

# 1531st meeting

Wednesday, 10 October 1973, at 3.20 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Zewde GABRE-SELLASSIE (Ethiopia).

A/C.2/SR.1531

## *Tribute to the memory of Mr. Wilfred C. Jenks, Director-General of the International Labour Office*

1. Mr. CHEVRON (International Labour Organisation) thanked the Chairman for the condolences he had expressed on behalf of the Committee at the previous meeting, in connexion with the death of Mr. Jenks.

### AGENDA ITEM 101

#### **Consideration of the economic and social situation in the Sudano-Sahelian region stricken by drought and measures to be taken for the benefit of that region (continued) (A/9178, A/C.2/L.1290 and Corr.1)**

2. The CHAIRMAN announced that the delegations of the Gambia, Guatemala, Argentina, Jordan, Jamaica, Haiti and Kenya had become sponsors of draft resolution A/C.2/L.1290 and Corr.1.

3. Mr. HEYWARD (United Nations Children's Fund) said that at the previous meeting, the Minister of Agriculture of the Upper Volta had referred to the needs of children in the Sudano-Sahelian region. Very young children were particularly vulnerable to certain types of food shortage and resulting disease problems, and therefore had a much higher mortality rate than other age groups. In the case of the Sudano-Sahelian region emergency problems arose mainly in camps and temporary settlements around towns or water points where women, children and old people were left while the men took their flocks south. There were problems both of nutritional rehabilitation and of nutritional supplementation; while those problems would be reduced as the nomadic population returned to its grazing grounds, a recurrence of the situation could be expected during the between-crop period of 1974. The amount of special food required, between 10,000 and 20,000 tons, was small in relation to the total quantities of cereals required for the region, but was essential to the health and survival of the very young. Some young children needed rehydration, and the incidence of diseases normally common in the area, such as measles and meningitis, was much higher because of the general debilitation of the age groups affected. The provision of emergency assistance involved complex organizational problems, and the countries required would also need assistance in meeting local expenses.

4. Where medium-term and long-term needs were concerned, assistance was required to increase the supply of drinking water, especially in agricultural areas. Together with UNDP, UNICEF was assisting in the drilling and deepening of wells both in those areas and in the nomad areas. A number of the countries affected had requested assistance in strengthening their health services, particularly through the establishment of mobile health teams. Assistance would also be required in relation to health and educational services if and when resettlement programmes were organized.

5. Assistance from bilateral sources, United Nations organizations and non-governmental agencies had been substantial. It was to be hoped that the plans made for 1974 would take greater account of the special needs of children. UNICEF itself had spent some \$700,000 on assistance, of which \$300,000 had been released by the Executive Director from the emergency reserve, and \$400,000 had been transferred from the regular programme. Those funds had been spent on medical supplies, particularly solutions for rehydration, food and the payment of local costs; WHO had provided medical advice and activities relating to child feeding and the movement of supplies had been co-ordinated with FAO. UNICEF's regular assistance programmes in the countries affected totalled some \$2.5 million annually; some of the projects would be amended in the light of the emergency situation, but if the needs of children in the area were to be met, assistance in future should be doubled or even tripled. UNICEF's national committees in a number of countries had already raised funds and were co-operating with a group of non-governmental organizations in Europe in plans for a major fund-raising campaign at the end of October. Governmental contributions had been solicited at focal points, on behalf of the United Nations system as a whole; from those contributions, no specific amount had as yet been allocated to meet the needs of children. Pending such an allocation, which he hoped would be forthcoming, the Secretary-General and the Director-General of FAO had agreed that UNICEF could approach a number of Governments directly with requests for emergency assistance.

6. Mr. WANG Tzu-chuan (China) said that famine was threatening tens of millions of the inhabitants of the Sudano-Sahelian region, and the rehabilitation of agricultural production and animal husbandry presented tremendous difficulties. The Chinese people supported all measures to fight against the natural disasters which had occurred in the region.

