



Chairman: Mr. Bruce RANKIN (Canada).

In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Pataki (Hungary), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

AGENDA ITEM 47

United Nations Conference on the Human Environment: report of the Secretary-General (*continued*) (A/8688, A/8691, A/8703/Add.1 (Part II), A/8783 and Add.1; A/CONF.48/14 and Corr.1; A/C.2/L.1227, A/C.2/L.1228, A/C.2/L.1229/Rev.1, A/C.2/L.1230-1234)

1. Mr. ALGARD (Norway) thanked all those who had made the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment a success, particularly the Swedish Government which had been an admirable host and Mr. Strong for his untiring efforts in preparing it. Many speakers had said that the Conference had been a milestone in the history of international co-operation, as it had represented man's first significant step towards co-ordinated and vigorous measures to improve his environment and preserve nature's resources in a global context. Although the many important recommendations embodied in the Declaration on the Human Environment and the Action Plan for the Human Environment (A/CONF.48/14 and Corr.1, chaps. I and II) covered a vast field, they were only the first step. The next logical step was for the General Assembly to act upon them. It should approve them *en bloc* without any substantial changes, since they constituted a consensus of the international community. His Government hoped that, although the Conference had not been truly universal in character, the General Assembly could act upon the various recommendations submitted to it in conformity with the Stockholm spirit of understanding and co-operation. At Stockholm, the common efforts of the developed and the developing countries had testified to the general realization that there need be no contradiction between economic and social development, on the one hand, and concern for the environment, on the other. It was very significant that the necessary foundations had been laid for merging those two basic areas of human endeavour.

2. The Norwegian authorities were particularly concerned about the level of marine pollution. Further international action on its prevention and control was urgently needed. His Government hoped that the preparations for the drafting of a global convention on the dumping of wastes at sea could be completed during the autumn and that further measures could be taken as soon as possible. His Government had already

ratified the Convention for the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping from Ships and Aircraft, signed at Oslo on 15 February 1972, and hoped that it would be ratified as soon as possible by the required number of countries for it to enter into force. It further hoped that the proposed co-operation in the prevention of pollution in the areas covered by the Convention could be ensured. At the Conference, his delegation had indicated that his Government was prepared to take the initiative in convening an international conference on the conservation of the natural environment of the Arctic areas. The Norwegian authorities were actively pursuing the matter and intended to approach the Governments of interested countries bilaterally in the near future. Provided that agreement could be reached concerning the preparations for, and the scope of, such a conference, his Government hoped that it could be held some time in 1973.

3. It was essential to have adequate institutional machinery (*ibid.*, chap.III) if endeavours in the environmental field were to be successful. His delegation supported the establishment of a Governing Council for Environmental Programmes composed of 54 members selected on the basis of equitable geographic distribution. He reiterated the suggestion his delegation had made at Stockholm that the environment secretariat should be situated at Geneva. In conclusion, he confirmed that, subject to parliamentary approval, Norway would make a substantial contribution to the proposed Environment Fund once it was formally established.

4. Mr. RUIZ MORALES (Spain) paid a tribute to the Secretary-General of the Conference for his efforts to promote international co-operation on environmental issues. The General Assembly had the responsibility of evaluating and paving the way for the implementation of the principles, decisions and recommendations adopted at the Conference and testifying to a global awareness of a serious contemporary problem and to the political determination of the international community to tackle it.

5. Despite the fact that attitudes concerning the problem of the human environment and international action to solve it differed—owing, *inter alia*, to the fact that countries were at different stages of development and situated in different parts of the world—all countries which had participated in the Conference, if not all countries of the world, had recognized the urgency of the problem and the need to find solutions.

6. Two fundamental considerations must be borne in mind. First, international action to preserve the

human environment must by no means divert international efforts to promote the development of the less fortunate countries. His own Government considered development the major thrust of its economic and social policies. Secondly, that initial consideration notwithstanding, the General Assembly's decisions should be guided by the fact that preservation of the environment was not merely a theoretical issue with no relevance for the developing countries. Pollution of all types was bound to spread from highly industrialized to less industrialized areas and, as international efforts on behalf of development made further headway, environmental problems would assume universal proportions at an increasingly rapid pace. Spain, for its part, had expressed concern regarding the Mediterranean Sea, and believed that international action in the environment field should be guided and shared by all countries.

7. Although his delegation had had reservations concerning some of the decisions taken at Stockholm, it had willingly endorsed the decisions as a whole, in the belief that the results attained should be a point of departure for the formulation of a policy and the establishment of the necessary machinery for international action. The General Assembly should ratify the conclusions of the Conference. Consultations held since the Conference on questions on which agreement had not been reached had led to the draft resolutions before the Committee. Although his delegation was prepared to support draft resolution A/C.2/L.1229/Rev.1, it would have preferred the original version. The suggestion in the new paragraph 5 that consideration should be given to convening a second conference was premature. It was first necessary to ascertain the effectiveness of the new international machinery and to test the most effective ways of balancing environmental and developmental efforts.

