



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 31st MEETING

Chairman: Ms. ERIKSSON (Sweden)

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STATEMENT BY THE UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR POLITICAL AND GENERAL ASSEMBLY AFFAIRS

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The meeting was called to order at 10.50 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 84: DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION (continued)
(A/C.2/40/L.30)

1. Mr. LAZAREVIC (Yugoslavia), introducing the draft resolution entitled "International Conference on Money and Finance for Development" (A/C.2/40/L.30) on behalf of the Group of 77, said that the Group had decided to submit a draft resolution on the matter because of the difficulties which the existing financial and monetary system had in meeting the requirements of the world economy and facilitating the development of the developing countries.

2. Since the partial efforts so far taken to deal with the situation had not only proved inadequate but had produced negative effects on the economies of developing countries, the Group of 77 believed that the time had come for a genuine multilateral approach which would reflect current realities and provide an impetus towards evolving a more equitable and satisfactory monetary and financial system with the co-operation of all countries concerned.

3. In the view of the developing countries, the international conference on money and finance for development proposed by the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries would provide the most appropriate forum for assessing the problems and deciding on proper solutions. The draft resolution confined itself to requesting the Secretary-General to undertake consultations at an appropriately high level on the terms of reference, format and timing of such a conference, with a view to convening an intergovernmental committee to begin preparatory work by April 1986.

4. The preparatory work would include intergovernmental discussions on the problems facing the international financial and monetary system and would take into account the relevant studies made by developing and other countries, as well as the necessary documentation provided by the Secretary-General. The Group of 77 was ready to enter into consultations with other groups and with China in order to agree on a meaningful text of the draft resolution.

AGENDA ITEM 84: DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION (continued)

(c) TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT (continued) (A/C.2/40/L.31)

5. Mr. LAZAREVIC (Yugoslavia), introducing the draft resolution on the reverse transfer of technology (A/C.2/40/L.31) on behalf of the Group of 77, said that measures taken to solve the problem of the outflow of qualified personnel from developing to developed countries had not been successful. In order to overcome that problem, which was seriously hindering the development of the developing countries, appropriate steps should be taken at the national and international levels.

6. The Group of 77 therefore proposed the convening of a fourth meeting of governmental experts on the reverse transfer of technology not later than the first quarter of 1987 to consider and formulate an integrated programme of action on that question and make recommendations on its implementation.

AGENDA ITEM 87: SPECIAL ECONOMIC AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE: SPECIAL PROGRAMMES OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE (A/40/3, 173, 423, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434 and Add.1, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 672, 770; A/C.2/40/3, 7; E/1985/67, 68)

7. Mr. RICHTER (German Democratic Republic) said that he agreed with the Secretary-General that efficient steps would in future be necessary at the national, bilateral and multilateral levels to render prompt and effective assistance to countries in emergency situations. The famine in Africa had demonstrated once again the need for co-ordinated measures within the United Nations system, such as had been implemented by the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator (UNDRO).
8. To that end, it was important to find the most cost-effective forms of co-operation with other United Nations bodies and to accord strict respect to the sovereignty of the afflicted countries whenever relief measures were initiated and implemented, including the stage of evaluating the situation and the assistance needed by the country concerned.
9. Mindful of the need to act swiftly in disaster situations, the German Democratic Republic had been one of the first States to render assistance to Mexico in the wake of the earthquakes in September 1985, and would continue to support Mexico's reconstruction efforts. Indeed, the idea of solidarity with other peoples was a part of life for people in the German Democratic Republic, which, in 1984 and 1985, had provided relief assistance for 18 developing countries as well as for the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) and the African National Congress (ANC). Acting in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 39/204, it had given Nicaragua assistance for reconstruction and development totalling 80 million marks by the end of 1984.
10. His delegation also shared the view that emergency aid should be accompanied by efforts to create conditions for the countries affected to tackle such situations through their own efforts or to prevent or restrict their occurrence. What was needed, among other measures, was the establishment of a stable industrial and agricultural base, the training of the required national personnel and the development of an appropriate infrastructure. To that end, the German Democratic Republic would intensify its equal and mutually beneficial co-operation with the States of Asia, Africa and Latin America on the basis of long-term programmes and agreements.
11. Mr. SEMEDO (Guinea-Bissau) said that Member States should take the opportunity of the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations to carry out an objective and realistic analysis of the international economic situation with a view to identifying appropriate solutions. The constant deterioration in the international economy, which affected mainly the developing countries, was an unquestionable reality. In the particular case of the African continent, the economic and financial crisis was being exacerbated by the effects of drought, desertification and famine.