7. Since March, when the Sudano-Sahelian region was declared a disaster region, the appeal made by the Governments of the countries affected had received a world-wide response; many African countries had provided them with financial and material aid on their own initiative, and the Chinese people had provided food, medicine and other relief supplies through appropriate channels. Such actions afforded a vivid demonstration of the spirit of unity, friendship and mutual assistance among the developing countries. His delegation supported the efforts made so far by United Nations organs, as well as the response to the medium-term and long-term needs of the region referred to in the resolutions adopted at the fifty-fourth and fifty-fifth sessions of the Economic and Social Council. It understood those needs to involve assistance in restoring production, rebuilding housing, developing irrigation, agriculture and animal husbandry, and enhancing the ability of the affected regions to combat natural disasters. In

rendering assistance and working out its special measures for the least developed countries, the United Nations should consider concentrating its limited resources on the most urgent aspects and ensuring that the measures were effectively implemented.

8. His delegation supported the draft resolution and hoped it would be adopted unanimously. It was pleased to note that under the leadership of their Governments, the people of the Sahelian region had taken effective measures and had already achieved results. They would undoubtedly prove themselves able to overcome their natural disasters, restore their normal economic life and promote the steady development of agriculture and animal husbandry at a fairly rapid pace.

9. Mr. DOO KINGUÉ (United Nations Development Programme) said that since UNDP had an office in each of the countries in the Sudano-Sahelian region, it had been able to assess the extent of the tragedy. He himself had visited that region, and had seen the suffering of the people and the damage done to national economies. He had attended the recent intergovernmental meetings held at Ouagadougou, in particular the Meeting of Ministers from 7 to 10 September and the Conference of the Heads of State of the six countries affected by the drought, held on 11 and 12 September. The Governments concerned had drawn up the programme described in the annex to the note by the Secretary-General (A/9178), and in the statement by the Minister of Agriculture of the Upper Volta, the Regional Co-ordinator, with extreme care. They had made a remarkable effort to co-ordinate their action and achieve results.

10. The assistance provided by UNDP in the area was substantial in relation to the size of its resources. In the regional programme for Africa for 1974-1976, activities directly affecting the Sudano-Sahelian countries and relating to projects designed to solve the problems caused by the drought accounted for more than a quarter of the programmed resources. If the draft resolution before the Committee was adopted, UNDP would do everything possible to respond to the appeals made in paragraphs 8 and 9 of the draft text. It should be borne in mind that UNDP's resources consisted of voluntary contributions from Member States, which would, he hoped, demonstrate their generosity at the 1973 Pledging Conference on 30 October.

11. Mr. ROUGÉ (France) said that the debate had two purposes, to take stock of the situation in the Sudano-Sahelian region and to make arrangements for the future with a view to rebuilding the economies of the countries affected on a sound footing. France had long had friendly relations with those countries, and its views on the situation and the assistance measures it had taken had been described in detail in other United Nations organizations. Apart from the aid it had channelled through FAO, recorded in the tables annexed to the FAO report reproduced in annex I to document A/9178, it had supplied food and transport through direct agreement with the Governments concerned; the assistance it had so far provided, excluding its share of the EEC contribution and its contribution to WFP, amounted to over \$20 million. France intended to continue those activities, and its President had said that French assistance would be manifest and exemplary.

12. Restoration of the economy of the Sudano-Sahelian region was a challenge to the international

community, and would require an unprecedented effort of international co-operation. His delegation welcomed the appointment of Mr. Morse to head the Special Sahelian Office within the United Nations Secretariat, and fully endorsed the Office's objectives (A/9178, para. 13). FAO's emergency relief mission had undoubtedly been useful. In his delegation's view, the primary role of the Special Sahelian Office should be co-ordination among the various organizations of the United Nations system, in particular UNDP and FAO which, his delegation hoped, would accept its authority unquestioningly. The Office would also have to assist donor Governments and non-governmental organizations in avoiding duplication of their assistance and ensuring co-ordinated action. The French organizations involved were prepared to co-operate fully with the Office.

