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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 41st MEETING

Chairman: Mr. PAPADATOS (Greece)
later: Mr. AMAZIANE (Morocco)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

1. The CHAIRMAN said that he had received a request from a non-governmental organization, the Lutheran World Federation, to address the Committee under the cluster of agenda items 79, 80 and 81, on behalf of the Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations (CONGO), in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council. He had discussed the matter with the Bureau, which considered that it would be acceptable, on an exceptional basis and without setting a precedent, to allow that non-governmental organization to address the Committee at its forty-first meeting. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee agreed to that suggestion.

2. It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 79: DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION (continued)
(A/45/25, A/45/663, A/45/666)

AGENDA ITEM 80: UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT
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A/45/696 and Add.1)

3. Mr. SEZAKI (Japan), referring to the report of the Governing Council of UNEP on the work of its second special session (A/45/25), said that his delegation was pleased that Japan's proposal to support UNEP in establishing a centre to provide a technical information database, training and consulting services had been welcomed by many delegations and the Executive Director of UNEP.

4. Turning to agenda item 80, he said that it was gratifying that the Preparatory Committee of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development was taking on a co-ordinating role for activities, particularly concerning forest issues, that had previously been undertaken by FAO, UNEP and the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) under their separate mandates and at the risk of some duplication. The forestry issue must continue to be discussed in the Preparatory Committee if a positive outcome was to be achieved, and Japan wished to participate even more actively in that debate.

5. The first substantive meeting of the Preparatory Committee had been fruitful, but in order to implement its decisions and prepare the output of the Conference in the limited time available, it was important to make full use of the results of ongoing international environmental protection efforts. Although a large number of issues would inevitably be raised during the preparatory process, the focus should be on finding practical solutions to specific problems and on setting up Working

(Mr. Sezaki, Japan)

Group III as soon as possible. A starting-point would be those terms of reference on which agreement could be reached at the outset, to which others could be added, if necessary.

6. Turning to agenda item 81, he said that global warming posed a serious threat, and his Government therefore welcomed the First Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the Ministerial Declaration of the Second World Climate Conference. In order to control carbon dioxide emissions, it was essential to set targets and also to draw up a plan based on specific measures. Japan took pride in having the highest level of energy efficiency of any major industrialized country, and the lowest ratio of carbon dioxide emissions per GDP: in October 1990 it had established an Action Plan to Arrest Global Warming, setting the year 2000 as the target for stabilizing such emissions at the present per capita level, and ordering action to stabilize total CO₂ emissions from the year 2000 onwards at about their 1990 level by means of innovative technologies, such as those related to solar hydrogen. An important component of the Action Plan was the promotion of international co-operation, e.g. by extending official development assistance and technology transfers to developing countries.

7. His delegation believed that the framework convention on climate change should be ready for signing by June 1992. It had been suggested that an implementation protocol on climate change should be completed by that date but, if the protocol was to be truly realistic and effective, it might not be productive to set a deadline for the time being. That view had also been taken by his Government at the G-7 Houston Summit.

8. Japan had also advocated the formulation of a comprehensive long-term programme, which might be called "New Earth 21", the aim of which would be to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases through global co-operation and to ensure that, over the next 100 years, the planet recovered from its current environmental problems. Technological breakthroughs would be critical for the success of such a programme, as would measures taken in a context of global partnership, such as promoting energy efficiency, reforestation, and the expanded development and use of new and renewable sources of energy. He stressed the importance of such comprehensive, long-term policies, to be implemented in parallel with short-term measures, and urged all countries to join in the great endeavour.

9. On the issue of large-scale driftnet fishing, his Government, one of the main supporters of General Assembly resolution 44/225, was basically of the view that high seas driftnet fishing was consistent with the conservation of resources if appropriate conservation and management measures were taken. It had thus made the regulation of that fishing procedure of its nationals more stringent and had made greater efforts to co-operate with the nations concerned in collecting and sharing statistically reliable scientific data, with due respect for the relevant provisions of resolution 44/225. An improved scientific observer programme, formulated jointly by Japan, Canada and the United States, was being carried out on board Japanese fishing vessels.

(Mr. Sezaki, Japan)

10. The report of the Secretary-General on the subject (A/45/663) was a useful attempt to collate all the information available, but it failed to provide a comprehensive overview of the measures already taken, or about to be taken, for the conservation and management of living marine resources relating to that fishing procedure, although they were referred to in passing in its various sections. It was very important to review the state of conservation and management as a whole, with a view to suggesting the direction that such measures should take in the long term.

11. Furthermore, the report gave no indication of the relative reliability of the various data derived from reports voluntarily submitted to the Secretary-General. While acknowledging that solid data were not yet available, his delegation felt that the report could have presented what data there were in a more meaningful way, as, for example, in the case of the results of the 1989 observer programme conducted jointly by Japan, Canada and the United States, referred to in paragraph 96 of the report. In that connection, his delegation was basically skeptical about the reliability and usefulness of past efforts to collect data relating to that method of fishing. For example, it rejected the argument that information obtained on driftnet operations in coastal waters should be applied indiscriminately to operations on the high seas. It thus regarded some of the data quoted, such as the rate of interception of marine mammals in paragraph 61, as insignificant and rather misleading. Given the very provisional nature of those data, the joint scientific observation programme being conducted was of vital importance.

