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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 20th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. OUDOVENKO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic)

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 86: SPECIAL PROGRAMMES OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE: REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/C.4/42/L.12)

1. Mr. MAHMOUD (Lebanon) introduced draft resolution A/C.2/42/L.12 on assistance for the reconstruction and development of Lebanon, which noted with deep concern the grave deterioration of the economic situation in Lebanon in 1986, a particularly difficult year for his country. Emphasis was also placed on the need to fill the vacant post of United Nations Co-ordinator of Assistance for the Reconstruction and Development of Lebanon. He hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus and that all delegations would join those of Cyprus, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the United Kingdom in sponsoring it.

AGENDA ITEM 92: DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION (continued) (A/42/3, 178, 313, 344, 352, 354, 357, 359, 381, 386, 407, 410, 411, 417, 474, 477, 549, 603, 604 and Corr.1, 605)

- (c) EFFECTIVE MOBILIZATION AND INTEGRATION OF WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT: REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/42/273 and Add.1, 508; E/1986/24)
- (e) ENVIRONMENT (continued) (A/42/25, 427 and 514; A/C.2/42/L.3)
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- (i) NEW INTERNATIONAL HUMAN ORDER: MORAL ASPECTS OF DEVELOPMENT: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/42/527)

2. Mr. BEN MOUSSA (Morocco) said that the environment was mankind's new frontier but it might be the last unless current development models changed. The report of the World Commission on Environment and Development made it clear that conservation of the world environment was an imperative, rather than a choice, for economic development.

3. In recent years, environmental problems had come to be regarded as something to be tackled in the future, by others. Massive educational campaigns - perhaps even a revolution in thinking - were needed to mobilize the international community for the Earth's survival. Environmental protection efforts must take into account the cyclical relationship between the utilization of limited resources, population pressures, scientific and technological progress and development needs.

(Mr. Ben Moussa, Morocco)

4. The current balance in the highly complex world ecosystem was the result of an ideology, dating back to the Industrial Revolution, according to which man's dominance required the submission of nature: instead of working in harmony with nature, man constructed development models which were destroying him together with his environment. For economic development to be compatible with the forces of nature, the link between production or consumption patterns on the one hand and ecological balance on the other must be acknowledged.

5. At the fortieth session of the General Assembly, his delegation had submitted a resolution entitled "Patterns of consumption: qualitative aspects of development", which had drawn attention to the interrelationships between population, resources, environment and development. The concept of consumption patterns must be incorporated into any global approach to the problem of ecological development. It was to be hoped that the case studies and monographs prepared in that connection by the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development would help to evaluate the basic social and economic needs of peoples and the qualitative aspects of development.

6. He concurred with the World Commission on Environment and Development that the principal threats to the environment were to be found no longer in the North but in the South. According to FAO, the forests of the developing world would be the most endangered ecosystem by the end of the century, as wood provided over 90 per cent of all the energy used in developing countries and the world deforestation rate was 10 times higher than the rate of reforestation. Furthermore, since 40 per cent of the world's species lived in tropical forests, the death of the forest ecosystem threatened thousands of species of plants and animals with extinction. The developing world was also experiencing serious problems caused by the widespread use of herbicides and insecticides and by water pollution and, while much less spectacular than the disasters which had occurred at Bhopal and Chernobyl, those problems were ultimately far more lethal.

7. The time had come for action, and the United Nations had a critical role to play in promoting multilateral efforts, because the developing world could not espouse the cause of environmental development without adequate support or clear-cut progress in the democratization of international relations.

8. He hoped that the report of the World Commission would become a universal covenant on the environment that would bind successive generations and that the fourth United Nations Development Decade would be a decade for development and the environment. To that end, his delegation was prepared to join in sponsoring any draft resolution on the environment.

