism, including both tariff and non-tariff methods, was fully addressed. Developing countries had much to deplore in the current methods employed by some less efficient food producers whose subsidies in the world markets, notably in grains and beef, had led to a triumph of the least efficient over the most efficient.

36. Mr. SUDEN (Federal Republic of Germany) said that his Government supported the goals of the Transport and Communications Decade in Africa, for which it had spent DM 3.7 billion. The construction of new roads had required the major part of those funds, but it was intended in the future to give more attention to road maintenance, including particularly the establishment of facilities for road maintenance and the strengthening of managerial capacities through expert advice and training; the negative repercussions of inadequate road maintenance on the economy constituted a serious problem for many African countries. In other transport sectors, such as railways and sea and air transportation, his Government had focused on the establishment of planning, operational, managerial and maintenance capacities which would reduce the dependence of the developing countries on foreign aid. In the communications sector, his Government supported various telecommunications services and was devoting attention to the solution of the problem of telecommunications services in remote areas in Africa; the programme proposed was to be implemented under the development assistance programme of the European Economic Community.

37. On the issue of food and agriculture in Africa, his Government had endeavoured to mitigate famine and to secure the survival of as many people as possible. Nevertheless, the economic situation in Africa had become precarious, particularly as regards basic structural questions, even after international aid on an unprecedented scale. The solidarity of the international community must be maintained and translated into long-term measures. His Government was endeavouring to support in particular those countries which, notwithstanding considerable social



(Mr. Suden, Federal Republic  
of Germany)

expense and increased political risks, had been willing to implement programmes of reform for the improvement of their overall economic conditions. The priority target for his Government's aid measures continued to be the agricultural sector, on the basis of the principle that it was of primary importance to maintain or to re-establish viable production units and to exploit fully the production potential of small farmers with a view to safeguarding the food supply. In order to mobilize agricultural potential, his Government would pay more attention to applied agricultural research and agricultural extension services.

38. His Government had paid great attention to the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade and continued to give careful study to all related projects. It had also prepared a paper on the issue which had been considered by countries belonging to the Development Assistance Committee and by multilateral donors such as WHO, UNDP, UNICEF, the World Bank and the Commission of the European Communities at a meeting held in October 1984. The meeting had established that there was a demand for meetings of experts at the developing country level for the following purposes: to support the Decade and improve co-ordination, particularly in terms of a more intensive exchange of information and in-depth analysis in co-operation with recipient countries: to provide co-ordination between the recipient country, bilateral and multilateral donors and non-governmental organizations through UNDP country offices; to disseminate information on Decade objectives and projects to the public at large and to promote the objectives and projects of the Decade during UNDP round-table conferences. The discussion had also revealed that close co-operation between bilateral and multilateral donors and recipient countries was essential. Priority must be given to the question of drinking water supply and sanitation in the overall development plan of the country concerned and institutions in the recipient country should agree on cross-sectoral co-operation in which appropriate low technology could be regarded as being on a par with high technology. In that connection, beneficiary countries should establish appropriate tariffs for water supply and sanitation in urban and rural areas; such tariffs should reflect the expense of supplying the water at the right time and place and in sufficient quantities. Interested communities (particularly women, who were the principal users of water) and municipalities must participate at the project planning stage. Much remained to be done; in particular, co-ordination must be improved and sectoral plans should be drawn up in accordance with generally applicable rules. His Government would make every effort to contribute to the success of the Decade, although it seemed obvious already that its goals could not be achieved fully.

39. Many developing countries viewed tourism as a possible means of diversifying their economies, stimulating development and obtaining additional foreign currency. In that connection it should be pointed out that, in 1984, tourists from the Federal Republic of Germany had spent DM 2.5 billion in the Third World, of which more than DM 1 billion had gone to African countries.