12. The indiscriminatory use of information of varying reliability had resulted in inconsistencies in the report. Paragraphs 58, 88, 96 and 98 contained conflicting information and his Government wished to make it clear that the by-catch of salmon by Japanese driftnet fishing vessels was estimated to be statistically negligible.

13. The references to the various measures taken to regulate that fishing procedure was gratifying. The statements in paragraphs 74, 89 and 90 were in line with his Government's position concerning driftnet fishing. The general principle that control of fishing and enforcement of regulatory measures were the primary means of keeping resources at a sustainable yield level applied equally to driftnet fishing and also to by-catches of marine mammals. Driftnet fishing must be controlled in such a way that, when a by-catch was unavoidable, it was kept to an acceptable level.

14. The report also contained a large number of factual errors and misleading descriptions. The statement in paragraph 83 that Japan prohibited the use of large driftnets within its 200-mile zone was incorrect: large driftnet fishing for albacore was permitted. The statement in paragraphs 123 and 139 that Japan had taken measures to prohibit large-scale driftnet fishing in the Indian and Atlantic Oceans was misleading in that it implied that Japan had halted such operations, whereas there had never been any Japanese operations of that kind in those areas. Paragraph 25 was also very misleading in that the decision referred to therein did

(Mr. Sezaki, Japan)

not relate primarily to driftnet fishing, but to purse-seine fishing for yellow-fin tuna associated with dolphin, a method employed mainly in North America and parts of Latin America, not in Japan.

15. His Government had repeatedly emphasized the importance of discussing the issue of driftnet fishing on a scientific basis. The present report lacked statistically reliable data and hence concluded that it was not for the time being possible to provide a sound scientific analysis of many important issues relevant to the subject. The scientific research programmes conducted by Japan both alone and jointly with Canada and the United States could be expected to provide a basis for adopting effective conservation and management measures, in conformity with resolution 44/225, paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 (a).

16. Mr. SARDENBERG (Brazil) said that the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development to be held at Rio de Janeiro in 1992 would perhaps prove to be the most important international meeting of the twentieth century. He hoped that the General Assembly would endorse the recommendation of the Preparatory Committee that States should be represented at the Conference at the Heads of State and Government level. Brazil, the host country, would provide all requisite facilities for the work of the Conference.

17. Environmental protection involved fundamental rethinking of development and must seek to eliminate abuses in the life-style of industrial society. Whereas market forces in industrialized countries might provide sufficient impetus towards a better environment, in less affluent societies they could cause severe damage and even destruction of the environment. International co-operation must therefore mean more than traditional assistance to developing countries.

18. Environmental challenges should not be seen purely from a technical or scientific perspective: the environment was linked to almost every aspect of contemporary economic life. The lack of conclusive scientific evidence on the effects of certain activities or phenomena was perhaps the best argument for concerted action to achieve a more efficient pattern of development. That was particularly true with regard to climate change. The most striking conclusion reached by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, and also by a large body of opinion, was that the decisions required could not be postponed.

19. At its current session the General Assembly was expected to launch the negotiating process of a framework convention on climate. No effort should be spared to have that convention adopted and signed by a large number of countries at Rio de Janeiro in 1992. Climate change could be effected as a global issue only with full participation of all countries in the negotiations. The negotiating process should draw on the contributions of the whole spectrum of United Nations scientific and economic agencies. An independent ad hoc secretariat should serve the negotiating mechanism, with the assistance of the specialized agencies.

(Mr. Sardenberg, Brazil)

20. The framework convention would have to be robust enough to be not only useful, but also flexible: it would have to encompass many issues, from adjusting emissions to limiting them, from technology and resource transfers to the co-ordination of a global research programme. Negotiations would be held in a context of rapidly developing scientific understanding and of growing pressure on the developing countries regarding the need for measures to prevent climate change. All countries bore a common, though varying, responsibility for the causes of climate change and for the strategies needed to respond to it. Negotiation of the framework convention should be closely linked to the work of the Preparatory Committee of the Conference on environment and development.

21. The principles in resolution 44/228 should determine the attitudes of the international community towards specific environmental issues. The crisis affecting the environment should not give rise to pessimism, but should be seen as a stage in history where a decisive change of direction was required.

22. Mr. MAYCOCK (Barbados) said that in years to come 1990 might be looked upon as the decisive year in addressing environmental issues. The second special session of the UNEP Governing Council, the first substantive session of the Preparatory Committee of the Conference on environment and development, and the Second World Climate Conference were merely stages on the long road to 1992 and beyond. The meeting of the Preparatory Committee in Nairobi had firmly launched preparations for the 1992 Conference. While that meeting had achieved all it could at the time, future work must aim to break some of the traditional moulds: delegations must arrive in the Preparatory Committee ready to deal with the core issue, namely, how to integrate environmental concerns fully into development planning. Greater attention should be paid to the role of environmental impact assessment and action to remedy past abuses. Developing countries must be assured of access to new and additional financial resources on concessional terms, together with environmentally sound technology and expertise.