9. Mr. CHUPRIKOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that, while the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development had rightly emphasized the dangers involved in the development of nuclear energy, his delegation believed that attention should have been drawn to the ecological problems caused by fuel-burning electric power stations. The failure to mention those problems, as well as a number of other omissions, had left the report

(Mr. Chuprikov, USSR)

somewhat incomplete. The international community should endeavour to strengthen the basic international agreements on the environment and take steps to prevent any attempt to circumvent or violate them.

10. The UNEP Governing Council had made great headway in preparing the Environmental Perspective to the Year 2000 and Beyond. The Soviet Union believed that the conclusions and recommendations of the report of the Brundtland Commission and the Environment Perspective could be used to good effect in the preparation of a system-wide medium-term programme of action for protecting the environment, in respect of the period 1991-1995. The programme of action, which should stress the need to prevent the harmful effects of the arms race on the environment, would be a practical step in the development of a global strategy for environmental protection and the efficient use of natural resources. UNEP could play a leading role in the development of such a strategy. In that respect the experience of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), in which work was being completed on a strategy for protecting the environment in Europe to the year 2000 and beyond, was also of interest.

11. The Soviet Union was prepared to assist in co-ordinating concerted action for protecting the environment, giving due consideration to all ideas and proposals, in order to enable the General Assembly to adopt concrete, action-oriented recommendations at its forty-second session. In any programme of co-operation for the solution of ecological problems, the development interests of the developing countries must be taken fully into account.

12. On the whole, the Soviet Union supported the draft resolution which the UNEP Governing Council had suggested for adoption by the General Assembly, but a number of proposals in the draft would result in unjustifiably broadening the Programme's mandate in the matter of mobilizing the United Nations system to ensure sustainable development. Such proposals rightfully fell within the purview of many other intergovernmental bodies, particularly the Economic and Social Council, which played the central co-ordinating role in the United Nations system in matters of development. Such shortcomings should be rectified in the discussion on the draft resolution.

13. The Soviet Union supported the activities of UNEP in combating desertification and drought. Soviet scientific and planning institutions co-operated actively with UNEP and other bodies and specialized agencies of the United Nations system rendering scientific and technological assistance to developing countries in their efforts to combat desertification and drought.

14. Science and technology played a key role in development, and the question of a global strategy for scientific and technological progress could be considered by the Intergovernmental Committee on Science and Technology for Development, with the active participation of the Advisory Committee and the United Nations Centre for Science and Technology taking into consideration the relevant activities of UNEP and other United Nations bodies and specialized agencies.

(Mr. Chuprikov, USSR)

15. The Soviet Union attached great importance to the implementation of Economic and Social Council resolution 1987/79, entitled "Cross-organizational review of the medium-term plans of the organizations of the United Nations system and programme analysis in the area of science and technology for development". The Intergovernmental Committee on Science and Technology for Development should step up its efforts to co-ordinate the activities of the United Nations system in that area.

16. The Soviet Union, together with other socialist countries, would continue to seek ways of uniting the efforts of all States with a view to using science and technology exclusively for peaceful purposes and for solving pressing social and economic problems. At the recent forty-third extraordinary meeting of the session of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA), the socialist States had stressed the peaceful and constructive objectives of the Comprehensive Programme of Scientific and Technological Progress of the Countries Members of CMEA up to the Year 2000 and had reaffirmed their willingness to co-ordinate their activities with those of other interested States.

17. His delegation supported the activities of the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless and commended the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) on its contribution. The Soviet Union would continue to participate actively in international co-operation in the area of human settlements.

18. In recent years, the United Nations had done much to enhance the effective integration of women in development. His delegation supported the general approach proposed by the Secretary-General in his report on progress in the preparation of the first regular update of the world survey on the role of women in development (A/42/508). However, in preparing the update, more attention should be given to the social and economic costs of external debt, protectionism and restructuring programmes from the point of view of their effect on the status of women. With regard to the Secretary-General's report on strengthening the work of the United Nations in integrating women effectively in economic programmes and activities (A/42/273), he emphasized that the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies, together with the decisions adopted at Mexico City and Copenhagen, were the most comprehensive intergovernmental mandates for United Nations activities in that area. The upcoming cross-organizational analysis of United Nations programmes for the advancement of women, to be held in 1989, should fully reflect the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies in all areas. His delegation had been surprised that document A/42/273/Add.1 failed to mention the participation of women in the strengthening of international peace and co-operation, since that was one of the important elements in the mandate of the United Nations for integrating women in the development process.