8. Draft resolution A/C.2/L.1228 dealt with a number of new points which the Conference had referred to the Assembly. Although his Government could endorse those additions in principle, it had reservations concerning paragraph 1, which raised very important substantive issues; it hoped that the Assembly would be able to solve those problems to the satisfaction of all, thereby eliminating the remaining obstacle to the establishment of the institutional machinery.

9. While his delegation had no objection in principle to establishing the environment secretariat at Geneva or New York, should the General Assembly agree to situate it elsewhere, Spain would be very honoured to serve as host country. Spain also wished to be a member of the proposed Environmental Co-ordinating Board and was considering the possibility of contributing to the voluntary Environment Fund an amount commensurate with its level of development and financial capabilities.

10. Draft resolution A/C.2/L.1227 on co-operation between States in the field of the human environment represented a balanced and viable solution to a problem which the Conference had been unable to settle, and should be acceptable to all; accordingly, he urged its unanimous adoption. Lastly, his delegation had an

open mind concerning the new ideas contained in the remaining draft resolutions before the Committee and would return to them later.

11. Mr. AJANOVIĆ (Yugoslavia) welcomed the successful results of the Conference, which had in some respects exceeded even the most optimistic expectations, given the fact that the participants had been confronted with a new set of problems and a new aspect of international economic relations with regard to which progress could be achieved only through strenuous efforts and compromise. He expressed appreciation for the constructive contribution of the Secretary-General of the Conference.

12. His country had from the outset attached considerable importance to the work of the Conference. The mass media in Yugoslavia were paying greater attention to the problems of the protection and improvement of the human environment. A Council for the Human Environment, which would play a decisive role, was being established; legislation was being drafted to regulate the implementation of constitutional amendments relating to the protection of the human environment; and steps had been taken to organize post-graduate studies to train personnel in the subject.

13. Despite its shortcomings, the Declaration on the Human Environment adopted by the Conference was a well-balanced document; it represented a moral and political commitment and provided a basis for launching joint international action. It would also stimulate countries to adopt a more active approach to environmental problems. As a developing country, Yugoslavia considered it significant that the Conference had confirmed that the problems of the human environment formed an organic part of the developing countries' over-all social and economic development and could be solved only as such. A solution required greater involvement by the international community and assistance in the form of material and financial resources, the transfer of technology, scientific achievements, etc.

14. It appeared from the current debate that the spirit of co-operation which had prevailed at Stockholm and had made it possible to adopt documents that represented a compromise had not been transferred to New York. Insufficient attention was being paid to development in the context of the environment; more accordingly, the developing countries must draw attention to the paragraphs of the Declaration which stressed the problem of under-development and the fact that there existed problems which were far more acute and complex, such as poverty, backwardness and the negative impact of natural forces. The proposed Environment Fund was expected to reach the target figure of \$100 million by 1975 through generous contributions from the developed countries; however, fears were being expressed that the Second United Nations Development Decade was proving a failure because of the reluctance of the developed countries to assist in that effort of solidarity. The question of development remained the most important issue facing the United Nations. The developing countries were therefore correct

in expressing concern that their problems were being accorded less significance.

15. He expressed regret that, owing to discrimination against the German Democratic Republic, some European countries had not taken part in the Conference, which had suffered from the absence of their contribution. The problem of the human environment was universal and its solution required the equitable participation of all countries; accordingly, it was to be hoped that an appropriate solution would be found when the time came to devise the formula for electing the members of the proposed Governing Council. That body and the Committee on Review and Appraisal should have the same status. Should the General Assembly decide that the proposed Governing Council should be an organ of the General Assembly, his delegation would raise the question of the status of the Committee on Review and Appraisal in 1973. It also felt that any increase in the contributions to the Environment Fund should be commensurate with an increase in contributions to UNDP.

16. His delegation was a sponsor of draft resolutions A/C.2/L.1227 and A/C.2/L.1234 and welcomed the suggestion in draft resolution A/C.2/L.1229/Rev.1 that consideration should be given to convening a second conference, an idea which his delegation had put forward at the last meeting of the Preparatory Committee.

17. Mr. SADEK (Egypt) said that, despite its initial misgivings about the term "human environment" on the grounds that it might refer primarily to pollution problems, which were the result of unplanned industrialization in developed countries, his delegation had participated actively in the preparatory work for the Conference, with a view to broadening the term to include the environmental problems of developing countries resulting primarily from their low levels of economic and social development and which were more difficult to solve. Those efforts had reached their climax during the twenty-sixth session of the General Assembly with the adoption of resolution 2849 (XXVI) on development and environment; the Panel of Experts on Development and the Environment which had met at Founex, Switzerland, in June 1971, had also made an important contribution. The result was that the term "human environment", as reflected in the Declaration, was now universal in scope.