23. The Action Plan for the Environment for Latin America and the Caribbean, convened by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago in Port-of-Spain from 22 to 23 October 1990, reflected the resolve of all States in that region to adopt more sustainable patterns of development. The Plan included an analysis of the main environmental concerns of the region, and of the obstacles preventing effective remedial action from being taken. It identified a programme for action at the national, subregional and regional levels. Barbados and other regional States looked to the international community for the necessary support to give effect to the Plan.

24. The decision of the Preparatory Committee to establish a voluntary fund to assist developing countries in participating in the preparatory process was the international community's signal of commitment to ensure global participation in a process of fundamental importance for reshaping life on the planet. He regretted, however, that contributions to the Fund had been below the level expected, and trusted that it would soon be possible for assistance to be extended to all developing countries.

(Mr. Maycock, Barbados)

25. Non-governmental organizations could make an important contribution by ensuring broad public involvement in the efforts of the Preparatory Committee. The General Assembly should therefore agree on more long-term arrangements to facilitate the access of interested and competent non-governmental organizations to preparations for the Conference on environment and development.

26. Barbados was concerned at the danger posed to the environment by large-scale pelagic driftnet fishing, and that concern had grown following reports suggesting that some members of the international community might be actively seeking to expand large-scale pelagic driftnet operations into new areas, including the North Atlantic. Such action was in violation of the spirit and the letter of General Assembly resolution 44/225, and his delegation called for immediate measures to ensure compliance with the provisions of that resolution.

27. The prospect of global warming directly affected the development and survival of small island countries like Barbados. Such countries would be among the first to experience the effects of sea-level rise; indeed, tidal surges, which were already occurring with increasing ferocity, might be one of the warning signs of that phenomenon. The predicted increases in average global temperature would bring about fundamental changes in delicate ecosystems such as coral reefs. The prospect of larger and more severe tropical hurricanes raised the spectre of the wholesale destruction of everything that years of painstaking development had achieved.

28. Barbados attached priority concern to the work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). In its decision SS.II/3 B, the UNEP Governing Council called upon the Panel to take all appropriate steps to ensure the effective participation of developing countries and small island States in its future work. Those principles should also govern the work of the open-ended working group on the framework convention on climate change. Barbados fully supported the conclusion of the Second World Climate Conference that work on the framework convention on climate change should not be delayed.

29. Mr. BABINGTON (Australia) said that while many of the small island States of the South Pacific had contributed little or nothing to the build-up of greenhouse gases in the Earth's atmosphere, they could be among those most adversely affected by its potential impacts. Sea-level rise at the rate predicted could destroy many island communities, changes in ocean currents would affect food supplies and the increased frequency of extreme weather events could reduce the number of inhabitable islands.

30. In its response to climate change, his Government had recently decided to adopt an interim planning target, based on 1988 levels, to reduce greenhouse gases not controlled by the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, by 20 per cent by the year 2005.

31. The framework convention on climate change should address the problem of global warming in an effective way so that the ultimate outcome would be the establishment of a permanent mechanism for co-ordinating efforts to control climate

(Mr. Babington, Australia)

change. In order to be effective, the convention must gain the support of the largest possible number of countries, should address all aspects of climate change, set limits on all greenhouse gas emissions not controlled by the Montreal Protocol and include a wide range of measures to ensure the effective implementation of the convention. The convention should be flexible enough to allow each country to develop strategies appropriate to its own situation, and it should address the particular interests of small islands and low-lying, coastal, and arid and semi-arid countries, as well as the problems of countries whose economies were heavily dependent on the use of fossil fuels.

32. An instrument of the scope and complexity of the framework convention on climate change would require institutional arrangements for its negotiation which would ensure appropriate and adequate support; such arrangements could be provided jointly by UNEP and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). In order to encourage the widest participation possible in the negotiations, the processes for the conduct of the negotiations should be open, follow clear rules of procedure and give all participants an opportunity to make genuine contributions.

33. The international community was collectively responsible for the conservation of biological diversity in all environments for the benefit of present and future generations of mankind. Australia was committed to the early conclusion of an effective international legal instrument on biological diversity and, to that end, had been participating in the Ad Hoc Working Group of Experts on Biological Diversity.

34. Sufficient evidence had emerged on the effect of large-scale pelagic driftnet fishing to warrant serious concern and immediate action, particularly since the economies of a number of countries were linked to and in some cases dependent on the effective management and conservation of the fisheries resources within their exclusive economic zones. Australia was staunchly in favour of an immediate ban on large-scale pelagic driftnet fishing in the South Pacific. In that regard, his delegation welcomed Japan's decision to suspend its driftnet fishing operations in the South Pacific one year ahead of the schedule set out in resolution 44/225, and it welcomed the Taiwanese authorities' announcement that they would comply to the provisions of that resolution with respect to the South Pacific.