19. Mr. GRECU (Romania), speaking on agenda item 82 (h), said that mankind was witnessing the greatest scientific and technological revolution in history. Romania was studying the increasingly powerful role science and technology played in the life of the Romanian people and in international relations. A scientific and educational congress had been held at Bucharest in 1986, at which the President

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(Mr. Grecu, Romania)

of his country had affirmed that science was the most powerful force for economic and social progress.

20. Recent discoveries and developments had indeed changed the means of production and man's place in the production process. The large-scale application of those developments had brought about major structural changes in the economy and society. New technologies also had implications for economic and social development at the world level: they must be used to help the developing countries develop their industry, increase their agricultural output, eradicate poverty and meet their energy needs. So far, however, the developing countries had played a very small part in the new scientific and technological revolution. Science and technology were being monopolized by some countries and used to exert pressure on weaker countries and peoples. The use of so much of mankind's vast scientific potential for military purposes was an anomaly which threatened the independence and security of peoples and world peace. Inequalities among States were on the rise as countries that lacked the new technologies became dependent on others, whereas all countries should have full access to the fruits of modern science and technology.

21. His delegation was pleased with the outcome of the debate at the ninth session of the Intergovernmental Committee on Science and Technology for Development on the role of new technologies in economic and social development and fully supported that Committee's resolution 3 (IX). It also supported the recommendation in resolution 1 (IX) that the General Assembly should, at its forty-fourth session, commemorate the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Vienna Programme of Action for Science and Technology for Development. At that session, the item on science and technology for development should be considered by the plenary Assembly rather than by the Second Committee, and there should be a substantive debate on the item in addition to the commemorative ceremony. He suggested that a second United Nations conference on science and technology for development might be held to strengthen the role of the Organization and the specialized agencies in promoting greater international co-operation in that field.

22. Mr. SUPKA (Observer, Council for Mutual Economic Assistance) said that the socialist countries had consistently stressed the need for all countries to pool their efforts in order to ensure stable, reliable, predictable and equitable conditions for development, the normalization of international economic relations and international economic security. The drastic deterioration of the international economic climate in recent years had had a negative effect on the developing countries. The problem of foreign indebtedness had assumed global dimensions, and could be solved only through a global and just settlement which took into account the interests of the debtor-countries, particularly the developing countries, and the stable and harmonious development of the world economy. Curtailment of the arms race, the diversion of part of the funds thus released to boost development aid, would help solve the problem of indebtedness. The position of principle of the socialist countries on ways to solve the foreign-debt problem as well as on a number of other problems besetting developing countries was set forth in a document entitled "On overcoming backwardness and establishing a new international economic order".

(Mr. Supka)

23. The socialist countries continued to develop economic and scientific and technological co-operation with the developing countries on a basis of equality and mutual advantage. The trade and economic relations of CMEA with developing countries were directed towards steady growth. In keeping with its basic position on strict observance of the right of every people freely to choose their social and economic system and paths of development, the CMEA countries were prepared to continue promoting various forms of economic co-operation with developing countries on the basis of long-term agreements and programmes.

24. The further development of the CMEA countries and of their reciprocal co-operation opened up new opportunities for trade, economic, scientific and technological relations with all countries. An accord had been reached on the establishment of co-operation between CMEA and the Latin American Economic System, and a dialogue between CMEA and the European Economic Community had been resumed. CMEA called upon the United Nations to play a greater role in solving global and economic problems and to strengthen its role in the development of economic, scientific and technological co-operation and was prepared to contribute to the achievement of those objectives.