(Mr. Semedo, Guinea-Bissau)

12. His own country's economic situation was characterized by a pronounced imbalance whose main features included large deficits in the budget and balance of payments, a weak secondary sector, inadequate investments by the public sector, with a consequent lack of basic infrastructure and a considerable reduction in marketable domestic products. In addition, there was the lack of incentives and the adverse climatic conditions during the period 1977 to 1983 which had plunged the country into a chronic food shortage.

13. In order to tackle such a difficult situation, his Government had drawn up a comprehensive development strategy in three stages, namely: economic and financial stabilization, restoration of balance in the national economy, and independent economic development. A stabilization programme had been formulated for the first stage (1983-1984), which had focused on remedying the economic and financial situation, reorganizing the economic and financial structures, making rational use of external assistance and controlling the economy.

14. The stabilization programme formed part of the first four-year economic and social development plan (1983-1986), in which emphasis was placed on three sectors: the rural sector, including forestry, fisheries and mining resources; the support sector, including transport, trade and finance; and the education, health, information and culture sector.

15. A basic component of the stabilization programme and of the first four-year economic and social development plan was the National Food Security Plan, aimed at ensuring that the basic food needs of the population were met in a more rational way, in the medium, long and short term, and that food production was increased with a view to self-sufficiency. The implementation of the Food Security Plan required the assistance of the international community. The Plan would help to promote the identification of national food needs, which would be met from national production and from indispensable outside contributions; it would help to determine production surpluses, which would be transferred to deficit regions; it would help to identify the obstacles preventing a regular supply from reaching the population and the means to be taken to overcome those obstacles, create the conditions needed to increase food production, organize the national grain market and stabilize agricultural prices.

16. There was no question that the responsibility for the economic recovery of a country lay first and foremost with the nationals of that country and that nothing could substitute for national effort. Any recovery process, however, would depend to a large extent on support from the international community and, in particular, on the honouring by donors of commitments made to recipient countries, so that the latter could execute the development programmes submitted at the round-table conferences of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and at other international meetings.

17. The Mission sent by the Secretary-General to Guinea-Bissau in April 1985, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 39/186, had decided that although the stringent measures adopted by the Government of Guinea-Bissau in 1984 had begun to bear fruit, the country still had to face the same economic and financial difficulties as in 1982. Furthermore, at the conferences between Guinea-Bissau and

(Mr. Semedo, Guinea-Bissau)

its main economic partners in 1984 and 1985, it had been recognized that the economic policy measures taken by the Government within the framework of its stabilization programme had helped to correct a number of distortions in the country's economic and financial situation. However, the lack of infrastructure and skilled manpower, and the scarcity of consumer goods, means of production, intermediate goods and capital equipment continued to hamper national economic recovery.

18. In the light of those circumstances, Guinea-Bissau needed sustained and regular external assistance in general, and food aid in particular, which was essential both to offset the food deficit caused by adverse climatic conditions and as a short-term measure to ease the pressure on the balance of payments.

19. He thanked the organizations and donor countries for their positive support to Guinea-Bissau's development efforts and reaffirmed the hope that the Secretariat would send a mission to Guinea-Bissau in 1986, to assess the progress made in implementing the special programme of economic assistance.

20. Ms. FRANKINET (Belgium), referring specifically to the way in which the Second Committee dealt every year with the item on special economic and disaster relief assistance, questioned the usefulness of the annual submission of a long list of resolutions, with minor changes, on the need for external assistance by some countries. Like all the Governments concerned, her Government believed that it was necessary to draw the attention of the international community to the difficulties being encountered by some countries; it felt, however, that the resolutions adopted by the Committee were not necessarily the most efficient way of attaining that objective.

21. In principle, her delegation supported the proposal for rationalizing the procedure by including the different draft resolutions on special economic assistance in a single resolution. For purposes of mobilizing resources (which was the main intention of the resolutions) it should be pointed out that the least developed countries, the category to which the majority of countries needing special economic assistance belonged, had other instruments of proven efficiency for mobilizing external assistance, namely, the UNDP round-table conferences and the World Bank consultative groups. Those mechanisms required sustained efforts from the recipient and donor countries and from the multilateral organizations concerned, as well as lengthy preparation.