40. Mr. Brotodiningrat took the Chair.



41. Mr. FIELD (United Kingdom) said that the objective of co-ordination was to make the best use of available human and financial resources. Co-ordination was not a code word for cutting down or contraction but a sensible management tool. Lack of co-ordination meant not only doing the same job twice, which was a wasteful process, but actually frustrated the completion of the task or led to a result which was worse than the original position.

42. Four points should be emphasized. Firstly, the emergency operation in Africa had revealed strengths and weaknesses in the United Nations co-ordination machinery. Those strengths and weaknesses should be examined openly and honestly, and a start had been made at the joint meeting of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC) and the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (CPC) - a meeting which, in spite of certain shortcomings, had been very useful. Secondly, adequate machinery for co-ordination existed in the United Nations, both in the Organization and in the system. One should therefore make proper use of the existing system, and not make institutional changes. Thirdly, international relations were more complex than at the time when the United Nations had been founded, and co-ordination was more essential than ever. The Economic and Social Council was, under the Charter, the body responsible for ensuring that co-ordination. Better use should be made of the co-ordination measures provided for in Chapter IX of the Charter, in subsequent General Assembly and Council resolutions and in agreements between the United Nations and the specialized agencies. Fourthly, responsibility for co-ordination could not be shifted to the Secretariat or to the bodies and agencies of the United Nations system. Member States must be fully involved in that process in New York, Geneva and other United Nations centres, as well as in their own capitals. Member States bore much of the responsibility for the shortcomings which they criticized.

43. Co-ordination was a continuing and painstaking process which would involve close co-operation with the Secretariat and extra work for the members of the Second Committee. It was therefore necessary to make a commitment, which was what his delegation had done at the joint meeting of ACC and CPC.

44. Mr. ELIASHIV (Israel) said that the Permanent Representative of Israel had many times outlined his country's position with regard to resolutions on "permanent sovereignty over national resources" in the territories administered by Israel, and had clearly indicated that the Government of Israel could not associate itself with the action called for by the General Assembly in its resolutions and decisions, particularly its decision 39/442, because they had been motivated by blatant political hostility towards Israel. With regard to that decision, judgement had been passed even before the experts appointed by the United Nations had visited the Israeli-administered territories.

45. The report of the Secretary-General on permanent sovereignty over national resources in the Israeli-administered territories (A/40/381-E/1985/105), submitted in accordance with Assembly decision 39/442, was, like previous reports, the final product of an annual propaganda campaign against Israel. "Objective sources" from Arab capitals and information supplied by Palestinian terrorist organizations were used to give credibility and respectability to the questionable findings of the

(Mr. Eliashiv, Israel)

report. All the positive elements, which were quite numerous, were ignored or discarded; conflicting reports and statistics were overlooked; extracts of documents were distorted and misused and statements were taken out of context. In short, the report had no connection with reality. It would seem that the poorly defined principle of permanent sovereignty over natural resources made it possible to ignore the existing framework and any inconvenient legal principles. The authors of the report had apparently thus managed to turn a purely economic matter into one of political controversy.

46. With regard to the use of natural resources by the inhabitants of the territories, Israel was fulfilling its obligations and responsibilities in accordance with the relevant requirements of international law and was applying all the applicable norms, whether they were Jordanian legislation or military orders. Furthermore, the judicial bodies, in particular the Supreme Court of Israel, reviewed the petitions which they received from inhabitants regarding the actions of the authorities and had so far ruled that the actions were legal. Israel had announced that, although it did not recognize the applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 to Judea and Samaria, it would nevertheless apply its humanitarian provisions in the areas under its military administration.