25. Mr. ESSY (Côte d'Ivoire) said that the issues discussed in the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development were of particular importance to countries such as his which based their development on agriculture. In the case of Côte d'Ivoire, environmental problems centred on man's relationship with the forest which, by virtue of its rich soil and regular rainfall, was the source of the nation's success as a producer of agricultural commodities and provided sufficient food and water.

26. The forest's ecological balance must be maintained, but the rapid development of agriculture had affected his country's forest cover which had shrunk by an average of 327,000 hectares a year for the past 26 years. That in turn had caused a drop in rainfall and more violent harmattans in coastal areas. Drought was a mounting problem in forest regions and the desert was fast encroaching on the savannah. As the afforestation rate was approaching the dangerous minimum of 20 per cent, changes in the ecosystem were threatening to become irreversible. Côte d'Ivoire had consequently taken precautions at the national, regional and international levels to combat deforestation.

27. At the national level, 4.7 million hectares of forest land had been classified in 1978 as a permanent forest reserve. The Forestry Service had established eight national parks and three natural reserves, with a total area of nearly 2 million hectares. The main thrust, however, had been directed towards halting deforestation by planting selected species and restoring the ecological balance through action at the political, economic and commercial levels. In May 1987, a national conference had been held to assess the impact of the country's efforts and to determine ways of improving the situation in the future.

28. At the regional level, Côte d'Ivoire was working with other West African and North African countries to combat desertification. The resolution on that subject,

(Mr. Essy, Côte d'Ivoire)

introduced by his delegation at the thirty-ninth session of the General Assembly, had led to a conference sponsored by the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office in Côte d'Ivoire in 1985 which had confirmed the link between deforestation and spreading desertification.

29. At the international level, his delegation placed great hope in intensified multilateral action, as recommended in the report of the World Commission. The international community's heightened interest in environmental problems was thus encouraging. The agreement of principle between the two major nuclear Powers to dismantle short-range and mid-range nuclear missiles was particularly welcome, as was the conclusion of an international agreement for the protection of the ozone layer. His country was co-operating actively with FAO in the context of the Tropical Forests Action Plan. Côte d'Ivoire's efforts to rehabilitate its forests were supported by a number of multilateral agencies, including the World Bank and the African Development Bank. It was to be hoped that more agencies would join in providing support, since environmental challenges were often too much for individual countries to meet by themselves. Côte d'Ivoire had also become a member of the International Tropical Timber Organization.

30. Mr. SVENSON (Sweden), speaking on behalf of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, commended the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, and the UNEP Governing Council's Environmental Perspective to the Year 2000 and Beyond. The impressive list of recommendations for national and international action in the Perspective reflected a broad consensus on measures for promoting sustainable development. The Nordic countries supported the draft resolutions of the UNEP Governing Council on the Environmental Perspective and on the report of the World Commission.

31. The role of environmental and natural resources agencies in advising and assisting other agencies should be strengthened and non-governmental organizations, industry and the scientific community had a very central role to play. Governments should keep in touch with each other when applying the concept of sustainable development which should be incorporated in the objectives of the multilateral development and financial institutions, but discussions on the environmental dimension of development assistance should be based on a genuine dialogue between the co-operating partners, taking fully into account the priorities of the recipient countries. Larger transfers of resources to developing countries were vital to the sustainable development process.

32. The Nordic countries welcomed the decision of the UNEP Governing Council that UNEP's clearing-house mechanism should focus on assisting developing countries to increasing their capacity for promoting sustainable development by supporting policy planning and institution-building. Corresponding efforts by the whole range of multilateral and bilateral development assistance agencies would also be very welcome.

