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New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 67th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. MWANGAGUHUNGA (Uganda)

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The meeting was called to order at 11 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 58: DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION (continued)

(b) RESTRUCTURING OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SECTORS OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM:
REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/33/410/Rev.1 A/C.2/33/L.104)

1. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to a draft resolution (A/C.2/33/L.104) submitted in his name as a result of informal consultations on draft resolution A/C.2/33/L.103. Draft resolution A/C.2/33/L.104 had no financial implications.

2. Mr. DADZIE (Director-General for Developmental and International Economic Co-operation) said that he and his colleagues had been pleased and encouraged by the statements made, all of which had reflected not only a constructive approach to the measures thus far undertaken but also a continuing commitment to the restructuring process, as an integral part of the efforts of the international community towards the establishment of the new international economic order, and as the framework which should govern the adaptation of structures and methods of work to the needs of Member States in the field of development and international economic co-operation.

3. He was sure that members of ACC would be gratified to note the expressions of satisfaction by many delegations regarding the restructuring of the ACC subsidiary machinery and other aspects of the response made by ACC to those recommendations contained in General Assembly resolution 32/197 that were of concern to the system as a whole. He too was grateful for the generous sentiments of support for the Office of the Director-General expressed by several delegations.

4. He and his colleagues had also taken due note of the emphasis placed in many statements on the need for further efforts to achieve a greater rationalization, streamlining and cost-effectiveness of Secretariat services, and of the perceptions of delegations as to the areas in which more intensive measures were required. Those would guide the further actions of the Secretariat and would be taken into full account in the preparation of the further reports required of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the restructuring recommendations.

5. A number of delegations had sought clarification as to the way in which the Director-General would interface with other departments and offices, particularly the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs in the area of programme planning. It would be an over-simplification to speak of a separation of functions between the Director-General and other units in the Secretariat. The Director-General's involvement, the scope of which was described in the relevant sections of the Secretary-General's report (A/33/410/Rev.1), would be aimed at promoting, with a view to achieving the objectives stated in paragraph 64 (a) (b) of the annex to General Assembly resolution 32/197, the full and effective exercise by the various units concerned of their respective competences. It would be based on the approach described in paragraph 22 of the Secretary-General's report, which stressed the

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Director-General's catalytic role in ensuring that all elements of the United Nations conform to the policy guidelines established by the General Assembly, and in promoting 'a multidisciplinary and well-co-ordinated approach to the problems of development throughout the United Nations system'.

6. The process could best be described as a continuum between broad policy elements at one end and analytical, technical elements at the other, both of which coexisted in differing degrees and interacted at most stages of the work of the United Nations units concerned. The Director-General's involvement would be more pronounced at the broad policy end of the continuum and would progressively diminish as the analytical, technical elements became more significant. That would comprise, among other things, the translation of intergovernmental directives into policies governing Secretariat actions, including the elaboration of policy-related guidelines and the provision of broad orientation for activities, together with the promotion of mutually reinforcing interrelations among different organizational entities in pursuance of substantive goals set by Governments.

7. In the area of programme planning, which had been referred to in a number of statements, the involvement of the Director-General, as foreseen in the Secretary-General's report and in relevant General Assembly resolutions, included the drafting by the Director-General of the introductions to the medium-term plans in the economic and social fields, which spelt out the Secretary-General's approaches, pursuant to legislative directives, to the orientation of the future work of the Secretariat and which would cover the elaboration, under the direct supervision of the Director-General, of the over-all objectives to be included in the plan. Responsibility for the elaboration of the plan itself in the economic and social field would then rest with the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs, which would undertake the analytical and technical work required, with the involvement of the Office of Financial Services in respect of the financial aspects. At that stage, the Director-General's role would be one only of general guidance, and would be mainly concerned with the resolution of policy issues or differences that might arise within the Secretariat in the processes of plan formulation and implementation, including the harmonization as necessary of the processes of planning and programming on the one hand and of budgeting on the other. The same approach would apply to the involvement of the Director-General in the process of translating the substantive policies of the plan into biennial programme budgets, and in evaluation work.

8. The instrumentalities to be utilized would of course vary, depending on the nature of the specific activity in question. Thus, work on the pilot evaluation study on activities relating to transnational corporations, requested by CPC, was guided by a high-level steering committee, chaired by the Director-General, which provided over-all guidelines and orientation for the study, in the light, inter alia, of the concerns and directives of relevant intergovernmental bodies. Responsibility for the preparation of the study itself and for the development of its methodology would rest with the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs, in consultation with the Centre on Transnational Corporations.