47. With regard to the vital area of water resources, the report piled misstatements upon slander. The members of the Second Committee could consult the document submitted by his delegation to the Committee the previous year (A/C.2/39/7). Restrictions regarding the use of water were only a consequence of the scarcity of resources and the objective was to avoid excessive utilization, to use the resources as efficiently as possible and to share them equitably among all the inhabitants of the region, keeping in mind the welfare of future generations. With regard to the statement contained in the report, according to which water development projects by Arab farmers had been systematically discouraged by the occupying authorities, the figures spoke for themselves: during the first 10 years of Israeli administration, the area under irrigation in Judea and Samaria had increased by 160 per cent, the yield had increased twelvefold, and income from agriculture had more than doubled in real terms. The main factor in that growth had been the introduction, by the Israeli authorities, of modern methods of cultivation and economical systems of irrigation. With regard to the practices resulting, according to the report, "in quantitative reduction of, and subsequent qualitative damage to, the water made available", it should be made clear that, when the Israeli administration had been established in those territories in 1967, water had been scarce and often polluted, and that much progress had been made since that time. A significant example was the fact that domestic water consumption in Judea and Samaria, which in 1956 had been 5 cubic metres per person per year, had reached more than 20 cubic metres per person in 1980.

48. The questions of land and water resources were interrelated. No delegation had explained why the Jewish people had no right to a presence in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip. Twenty-three thousand Jews lived in those territories alongside 1,261,000 Palestinian Arabs. Most Jewish villages were located on the

(Mr. Eliashiv, Israel)

top of rocky hills or in the Jordan Valley where, until 1967, the lands had been considered unfit for agriculture. The lands tilled by villagers had been mostly State domain. It was therefore wrong to say that the establishment of Jewish villages constituted exploitation of the land resources of the occupied territories (A/40/381-E/1985/105, para. 7). Furthermore, the authors of the report completely ignored the very significant progress made in agriculture in the territories under Israeli administration. The figures were very revealing: the real value of agricultural production had doubled between 1970 and 1980, and its average annual growth since 1967 had been 10 per cent as compared with 5 per cent in Israel. The successful utilization of modern technologies were the direct and indirect result of the contacts of the population with Israel since 1967.

49. Contrary to the conclusions contained in the report, Israel was acting and would continue to act in such a way as to promote the social and economic development of the Palestinian Arab inhabitants of the territories which it administered. Neither baseless allegations nor slander would deter Israel from maintaining the laws in force, conducting its administration in such a manner as to ensure the safety and well-being of the entire population and maintaining options for future peace negotiations. It was only in the context of peace in the region that the needs of the entire population could be satisfied.

50. With regard to the topic entitled "Assistance to the Palestinian people", the State of Israel was currently the only State engaged, directly and actively, in promoting the well-being, safety and socio-economic development of the Palestinian Arabs of Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip - a fact which many delegations preferred to forget for numerous political reasons. It should be stressed that the living conditions of the Palestinian Arabs were much better than those in many neighbouring countries and were far indeed from the hell some described.

51. Contrary to what some wished to convey as truth during the debate in the Second Committee and in the resolutions which it adopted, Israel not only welcomed any assistance which might be extended for constructive purposes, through proper and legitimate channels, to the Palestinian Arabs, but also fully co-operated with UNDP and other international organizations in implementing programmes which directly benefited them.

52. On the other hand, Israel was firmly opposed to any form of assistance to or co-operation with PLO. It rejected the slanderous attacks against it under the pretence of assessing the living conditions of the Palestinian Arabs. Israel also rejected the political connotations and implications introduced into the debate, at the prompting of delegations representing countries actively engaged in military and political campaigns against its very existence. Everyone knew that the most vociferous countries were those which, paradoxically, gave less aid, or none at all, to the Palestinian Arabs and systematically refused to make any contribution, financial or otherwise, to the concerted world efforts aimed at promoting constructive and peaceful development for the Palestinian Arabs.

53. Mr. BROLSMA (Netherlands) congratulated the United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations on the interest and value of its research work, which covered a wide range of topics and aspects, both on the macro-economic impact of transnational corporations and on industry-specific aspects. In particular, it was interesting to note that the Centre increasingly recognized in its work that transnational corporations could contribute to the achievement of the development objectives of developing countries. For example, a recent study indicated that, in the developing countries, affiliates of transnational corporations tended to apply tougher environmental standards than domestic firms. Nevertheless, the research efforts could be further improved. The Centre could, in particular, place greater stress on the policy implications of its analyses. In that regard, his delegation believed that the Centre should, in its future work, take account of "all" transnational corporations. Furthermore, it could draw to a greater extent on the experience and understanding gained through its very successful technical co-operation programme.