33. The joint assessment of the risks resulting from the pollution of the ozone layer and the joint action agreed upon at Montreal were a breakthrough in

(Mr. Svenson, Sweden)

intergovernmental environmental co-operation. The assessment and review of control measures, to begin in 1990, should be thorough and, if necessary, further measures should be agreed upon. The Nordic Ministers for the Environment intended to propose the implementation of further steps for reducing the consumption of ozone-depleting substances in the Nordic countries. The decision by the Governing Council on global climate change was also of fundamental importance.

34. The Nordic countries attached great importance to the adoption of the London guidelines for the exchange of information on chemicals in international trade and were prepared to work constructively in the Working Group set up to continue the search for ways of applying the principle of "prior informed consent".

35. The Cairo guidelines and principles for the environmentally sound management of hazardous wastes was another important achievement. The Nordic countries supported and would participate in efforts to negotiate a global convention on the control of transboundary movements of hazardous wastes.

36. In his report on desertification and drought, the Secretary-General had stressed that desertification control should be an integral part of national development priorities. The responsibility for national and regional plans of action to combat desertification lay with the affected countries, but both bilateral and multilateral donors should match those efforts by contributing more resources, but care should be taken to avoid duplication. In that context, the Nordic Governments welcomed the decision of the UNEP Governing Council to review the activities of the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office.

37. In March 1988, the UNEP Governing Council would meet for a special session on the system-wide medium-term environment programme, and States would have the opportunity to agree on a programme for dealing with environmental problems at their source by re-orienting policies and programmes in major economic and social sectors.

38. Mrs. PERKOVIC (Yugoslavia) said that the international community had recognized the need for urgent measures to avoid a world-wide environmental catastrophe. Of particular importance was the recognition that environmental issues were closely linked with development. According to the report of the World Commission, poverty was a major cause - as well as an effect - of environmental degradation. In addition, heavy external debt and the debt-servicing burden, unfavourable terms of trade, protectionism, and diminished capital flows to developing countries had contributed to serious environmental deterioration in many countries. In order to reverse that situation, international economic co-operation should be strengthened and financial assistance to developing countries substantially increased in order to achieve sustainable development. The position of the developing countries was set forth in the Declaration of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Group of 77 (A/42/604).

39. In the early 1970s, Yugoslavia had started to protect the environment. The right of citizens to a healthy environment and the obligation of society to ensure

(Mrs. Perkovic, Yugoslavia)

proper conditions for exercising that right were proclaimed in the 1974 Constitution. One reason for making that right a constitutional principle was that the period of accelerated economic development and industrialization had, until the mid-1970s, failed to establish a proper correlation between development and environmental protection. The Chernobyl disaster had heightened public concern about the dangers of nuclear pollution and her country was considering banning the construction of nuclear plants until the year 2000.

40. Attaching great importance to co-operation at all levels, Yugoslavia was one of the 16 littoral States participating in the UNEP project to protect the Mediterranean from pollution.

41. With regard to human settlements, she welcomed, inter alia, the Global Shelter Strategy to the Year 2000, adding that her country had initiated activities to mark the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless.

42. As a developing country, Yugoslavia had consistently emphasized the need for greater international co-operation in science and technology. Accordingly, it had worked for implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for fuller incorporation of science and technology into the development process of all countries, particularly the developing countries, and fully supported the Intergovernmental Committee on Science and Technology for Development and the Centre for Science and Technology for Development.

43. Mr. MOYA PALENCIA (Mexico) praised the report of the World Commission which offered new approaches to international co-operation for tackling environmental problems. As a developing country, Mexico was particularly concerned with environmental protection. His Government had set up a single body to deal with all aspects of the environment and had drafted laws to protect endangered species and set up special breeding-grounds. It had organized the protection of a very large area of highland tropical forest, created nature reserves and implemented production-oriented programmes for maintaining the ecological balance. Exploitation of resources around the Gulf of Mexico had been prohibited in order to protect the environment, which included the second largest reef zone in the world.