18. The Conference had been a milestone in the history of the United Nations, and as such should have been open to universal participation. However, for motives which had not been taken equally into account when the General Assembly had decided at its twenty-sixth session that participation in the World Disarmament Conference should be open to all States, participation in the Stockholm Conference had been limited to States Members of the United Nations and members of the specialized agencies or IAEA. The Conference had thereby been deprived of the active participation and support of the Eastern European socialist countries. His delegation joined in the appeal which had been made for a solution which would lead to universal participation in future environmental activities conducted by the United Nations.

19. The General Assembly was confronted with the historic task of implementing the recommendations of the Conference. His delegation endorsed the provisions which it had supported at the Conference, and particularly welcomed the agreement reached with regard to the wording of principle 20 of the Declaration, reflected in draft resolution A/C.2/L.1227, which his delegation had co-sponsored and hoped would be adopted unanimously. The institutional and financial arrangements adopted at Stockholm had been reproduced with some changes in draft resolution A/C.2/L.1228. The changes in operative paragraph 1, making the distribution of seats in the proposed Governing Council similar to that of the sessional committees of the Economic and Social Council, required more consultation among regional groups with a view to reaching an agreed formula. The same paragraph should provide for universal participation in the membership of the Governing Council, and extensive negotiations would be required to draft such a provision. His delegation therefore agreed with the view expressed by the delegation of Australia (1468th meeting) that the Committee should postpone consideration of the paragraph until both questions had been settled.

20. The adoption of draft resolution A/C.2/L.1234 would add important facets to the work of the Governing Council for Environmental Programmes, in particular the promotion of effective regional programmes in the human environment to deal with problems which were not susceptible of treatment at the national level alone. Egypt faced a number of such problems, including the pollution of the Mediterranean and—a problem which affected many countries of North Africa—the numerous unmarked minefields still remaining in their territories from the Second World War. Many of those fields had not yet been cleared and the rising death rate among innocent inhabitants and visitors to the areas concerned could not be overlooked. His delegation would also support the establishment of a regional centre for the environment at Damascus. A second important function of the Governing Council under the draft resolution would be to ensure the compatibility of environmental programmes with the policy measures and objectives of the International Development Strategy relating to science and technology, and those to be recommended by the Committee on the Application of Science and Technology to Development after a study of the World Plan of Action.

21. His delegation endorsed draft resolution A/C.2/L.1228, which reproduced the Stockholm provisions relating to the environment secretariat, on the understanding that the changes incorporated in operative paragraph 5 would in no way preclude the possibility of re-electing the Executive Director for further terms. His delegation was confident that the Environment Fund would play an important role in assisting developing countries to undertake environmental programmes at the national and international levels. As emphasized in paragraph 10 of draft resolution A/C.2/L.1228, the assistance rendered by the Environment Fund must be additional to other forms of assistance provided through the United Nations. It was

also important that contributions to the Fund should in no way affect the annual rate of increase of 9.6 per cent in contributions to UNDP, as agreed upon during the twenty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

22. His delegation would support draft resolution A/C.2/L.1229/Rev.1, which dealt with the results of the Conference, with the exception of resolutions 1 (I) and 3 (I) adopted by the Conference, and included procedural provisions for the implementation of resolution 4 (I). It hoped that the spirit of accommodation prevalent at Stockholm would be maintained in the Second Committee and in other forums dealing with assistance, transfer of science and technology, trade and monetary and fiscal issues, in which the confrontation between developed and developing countries regrettably prevented the realization of major achievements for the benefit of all.

23. Mr. PANGGABEAN (Indonesia) said that an awareness of environmental problems was rapidly gaining ground in Indonesia. The developing and the developed countries adopted a different approach to them, since the problems they faced and their causes differed. The latter countries were confronted with the effects of the abuse and uncontrolled application of science and technology as a result of the race to maximize the production of goods and services. The former countries were beset by lagging development and to them poverty, malnutrition, inadequate housing and sanitation, disease and human suffering were at the heart of the problem. Their capacity to remedy their situation was constantly frustrated by strong competition in all sectors from the powerful economies of the industrialized countries. Rapidly expanding population growth also tended to offset the results of economic growth and, if unchecked, would pose a real danger to the developing countries in the near future. Given those differences, the priorities which the developed and the developing countries attached to the solution of environmental problems necessarily differed also.

24. Indonesia's difficulties derived primarily from its rapidly increasing population and the uneven distribution thereof. The resettlement of the population was a formidable problem which might far exceed the capacity of its resources. Urbanization was another acute problem, resulting from rapid population growth in urban and rural areas and the rapid increase in rural unemployment. Accordingly, population, resettlement and, above all, rural and urban unemployment, received top priority in Indonesia's development plan. His delegation was pleased that the Action Plan reflected those concerns.