54. Many developing countries recognized the beneficial role that transnational corporations could play in their development strategies, particularly in terms of investments, the transfer of technology and managerial skills, export promotion and access to world markets. Yet they were often handicapped in their dealings with those corporations by a lack of necessary information and skills. The Centre's programme of technical co-operation (training workshops for government officials from developing countries and, in particular, the provision of advisory services, background information and teams of experts) played a highly useful role in that respect. Such assistance was in the long-term interest of both Governments and transnational corporations, and very valuable. That was why the Netherlands, as in previous years, had contributed 200,000 guilders to the trust fund that financed the programme.

55. The Netherlands attached great importance to the agreement reached at Seoul on the establishment of the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency, which would cover non-commercial risks. The Agency might promote international investment and serve as a catalyst for the improvement of the overall framework of rights and obligations of transnational corporations and host countries.

56. The Netherlands welcomed the fact that donors had agreed, despite budgetary constraints, to set a figure 40 per cent higher than commitments for the biennium 1985-1986 as the pledging target for contributions to the World Food Programme for the biennium 1987-1988. That action stood as a testimony to their support for the Programme and the commendable role it had played in assisting the developing countries. The Netherlands hoped that that target would be reached at the pledging conference to be held in early 1986. The World Food Programme, which had demonstrated an outstanding capacity in the areas of both emergency aid and development assistance and had made commendable efforts to develop innovative ways of utilizing food aid and integrating it with other types of development assistance, should be encouraged. His delegation also welcomed the report of the Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes on the work of its twentieth session.



(Mr. Brolsma, Netherlands)

57. Lastly, his delegation hoped that the decisions to rationalize the work of the Committee on Natural Resources and to confine the discussions during each session to one priority subject relating to natural resources would encourage Governments to send their experts to the Committee's sessions once again, in view of the rather technical nature of the topics discussed there. With regard to the resolution on the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade, the Netherlands intended to introduce some amendments aimed at improving its effectiveness without adding to the costs of its implementation.

58. Mr. NIKITENKO (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) reminded Committee members of the importance of the activities of the Economic and Social Council; at its second regular session of 1985, that body had adopted far-reaching resolutions and decisions on Israeli economic practices in the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories, assistance to the Palestinian people, assistance for the reconstruction and development of Lebanon, implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, the critical economic situation in Africa and permanent sovereignty over natural resources. His delegation also believed that the question of disarmament, one of the prerequisites for strengthening peace and for development, should be at the forefront of the Council's work. It therefore supported the Soviet Union's proposal to have the United Nations Secretariat prepare a report on the implementation of General Assembly resolutions 38/188 J and 39/151 E and submit it to the Council at its 1986 session.

59. His delegation also welcomed the holding of the Public Hearings on the Activities of Transnational Corporations in South Africa and Namibia and endorsed the document prepared on the basis of the conclusions of the Panel of Eminent Persons, which contained proposals for concrete steps.

60. The Economic and Social Council, hindered in taking action by the attitude of certain Western countries which increasingly opposed the adoption of constructive resolutions, had been forced to refer back to the Second Committee important draft resolutions on food security, the creation of conditions favourable to the conducting of constructive negotiations and the examination of long-term trends in economic development. It should be recalled that the Council's effectiveness depended in large measure on the implementation of the decisions and resolutions it adopted, and his delegation shared the concerns of the Group of 77 in that regard. His delegation also called for the implementation of the principles of the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States, the Declaration on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order and the International Development Strategy.

61. The instability of the international monetary and financial situation was an inherent feature of the market-economy system; as such, it explained why monetary reform was incompatible with the further structural development of that system. The solutions advanced by the capitalist countries for settling monetary problems ran counter to the interests of most States. It should be noted in that connection that the indebted developing countries were bearing a disproportionate share of the burden of readjustment in that area.