44. Lead-based fuel was gradually being replaced by a less harmful type and various incentives had been introduced to encourage industry to move out of densely-populated urban areas and reduce pollution. Increased awareness of such problems had led to the emergence of highly active ecology groups. At the national level, a body had been created to propose ways and means of dealing with the major sources of pollution and ecological imbalance. Its proposals were being implemented by federal, state and local authorities.

45. Mexico was a party to various international conventions and protocols on the environment. It had also signed environmental co-operation agreements with neighbouring countries, including Guatemala and the United States, and had ratified the Convention on the Law of the Sea. In 1987, it had been host to two important

(Mr. Moya Palencia, Mexico)

meetings organized by the Latin American countries, one on environmental legislation in Latin America and the Caribbean, the other on hazardous wastes and other substances in the Gulf of Mexico.

46. The proposed legal principles for environmental protection and sustainable development, summarized in annex I of the report of the World Commission, should be studied by the Sixth Committee with a view to their definitive adoption.

47. Environmental problems were complex and interrelated: for example, desertification, which affected many parts of the world, was a natural phenomenon aggravated by the effects of human activity. The time had come to reactivate international co-operation on the basis of shared responsibility. The developing countries had stressed long before that a system of international economic relations based on the unrestricted exploitation of resources would not continue indefinitely. The failure to establish a new international economic order had contributed to the current crisis. Environmental concern should give a fresh impetus to further efforts in that direction. The concept of "sustained development", as expounded in the report, was particularly relevant in that connection: it meant a new orientation in international relations and satisfying existing needs without compromising those of the future and vice versa. It called for action on all sides, having regard for the wide range of cultures and ecosystems.

48. The environment could not be adequately protected unless the economic crisis was overcome. As far as the developing countries were concerned, that meant the removal of protectionist barriers against their exports, improved terms of trade, a reversal of the current net flow of resources and a lasting solution of the debt problem. Not only were many countries obliged to step up their production of commodities merely to earn foreign currency, but their debt-servicing obligations made them incapable of sustainable development. The debt burden must be alleviated, with both debtors and creditors sharing the responsibility.

49. He endorsed the view expressed in the report that nuclear war constituted the greatest threat to the environment and that the international community should formulate and apply a régime for outer space, allowing it to be used solely for non-military purposes. The report could serve as a valuable basis for multilateral discussions, but greater consideration must be given to the preoccupations of the developing world.

50. Mr. NENEM (Poland) welcomed the World Commission's report which presented a new and stimulating approach to environment and development. Most of its recommendations should be implemented as soon as possible. It did not, however, address satisfactorily the problem of access to modern technologies for combating environmental hazards. Poorer countries would long be unable to reach internationally agreed levels of protection. Poland, for example, could not yet reduce its sulphur emissions in accordance with the Helsinki Protocol of 1985; it would be able to reach that level only some 20 years after the deadline. It therefore supported closer international co-operation in environmental protection

(Mr. Neneman, Poland)

and had put forward the idea of accepting as a universal principle the unrestrained flow of technology, experience and know-how in that field. It also favoured the setting-up of a world-level body to deal with problems of ecological security.

51. He welcomed the decision on promoting the transfer of environmental protection technology and the document "Environmental Perspective to the Year 2000 and Beyond", both adopted at the fourteenth session of the Governing Council of UNEP. The document was particularly important because it reflected a broad consensus on approaches to environmental protection.

52. Referring to the various barriers to international action, he said that the arms race and political tensions were major factors diverting both attention and resources from problems of the environment and development. The ecological aspects should loom large in a comprehensive system of international peace and security.

53. With regard to the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless, he praised the Commission on Human Settlements for having devised a Global Shelter Strategy for the Year 2000 as a follow-up to that initiative.

54. Emphasizing the need for longer-term objectives in international co-operation within the United Nations framework, he welcomed the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, which called for harmonization of the strategies and programmes of all the relevant United Nations bodies.