13. Nevertheless, his delegation was somewhat concerned at some aspects of the Office's activity. Economic and Social Council resolution 1797 (LV) provided that the Office's functions related only to co-ordination within the United Nations system. The draft resolution (A/C.2/L.1290 and Corr.1) made that point clear, in that paragraph 3 referred to the Office's role of co-ordinating the activities of the organizations of the United Nations system, whereas paragraph 16 invited Governments and governmental and non-governmental organizations to co-operate fully with the co-ordination system set up by the Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel, which was also responsible for formulating a programme. Indeed, it had already done so; a programme had been drawn up at one of the meetings held in Ouagadougou, attended by representatives of most of the foreign aid organizations, which had expressed their readiness to take part in its implementation. The French Government, for its part, had already made arrangements to do so and intended to finance a number of projects in 1973, including a food crop development study in Mauritania, forestry operations in Mali and an agricultural irrigation project in Senegal. In addition, French experts would be visiting those countries to study projects which the *Fonds d'aide et de coopération* might finance in 1974.

14. Accordingly, his delegation would like to know what exactly was meant by the statement in paragraph 17 of the note by the Secretary-General (A/9178) that the office would contribute to the formulation of a comprehensive medium-term and long-term programme, particularly in view of the reference in paragraph 14 to identifying activities that should be considered in addition to the projects proposed by the Permanent Inter-State Committee. If that meant that the United Nations was modifying programmes and priorities adopted by Governments, his delegation would find it extremely hard to support such activity. It was for the Governments themselves to establish their needs and to draw up a programme to meet them.

15. His delegation agreed with almost all the points made in the draft resolution. The one exception was the reference in paragraph 6 to a suspension of repayments of their financial obligations by the Governments of the Sudano-Sahelian region. The French Government, as the main creditor of the countries concerned, had never been and had no intention of becoming an exacting creditor. It had presided over various groups convened to study the situation of insolvent countries and had

earned the gratitude of many recipient countries. However, it could not accept as a general principle the idea that a country which found itself in a difficult situation should automatically be freed of the obligation to repay its debts. Debts resulted from a contractual arrangement between debtor and creditor, and their terms could be changed only through negotiation between those two parties. Indeed, it was in the interest of the recipient countries themselves that the validity of their acceptance of international obligations should not be called in question by the application of the principle hinted at in paragraph 6.

16. Mr. MACKENZIE (United Kingdom) said that the sympathy he felt for the plight of the people in the Sudano-Sahelian region was mingled with a sense of pride at the international community's speedy reaction to the situation in that area. It was regrettable that people had not been made aware of the situation until the drought had been affecting the region for over five years; it was a challenge to the United Nations system to alert world public opinion more rapidly in the future, as had been suggested in the note by the Secretary-General,<sup>1</sup> submitted to the Economic and Social Council at its fifty-fourth session, on the concept of collective economic security.

17. When it had become aware of the situation in May 1973, his Government had immediately contributed \$750,000 to the trust fund set up by the Director-General of FAO. It had also contributed over \$1 million through EEC in addition to its contribution to WFP, and the Royal Air Force had assisted with the emergency food airlift. Many other countries had reacted in a similar way.

18. As all concerned recognized, medium-term and long-term measures were needed. His delegation was gratified by the speed with which the Secretary-General had set up the Special Sahelian Office. The Office was facing the complex task of co-ordinating activities in the six countries of the region where many United Nations specialized agencies and the Permanent Inter-State Committee were already operating and he wished it every success. In his delegation's view, paragraph 16 of the draft resolution was particularly important.

19. The general aim of the draft resolution was to make it clear that the Sudano-Sahelian area was an emergency and priority region. However, there were other disaster areas in the world and he felt that the draft resolution could have brought out that fact more clearly. Referring to the last phrase in paragraph 3, he said that he would be grateful for an assurance that the work envisaged in the draft resolution could be carried out with the funds referred to in paragraph 18 of the Secretary-General's note (A/9178). Lastly, he shared the view expressed by the representative of France that paragraph 6 of the draft resolution required further consideration and redrafting. His delegation would prefer the text to be closer to the text of the programme drawn up at Ouagadougou.