(Mr. Nikitenko, Byelorussian SSR)

62. Another disquieting fact worthy of mention was the involvement of private capital in the area of technical assistance provided by the specialized agencies of the United Nations system. For that reason, the Byelorussian SSR sought to strengthen its co-operation within the framework of UNIDO, which would officially become a specialized agency on 1 January 1986.

63. Ms. DANIELSEN (Norway) said that her Government had supported the Public Hearings on the Activities of Transnational Corporations in South Africa and Namibia and welcomed the fact that they had been conducted in an equitable and objective manner. The conclusions should be discussed in due course in the appropriate United Nations forums. She also wished to point out that, while transnational corporations had not participated directly in the Hearings, a number of them had indicated that they had been represented there by the International Chamber of Commerce. Her delegation therefore believed that the principal parties had been fairly represented and that the Hearings had achieved their goal.

64. Mr. Birido (Sudan) took the Chair.

65. Mr. HUSSAIN (Pakistan) welcomed the positive results achieved by the Economic and Social Council in 1985 and, in particular, the desire shown by all members to engage in a meaningful dialogue on questions of money, finance and trade. The statement by the Council President on the general discussion of international economic and social policy would be most useful in the consideration of those issues during the current session of the General Assembly. The way in which the Council had dealt with follow-up action in connection with the critical situation in Africa was to be commended. The adoption by consensus of the resolution submitted on that subject by the Group of African States was of great significance. In that connection, the manner in which the African Heads of State and Government had approached the problem was admirable. His delegation fully supported the efforts of the African countries. It supported their call for the convening of a special session of the General Assembly on the critical economic situation in Africa and of an international conference on the external indebtedness of African countries; his delegation also hoped that the efforts undertaken thus far would be continued and that their cohesiveness would be strengthened.

66. His delegation was disappointed at the lack of progress in the drafting of a code of conduct on transnational corporations; to break the current deadlock, a working group of the Second Committee should perhaps be established during the forty-first session of the General Assembly to consider the remaining issues with a view to completing the drafting of the code. His delegation welcomed the fact that Public Hearings on the Activities of Transnational Corporations in South Africa and Namibia had recently been held; perhaps the Second Committee might carefully examine the results of the Hearings during the current session and draw conclusions which would be submitted to the General Assembly.

67. Drawing attention to Economic and Social Council decisions 1985/177, on Israeli economic practices in the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories, and 1985/52, on permanent sovereignty over natural resources, he expressed concern

(Mr. Hussain, Pakistan)

at the fact that Israel's illegal occupation of Palestine and other Arab territories was bringing about a deterioration in the economic situation of those regions and insisted that a comprehensive report should be prepared on the question.

68. Mr. CHOWDHURY (Bangladesh) said that the decision to focus the second regular session of the Economic and Social Council on the questions of money and finance had yielded very positive results, and he stressed the need to draw a lesson from that experience and try to focus on specific issues in the future.

69. He recalled the suggestions made by his delegation concerning the rationalization of the work of the Economic and Social Council to the effect that the Council should urgently review its objectives and functioning with regard to its responsibilities for system-wide co-ordination, adopt procedures so that the more basic issues could be discussed in greater depths, reduce routine activities and avoid the adoption of repetitive resolutions, serve as a forum for discussing issues of global and interregional interests for subsequent action by the General Assembly, and consider the recommendation of the Group of Experts on the Structure of the United Nations System to set up small negotiating groups to deal with basic economic questions in greater depth in order to arrive at solutions; that the heads of the specialized agencies, programmes and bodies of the United Nations system should participate more actively in the deliberations of the Council at the committee level on issues falling within their competence instead of making statements in plenary meeting; and that the substantive services of the Secretariat should improve the analytical quality of the documentation submitted to the Council. He proposed that the Secretariat should prepare a document containing all the suggestions concerning the Council's work made by delegations at the second regular session.