55. Although the ninth session of the Intergovernmental Committee on Science and Technology for Development had proved to be a valuable forum, it had concentrated on the details of selected topics at the expense of their wider context. He urged that Committee and the Centre for Science and Technology for Development to pay more attention to the wider implications of the issues discussed.

56. Mr. SZEDLACSKO (Hungary) praised the work of the Governing Council of UNEP and of the Intergovernmental Inter-sessional Preparatory Committee, which had produced the document entitled "Environmental Perspective to the Year 2000 and Beyond". He also welcomed the report of the World Commission which had been well received at the meeting of Eastern European States, hosted by Hungary in May. Presenting a new and complex approach to environment and development, the report emphasized the close relationship between the natural, social and economic aspects of environmental problems and sustainable development. It contained comprehensive recommendations, taking account of the importance of policy at all levels and stressing the close links with the maintenance of peace and security.

57. An international climate of peace, security and co-operation, free from the threat of nuclear war, would greatly enhance environmentally sound development. The rapidly increasing deterioration of the environment called for unified efforts by the international community at a time when military and non-military challenges to world security, the complexity of international problems and the interdependence of States necessitated entirely new approaches to the problem of security. Hungary believed environmental protection to be an integral part of the comprehensive

(Mr. Szedlacskó, Hungary)

international peace and security system, initiated by the socialist countries in 1986. There were also close links between environmental issues and development policies and practice, and environmental goals and actions must, therefore, be defined in relation to development objectives.

58. The United Nations and its specialized agencies should devote greater attention to the interrelationship of development and the environment. It was particularly important to establish early-warning systems for forecasting environmental, natural and man-made disasters. UNEP should play a greater role in the co-ordination of environmental co-operation and back-up activities.

59. Ms. BETHEL-DALY (Bahamas) emphasized the importance of the effective integration of women into economic development programmes and activities. The United Nations Decade for Women and the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women had undoubtedly made not only Governments and organizations, but also women themselves, more aware of the significant issues. The first regular update of the world survey on the role of women in development would help to maintain the momentum.

60. Macro-economic plans and structural adjustment policies had too often been implemented with little or no concern for their impact on women. It was encouraging that the recent meeting of the Commonwealth Ministers for Women's Affairs had agreed to set up an expert group to study that issue and that the update of the world survey would deal with the same subject-matter.

61. Her Government actively sought to promote and enhance the integration of women in development. A special department advised on the formulation of policies, established organizational links within the Government itself and with women's organizations, encouraged and supported women's programmes and organizations and instituted programmes at the national level. Similar activities in any country would benefit not only women, but the population as a whole.

62. She welcomed the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, which contained valuable warnings and recommendations. The Bahamas was particularly concerned about the preservation of the marine ecosystem and appreciated the assistance it had received from UNEP in the mapping of seagrass meadows. The data collected could be used by the Government to plan coastal development without jeopardizing the coastal habitat. The Bahamas would continue to support UNEP through contributions to the Regional Trust Fund for the Implementation of the Action Plan for the Caribbean Environment Programme and the Trust Fund of the Convention on International Trade and Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.

63. She endorsed the proposal that the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless should be extended in the form of a global programme to guarantee shelter for all by the year 2000, an undertaking that would require time, a great deal of resources and, above all, a genuine commitment. A number of guidelines and recommendations on possible actions to be taken by Governments and other bodies had

(Ms. Bethel-Daly, Bahamas)

emerged from the tenth session of the Commission on Human Settlements. The international community should do its utmost to implement those recommendations under national policies. In the past year, for example, the people of the Bahamas had benefited from various housing programmes and the Government would continue to implement further such programmes.