25. The spirit of international co-operation and understanding that had prevailed at Stockholm reflected recognition of the fact that the human environment was a problem of universal concern. He paid a tribute to the Secretary-General of the Conference and to the people and Government of Sweden for their roles in making the Conference a success. It was regrettable that some countries had not taken part in the Conference; he hoped that they would be in a position

to participate actively in future work on the human environment.

26. His delegation in principle supported the Declaration, the Action Plan and the proposed institutional and financial arrangements. The Declaration and the Action Plan could serve as a useful basis for future efforts.

27. His delegation could support, and might even become a sponsor of, draft resolution A/C.2/L.1228, provided that consultations resolved the question of the distribution of seats in the proposed Governing Council to the satisfaction of all concerned; the Asian Group had expanded and was entitled to more seats than had been allocated to it in General Assembly resolution 2847 (XXVI), which was referred to in part I, paragraph 1, of the draft resolution. He commended draft resolution A/C.2/L.1229/Rev.1 to the Committee for adoption. The substance of draft resolution A/C.2/L.1227 was acceptable and his delegation would support the amendments to paragraph 2 in document A/C.2/L.1233.

28. His delegation had an open mind regarding the site of the proposed environment secretariat; solely for practical reasons, there was merit in situating it at Geneva or New York.

29. Three salient points to be borne in mind were as follows. First, environmental efforts could not succeed on a global scale unless problems of international development were solved. Secondly, to avoid a further deterioration in the terms of trade for the primary commodities of the developing countries, the major economic Powers should provide additional aid to compensate them for the cost of ecological programmes. Thirdly, the fact that the priorities which the developed countries attached to the problem of the human environment differed from those of the developing countries should in no way detract from the commitments of the former arising out of the International Development Strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade; contributions to the Environment Fund and other financial arrangements should be additional to the normal bilateral and multilateral aid provided to the developing countries.

Mr. Rankin (Canada) took the Chair.

30. Mr. ANANICHEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that his delegation had stated its position of principle with regard to the Conference in the Economic and Social Council at its resumed fifty-third session (1840th meeting).

31. His Government attached great importance to broad international co-operation, on a basis of equality in dealing with the problems of preserving and improving the human environment, and had more than once expressed its readiness to participate actively on the basis of such co-operation. Accordingly, it had supported the proposal to convene a United Nations Conference on the Human Environment and had participated in the preparatory work in the belief that the

Conference would make an important contribution to the study of a wide range of questions closely related to the conditions of human life and the further progress of civilization. However, it had informed the Secretary-General in February 1972 that those goals could be achieved only if all interested States, without exception, were enabled to participate in the Conference. Since the vital interests of all peoples were affected, it would be unjust to sacrifice those interests to narrowly egotistical considerations, or make them dependent on political prejudice. It was regrettable that, under pressure from certain circles in the West, the General Assembly had decided to exclude from the Conference a number of States, including the German Democratic Republic, one of the most industrially developed countries of the world, situated in the centre of Europe, which had clearly and unambiguously expressed its readiness to participate. Under the circumstances, his Government had been compelled to withdraw from participation in the Conference, while reserving the right to express subsequently its views on any decisions or recommendations adopted by the Conference. That did not mean that his delegation was or would be opposed to consideration of environmental questions by the United Nations. However, its position was that any United Nations activity in an area of such universal interest must be organized on a universal basis, with the participation of all interested States.

32. In principle his delegation was not opposed to the current session of the General Assembly taking note of the Declaration on the Human Environment, but that did not imply agreement with all its provisions. For example, his delegation could not agree that the problems of the environment in industrialized countries were caused primarily by industrialization. To state the problem in such a way was to ignore a number of very important social and economic factors, such as those referred to by the representative of Kenya. Since the competent Soviet authorities had not been able to study the Action Plan in detail, his delegation was unable to take any position on it. However, his Government could not accept any formulation involving a supranational approach to solving the problems of the environment, or any attempt to internationalize natural resources; it would also reject any recommendations which aimed at altering international agreements and conventions already concluded.

33. The final report of the Conference (A/CONF.48/14 and Corr.1) included a number of unacceptable statements. It referred to the need for new concepts of sovereignty and for the collective exercise of sovereignty. The new conception was reflected in the argument for the automatic financing of international co-operation by imposing levies and tolls on, for example, certain forms of international transport or the consumption of certain non-renewable resources. Such proposals were clearly quite unacceptable. There were also omissions from the results of the Conference; insufficient attention was paid to the wars being waged in various parts of the world, where modern weapons were destroying not only the environment and its resources, but also the health and well-being of man. His delegation endorsed the remarks

made by the representative of Algeria in that connexion at the previous meeting.