35. There was a tendency to downplay the scale of cetacean and other marine life by-catches in the Pacific and other oceans. Conventional management measures would do little to address that problem, since the reductions necessary to protect the most vulnerable species might be so severe as to make the method uneconomical. Action in one region should not lead to the expanded use of driftnets in other oceans. Australia was especially concerned about the possibility of increased driftnet fishing in the Indian Ocean, which would contribute to further depletion of the southern bluefish tuna stock. His delegation was dismayed at reports about the reflagging of vessels as a means of circumventing the spirit of resolution 44/225.

36. Mr. ARROSPIDE (Peru) said that the persistent trend towards ecological imbalance was directly related to the production and consumption patterns of developed countries. It was therefore clear that the basic difference between the developed and developing countries with respect to the current state of the global environment necessarily implied a different degree of responsibility, which should also be reflected in the efforts to halt and eventually reverse deterioration of the environment.

37. His delegation attached particular importance to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and was firmly convinced that resolution 44/228 constituted a balanced consensus. That resolution reaffirmed that, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, States had the "sovereign right to exploit their own resources pursuant to their environmental policies". The foregoing implied that no guidelines for environmental action should be established without taking account of the particular situation of the developing countries or without their active participation.

38. Since any strategy for halting environmental deterioration required the incorporation of new technologies in the processes of production, particularly in industry, one crucial aspect of the problem was the allocation of additional financial resources and the transfer of environmentally sound technologies on a concessional and preferential basis. Such principles should not only remain in agreements already concluded but should also be reflected in the future commitments. Decision 1/25, adopted by the Preparatory Committee for the Conference on Environment and Development at its first session, was of great importance since it contained the basic elements involved in the relationship between environment and development. Poverty, the lack of economic growth in most developing countries, external debt, the net negative transfer of resources and the adverse international economic climate all contributed to deterioration of the environment.

39. The Second World Climate Conference had recognized that countries bore a different degree of responsibility with regard to global warming and its negative effects. The consequences of that phenomenon would jeopardize the survival of low-lying coastal States and other small island States, as well as arid and semi-arid areas. Even if such predictions were not entirely accurate, the international community should adopt response strategies as soon as possible.

40. Mr. DJOHLAF (Algeria), speaking on behalf of the States members of the Arab Maghreb Union, expressed support for the statement made by the representative of Bolivia on behalf of the Group of 77. The States of the Arab Maghreb Union had chosen to make a collective statement because of the importance they attached to the relationship between environmental protection and harmonious development and because they were determined to make every effort to ensure the success of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. Finally, they wished to acknowledge the historic progress made by the formation of their Union, which was a logical development for their region, as the Union sought to make the environment one of its areas of operation.

(Mr. Djoghlaïf, Algeria)

41. In October 1990, the Union's Economic and Financial Committee had adopted a drinking-water supply plan and agreed on a series of measures to combat desertification and drought which had been elaborated by a working group of the Union's Food Security Committee. That working group had recently adopted a number of co-operation projects on desertification, water supply and environmental assessment and had agreed that a conference of the countries of the region should be held to define environmental protection priorities. In addition, 17 June had been proclaimed Maghreb Environment Day and 21 February, Maghreb Arbour Day, both to be celebrated annually.

42. Of all the assaults perpetrated on the Earth's environment, desertification had the most devastating effects. The degradation of fragile ecosystems in arid and semi-arid regions affected the world's most impoverished regions and neediest people. While desertification occurred in many parts of the world, it was in Africa that its effects - chronic food shortages, endemic famine and constant refugee flows - were felt most acutely. Africa also encompassed three quarters of the world's least developed countries as well as the world's largest desert, the Sahara. Inadequate rainfall in over half the continent caused the desert to spread; each year, more than 6 million hectares were swallowed up and another 21 million hectares rendered unproductive. It was therefore fitting that the topic of drought and desertification should figure prominently in the work of the Conference on environment and development and of its Preparatory Committee. Failure by the international community to honour the commitments it had made in connection with that problem, particularly where financial resources were concerned, reflected the narrow notion that the environmental problems of countries of the South were not the concern of countries in the North. In fact, ecological imbalances did not respect national and regional boundaries.

43. While the countries of the Arab Maghreb Union were threatened by desertification to the south, they also suffered from the effects of pollution of the Mediterranean Sea to the north. Moreover, they had no control over that pollution, which was caused by patterns of consumption and production in developed coastal countries. Each year more than 650,000 tons of hydrocarbons and 550 tons of pesticides were dumped into the Mediterranean. The resulting disequilibria were aggravated by the overexploitation of marine resources caused by large-scale pelagic driftnet fishing by developed coastal countries. In the light of the information provided in the Secretary-General's report on that subject (A/45/663), the countries of the Arab Maghreb Union would not support any draft resolution that failed to mention the Mediterranean Sea as an area where such fishing took place. Furthermore, any resolution on the subject must contain an explicit ban on the use of that technology by the developed coastal countries of the Mediterranean.