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9. Another question raised during the discussion related to the balance to be maintained between, on the one hand, the need for the Director-General to avoid duplicating capabilities existing elsewhere in the United Nations and, on the other hand, his corresponding ability to draw, on a continuing basis, on the resources and expertise available in the United Nations and, as appropriate, in the system as a whole. The Secretary-General's report specified that such assistance could include both the ad hoc secondment of individual staff members for a specific assignment in support of the Director-General and the preparation of appropriate studies and documentation in response to requests by him. He could inform the Committee that while, as indicated in the report, an informed assessment of those availabilities could be made only at a later stage in the light of experience, every effort would be made by all concerned within the United Nations to meet any requests for such assistance that might be made by the Director-General in that regard.

10. Mr. RIPERT (Under Secretary-General for International Economic and Social Affairs) said that a spirit of co-operation had marked relations between himself and the Director-General, whose response from the outset had been a great source of encouragement. In the light of the Committee's deliberations, as reflected in draft resolution A/C.2/33/L.10⁴, he wished to reiterate the willingness of the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs to implement the decisions adopted and give the Director-General active support. The Department fully understood the need to strengthen the over-all effectiveness of the United Nations system, with a view to the establishment of the new international economic order.

11. Some questions had been raised regarding the number of organizational units within the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs in the field of programme planning and co-ordination. The Department's programme planning and co-ordination component had two sets of functions: the promotion of interorganizational co-operation and joint planning for the United Nations system, and programme planning and evaluation for the United Nations. The nature and scope of the functions relating to joint planning and programming activities for the United Nations system as a whole were, for obvious reasons, different from those relating to programme planning activities within the United Nations Secretariat, the constituent units of which shared several common attributes.

12. In response to the recommendations contained in General Assembly resolution 32/197, the first group of functions aimed to promote co-operative and joint planning among organizations of the United Nations system in the economic and social fields. It included, firstly, the development, in co-operation with the organizations concerned, of concepts and frameworks for and the preparation of cross-organizational analyses and plans. The importance of such analyses had been emphasized by CPC at its seventeenth session and again at the joint CPC/ACC meetings in July 1977. A precise programme had been formulated for 1979.

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13. Secondly, the first group of functions included the preparation of system-wide reports which could not be directly linked to programme planning, such as those concerning international years and consumer protection, and the provision of substantive support to intergovernmental and intersecretariat bodies on relevant interagency questions. Accordingly, the establishment of two units was proposed in order to deal with each of those sets of functions for the promotion of interorganizational co-operation and joint planning.
14. The second group of functions related to programme planning and evaluation for the United Nations. It consisted of three units for programme planning, resources planning and evaluation. The separation of programme planning and resources planning into distinct organizational units was explained by the difference in the scope and depth of the functions in those fields. The separation of the evaluation functions into a small unit was explained by the need to develop approaches, methodologies and techniques in an area where little work had been done by the United Nations Secretariat thus far. There again, a concrete programme had been formulated by CPC, and the Director-General, in a preceding statement, had given a precise example of the type of study to which the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs could make a substantive contribution.
15. Dissatisfaction had been expressed with the efforts to redeploy resources within the Secretariat to meet the requirements of the restructuring exercise. In particular, the substance of paragraph 53 of the Secretary-General's report (A/33/410/Rev.1) had been called into question. The main thrust of the restructuring exercise, as it affected the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs, had been to enable the Department to concentrate on two sets of functions - interdisciplinary research and analysis, and programme planning and co-ordination - both of which involved new responsibilities and the reorientation of existing ones. It must be recognized that, in order to meet the restructuring challenge, the Department was bound to reorient research and analysis in some cases. In areas such as statistics, population, science and technology, policy analysis and projections and prospective studies, ongoing activities should not only be maintained, but should also be developed and elaborated, particularly in their intersectoral aspects. That implied a redeployment of Professional staff, and strenuous efforts had been made to redeploy, to the extent feasible, staff resources from some of the larger substantive units, with a view to reducing the need for new resources for new functions.
16. In evaluating that need, the Department had fully taken into account the close interaction between the research and analysis component and the programme planning and co-ordination component within the Department. The latter component would draw on the expertise in substantive matters, and the experience, of the research and analysis components. Technical skills and expertise were not, however, readily interchangeable between disciplines, and it was not easy to transform a statistical expert overnight into a planning and programming expert.

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17. Such had been the arguments presented to the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions in support of the Department's request for additional resources. Although the Advisory Committee had not been convinced in all cases, it had finally recognized the need to allocate additional resources to the Department as from 1979.

18. The CHAIRMAN said that, if there was no objection, he would take it that draft resolution A/C.2/33/L.103, submitted by Tunisia on behalf of the Group of 77, was withdrawn and that the Committee was ready to adopt draft resolution A/C.2/33/L.104 without a vote.