34. The Soviet Union was opposed to any attempts to limit State sovereignty over natural resources or national jurisdiction and control, which had been won after a prolonged struggle against colonialism and neo-colonialism. All States must seek, not to review that important principle of international relations but to comply strictly with it and strengthen it. The new ideas referred to at Stockholm therefore gave rise to justified concern and required strict interpretation. The United Nations must uphold the principle of State sovereignty and ensure strict compliance with it in the interest of rapidly achieving the goals of the Organization.

35. His delegation did not believe that the recommendations adopted at Stockholm relating to an expansion of the activities of specialized agencies and other organizations connected with the United Nations system in respect of the environment were necessarily binding on those bodies. They should be considered in the normal manner by their governing bodies and should be confirmed only if they were appropriate and if their inclusion in programmes would not lead to duplication and overlapping. Some of the recommendations in the Action Plan either had an insufficient basis in fact or were based on erroneous premises. For example, a number of them advanced the theory that population questions were closely linked to problems of the environment, the underlying idea being that population growth was one of the basic causes of environmental problems. During the preparatory work for the Conference his delegation, as well as others, had indicated the unsoundness of that concept. It was therefore surprising to find in the Action Plan references to WHO intensifying research endeavour in the field of human reproduction so that the serious consequences of the population explosion for the environment could be prevented. It should be noted that that recommendation appeared in the section of the Plan dealing with planning and the management of human settlements for environmental quality; the question arose as to whether it was really necessary, for such purposes, to establish an international fund or to formulate programmes to meet effectively the requirements of growth of human settlements and to improve the quality of life in existing settlements. The appeal to WHO to study human reproduction with a view to preventing population growth was, to say the least, ambiguous. His delegation supported neither that recommendation nor the other provisions of the Action Plan relating to population problems.

36. His delegation also found it hard to agree that housing problems should be treated in the context of the environment. Although human settlements were artificial ecological systems, even more extreme cases of such systems were exemplified by industrial complexes and agricultural production, with their immense chemical and biological effects on nature and man. It was therefore not clear why the recommendations called for action only in housing construction and not in technical assistance for industrial and agricultural development. His delegation did not believe it approp-

riate to include all problems of development under the heading of environmental problems, especially such social and economic problems as housing and the planning of human settlements. It was in his delegation's view premature to speak of drafting international standards for various aspects relating to the quality of the environment. It would be more appropriate to discuss methodology and the criteria which in future might be used in international standardization activity, and was proposed for example in the recommendations relating to the quality of water.

37. The recommendations on the international protection of representative ecosystems of international significance and systematic audit of development projects within them must be implemented in such a way as to avoid interference in the internal affairs of States.

38. The Action Plan provided for the provision to the United Nations, FAO and UNCTAD by States of statistics on the production and use of toxic or dangerous substances which were potential marine pollutants. What was important in preventing pollution of the sea was information not so much on the volume of such substances produced but on the quantity which entered the marine environment. Simply to record data on the pollution of the environment would not solve the problem, but would in fact create additional difficulties. It was scarcely possible to agree to the recommendation for the compilation of a world registry of rivers classified according to the amount of pollution they poured into the oceans; such measures might be useful at a regional level, as part of the work conducted by the countries concerned to prevent pollution of the seas off their coasts. For the same reasons, it was difficult to agree with the proposal to explore the feasibility of developing a registry of releases to the biosphere of significant quantities of radioactive materials. Such a registry would serve no practical purpose; it would be more advisable to concentrate on ensuring that each country individually took action to prohibit such releases. International co-operation in the area should be conducted through IAEA.

39. Certain organizational and methodological provisions should be made more specific. For example, the experimental research programmes to provide data on the epidemiological consequences of the various environmental agents must be based on co-operation among national epidemiological observation and research systems. Implementation of the proposal for the establishment of a world-wide monitoring system and for the international exchange of information on problems of the environment must be based on observation parameters agreed to at the international level. To avoid duplication and overlapping, the work of the various monitoring systems established by WHO, WMO, UNESCO and FAO must be co-ordinated. It would also be desirable to reduce the number of separate monitoring programmes by combining some of them. No monitoring system could function successfully unless it was based on national systems and complied strictly with the principle of universality.

40. The Soviet Union's position with regard to international co-operation in environmental protection had been formulated clearly in the decisions of the twenty-fourth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The consideration by the Supreme Soviet, in September 1972, of measures for the further improvement of environmental protection and the rational use of natural resources was also important in that respect. A report made to the Supreme Soviet had clearly indicated the possibilities for improving environmental protection and the rational use of natural resources available to the Soviet State and socialist economy, and had also outlined the extensive activities undertaken in that connexion. The Soviet Union had been the first country in the world to establish maximum permissible levels for air pollutants and to prohibit the operation of new industrial undertakings without purification equipment. A considerable amount of important legislation relating to the environment had been adopted during the preceding year, giving the competent State and republican organs the right to prohibit or temporarily halt the operation of industrial and other plants which contaminated the environment. The Government had recently issued decrees on measures to prevent the pollution of the Caspian Sea, on the rational use and preservation of the resources of Lake Baikal and the protection of the Volga and Ural river basins. The Soviet Union had also made great strides towards a solution of the problem as a whole by developing new technologies designed to avoid contamination of the environment. The Supreme Soviet had stressed, in its decree on measures for the further improvement of environmental protection and the rational use of natural resources, that concern for the environment was a primary duty of the State, and had instructed the Government to prepare a broad set of measures which would solve the problems of the environment and ensure the rational use of natural resources. It had attached great importance to the active participation of the Soviet Union in international co-operation programmes for the study and protection of the environment.