44. General Assembly resolution 44/228 was the result of a compromise reached after long and difficult negotiations, and provided a shaky framework that could be undone by partial or selective interpretations of its provisions. The States on whose behalf he spoke believed that the agreement reached on international co-operation for the removal of remnants of war, mentioned in the sixteenth preambular paragraph of that resolution, formed an integral part of that framework.

(Mr. Djoghlaf, Algeria)

Five days earlier, an anti-personnel mine left over from the colonial period had exploded in Algeria, killing three children who had mistaken it for a toy. He therefore hoped that that issue would be given due consideration by both the Preparatory Committee and the Conference. The Conference secretariat should furnish the Preparatory Committee with documentation aimed at promoting international co-operation in that area at its next session.

45. The manner in which the Preparatory Committee dealt with questions relating to the transfer of technology and financial resources on concessional terms to the developing countries was crucial to the success of the Conference. Thus, the move to reopen the debate on that issue observed at the first session of the Preparatory Committee was a source of serious concern to the States of the Arab Maghreb Union. Only strict compliance with the relevant provisions of resolution 44/228 would ensure the success of the 1992 Conference, and those States would make every effort to ensure that success was achieved.

46. Mr. REVA (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development should result in broader co-operation in the area of environmental protection, based on the new political and environmental thinking and respect for the interests of all members of the international community. The main task of the Conference was to devise a strategy for the ecological survival of mankind and to define priority areas for international co-operation to protect the environment.

47. The Preparatory Committee for the Conference had made a considerable amount of progress in working out an approach to the conduct of that important environmental forum. At its first session, the Preparatory Committee had adopted all of its decisions by consensus, and it should continue that practice at its future sessions. His delegation commended the high degree of co-ordination between the activities of the Preparatory Committee and UNEP, whose secretariat and Executive Director had taken pains to prepare the basic documentation for the work of the Preparatory Committee.

48. The Conference on environment and development should consider issues related to environmental security and their impact on the international political situation, since international conflicts arising from environmental concerns were occurring with increased frequency. Certain aspects of the responsibility of States for ensuring environmental security must be rethought, and principles of diplomacy and international legal norms in the area of environmental protection must be developed. An international expert study of major economic projects which could have inter-State and regional consequences should be undertaken, and a mechanism for international co-operation in the monitoring, assessment and prediction of environmental threats should be established.

49. Europe could serve as an example of the organization of international environmental co-operation at the regional and interregional levels. The Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), with its rich experience in conducting research and carrying out projects in the field of the environment, was a reliable forum for

(Mr. Reva, Ukrainian SSR)

such co-operation. The Bergen Conference, held by the Government of Norway in co-operation with ECE in May 1990, had made an important contribution to the preparations for the 1992 Conference, and the documents adopted at the Bergen Conference should be closely studied by specialists.

50. Economic and Social Council resolution 1990/50 on international co-operation to address and mitigate the consequences of the Chernobyl accident was one example of the practical implementation of the Bergen Conference's appeal to Governments and international organizations to provide assistance in overcoming the consequences of industrial accidents which had transboundary consequences. His delegation hoped that the draft resolution on that issue, which had been jointly prepared by the delegations of the Ukrainian SSR, the Byelorussian SSR and the Soviet Union, would be adopted by the General Assembly by consensus.

51. The Conference on environment and development should be conducted at the heads of State or Government level, since a high level of political participation would have considerable bearing on the content of the decisions which would be adopted. Non-governmental organizations, including businesses and youth, scientific, social and environmental organizations, should also participate in the work of the Conference. The outcome of the Conference should be the signing of a binding international legal instrument containing basic principles and norms for the environmental behaviour of States, as well as a programme for concerted practical action.

52. The report of the Secretary-General on the progress achieved in the implementation of resolution 44/207 (A/45/696) was evidence of the efforts of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) connected with the drafting of the framework convention of climate change. Such work should be conducted in close co-operation with WMO and UNEP. The first assessment report of IPCC contained a wealth of facts and analytical material and could be a great help in working out national policies for responding to, and preventing further, climate change.

53. The Ukrainian SSR whole-heartedly supported the recommendations of the open-ended working group on the framework convention on climate change, and fully agreed with the working group that the framework convention should be ready in time for the Conference on environment and development in June 1992.

54. Mr. TANLAY (Turkey) said that life on Earth for future generations could be threatened if mankind did not immediately take the necessary steps to protect the environment. Various forms of environmental degradation had become increasingly evident, requiring different but complementary and co-ordinated solutions; without satisfactory conservation measures, there could be no long-term sustained development. Accordingly, durable and ecologically sound development must be a major objective of the new international development strategy.

55. The importance of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, together with its preparatory process, could not be underestimated. The Conference was coming at a time when new environmental issues continued to be

(Mr. Tanlay, Turkey)

raised, and existing problems called for more concerted action based on a spirit of sacrifice and collective responsibility. The Conference should agree on specific measures to protect the environment and correct the damage already done, while accommodating the special situation of the developing countries.