20. Mr. CHATENAY (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development) said that the draft resolution before the Committee would be brought to the attention of the President of IBRD and of the Governing Council of IDA as soon as possible. IDA was responsible for all the operations of the World Bank Group in the area, with the exception of two or three projects in

Senegal. Loans granted by IDA were interest-free and repayable over 50 years with a 10-year grace period. Administrative costs were 0.75 per cent of the total loan. Since loans had only been granted in the Sudano-Sahelian region in recent years, there had been no reimbursement of the principal, but only of the 0.75 per cent he had referred to. In June IDA had sent a mission to the Sudano-Sahelian region which had recommended that supplementary credit for short-term projects should be approved immediately. A team of experts had subsequently been sent to evaluate those projects and means of financing them, including the use of national financial institutions. In order to accelerate the process, the loans had been negotiated on the spot. There was now a formal proposal before the Governing Council of IDA for new loans totalling \$12.5 million, on which a decision was to be taken within the coming three weeks. Exceptionally, the credits financed 100 per cent of the cost of the projects and were payable immediately. IDA was also considering ways to speed up the original projects. The action taken by the World Bank Group took into account the climatic conditions and the financial needs of the peoples of the Sudano-Sahelian region. Moreover, the Group's activities were co-ordinated with those of the United Nations specialized agencies operating in the area, particularly FAO and the Special Sahelian Office. Accordingly, the action taken by the World Bank Group anticipated the measures advocated in the draft resolution (A/C.2/L.1290 and Corr.1). IDA was aware of the need for rapid action and the danger of delays and would continue to ensure that its funds were used as effectively as possible for the benefit of the countries of the Sudano-Sahelian region.

21. Mr. RATSIMBAZAFY (Madagascar) said that world opinion had been widely informed of the situation in the Sudano-Sahelian region. Emergency measures had already been taken and would be followed up by medium-term and long-term measures. His country had issued special stamps, the proceeds of the sale of which, \$22,000, had been contributed to the countries affected. His country was well aware of the economic and social problems of that region since it had suffered similarly from droughts. His delegation supported the draft resolution and hoped that its provisions would be implemented speedily.

*Mr. Arvesen (Norway) took the Chair.*

22. Mr. POERWANTO (Indonesia) said that his delegation had supported the Economic and Social Council resolutions (1759 (LIV) and 1797 (LV)) concerning aid to the Sudano-Sahelian region. He was glad to note that many United Nations organizations and Member States had responded favourably to appeals for aid for the region. His Government had made a small contribution within its very limited ability. Despite the massive relief effort, however, it appeared that the available assistance would not fully cover the needs of the region in the near future. Much remained to be done by the international community to remedy the situation, and additional medium-term and long-term assistance would be needed to meet existing and anticipated needs. His delegation therefore hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted unanimously.

23. Mr. MADDY (Guinea) said that the drought in the Sudano-Sahelian region which had caused the death of hundreds of men, women and children and ravaged

<sup>1</sup> E/5263.

livestock had struck countries which were among the least developed of the developing countries. It was estimated that some 4 million head of cattle had been lost and the deficit in grains was some 850,000 tons. One press correspondent had described the situation in the region where the corpses of cattle were strewn everywhere and piled up around water holes. People had been reduced to eating leaves and the grain stored by ants in ant-hills. Hunger had driven people of the space age to behave like their prehistoric ancestors.

24. He paid tribute to all the international organizations and the international community in general for the generous assistance extended to the Sudano-Sahelian region. Their spontaneous goodwill clearly showed that it was possible to eliminate suffering from the world. However, the good work of the international community would be incomplete if it was not continued with a view to guarding against a recurrence of the same disaster. His delegation welcomed the statement of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the USSR, at the 2126th plenary meeting, proposing a reduction of the military budgets of States permanent members of the Security Council by 10 per cent and utilization of part of the funds thus saved to provide assistance to developing countries (agenda item 102). His delegation believed that the proposal of the Soviet Union would be accepted by other States, so that the developing countries would benefit from the *détente*. It was evident from the note by the Secretary-General that the United Nations intended to do its utmost to help the Sudano-Sahelian region. His delegation fully supported the draft resolution and hoped that it would be adopted by consensus.

25. Mr. OLIVERI LOPEZ (Argentina) said that the reaction of the organizations of the United Nations system to the emergency in the Sudano-Sahelian region had been exemplary so far. It must now endeavour to prevent a recurrence of the disaster and mobilize international and national resources for a permanent solution to the problem. The international community was being challenged to prove that the United Nations system had the capacity to act as a preventive mechanism by carrying out medium-term and long-term measures within the framework of collective economic security. It was to be hoped that the Special Sahelian Office and the Permanent Inter-State Committee would successfully co-ordinate their work and prove to be a model of efficiency in international co-operation.