70. Stressing the importance of the work of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination, he said that the interaction between the Second Committee and the Fifth Committee, particularly with respect to the consideration of the report of CPC, should be improved. He suggested that the report of CPC should be submitted and considered at joint sessions of the two Committees.

71. Mr. PAYTON (New Zealand), stressing the importance of the Economic and Social Council which had launched some of the most successful United Nations programmes and gave cohesion to a complex system, said that the Council had proved to be equal to the tasks entrusted to it. Thus, Council resolution 1985/80 on the critical economic situation in Africa, which had been adopted by consensus after lengthy negotiations, showed the resolve of the international community to face that problem squarely. It was also hoped that the spirit of co-operation and consensus demonstrated by the Committee on the Review and Appraisal of the Implementation of the International Development Strategy would also manifest itself in the work of the Second Committee in spite of the difficulties which arose in connection with some of the questions on its agenda and which should be dealt with openly and constructively.

(Mr. Payton, New Zealand)

72. In that regard, note should be taken of a number of positive developments such as the decision of the States parties to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade to work towards a new round of multilateral trade negotiations, the conclusions reached at the meetings of the World Bank and IMF in Seoul and the pledge taken by the Commonwealth countries at their recent meeting in Nassau to participate fully in the revitalization of multilateral institutions and in all concerted efforts to deal with the basic problems of inequality in international economic relations. Multilateralism offered the only chance of achieving the economic and social objectives which the Organization had set.

73. With regard to food and agricultural problems, although his delegation regretted that it had not been possible to adopt a resolution at the second session of the Council on a subject of such importance, it was hoped that a consensus, which his delegation would join, could be reached at the current session of the General Assembly. Ways of rationalizing food production to meet human needs must be found.

74. His delegation had supported the holding of the Public Hearings on the Activities of Transnational Corporations in South Africa and Namibia. Those Hearings had made it possible to analyse the current situation and had enabled various parties to express their points of view. Although New Zealand had no transnational corporations which operated in South Africa or Namibia, his country, nevertheless, was interested in the work carried out by the United Nations in that field and therefore wished to see the role of those corporations throughout the world assessed in a realistic and fair manner. For that reason, his delegation could not accept the methods used within the Council to stifle the debate on the proposals made by several Western delegations concerning the definition of transnational corporations and the content of the work programme of the Centre on Transnational Corporations.

74a. Referring to the consideration of the draft resolution on alternative forms for the calendar of meetings of the Economic and Social Council, he said that the Council's work methods, which had been decided upon in 1947, should not be considered immutable. In that regard, his delegation was firmly opposed to concluding discussion when delegations still wished to express their views on questions under consideration and expressed the hope that a more constructive approach would be taken at future meetings of the Council.

75. Ms. FERNANDES (Brazil) said that her delegation supported the views expressed by the representative of Yugoslavia on behalf of the Group of 77 on agenda item 12. With regard to the question of the countries stricken by desertification and drought, it was regrettable that the final report of the Secretary-General on the question had not been submitted at the fortieth session of the General Assembly, because the document before the Committee (A/40/392), which had already been considered at the second session of the Economic and Social Council in 1985, made no mention of the activities which could be undertaken in the United Nations system in order to solve the problems in that field or of the co-ordination measures which were being taken to avoid duplication. The solution to the problem

(Ms. Fernandes, Brazil)

of desertification must include the dissemination of agricultural techniques which maximized output but did not exhaust the soil. The developing countries were confronted with that phenomenon, not because they practised soil "mismanagement", but because they lacked both scientific and technological information and resources. The report of the Secretary-General on financing the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification (A/40/644) showed that modalities and plans which were feasible and would meet with the broad support of the international community had not yet been devised. Furthermore, the success of the projects and programmes drawn up within the framework of the Plan of Action submitted to the World Commission on Environment and Development for a rational and non-destructive use of tropical forests would depend on the availability of the funds necessary to implement the projects and programmes drawn up. The international community was aware of the gravity of the situation and the urgent need for measures to combat desertification and protect the forests. That, however, was not enough and effective measures must be taken speedily. United Nations bodies should endeavour, within the existing framework, to mobilize resources, provide technical assistance, promote South-South co-operation and spread scientific and technological information. Any attempt to introduce the question of sovereignty over natural resources under the pretext that "political decisions" were needed should be rejected because the political decision to address those issues had been taken by the countries concerned at a much earlier date.