41. It was thus apparent that the Soviet Government was taking serious action to preserve the environment both in its territory and in the world at large. International co-operation was of great importance to the solution of environmental problems; however effective the measures undertaken in the Soviet Union were, they could not solve the problem of the general pollution of the world's air and seas. Accordingly, the Soviet Union was engaged in international co-operation on both a multilateral and a bilateral basis. A programme adopted in July 1971 provided for joint action by the countries members of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) on a number of serious problems of the environment and the rational use of its resources. At the bilateral level, the Soviet Union had recently concluded agreements with a number of neighbouring countries relating to water, fisheries, quarantine and plant protection. Further agreements relating to the environment were contemplated with Finland and Iran. Co-operation with other countries was also being expanded. In May 1972, an agreement had been signed with the United States on co-operation in environmen-

tal protection. The first session of the Soviet-United States Commission established under that agreement had recently been held. The agreement covered a wide range of questions and areas of co-operation, and aimed at settling the basic aspects of the environmental problem and, by mutual agreement, making the results of co-operation between the two countries available to others. Multilateral co-operation in individual aspects of the environment also afforded great possibilities; the Soviet Union was a member of the recently established International Institute of Applied Systems Analysis.

42. The Soviet Union favoured the expansion of international co-operation with regard to the environment, including co-operation within the United Nations system. It was, however, apparent from the current discussion and from the various draft resolutions submitted that all countries were not equally satisfied with the results of the Conference and that there were various interpretations of the future action to be taken by the United Nations in the matter of the environment. A main theme of the debate had been the question of the universality of the international action to be taken by the system. Unfortunately, political prejudice was still apparent in that connexion. It was particularly clearly expressed in the fact that none of the draft resolutions submitted revealed any real wish to remedy the situation which had led to the exclusion of the German Democratic Republic from participation and which had compelled the Soviet Union and other socialist countries to repeat again and again that any action taken by the United Nations to deal with the worldwide problem of the environment must be organized on a universal basis and that all interested States must be given the right to participate in it. His delegation hoped that the sponsors of draft resolutions would give serious thought to that point and reserved the right to speak again on the draft resolutions at a later stage in the debate.

43. Miss GONZÁLEZ MARTÍNEZ (Mexico) said that the time factor had become one of the most important elements in the work of international organizations. Preparations for the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment had begun in 1968 and the Conference had successfully achieved the main purpose established by the General Assembly in resolution 2581 (XXIV), paragraph 2, of 15 December 1969.

44. The specialized agencies and certain intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations had engaged in intensive discussions and research, the results of which had been of great value to the Preparatory Committee and the Conference. Each Government had worked towards making its nation aware of the problem and establishing the requisite institutional machinery for internal co-ordination. At Stockholm, her Government had informed the international community of its national administrative and legislative programmes for improving the environment, and had reaffirmed its desire to continue its international activities in the environmental field.

45. She recalled that the Latin American Regional Seminar on Problems of the Human Environment and

Development had been held in Mexico City from 6 to 11 September 1971. Furthermore, her Government had offered to host the second conference which, it hoped, would be held in 1975, provided that it did not require such careful preparation as the first.

46. The Declaration approved in Stockholm referred, *inter alia*, to the protection of nature, population planning with regard to fundamental human rights, the duty to reach agreement on the elimination and complete destruction of nuclear weapons and all other means of mass destruction and the sovereign right of States to exploit their own resources and their responsibility to avoid causing damage to the environment. In the Declaration and the recommendations in the Action Plan it was recognized that improvement of the environment should not hamper the development process in the countries of the third world. The Declaration also stressed the need to accelerate development in the least developed countries and the importance of stability of prices for their exports. Thus the principles confirmed that the developed countries, in adopting such policies, should not try to obstruct development in the third world or to use those policies to reject the principle of non-reciprocity in the transfer of technology and international trade. Although not perfect, the Declaration was the result of a joint effort by all States and should be considered a success. The principle which called for the elimination of nuclear arms and means of mass destruction was one of the most important points of agreement, although her Government would have preferred an even stronger wording.