56. The prompt conclusion of a world climate convention to curb such phenomena as global warming, depletion of the ozone layer and deforestation was crucial. He welcomed the outcome of the Second World Climate Conference, which had drafted guidelines for a framework convention on climate change. He also welcomed the Ministerial Declaration of that Conference, which called for the launching of negotiations in February 1991. It was to be hoped that a convention would be opened for signature at the 1992 Conference. He also endorsed the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Working Group of Government Representatives in document A/45/696.

57. Regional preparations for the Conference were also of importance in preventing further environmental degradation. The numerous meetings held during the past year had emphasized the importance of international co-operation and collective responsibility for environmental protection. Yet the industrialized countries, which accounted for 70 per cent of world consumption of energy, must assume special responsibility for preventing or limiting environmental damage and helping the developing countries to achieve sustainable and ecologically sound development. Conference preparations for the transfer of ecologically sound technologies to the developing countries and the provision of new and additional financial resources to enable them to participate more effectively in global efforts to protect the environment were of the utmost importance and called for a global approach.

58. Mr. PIBULSONGGRAM (Thailand) said that his country's experience with environmental problems was likely to be instructive for other countries. During the 1970s and the first half of the 1980s, preoccupation with development needs had been so great that little attention had been paid to the rapid degradation of Thailand's environment. Growing industrialization and urbanization had resulted in polluted air and water; the rapid depletion of natural forests had seriously eroded soil, causing landslides and flash flooding in many areas and a general warming of the climate.

59. Fortunately, Thailand had recognized the problem early on and had taken steps to cope with it. Fifteen years earlier, a National Environment Board had been created to conduct programmes on conservation. Recently the Government had intensified its efforts: a major publicity campaign to enhance public awareness of environmental problems had been launched and the Ministry of Education was drafting a strategy to integrate environmental concerns into the curriculum at all levels of education. Thailand had also recognized the need to integrate environmental concerns in national social and economic development policies; each province was responsible for drafting a resources and environmental management plan which would be incorporated into the plan for the country as a whole. That endeavour was intended to decentralize decision-making and promote public responsibility and participation.

(Mr. Pibulsonggram, Thailand)

60. Thailand's Seventh National Economic and Social Development Plan set specific goals for improving the quality of life and the environment and protecting the country's natural resource base. Logging concessions had been banned and intense reforestation measures undertaken by the Government and the private sector. Funds for the construction of waste-water treatment plants had been increased, the compulsory use of lead-free petrol was being considered and the penalties imposed under anti-pollution laws were being raised.

61. Thailand had recently hosted a ministerial-conference on environment and development in Asia and the Pacific and had become a party to various international instruments on the environment. The King and Queen of Thailand had set an example with their awareness of environmental issues, having initiated crop-substitution, reforestation, watershed development and wildlife preservation projects.

62. As the 1990s approached, a more concerted approach to environmental problems was necessary. While the international community had agreed in principle on the need for specific measures to counter environmental degradations, specific actions had failed to materialize thus far: for example, at the Second World Climate Conference, delegations had failed to agree on targets to reduce CO₂ emissions. The Ministerial Declaration of the Conference was an expression of noble intentions that lacked specific targets for action.

63. Individual countries had varying levels of resources to devote to environmental protection. While funds and technical expertise could be employed by developing countries without serious macro-economic consequences, developing countries were burdened with poverty, overpopulation, inadequate infrastructures and a need to apply limited resources to many areas. All countries must therefore help one another according to their means. Obstacles hampering environmentally sound and sustainable development must be removed. Special attention must be given to the plight of the developing countries, especially the least developed among them. Given the importance of sustainable development, national environment policies and plans should attempt to balance development and environmental objectives.

64. His delegation looked forward to the Conference on environment and development which should yield a strategy leading to the formulation of global environmental policies. Proposals must be made to prevent further degradation of the environment and rectify the damage done. Difficult issues, such as the need for additional resources to the developing countries, the transfer of environmentally sound technologies on a preferential basis, the sharing of expertise in the areas of resource management and institution-building, must be addressed. The Conference must also discuss timetables, co-operation arrangements and the assignment of responsibility for a programme of work that continued beyond 1992. The results of the first substantive session of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference were encouraging, although Conference objectives had yet to be defined.

(Mr. Pibulsonggram, Thailand)

65. Thailand actively participated on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and other technical bodies concerned with research on climate change and sea-level rises. The Thai Government was currently reviewing the First Assessment Report of IPCC with a view to developing appropriate response strategies at the national level. The industrialized countries, which were largely responsible for the accumulation of greenhouse gas, must make an effort to limit further emissions and transfer environmentally sound technologies on concessional or preferential terms to developing countries. The proper balance between economic and environmental concerns must be struck in the negotiating process. Dividing the work into several stages might prove to be the most effective strategy for negotiating a framework convention on climate change and related protocols on, inter alia, carbon dioxide and forests. His delegation would elaborate on the proposed strategy at the negotiating session in February 1991 and at the second substantive session of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference on environment and development.