26. The Minister of Agriculture of the Upper Volta had informed the Committee of the programme of action prepared by the six countries affected. The financial resources to implement that programme must be sufficient to cope with the situation. The countries affected by the drought were among the least developed of the developing countries and earlier assistance to them had not always produced the desired results. His delegation hoped that in the current, somewhat unpredictable, phase of international co-operation, the action taken by the international community in the Sudano-Sahelian region would be a shining example of international solidarity.

27. Mr. RASAPUTRAM (Sri Lanka) expressed his delegation's appreciation of the efforts made by the international community to help the population of the Sudano-Sahelian region. The emergency relief operations were to be followed by an intensive and co-ordinated programme of reconstruction and rehabilita-

tion. Only after that second stage had been completed could the international community be certain that it had fulfilled its obligations. Much research was needed in agriculture, meteorology and hydrology in order to prevent the recurrence of such a disaster. The international community and the organizations of the United Nations system must be prepared to help famine-stricken areas to rebuild their future. The six countries of the Sudano-Sahelian region had come together to solve their problems and their efforts must be fully supported by developed and developing countries and by the international agencies.

28. His country was also experiencing food shortages as a result of unfavourable weather conditions. If the major rice crop due in March 1974 was not up to expectation the crisis would worsen. Sri Lanka had requested short-term and medium-term assistance from some international organizations to help its development programme, but those organizations worked within a certain framework and found it difficult to help Sri Lanka unless it fell into line with their way of thinking. He hoped that all organizations would be as ready to assist in the second stage of reconstruction and rehabilitation in the Sudano-Sahelian region as they had in the first stage of relief operations. His delegation fully supported the draft resolution.

29. Mr. KIRSHI (Yemen) said that his country was well aware of the extent of the suffering of the Sudano-Sahelian peoples, since it had suffered from drought during the previous four years. During the current year, however, nature had been generous; but the rains had led to floods which had caused considerable damage, and his Government was now dealing with the consequences of that disaster. The international community was frequently faced with similar disasters in which all it could do was help the victims. The organizations of the United Nations system, particularly FAO and UNEP, must make long-range plans for preventive action with a view to eliminating such suffering. His delegation felt that paragraph 10 of the draft resolution was the most important and far-sighted provision of the draft resolution; it would support the draft resolution as a whole.

30. Mr. FASLA (Algeria) expressed appreciation for the emergency measures taken by United Nations organizations to deal with the disaster in the Sudano-Sahelian region. The short-term action already taken must be followed up by medium-term and long-term measures as outlined in the programme drawn up at Ouagadougou. Furthermore, the international community must help the countries of the Sudano-Sahelian region to prevent a recurrence of the disaster. He appealed to members of the Committee to adopt the draft resolution by consensus.

31. Mr. JABER (Jordan) said that his delegation shared the concern of previous speakers about the situation in the Sudano-Sahelian region and supported all efforts undertaken by the organizations of the United Nations system, Governments and non-governmental agencies to assist the affected countries. The disaster had revealed the fragility of the economies of those countries and the serious inadequacy of their infrastructure. Jordan had also suffered from a drought, though not on the scale witnessed by the Sudano-Sahelian region. Its wheat production had declined by 85 per cent and agricultural production in general had

fallen by 45 to 50 per cent. His country was therefore familiar with the difficulties faced by the six countries in Africa. Those difficulties were exacerbated by the world food shortage and the sharp increase in the prices of food-stuffs, especially wheat, the price of which had doubled in a single month. The United Nations system was obviously becoming more responsive to urgent economic problems. However, medium-term and long-term measures such as those outlined in the draft resolution were equally necessary.

32. Mr. SOGLO (Dahomey) said that his delegation would support the draft resolution (A/C.2/L.1290 and Corr.1). His country had sent food supplies to the Niger and the Upper Volta in a demonstration of solidarity and in recognition of the fact that, although the drought had also affected the northern part of Dahomey, their need was greater. The international community was providing generous, although insufficient emergency assistance. The characteristic problems of the Sahel, however, also affected the neighbouring regions, and it was essential that longer-term programmes of assistance should be designed to benefit the Sudano-Sahelian region as a whole.