47. It was important that the principles adopted at Stockholm should be clearly reflected in the draft resolutions, in which case they would have the support of her Government. Her delegation had joined with that of Sweden in sponsoring draft resolutions A/C.2/1228 and A/C.2/L.1229/Rev.1, because it believed that the first provided an appropriate institutional framework for the implementation of the Action Plan and the second reaffirmed the consensus reached at Stockholm. Consequently, she hoped that both would be unanimously adopted. Her Government would report on the amount of its contribution to the proposed Environment Fund once the Congress had approved it. In her delegation's view, draft resolutions A/C.2/L.1230 and A/C.2/L.1231 were closely related and it might prove useful for the sponsors of both to consider merging them so as to avoid a proliferation of similar resolutions. Draft resolution A/C.2/L.1234 reflected her Government's views on the need to ensure that environmental programmes concerning development should be compatible with the goals of the International Development Strategy.

48. Her delegation was glad to note that the divergent views expressed at Stockholm on principle 20 had been reconciled. However, in the view of the majority of Member States, draft resolution A/C.2/L.1227 was not compatible with the modern concept of responsibility of States, as indicated by the various proposals submitted on the subject to the International Law Commission. She could not therefore endorse paragraphs 2 and

3. Her delegation had held informal consultations with some of the sponsors with a view to finding an acceptable compromise, but its suggestions had not been accepted for reasons which it could well understand. She pointed out that the last part of paragraph 3, as it stood, could be interpreted to mean that the obligation to ensure protection of the environment and the corresponding responsibility, embodied in principles 21 and 22, could be met by merely informing neighbouring countries and could lead to the ridiculous situation where the State faced with a serious threat to its environment would only be entitled to be notified that such damage would be caused. For some countries that might suffice, but not for Mexico. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mexico had explained her Government's position clearly at the 2050th plenary meeting of the General Assembly, on 3 October 1972, when he had said that it was the responsibility of all States to avoid activities within their jurisdiction or control which might cause damage to the environment beyond their national frontiers and to repair any damage caused. Mexico had suffered the effects of non-compliance with that principle which all States should respect bilaterally and multilaterally. Thus, her delegation would endorse the Canadian amendments (A/C.2/L.1233) which referred to paragraph 2 and attempted to avoid such an ambiguous interpretation of principles 21 and 22. Her delegation asked that the vote on the operative part of draft resolution A/C.2/L.1227 should be taken paragraph by paragraph.

49. As the representative of Sweden had said (1466th meeting), the main objective of the Conference had been achieved, since world public opinion had been made fully aware of the problems, and Governments could rely on the co-operation of their citizens in carrying out their work.

50. Mr. AL-SHARIFI (Yemen) thanked Mr. Strong for his comprehensive introduction of the report of the Conference and his dynamic efforts, and also thanked the Swedish Government for the work involved in hosting the Conference.

51. The General Assembly was faced with the question of establishing a Governing Council and an environment secretariat as a result of the recommendations adopted by the Conference. The Action Plan adopted by the Conference encompassed a wide range of recommendations including, *inter alia*, management of water resources, soil conservation, forest and wildlife conservation, rapid development and management of domestic livestock and improvement of human habitation in general.

52. In many developing countries, including his own, people lived in a hostile environment owing to the scarcity of resources and the many threats to human and animal life. If such environments were to be improved, sufficient housing and food must be provided and water resources must be developed. A massive effort by the world community, using technology and capital, would be the most effective way to replenish depleted forests and revitalize desolate valleys. The development of the environment in that sense should in no way con-

tradict or limit general development, in fact it was a first step in development. An Environment Fund was to be set up and priorities must be established; the essential needs for survival in the developing countries, namely, food, water and decent shelter, should have top priority, as suggested in the Action Plan. Environmental problems resulting from industrial waste, similar to the problems experienced by developed countries, also confronted the developing countries but, in his delegation's view, they were of secondary importance. Unlike the developing countries the developed countries had the necessary resources, machinery and technology to deal with any environmental problem, no matter how complex it might be.

53. His delegation had co-sponsored draft resolutions A/C.2/L.1227, A/C.2/L.1231 and A/C.2/L.1234. In his delegation's view, the Canadian amendments A/C.2/L.1233, to draft resolution A/C.2/L.1227 would upset the balance of the original text which was supported by the majority of delegations.

54. Mr. ROSSIDES (Cyprus) said that the problem of the human environment was perhaps the most important item on the agenda of the General Assembly. It was a subject in which there was no room for conflicting interests or ideologies. No single undertaking in recent history had such important implications for the survival of mankind. He expressed his Government's profound gratitude for Mr. Strong's work at the Conference and thanked Sweden for its characteristic foresight, tact and generosity in hosting the Conference.

