

# General Assembly

FORTY-SIXTH SESSION

*Official Records*

SECOND COMMITTEE

13th meeting

held on

Monday, 14 October 1991

at 10 a.m.

New York

## SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 13th MEETING

Chairman:

Mr. BURKE

(Ireland)

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AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (A/46/3, A/46/19, A/46/163, A/46/171-E/1991/61, A/46/132-E/1991/58, A/46/171-E/1991/61, A/46/204-E/1991/80 and Add.1 and 2, A/46/263-E/1991/88, A/46/288, A/46/467, A/46/477, A/46/493, A/46/520; A/C.2/46/2; A/C.2/46/L.8, L.10, L.11 and L.12; E/1991/432 (Supplement No. 11))

1. Mr. AHMED (Under-Secretary-General for International Economic and Social Affairs) said that the Special High-level Meeting of the Economic and Social Council had addressed the important issue of the impact of the recent evolution of East-West relations on the growth of the world economy, in particular on the economic growth and development of the developing countries, as well as on international economic cooperation. In the interim since the summer session of the Economic and Social Council, the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs had updated its economic projections for Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union; those projections indicated that the decline in economic activity in those countries was even more severe than had originally been anticipated. It was estimated that industrial production had fallen by 15 per cent. Trade among the countries of the region had collapsed: exports from Eastern European countries to the Soviet Union appeared to have been reduced by half and their imports from the Soviet Union to have declined by one fifth. Yet most of the countries with economies in transition had been carefully following strategies for transformation and would accordingly need a substantial amount of technical and financial assistance. It was also clear that the rest of the world had a stake in their success. As the Council had reaffirmed, that complementarity of interests should not be at the expense of the developing countries. There was in fact some concern that the demand for resources arising from the major transformations taking place in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union might outstrip the available resources. The momentous political changes in the world brought with them the possibility that genuine disarmament might finally be achieved. In the long run, gains from reduced military expenditures might represent a major new source of resources. Every country needed, therefore, to adopt growth-oriented policies to ensure that adequate capital was available and that the "peace dividend" was used judiciously to meet the needs of progress and development. Equally important was a clear understanding as to how multilateral and bilateral resources were to be allocated among developing countries and those with economies in transition.

2. The AIDS pandemic had reached severe proportions. The report of the World Health Organization (WHO) which was before the Committee (A/46/171) estimated that 8 to 10 million adults and 1 million children were infected by HIV worldwide. It was projected that the cumulative total of HIV-infected persons would reach 40 million by the year 2000. The infection was still spreading both in the areas already affected and was also into new regions such as South-East Asia. That might lead to an upward revision of the current estimates. While the world was fervently hoping for a medical solution to the

(Mr. Ahmed)

deadly scourge, it would be imprudent, to say the least, not to anticipate some severe problems in those countries which were least able to withstand further shocks to the health of their populations and to their socio-economic systems. A recent publication on the AIDS epidemic and its demographic consequences, prepared by the Population Division in cooperation with WHO, provided for the first time a set of standard input parameter values for epidemiological models, which could be used by all researchers and policy makers. Those standard values would allow for a better understanding of the dynamics of the pandemic and the potential effect of interventions.

3. Preparations were under way for the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development. The Population Division had been working in close collaboration with the Secretary-General of the Conference and the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); six technical expert group meetings were planned for 1992 and 1993 and would cover the following topics: interrelationships between population, development and environment; population policies and programmes; population and the status of women; population growth and ageing; family planning and health; and changes in the distribution of population.

4. Finally, he noted that the report of the Committee for Development Planning (E/1991/32) examined the question of the impact of the reforms in Eastern Europe and the USSR on the developing countries, the importance of which had been stressed by the Economic and Social Council. Chapter V of the report contained recommendations for criteria for identifying least developed countries. In the view of the Committee, those new criteria would correct a number of anomalies which had arisen over the past two decades. The Economic and Social Council had had intensive discussions on that issue and had decided that further consideration of the proposed new criteria should be carried out by the General Assembly, taking into account the views expressed by the Council. Following its examination of the case of Namibia, the Committee for Development Planning had concluded that that country had not met the existing criteria, as they were currently applied, owing primarily to its relatively high per capita GDP; none the less, the Committee had recommended that the international community should, for a number of years, adopt special measures in favour of Namibia in order to assist it, as a newly independent nation, in mobilizing its considerable economic potential. For its part, the Council had invited donor Governments and agencies to grant Namibia assistance comparable to that provided to a least developed country.

5. Mrs. BRUGGEMANN (World Health Organization) introduced the report of the Director-General of the World Health Organization on the global strategy for the prevention and control of acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) (A/46/171), which had been prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 45/187.