*Mr. Gabre-Sellassie (Ethiopia) resumed the Chair.*

33. Mr. VIEMERÖ (Finland) said that it was abundantly clear that the problems of the Sudano-Sahelian region required not just short-term measures, but also long-term large-scale programmes. His delegation was pleased to note that the United Nations was fully mobilized to provide medium-term and long-term assistance. The discussions in FAO concerning the concept of minimum world food security should have positive results for the afflicted region.

34. His Government had been assisting United Nations and bilateral efforts. It had recently shipped substantial quantities of grain to the area and the 1974 budget included additional funds for aid to the region. His delegation would give favourable consideration to the draft resolution and trusted that certain minor modifications could be made so that it could be approved unanimously.

35. Mr. AKSOY (Turkey) said that it had been a relief to learn that the international community had come forward with the necessary emergency assistance to avert famine in the affected region. His delegation welcomed the establishment of the Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel and the Special Sahelian Office. It was paradoxical that in an era of advanced communications media, signs in the mid-1960s that drought was a possibility had gone unnoticed, and global action had been initiated only when the situation had become serious.

36. Other problems which those countries faced had to be tackled at once. Conditions for agriculture should be restored, the encroachment of the desert should be halted or at least limited, seeds suitable to the climate and soil of the area should be developed and locust control measures should be extended. The migration of the worst affected population to urban areas had resulted in clashes between the refugees and the urban population, one consequence of the drought which might have been eliminated by the arrival of food assistance in time. Natural deterioration and overpopulation in what remained of the agricultural and pastoral lands had made it difficult to resettle the mi-

grants and, despite rural migration, severe problems of over-grazing and over-cultivation would persist, owing to a high rate of population increase.

37. The international community should help the afflicted countries with their long-range planning and development. Priority measures should include low-cost urbanization schemes and labour-intensive programmes to alleviate unemployment. Consideration should also be given to the possibility of reinforcing and re-equipping the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator. New large-scale projects might have to be extended to countries bordering on those worst stricken by the drought. Efforts should be made to develop an early warning system, and the international community should organize itself to meet the immediate and long-range requirements of countries whose economies were vulnerable to the forces of nature.

38. Mr. TREVIÑO (Mexico) recalled that his country had recently been afflicted by floods and earthquakes; nevertheless, recognizing the gravity of the situation in the Sudano-Sahelian region, it had sent large quantities of improved corn seed to Chad. The international community should continue its generous support for the stricken countries. His delegation would support the draft resolution.

39. Mr. HEWITT (Jamaica) expressed his delegation's concern for the inhabitants of the Sudano-Sahelian region. The international community had understood the suffering of the people of the drought-stricken region and he congratulated all those who had rendered assistance. Regrettably, however, the assistance provided so far was not nearly enough to solve existing problems, a fact which could be attributed to a lack of political and moral will. He quoted an excerpt from the statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Sudan in the General Assembly (2142nd plenary meeting) illustrating the inadequacy of the international response to the disaster.

40. The United Nations faced two vital questions, whether the existing terrible inequalities and inhuman conditions should be allowed to continue and, if not, whether the will to correct them existed. The disaster had aggravated an already precarious situation, and many of the afflicted countries were among the poorest of the world. All countries should do their utmost to provide emergency assistance. As for future action, his delegation supported all the suggestions before the Committee. The medium-term and long-term strategies needed to reverse the present process were those which the developing countries had been suggesting for years without any meaningful response from the rich nations. The world must make the sort of commitment in the economic field that it was learning to make in the political and racial fields.

41. Mr. HAQ (Pakistan) said that, as a sponsor of Economic and Social Council resolution 1797 (LV), his delegation fully supported the efforts being made to assist the drought-stricken countries in Africa. Owing to recent floods Pakistan, too, was experiencing severe food shortages.

42. The international community's response to both disasters had been extremely generous. The short-term problems of the Sudano-Sahelian region were being tackled; the medium-term and long-term difficulties re-

quired serious consideration. Transport difficulties had not yet been fully solved. The encroachment of the desert should be halted and desert land reclaimed. It was encouraging that the Special Sahelian Office had begun operations under the dynamic leadership of the Under-Secretary-General for Political and General Assembly Affairs. He asked for clarification regarding the recipient of the funds earmarked for rental of premises for the Special Sahelian Office in paragraph 20 of document A/9178, as it was his impression that the Secretariat could provide the facilities required. His delegation supported the draft resolution under consideration.