76. Mr. LEE (Canada) noted with satisfaction that the general debate at the second session in 1985 of the Economic and Social Council had been more constructive than in recent years. It was gratifying that during the debate on Africa general agreement had been reached on the need to concentrate more on the medium- and long-term development needs of that continent. Furthermore, the efforts to reform and revitalize the Council were beginning to bear fruit, although much remained to be done. In particular, the biennial approach should be fully applied by the Council at its second regular session and by the Second Committee.

77. The biennial report on the world population situation, which was summarized in the report of the Secretary-General (A/40/190-E/1985/20), highlighted the serious difficulties in that field. Although the developed world, like developing countries, had demographic problems to solve, it should also help the developing countries to control adequately their population growth in order to be able to meet development needs. Furthermore, demographic growth also had an impact on the environment. Those problems were difficult to solve. Many developing countries, for example, lacked family planning services. It was also necessary to educate women, since improving their status in society was of great importance in order to reduce fertility. Population problems were linked to economic and social factors; officials involved in population planning should give greater attention to that interdependence and resolve to support activities in the social sector.

78. Canada continued to give its full support to the work of the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) and thought it appropriate that the Fund should provide the means for planning programmes to assist developing countries in solving their population problems. Canada was currently one of the main donors,



(Mr. Lee, Canada)

having contributed 10.4 million Canadian dollars in 1984. He earnestly hoped that account would be taken of the recent decisions of the UNFPA Governing Council and the Secretary-General's report on the strengthening of the Fund that would be submitted by next year, with a view to qualitative and quantitative improvements in the Fund's support activities. A recent internal evaluation of the Fund had revealed that UNFPA staff in the field did not have the same levels of qualification and that there were some gaps in support services at Headquarters. Furthermore, programmes and related technical support services should be better conceived and more emphasis should be given to research and planning. It would also be desirable if the Fund's financing capacity in that regard could be strengthened. The lack of co-operation and co-ordination among the various United Nations bodies in implementing projects was disturbing. UNFPA should try to strengthen the co-ordination of planning and operational activities. It was important that family planning activities carried out under UNFPA auspices should continue to be voluntary.

79. In addition to the very important work being done by UNFPA, the very useful work of numerous non-governmental organizations in the field of population activities was noteworthy.

80. The Canadian delegation supported the draft resolution on the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade (IDWSSD), adopted at the Ninth Session of the Committee on Natural Resources (decision 9/11). Governments should carefully study the Secretary-General's report on the progress achieved in meeting the goals of the Decade (A/40/108), including the recommendations in section III.

81. With respect to regional co-operation and the place of the regional commissions in the United Nations system, he reaffirmed his delegation's view that the organs of the system should work as a team. That applied for example, in the case of the regional commissions, which together with other bodies, would play an important role in implementing the Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women adopted in Nairobi.

82. The General Assembly had expressed the view that the appointment of senior women's programme officers at the regional commissions was integral to the successful outcome of programmes for women and had given instructions on that subject (resolution 39/127). The response of the regional commissions to the Assembly's request had been extremely disappointing. It was all the more vital to comply inasmuch as the Nairobi Strategies laid down a 15-year programme to advance the status of women.

