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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 48th MEETING

Chairman:

Mr. PAPADATOS

(Greece)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

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

Draft decision on the inclusion of Liberia in the list of least developed countries (A/C.2/45/L.45 and A/C.2/45/L.48)

1. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to draft decision A/C.2/45/L.45 and to its programme budget implications (A/C.2/45/L.48).
2. Draft decision A/C.2/45/L.45 was adopted.
3. Mr. HURLEY (United States of America) said that, while it had joined the consensus on the decision, his delegation would welcome more precise criteria for the inclusion of countries in the least developed country category. If the list of least developed countries was to serve a useful function, it must be a dynamic one, allowing for subtractions as well as additions.

AGENDA ITEM 85: TRAINING AND RESEARCH

(b) UNITED NATIONS UNIVERSITY (A/45/31)

4. Mr. GURGULINO de SOUZA (Rector, United Nations University) said that the University's second medium-term perspective for 1990-1995 was focused on developing strengths in certain areas, particularly by improving the effectiveness of the University's institutional mechanisms. The programme activities were organized within five programme areas: (a) peace, culture and governance; (b) the global economy; (c) global life support systems; (d) science and technology; (e) population, health and human welfare.
5. The University's institutional development had led to the establishment of a number of research and training centres and programmes. The World Institute for Development Economics Research (WIDER) concentrated on global economic issues and had produced a substantial number of useful publications. The Institute for New Technologies (INTECH), which had just become operational, would be concerned with microelectronics and biotechnology. Progress had been made in the establishment of research and training centres for software technology in Macau and environment and human health in Ulm. Consultations were being held on the proposed establishment of an institute of advanced studies in Tokyo and on other centres and programmes in a wide range of social, economic and technological fields. A programme on natural resources in Africa had just been initiated. It would be concerned with the conservation and management of land and water resources, indigenous African plants and mineral resources, and was designed to lead to the establishment of an Institute for Natural Resources in Africa (INRA). Another programme on biotechnology activities in Latin America and the Caribbean (to be known as BIOLAC) would concentrate on brucellosis research, plant biotechnology and micro-organisms of industrial interest.

(Mr. Gurgulino de Souza)

6. A decentralized system of institutes and programmes had thus been developed, operating with a degree of autonomy under the authority of the Council and the Rector. At its thirty-fifth session, however, the Council had acknowledged the need to review its strategy and to ensure that planned research and training centres and programmes were set up in accordance with the overall University programme structure.

7. In 1990, the University's Academic Publication Services had been reorganized as the United Nations University Press to ensure that the University's publications would be on a par with those of other University presses throughout the world, and it had already published some 250 titles.

8. Collaboration between the University and the United Nations system had been strengthened and rendered more systematic. The University and WIDER had contributed actively to the preparations for the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly and the University and the United Nations Centre for Science and Technology for Development had agreed to establish a register of research in the United Nations system, in order to strengthen practical co-operation among United Nations research institutes.

9. The UNU/WIDER research conference on Hunger and Public Action, held in July 1990, had been attended by many high-level policy makers from different countries. It was hoped that it would have a positive influence on policies to combat hunger. UNU had also made useful contributions to work-shops and meetings on the issues of global warming, science and technology for development and new and renewable sources of energy.

10. Finally, he noted that the construction of the University headquarters building by the Government of Japan was progressing satisfactorily and should be completed by 1992.

11. Mr. DONG Jianlong (China) said that the United Nations University had made commendable progress in many areas in 1990 and its World Institute for Development Economics Research had won widespread acclaim for the high quality of its publications.

12. However, the University should play a still larger role. As an international community of scholars combining the fields of natural science and social science, it should advance its own views on such important issues as environment and development, poverty, population and debt relief, thereby increasing its prestige and attracting more funds.

13. The University should act as the research arm of the United Nations system in the study of long-term trends with the aim of forecasting major economic, social, scientific and technological developments. Co-operation between the University and the United Nations system, particularly UNDP and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), should be strengthened.

(Mr. Dong Jianlong, China)

14. The University should establish more research and training centres and operational units in developing countries thereby enhancing the academic capabilities of those countries. UNU headquarters should not be solely concerned with administration, but should expand its activities in the areas of academic research and planning. China proposed that University Council sessions should be held only once a year to save funds and to free headquarters staff for substantive academic work. It was essential for the University to gain widespread support through the successful implementation of its programmes if it wished to attract more funds and overcome its current financial difficulties.

15. Considerable progress had been made in the negotiations between China, Macau, Portugal and the United Nations on the funding of the Institute for Software Technology in Macau. Once the relevant agreement had been concluded, China would make every effort to ensure that the Institute was able to play a positive role in research and training.

16. Mr. HOLGER (Chile) said that the second medium-term perspective constituted an excellent general framework for specific UNU activities. The University was slowly establishing a network of research and training centres and programmes for the study of global problems of current concern to the United Nations and its specialized agencies. WIDER had produced a number of reports on matters of particular interest to the developing countries; they should be widely distributed, in particular to decision makers and in the United Nations system. His delegation hoped that INTECH and the other centres would produce work of similar quality.