43. Mr. PAUL (Haiti) said that his delegation was pleased at the response of the international community to the plight of the drought victims and hoped that assistance would continue to be provided.

44. Mr. ZACHMANN (German Democratic Republic) said that his Government was sending high-quality food-stuffs and medicine, for which 4.1 million marks had been allocated, to Mali, the Upper Volta, Senegal and the Niger, in accordance with the request of the Secretary-General, and Economic and Social Council resolutions 1759 (LIV) and 1797 (LV).

45. The implementation of the proposal of the USSR that the military budgets of States permanent members of the Security Council should be reduced by 10 per cent and part of the funds thus saved should be utilized to provide assistance to developing countries would instantly provide funds for economic assistance, in the first instance, to countries afflicted by natural disasters. The proposal could therefore have a positive impact on the countries of the Sudano-Sahelian region.

46. His delegation was in general agreement with the main aims and suggestions of the draft resolution.

47. Mr. AL-EBRAHIM (Kuwait) expressed the hope that action to meet the needs of the afflicted area would continue. Natural disasters disrupted national de-

velopment plans and caused the gross national product to decline. It was the duty of all countries to alleviate the consequences of natural disasters. The United Nations initiative was commendable and should continue, for the Organization was the appropriate channel for organizing relief activities.

48. Mr. LAHLOU (Morocco) said that the Government and people of Morocco were deeply saddened by the effects of the drought in Africa and, although the disaster had affected Morocco's own crops, it had provided food aid within the limits of its capacity. Man should strive to conquer the forces of nature. His delegation wished to join the list of sponsors of the draft resolution.

49. Mr. VERCELES (Philippines) said that his delegation's full support for the draft resolution stemmed from its sympathy for the victims of natural disasters, to which the Philippines was also vulnerable. He commended the international community on its admirable response to the disasters which had struck the Sudano-Sahelian region and Pakistan a few months earlier.

50. The draft resolution was the most comprehensive of all those dealing with natural disasters. The United Nations, the specialized agencies and the countries concerned must co-ordinate their efforts and adopt a comprehensive approach in order to ensure that assistance produced maximum effect, particularly in the case of aid to the least developed countries, where various United Nations agencies had already launched projects.

51. He proposed that the names of the six affected countries—Chad, Mali, Mauritania, the Niger, Senegal and the Upper Volta—should be inserted after the words "Sudano-Sahelian region" in the first preambular paragraph of the draft resolution.

*The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.*

## 1532nd meeting

Thursday, 11 October 1973, at 10.50 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Zewde GABRE-SELLASSIE (Ethiopia).

A/C.2/SR.1532

*In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Arvesen (Norway) took the Chair.*

### AGENDA ITEM 101

**Consideration of the economic and social situation in the Sudano-Sahelian region stricken by drought and measures to be taken for the benefit of that region (continued) (A/9178, A/C.2/L.1290 and Corr.1)**

1. The CHAIRMAN announced that the draft resolution (A/C.2/L.1290 and Corr.1) before the Committee was now sponsored by the following countries: Algeria, Argentina, Brazil, Chad, Colombia, Egypt, Gambia, Guatemala, Haiti, Indonesia, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Libyan Arab Republic, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Senegal, Sudan, Tunisia, Upper Volta and Yugoslavia.

2. Mr. MALHAN (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) said that, by the very nature of its competence, UNESCO's involvement in the drought problem in the Sudanese-Sahelian region would be in the medium-term and long-term activities. However, UNESCO, which had for the past 20 years been involved in the problems of arid and semi-arid territories surrounding the Sahara, also envisaged a number of research programmes on hydrological problems such as floods and droughts. A study of water resources in Chad had been conducted under UNDP financing, and a project concerned with the impact of human activities and of land use practices in semi-arid areas was being implemented in close co-operation with FAO.

3. In the field of social sciences, he mentioned a medium-term project related to interdisciplinary and