19. It was so decided.

20. Draft resolution A/C.2/33/L.104 was adopted without a vote.

21. Mr. RIEMER (United States of America) thanked the Director-General and the Under-Secretary-General for their replies to the questions raised during the debate. His delegation was pleased to join in a true consensus on draft resolution A/C.2/33/L.104, which it believed incorporated the views of all members of the Committee and which also advanced their interests by bringing further clarity to the agreement reached in General Assembly resolution 32/197. The restructuring effort was an important step towards making the United Nations more fully capable of dealing with problems of development and international co-operation, thus contributing to the even broader consensus upon which a new international economic order must be built.

22. His delegation fully endorsed that part of the draft resolution which referred to the Director-General, who must have the authority necessary to fulfil his functions and responsibilities efficiently and without duplication. It welcomed the clarifications on decentralization, and endorsed the requests addressed to ACC and CPC. It hoped that the Economic and Social Council would display maximum imagination and political will in meeting the underlying purposes of section II of the restructuring recommendations annexed to General Assembly resolution 32/197.

23. He wished to express his delegation's appreciation to the Chairman for his leadership, and to all delegations involved in the long negotiations for the flexibility and imagination they had brought to them. Although the Committee had completed its formal work, his delegation would not take it amiss if the Chairman were to convene, at an appropriate time in the not too distant future, a meeting open to all delegations for the purpose of achieving an informal agreement on rationalizing the methods of work of the Committee which might commend itself to those serving on it at the thirty-fourth session.

24. The CHAIRMAN assured the United States representative that he would do his utmost to see whether the work of the Committee could be rationalized for the future. In the light of some of the difficulties which had faced the Committee, members might wish to consider informally how to lighten the burden on those who would assume the heavy responsibility of serving as Chairman in the future.

25. Mr. LIPATOV (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic), speaking on behalf of the delegations of Bulgaria, the Byelorussian SSR, Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Mongolia, Poland, the Ukrainian SSR and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, said that, although the socialist countries had some doubts about, and even some objections to, certain provisions of draft resolution A/C.2/33/L.10^b, they had not stood in the way of its adoption. They proceeded from the premise that any restructuring should be carried out rationally, and should contribute to enhancing the effectiveness of the Secretariat's work by improving its methods, eliminating duplication and overlapping and concentrating efforts and resources on the most important aspects of the restructuring of international economic relations in accordance with the main provisions of the Declaration and Programme of Action on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order, the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States and other relevant United Nations decisions. However, the draft resolution did not clearly adopt such an approach, and its acceptance by the socialist countries did not, therefore, imply any change whatever in their position of principle, which they had made clear in statements to the Ad Hoc Committee on the Restructuring of the Economic and Social Sectors of the United Nations System, at the time of the adoption of General Assembly resolution 32/197 and at the second regular session of the Economic and Social Council in 1978.

26. Although the draft resolution was the result of a compromise reached in the course of lengthy and arduous consultations, it did not truly reflect the interests of all groups, particularly the socialist States. The latter took a very serious view of the fact that the changes planned in the structure of the Secretariat violated the principle of equitable geographical distribution of posts set forth in the Charter of the United Nations and in numerous General Assembly resolutions. They strongly condemned any attempt to hinder the recruitment and promotion of nationals of the socialist countries, particularly at the senior levels. Ambiguities in the wording of the draft resolution could lead to new and cumbersome subdivisions, administrative superstructures, more Secretariat personnel and unjustified growth in the regular budget. What was needed was not the creation of new units and posts but maximum use of existing units and capacities available to the Secretariat, through a more rational distribution of human and financial resources, and maximum savings. That applied also to the strengthening of the office of the Director-General. The principle of equitable geographical distribution of posts, particularly at the senior level, should be observed without exception. Discrimination against certain countries or groups of countries was inadmissible. United Nations activities must be based on the representation of all social systems. The socialist countries attached political significance to that, and had no intention of reconciling themselves to any form of discrimination.

27. He expressed appreciation to the Chairman and other officers, and to the representatives of the Secretariat, for their valuable contribution to the success of the Committee's work.

28. Mr. DADZIF (Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation) stated that the Secretary-General was gratified at the fact that the Committee had reached a consensus on the draft resolution contained in document A/C.2/33/L.104. It was the Secretary-General's intention to make a statement to the General Assembly when that draft resolution was placed before it, setting forth his general and preliminary response to the draft resolution.

COMPLETION OF THE COMMITTEE'S WORK

29. After an exchange of courtesies, the CHAIRMAN declared that the Committee had completed its work for the thirty-third session.

The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.