83. The nineteenth session of the Committee on Food Aid Policies had yielded positive results. The spirit of co-operation shown in discussions on institutional questions had made it possible for useful work to be done in implementing the Joint UN/FAO Task Force recommendations on the World Food Programme. The agreement reached on the proposed WFP pledging target to increase food aid by 25 per cent in relation to the previous biennium was particularly satisfying. The amounts set were realistic and extremely useful in planning the aid programme. Canada, which was the largest per capita donor would continue to provide the Programme with more than 45 per cent of the country's annual food aid which amounted to over \$145 million.



84. Mr. ELHASSAN (Sudan) said it had rightly been observed that lack of infrastructure, protectionism and deterioration of the terms of trade were obstacles to the development of the food sector in Africa. The countries of Africa were still in an emergency situation and there were many problems to be solved, particularly with respect to food relief, transportation and distribution. There were also many other needs which had not been properly studied: for example, health, water supply and the question of storage facilities for the coming harvest. At the present time, the main concern should be to ensure long-term rehabilitation. In that connection, rural development was a priority in Africa, where many countries were dependent on agriculture. It was also equally true to say that the debt problem had not been significantly alleviated by the palliatives used so far. As had rightly been observed, it was up to the creditors to take the necessary steps. Furthermore, it was necessary to grant funds on favourable terms. On the other hand, it did not appear that a case-by-case approach should be used to settle the debt problem. Admittedly, each country had its own specific situation, but some general measures were also needed.

85. The report by the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) on the Transport and Communications Decade in Africa (A/40/633) was extremely useful. It highlighted the role given to the Economic and Social Council, which was the United Nations lead agency for the co-ordination and control of operations, and raised questions which had never really been dealt with by the Council or the Second Committee in the years that those bodies had been concerned with the Decade. An evaluation report reviewing the progress made so far during the Decade had been requested but was not yet available. It was hoped that in 1986, the Council, the General Assembly and the Council of Ministers of the Economic Commission for Africa would study it thoroughly. Accordingly, the JIU report was the only available analysis of the Decade. The transport and communications sector was a vital one, however, and its importance had been highlighted by the difficulties encountered in the emergency relief operations. The report systematically and objectively examined problems of all sorts - conceptual, institutional, financial and practical - which had proved stumbling-blocks to the Decade and assessed the extent to which goals had been achieved. As JIU so aptly put it, hopes had not been realized and routine had replaced enthusiasm. Admittedly, the Decade had been useful in increasing awareness of the problems but, as stated in the report, it had failed to act as a catalyst for the mobilization of internal or external resources. To do so would have required more cohesion, better integration and more exactly defined roles and mandates. The recommendation that a two-year "period of reflection" should be devoted immediately after the Decade to making careful preparation for subsequent action was interesting. The Secretary-General's comments on the JIU report (A/40/663/Add.1), which dealt primarily with the question of the additional resources required by ECA, did not cover the whole of its analysis in the JIU report.

86. Mr. LUFTI (Jordan), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, referred to a statement by the representative of Israel, who had challenged the permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people over the resources of the occupied territories, defended the exercise of Israeli authority over those territories and criticized the assistance given to the people of those territories. It was clear,

(Mr. Lufti, Jordan)

however, from United Nations investigations and from statements made in United Nations forums that Israel was trying to appropriate the resources of the occupied territories and was using oppression in the process. In order to justify the continued occupation, Israel claimed that it benefited the Palestinian people, whose standard of living was improving. If such was the case, he wondered why Arab resistance to the Israeli occupation forces was increasing. Those forces had resorted to the most illegal methods of usurpation and the most inhuman practices in order to force the Palestinian people to leave and to establish settlements in their place. The deputy mayor of Jerusalem, an Israeli himself, had spoken of those practices. Similarly, an article which had appeared some years ago in the Washington Post had reported that some Israelis who had failed to convince an elderly Palestinian to sell them his lands to make room for a settlement had cut off his fingers to compel him to sign a contract of sale. All the investigations carried out had reached the same conclusion: Israel was engaging in acts of violent repression against the Palestinians in order to appropriate their resources.

The meeting rose at 6.50 p.m.