22. Her delegation had repeatedly pointed out that there was duplication of effort between the Secretariat and the UNDP round-table conferences in the area of special economic assistance. Although it would seem that, in general, there was an awareness of the problem, so far, the necessary measures for rationalization had not been taken. The multiplicity of resolutions in their present form regularly entailed substantial expenditure, which was out of proportion to the contributions obtained. Those funds could be effectively utilized for other programmes. If the preparation of resolutions on the item had to continue, it should be done as efficiently as possible, bearing in mind the activities of all parts of the United Nations system.

23. Mr. WOLDE-GIORGIS (Ethiopia) referred to the appeal he had made the previous year to the Second Committee when Ethiopia had been suffering the effects of one of the worst droughts in its history, and expressed appreciation for the joint effort made by the international community in pursuance of the resolution adopted by the General Assembly at its thirty-ninth session. The tragedy of Ethiopia, which had mobilized the whole world in a perhaps unprecedented effort, had brought together the people and Government of Ethiopia in a joint effort which, with the collaboration of the international community, in particular the Office for Emergency Operations in Africa, had saved millions of lives.

24. Ethiopia's total food aid requirement for 1985 was 1.3 million tonnes. Of that amount, 1.2 million tonnes had been pledged and approximately 1.1 million tonnes had been received. Between December 1984 and August 1985 some 650,000 tonnes of food had been distributed, or a total of 53.3 million monthly rations to an average of 6.3 million people per month. Almost all the drought victims in the inaccessible areas had received aid through the international airlift.

25. His Government had mobilized financial, material and human resources for the relief operations and had utilized up to 70 per cent of the national transport capacity for the transportation of relief items. In addition, the port unloading capacity had increased considerably, sometimes reaching a maximum of 4,000 tonnes a day. At the same time, the Government had begun a massive resettlement programme. So far, of the total target of 300,000 families, 182,695 had been moved to the more fertile and less densely populated areas of the country. Through the efforts of the international community, 214,151 drought victims had received food rations, seeds and agricultural implements so that they could return to their homes and begin a productive and self-supporting life again.

26. Notwithstanding all those efforts, the emergency persisted and required the continued attention of the international community. In 1985, production during the short rainy season had not reached normal levels because of a lack of rain in some areas, but more importantly, because of a lack of seeds, oxen and agricultural tools. Furthermore, as a result of the dislocation caused by the drought, many farmers had not been able to take advantage of the good rains. In those circumstances, it was estimated that, in 1986, about 5.8 million people would be affected by food shortages and that food aid requirements would be 1.2 million tonnes.

27. Accordingly, Ethiopia was launching an early appeal for international assistance, to give the donors as much time as possible to make plans for their contributions and to ensure the delivery of supplies in time, so as to facilitate their timely distribution to those in need. To that end, joint planning by his Government and the donor countries would continue to be of key importance.

28. He hoped that the international community would once again respond positively to Ethiopia's request. The Government, for its part, had set up an effective and improved relief distribution system, so that it could provide assistance to all drought victims, and pledged that whatever assistance was received would be distributed as quickly as possible to them.

(Mr. Wolde-Giorqis, Ethiopia)

29. To do that, distribution points had been and would continue to be set up close to the affected people to prevent their having to leave their homes, with the suffering and loss of agricultural production that entailed. Assuming that in 1986 aircraft from donor countries and specialized agencies were still available and the necessary additional trucks were obtained, it might be possible to surpass the already excellent record set in recent months in the distribution of emergency relief to those in need.

30. In 1986, the Ethiopian Government would also implement a recovery programme for drought victims which would include the provision of agricultural inputs and implements, the implementation of drinking-water supply projects in drought-stricken areas, the housing of nearly 200,000 children without families and the provision of assistance to hundreds of thousands of returnees from neighbouring countries in the Harerge region, which, according to predictions, would be one of the regions most severely affected by drought in 1986. Those efforts also required urgent assistance from the international community.

31. In addition, in order to prevent the recurrence of such a sweeping tragedy, the Government would continue to promote the implementation of longer-term programmes for the rehabilitation of the population and land in the drought-affected northern areas and for the resettlement of part of that population in the western and south-western parts of the country. Reforestation, water- and soil-conservation schemes and resettlement in more fertile areas had shown encouraging results. Nevertheless, the process was a long and painstaking one which urgently required increased international assistance.

32. Another matter to which the Government of Ethiopia attached great priority was the establishment of a food security reserve which would, at 180,000 tonnes, make it possible to respond quickly to disaster situations and prevent delays created by the process of requesting, pledging, receiving and distributing food aid from abroad. The Ethiopian Government was prepared to make a substantial contribution to that reserve, but expected the donor community to provide larger contributions.