17. The University's activities in the area of the environment and development, such as the Human Dimensions of Global Change Project and the studies produced jointly with WIDER, were of direct interest to Member States and could contribute significantly to the understanding of environmental and developmental issues and facilitate the discussion of policy options.

18. His delegation welcomed the increasing co-operation between the University and the United Nations system exemplified by the joint initiative with the United Nations Centre for Science and Technology for Development to establish a register of research within the United Nations system. UNU projects involving collaboration with Chilean institutions included research on iron deficiency and cognitive performance, rapid health assessment procedures and the study of micronutrients. Chile would continue to support UNU and called upon other States to do likewise.

19. Mr. ARKHIPOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that it was essential for the second medium-term perspective to adopt a systemic approach to research, which responded to the latest developments in the world economy, in population studies and in other areas of science and technology. The establishment of research centres in different parts of the world and the broad dissemination of scientific research materials would undoubtedly enhance the effectiveness of the University's work and the quality of its scientific training programmes. The authority of the University had been increased by its successful establishment of a wide network of contacts with scientific organizations and specialists, particularly in the developing countries.

(Mr. Arkhipov, USSR)

20. The USSR welcomed efforts to strengthen interaction between the University and the organizations of the United Nations system. The University had conducted valuable research in new and renewable energy sources and in other related areas and should be more directly involved in preparing the international community for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. It should also join forces with the United Nations Centre for Science and Technology for Development in studying environmentally benign technologies. The University could also include in its medium-term perspective for 1990-1995 consideration of the conversion of military production to peaceful uses, a matter of increasing interest to a number of countries.

21. Mr. SEZAKI (Japan) said that his delegation was pleased to learn that preparations for the start-up of activities under the second medium-term perspective had been concluded and that many activities were well under way. The survival of humankind depended on successfully addressing the five major themes of the second medium-term perspective and he strongly hoped that UNU would pursue these issues vigorously through its world-wide research and training network.

22. The role played by the research and training centres was important to the University's overall mission. It was encouraging to hear that the second such centre, INTECH, had commenced its work and he hoped that the University would move ahead with the establishment of other centres.

23. A closer relationship was needed between UNU and associated institutions. UNU headquarters should strengthen its central programming and co-ordination role, undertake exploratory inter-programmatic activities and continue to foster co-ordination and co-operation with other organizations, in particular those of the United Nations system.

24. His delegation was pleased to note that approximately 1,000 scholars and scientists from more than 90 countries had been trained under the University's regular fellowship programme. Such programmes emphasized institution-building in a South-South context. The University, whose associated institutions were located mainly in developing countries, had contributed to reducing the "brain drain" to the North.

25. Japan was pleased to learn that active consideration was being given to improving arrangements for the timely dissemination of research results and hoped that that would be done in a cost-effective manner. He suggested that UNU should co-operate more with the United Nations information centres.

26. The University's serious financial situation remained a source of concern. To prevent further erosion of the Endowment Fund and maximize interest income an independently managed investment portfolio should be established at an early date. His delegation endorsed the Rector's appeal for financial contributions and suggested that the UNU newsletter, Work in Progress, should be used to increase public awareness and so assist fund-raising. Finally, he said that Japan continued to support the University in its action-oriented research.

27. Mr. MALONE (Canada) said that during the past year UNU had contributed to a number of Secretariat reports and had played a leading role in strengthening co-operation among various United Nations research institutes. The resulting organisational improvement should lead to more efficient planning of research programmes and co-operation in research efforts. Canada strongly supported the work of UNU and looked forward to a better integration of the recently initiated research activities.

28. Mr. BARAC (Romania) said that his delegation would welcome an expansion of the University's activities relating to economic reform in Eastern Europe. The University could assist interested countries of Eastern Europe in overcoming the complex problems they faced in moving over to market-oriented economy, inter alia, by providing specialized publications in economics and offering fellowships in developed countries for Romanian students wishing to study aspects of the market economy.

29. Mr. MUCHANGA (Zambia) welcomed the appointment of the Director of the Institute for Natural Resources in Africa, which should help the Institute to become operational. Zambia had pledged \$US 2 million to INRA, and was gratified to note the pledges of support from African Governments, official donors and individuals. The INRA mineral resources unit, for which Zambia was providing initial facilities, would assist African countries in general to benefit from their rich mineral resources.

AGENDA ITEM 79: DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION (continued)

Draft resolution on large-scale pelagic driftnet fishing and its impact on the living marine resources of the world's oceans and seas (A/C.2/45/L.50)

30. Mrs. THORPE (Trinidad and Tobago), introducing the draft resolution, said that Ethiopia, Haiti, Jamaica, Kenya, Malaysia and the Philippines had joined the list of sponsors. States were bound under the 1983 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea to promote the conservation and management of the living resources of the high seas and many Governments had taken action to give effect to the provisions of General Assembly resolution 44/225, to secure conservation of the world's living marine resources in the light of the impact of large-scale pelagic driftnet fishing. The delicately balanced text, which attempted to take into account regional and global concerns, should be seen as a concrete, collective step aimed at achieving the full and timely implementation of Assembly resolution 44/225.

The meeting rose at 11.35 a.m.