55. The Conference had made all nations aware of the magnitude of the task confronting the world and of the relationships between mankind and the other species and between man and nature. It was now realized that mankind was part of a highly interdependent global ecological system which was inevitably affected by any interference. If the Conference had accomplished nothing more than that, it could be considered successful. But it had gone further; it had adopted the historic Declaration on the Human Environment, over one hundred recommendations and the Action Plan, defining mutual responsibilities, outlining a course of action to be followed and drawing up plans for the machinery needed to provide a continuing global response to the perils threatening the environment.

56. His Government attached particular importance to those principles in the Declaration which established that States were responsible for the impact of their environmental decisions on the world community as a whole. In that connexion, his Government wished to co-sponsor draft resolution A/C.2/L.1227 because it considered that it would help to implement the Declaration. His delegation also endorsed the constitutional and financial arrangements recommended by the Conference for action by the General Assembly. Such arrangements, although insufficient to deal with the problems of global environmental deterioration, were adequate for the initial task of integrating efforts among existing agencies and assisting Governments in co-ordinating their approaches to pollution problems. His delegation would support draft resolutions

A/C.2/L.1228 and A/C.2/L.1229/Rev.1 and would like to be included in the list of co-sponsors of the latter.

57. His delegation also fully supported the recommendations of the Action Plan which, if implemented, would radically improve the relationship between man and his environment. It was important that the Declaration had established the responsibility of States to develop international law on environmental problems. Although his Government had an open mind on the matter, it must be clear to all that it was more important to deal with the environment of the earth than, for instance, with the resources of the moon or other celestial bodies, however important they might ultimately prove to be. At a second conference it would be appropriate to consider in detail the codification of practices in legal terms, and to provide the machinery for achieving adequate compliance with universally agreed guidelines for the pacific settlement of disputes arising in connexion with environment problems. While the main responsibility for action must remain with States and regions, their action was not without implications for the world community. Therefore the world community had a stake in such decisions and action, for example, with regard to pollution levels in water and the air, although such matters fell within the internal jurisdiction of States. The rationalization of guidelines on such matters would call for a high degree of co-operation, scientific awareness, understanding and accommodation of views. His delegation, therefore, strongly endorsed paragraph 1 of draft resolution A/C.2/L.1227. Generally speaking, there could be no real frontiers in matters affecting the environment.

58. It was significant that the Conference had recognized the over-all relationship between development and protection of the environment and had endorsed the principle of "additionality". The mistakes of the past could and should be avoided, but not to the detriment of the vital economic growth rate of the developing countries. It was of signal importance that the Conference had come to the conclusion that development and environmental protection were, in the long term, inseparable aspects of the same question. Indeed, the protection and preservation of the environment was of such vital significance to all nations that no effort or funds should be spared in the effort to carry out the scientific and technological task of co-ordinating economic development with full protection and preservation of the environment and of reaching a political consensus on the procedures for carrying it out both nationally and internationally. At the same time, in certain cases it might be better not to encourage excessive growth where it might create insuperable problems. However, that was not the case of the developing countries whose development had not yet reached an adequate stage.

59. As the representative of Sweden had pointed out, the need for a global redistribution of resources was no longer only a moral imperative but also a reflection of the ultimate limits to growth. He hoped that all future efforts in the environment field would be fully representative and that political divisions would not be allowed to jeopardize that universality.

60. His delegation whole-heartedly endorsed the institutional and financial recommendations for co-ordinating a world-wide approach to environmental problems. In that field alone, the United Nations could justify its existence. He agreed that the environmental unit should report to the General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council, which was responsible for co-ordination in its field, while maintaining its own distinct character. Although the membership of the proposed Governing Council was large, it was not too large to be efficient and it provided a broad level of representation in keeping with the nature of its functions. The proposed Fund, while small in comparison with other expenditures and in relation to the magnitude of the problem, was a sound beginning in keeping with the type of communicating and co-ordinating work initially contemplated. Adequate supervision was combined with the requisite flexibility. His Government hoped that contributions to the Fund would soon be forthcoming. Cyprus was small and its means were limited; its contribution would therefore be modest, but it would be as generous as possible because his Government was aware of the importance of the problem.

61. The high degree of mutual confidence and the atmosphere of co-operation on environmental matters was largely due to Mr. Strong's abilities. Cyprus hoped that he would continue the work he had so effectively begun, as head of the environment secretariat. Following the Conference the nations of the world must exercise their wisdom in acting collectively and co-operatively for the common good and the common need and there was every indication that they would do so. His delegation urged and expected speedy action by the Committee in approving and recommending the appropriate measures to the plenary Assembly. He reserved his right to speak on the other draft resolutions after they had been introduced.

62. The CHAIRMAN announced that Morocco and Singapore had asked to be included in the list of sponsors of draft resolution A/C.2/L.1229/Rev.1. Tunisia had asked to co-sponsor draft resolution A/C.2/L.1234, and New Zealand to co-sponsor the amendments in document A/C.2/L.1233.

The meeting rose at 5.20 p.m.