66. Mr. GODIN (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) stressed the role of the scientific community in national decision-making on climate issues. UNESCO and its Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) had contributed significantly to the World Climate Programme through their assessments of the major role of oceans in governing the world climate system and climate change, the role of the global water cycle in climate and the impact of climate change on fresh-water resources. It was also exploring the land-atmosphere interface and the impact of climate change on terrestrial ecosystems, past climate changes in relation to geological processes and the energy/climate link. UNESCO's partners in those initiatives included WMO, UNEP, FAO, the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU) and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). The role of the ocean in the climate system was comparable to that of the atmosphere. The heat storage and transfer by oceans was comparable to that in the atmosphere. The ocean also absorbed and released carbon dioxide and was a large source of water vapour, a very important greenhouse gas. The effects of sea-level and temperature rises on coastal zones and small islands also influenced climate. Through IOC, UNESCO was studying all of those aspects of the oceans's impact on climate change.

67. Together with WMO and UNEP, IOC was working on an urgently needed global ocean observing system which could feed adequate data to climate prediction models. To that end, IOC had established a group of experts, whose status report on existing ocean observation system components and draft strategy would be reviewed in the light of the results of the Second World Climate Conference. IOC, UNEP and WMO had elaborated a draft proposal for a global coastal zone observing system capable of observing parameters and processes for the detection and assessment of climate change and its impact on coastal zones. The draft would be reviewed at an expert meeting in December 1990 and plans for a pilot programme would be formulated.

68. The hydrological cycle, a major vehicle of energy and mass transfers between land, ocean and atmosphere, was another area of interest to UNESCO. UNESCO's International Hydrological Programme was probing some of the uncertainties

(Mr. Godin, UNESCO)

connected with the hydrological cycle, including the hydrological consequences of melting glaciers and polar ice masses and rising sea level on coastal aquifers and estuaries. UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme was studying plant and animal responses to global warming.

69. Regrettably, specialists from developing countries were not sufficiently involved in the work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and participation in the World Climate Programme was limited to a small number of countries with sophisticated scientific capabilities. UNESCO and IOC would be prepared to assist the Second Committee in addressing the issues of training and institutional capacity-building in developing countries. Recognizing the importance of public information and, in particular, of providing scientific and technical information to decision makers, UNESCO had introduced climate issues in its education programmes at all levels.

70. Mr. FRITSCHÉ (Liechtenstein) said that, more than ever, international co-operation was necessary to combat the many threats to the environment, including atmospheric pollution, potential climate change and the deterioration of resources. Co-operation between industrialized and developing countries would be particularly important. Overall integrated environmental protection was essential to a small country like Liechtenstein which had been very active in ecopolitics for many years. Its primary focus had been on water protection, air protection and waste management and soil protection policies. Liechtenstein also attached great importance to the protection of flora and fauna and of biotopes. It was making special efforts to rehabilitate lost biotopes, create a biotope network, revitalize rivers and streams and preserve special locations.

71. Ecopolitics in Liechtenstein was based on the "polluter pays" principle, the precautionary principle and the co-operation principle. Convinced that small States also had a responsibility to meet global challenges, Liechtenstein was a party to all the major international agreements on the environment. In that connection, it attached particular importance to the 1992 Conference on environment and development and was prepared to participate in the elaboration of a framework convention on climate change and related protocols.

72. Mr. OUALI (Burkina Faso) said that the Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) constituted the framework for Burkina Faso's policy on desertification control.

73. The Government had obtained encouraging results by building awareness of environmental issues among the populations, particularly among women. Non-governmental organizations were assisting in the efforts to control excessive wood cutting, roving animals and brush fires. The Naam movement in Burkina Faso had been recognized by the international community for its contribution to protection of the environment. Indeed, the Right Livelihood Prize had been awarded to its founder, Dr. Ouedrago, for championing environmental and human rights.

(Mr. Ouall, Burkina Faso)

74. The developing countries trusted that they would not be penalized for applying environmental protection measures. Under agenda item 82 on international co-operation for the eradication of poverty in developing countries, his delegation had stressed the relationship between poverty and the environment, which should remain a priority issue in the action taken by the international community.

75. The responses presented at the first substantive session of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference on environment and development gave cause for optimism. The "polluter pays" principle had been recognized and it had been generally agreed that pollution emanated mainly from the industrialized North. In addition to providing financial aid to developing countries, the countries of the North must ensure the transfer of non-polluting and readily adaptable technologies to the developing countries. The United Nations could also play an important role in the transition to new and renewable sources of energy. The developing countries hoped that the international community would help them to identify suitable projects particularly in agriculture and cattle-raising for the conservation of land resources (soil, water, etc.).

76. Additional resources must be provided to ensure implementation of the decisions to be taken at the landmark 1992 Conference in Brazil. The developing countries and particularly the least developed countries must participate in the sessions of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference. Each of those countries should appoint at least two representatives for the preparatory sessions. In conclusion, he remarked that the 1992 Conference was concerned with both environment and development but development must not be overshadowed by the more publicized issue of the environment.