33. General Assembly resolution 39/201 stressed the importance of solutions to the problem of the medium-term and long-term recovery and rehabilitation of Ethiopia. Yet the action taken thus far in that realm left much to be desired. Unless the international community revised its attitude towards the financing of development and rehabilitation projects in Ethiopia, it was unlikely that that country would become self-sufficient in the short term. For its part, the Ethiopian people was unwavering in its determination to do everything possible to achieve that objective.

STATEMENT BY THE UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR POLITICAL AND GENERAL ASSEMBLY AFFAIRS

34. Mr. BUFFUM (Under-Secretary-General for Political and General Assembly Affairs), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on assistance for the reconstruction and development of Lebanon (A/40/434 and Add.1), said that the atmosphere of general insecurity in Lebanon had severely limited the scope of United Nations activities there. At the same time, the increasing number of civilian victims of the hostilities and the physical destruction which had been wrought had led to a redirecting of efforts to relief and rehabilitation activities.

(Mr. Buffum)

35. The displacement of the population, one of the most dramatic aspects of the situation, currently involved hundreds of thousands of people and constituted one of the major concerns of the Government, which had requested the international community's support in alleviating that problem.

36. Under those circumstances, it must be emphasized that all United Nations agencies dealing with technical operations and economic development had kept their offices in Lebanon open, although they had had temporarily to reduce the number of their international personnel and their field operations. FAO had been active in a number of development projects funded by UNDP (which had been compelled to suspend most of its projects because of the situation), by bilateral resources and under its own regular programme.

37. UNICEF, too, had played a major role in activities relating to water supply, health and education financed with its own resources (in the amount of \$US 4.4 million) and, in co-operation with the Lebanese Council of Development and Reconstruction, under the South Lebanon Reconstruction Programme (in the amount of \$6.4 million) aimed initially at restoring basic services in that region and, later, in Beirut and other war-affected areas. In addition, UNICEF had recently started a rehabilitation programme in the area of drinking-water supply at a cost of \$5.6 million.

38. The World Food Programme (WFP), which was implementing three development projects that had provided assistance in the amount of approximately \$4 million to roughly 1 million people, had also provided emergency food aid and had only recently approved a new programme to cover the food needs of 300,000 displaced persons in and around Tripoli for 90 days, at a cost of \$6,670,000. The World Health Organization (WHO) had reprogrammed its 1984-1985 budget of \$1,140,000 in order to meet Lebanon's urgent needs.

39. At present, although humanitarian assistance needs were constantly increasing, the United Nations had very limited resources with which to meet them. However, as a result of the co-ordinating role played by the United Nations Co-ordinating Committee in Beirut, the international assistance received had been used most efficiently. In that connection, it should be emphasized that the United Nations was providing assistance without discriminating in any way on the basis of geographical areas or factional groups, and always with the full agreement of the Lebanese Government.

40. With regard to the scarcity of available resources, he was sorry to report that the Trust Fund of the Secretary-General for assistance to Lebanon had exhausted all its resources. The balance available for the current year - \$560,000 - had been used to purchase emergency relief items for needy displaced persons and to carry out urgent repairs of the water and sanitation facilities in Beirut and Tripoli. UNHCR had, over and above its normal activities of protecting refugees in keeping with its mandate, contributed \$100,000 for the population affected in the Sidon region and, more recently, \$70,000 for relief activities in Tripoli. Lastly, the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) had also extended humanitarian assistance to the local population in its area of operation.

(Mr. Buffum)

41. It should likewise be noted that the Secretary-General had dispatched to Lebanon a high-level mission from the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator (UNDRO), which had visited the country from 31 October to 4 November 1985. The mission had confirmed the grim situation facing 500,000 displaced persons, whose relief and rehabilitation needs were estimated at \$51 million, in addition to the significant need for health facilities. The Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Political and General Assembly Affairs, in collaboration with UNDRO in Geneva, had initiated a joint fund-raising effort. It was his hope that, following its consideration of the Secretary-General's report on that subject, the Second Committee would decide to maintain the level of assistance provided in previous years.

42. Mr. BITAR (Lebanon) expressed his Government's profound gratitude to the Under-Secretary-General and his Office and to the various organs of the United Nations system which had been involved in providing humanitarian assistance and in the reconstruction and development of Lebanon during the most difficult time in its history.

The meeting rose at noon