77. Mr. Amaziane (Morocco), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

78. Ms. CAREY (Bahamas) applauded the outcome of the first substantive session of the Preparatory Committee for the 1992 Conference and hoped that the General Assembly would endorse its recommendations. She also supported the goals elaborated by the Secretary-General of the Conference. Equitable representation by non-governmental organizations from developed and developing countries would ensure a balance between the focus on environment and development. Scientific and other organizations should also be encouraged to participate. Achieving the objectives of the Conference would require the support of the entire United Nations system and all Member States, particularly the developed countries, which had a fundamental responsibility to assist the developing countries on environmental issues.

79. The special financial measures taken to facilitate participation by the developing countries in the preparatory process were commendable. As the contributions to the voluntary fund were not yet sufficient to implement the programme of work, all States able to provide resources were encouraged to do so.

80. Rising pollution levels and the degradation of coastal ecosystems threatened the life-support capacities of oceans and seas and undermined their role in the food chain. Her delegation wished to encourage international co-operation for

(Ms. Carey, Bahamas)

marine pollution control and environmental management of oceans and seas. Governments must introduce policies for preventing practices which harmed marine ecosystems and the environmentally sound development of inland areas. Such policies should address the discharge of industrial effluents and sewage; the disposal of hazardous residues and operational wastes from ships; and oil spills from tankers. Her delegation applauded the work of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and UNEP in that regard.

81. Developing countries were deeply concerned by hazardous wastes and, particularly, the export thereof in the absence of a simultaneous transfer of the managerial capability necessary to deal with them. Until such time as production and storage processes could be made less hazardous, technical and regulatory measures would be necessary in the exporting countries. Few developing countries had been able to develop a hazardous waste system, for lack of regulation, trained manpower and waste treatment and disposal facilities. Those countries could benefit greatly from a busy exchange of information, with special emphasis on waste minimization, recycling and reuse. She was pleased to announce the successful outcome of the Latin American Ministerial Conference, held in Trinidad and Tobago in August, at which a Plan of Action for the Latin American and Caribbean region was adopted.

82. Technical co-operation among countries, at the regional and global levels, must be encouraged so that developing countries would have access to modern technology and the necessary expertise for collecting and interpreting environmental data. Governments must also educate their citizens - producers and consumers alike - on the environmental impact of their activities. The developed countries bore a special responsibility to devise less harmful production techniques.

83. Convinced that climate change was inevitable and that mitigating action was urgently needed, her delegation welcomed the successful outcome of the Second World Climate Conference. It hoped that the General Assembly would endorse the recommendations of the Geneva preparatory meeting on organizational arrangements for negotiations. In an age of increased globalization, the challenge of environmental protection offered an unprecedented opportunity for greater interdependence and international co-operation. In that spirit, her delegation attached great importance to the convening of the 1992 Conference on environment and development and would make every effort to carry out the recommendations of resolution 44/228.

84. Mr. Papadatos (Greece), resumed the Chair.

85. Mr. DEFFENBAUGH (Lutheran World Federation), speaking on behalf of the Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations in Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council (CONGO), expressed appreciation for the opportunity given to address the Committee. CONGO attached particular importance to the 1992 Conference on environment and development and, because of its own activities in those fields, was keenly aware of the Conference's dual aspect. He referred to

(Mr. Deffenbaugh)

decision 1/1 of the Preparatory Committee on the role of non-governmental organizations in the preparatory process for the Conference on environment and development (A/45/46) and expressed the hope that participation from international, regional and national non-governmental organizations would be as broad as possible, encompassing citizens' organizations, scientific and academic bodies, and technical and professional associations.

86. CONGO welcomed the request of the General Assembly, in resolution 44/228, for relevant non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council to contribute to the Conference, and also the Preparatory Committee's recognition, in its decision 1/1, of the importance of the involvement of non-governmental organizations in the preparatory process.

87. Referring to paragraphs 4 and 6 of the decision, he said that CONGO construed relevant non-governmental organizations to mean both those in consultative status and others interested in the issues to be dealt with by the Conference.

88. Referring to paragraphs 3 and 4 of the decision, he said that the complexity of non-governmental organization involvement throughout the world made inappropriate the concept of sectors or constituencies. If anything, linkage of such issues as environment, development and human rights and their wide geographical distribution could be considered the major strengths of those organizations. In the past, official United Nations cover pages had been provided for written presentations by such organizations. It would be helpful if, in that spirit, the Secretariat of the Conference could allocate a document reference number for them.

89. It was to be hoped that all such organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council and those which collaborated with other organs of the United Nations system would have a voice in formulating guidelines for the Conference. It would be useful to consult the sections relevant to those organizations in the Draft Standard Rules of Procedure for United Nations conferences (A/38/298). In conclusion, CONGO welcomed the Preparatory Committee's proposal to utilize extrabudgetary resources so as to enable non-governmental organization representatives from developing countries to participate in the preparatory process.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.