64. Mr. TAIHITU (Indonesia) said that in the long term it was undesirable that economic problems should relegate the important issues before the Committee to the sidelines. New developments in science and technology had profound implications for the social and economic development of the developing countries, yet they seemed to be losing support in the multilateral context. The Vienna Programme of Action had not been implemented and the technological gap between developed and developing countries had widened. The Governments of the developing countries bore primary responsibility for harnessing science and technology for national development, but international co-operation remained indispensable and the United Nations had a crucial role to play. The report of the Intergovernmental Committee confirmed that point, and the new approach, initiated in 1986 to bridge the gap between the global context and specific countries, was expected to make the activities of the United Nations more substantive. He hoped that the end-of-decade review of the Programme of Action scheduled for the tenth session of the Intergovernmental Committee would reactivate the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action, to which end adequate financing was essential. The new Fund for Science and Technology for Development should fill the gap, pending implementation of the financing system referred to in the Programme of Action, by co-operating with the Centre on Science and Technology for Development.

65. The increasing loss of productive land through environmental degradation was a matter of serious concern not only for the countries concerned but for the world at large. The General Assembly should therefore support the recommendations in the Secretary-General's report (A/42/501). The Intergovernmental Committee had an important contribution to make, and the degree to which that contribution was taken into consideration would measure the success or failure of co-ordination in the United Nations system.

66. The International Year of Shelter for the Homeless had highlighted the fact that huge numbers of people, particularly in the developing countries, lived in sub-standard dwellings and were denied social services and employment. The encouraging responses by Governments during the International Year must be translated into action. The new agenda for human settlements should constitute a valuable input in UNCHS's medium-term plan 1990-1995. His own country had incorporated the solution of problems of human settlement in its national development plans, which took into account the needs of lower-income segments of society. The mobilization of national efforts must be matched by international support, and the momentum of the International Year must be kept up as long as so many people lacked adequate shelter.

67. Despite their vast potential, women were relegated to the sidelines in most countries. Hence the importance of the United Nations role in integrating women in

(Mr. Taihitu, Indonesia)

development. His delegation welcomed the intention of the Commission on the Status of Women to ensure implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies by focusing on 15 priority issues. Indonesia was a member of the Commission and had always supported equal rights and opportunities for women in development.

68. The Brundtland report was a timely reminder of the problem of environmental degradation. Its most important achievement was to harmonize the concept of ecological balance and economic progress, emphasizing the need to meet present needs without compromising the well-being of future generations. His delegation endorsed the report's basic premise that poverty was a major cause and effect of global environmental problems. In that connection the international community could not do better than to take concrete action to eradicate world poverty and inequality.

69. Mr. KIURU (and), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, said that UNCHS had played a catalytic role in securing the broad consensus on the most effective means of solving human settlements problems. The Nordic countries had approved the 1982 decision to make the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless into a three-stage process extending to the year 2000. The first stage of that process and the activities of the International Year itself had provided a basis for national strategies and for the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000.

70. Widespread improvement of the housing situation was possible despite the lack of essential resources. Many resources, particularly human energy and ingenuity, were under utilized, and in many countries the strategy should be based on greater use of local materials. Public agencies alone could not provide shelter; rather it was the task of Governments to mobilize local and informal resources.

71. The growth of large cities was a threat to shelter strategies, as the UNCHS report pointed out. Migration to the large cities should be curbed and decentralization policies implemented, as the Brundtland report had also indicated.

72. With respect to the follow-up to the International Year, further action on shelter must remain a priority of UNCHS, despite the disbanding of the special secretariat, for the Global Strategy would require support in the years to come. Integrated action would be required from UNCHS, but it must keep the central goal in mind: in its implementation of UNDP human settlements projects, for example, it should not focus exclusively on improvement of housing conditions in a given area but provide innovative examples for other areas and other countries. UNCHS enjoyed a good reputation and it would be further strengthened by a successful follow-up to the International Year. The Nordic delegations therefore supported the draft decision submitted by the Economic and Social Council to the General Assembly.

73. Mr. SAAB (Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations) said that it was accepted that women bore the main responsibility for growing food in rural areas and that they should be recognized as key protagonists in the alleviation of poverty and improvement of food security. FAO could not achieve its goals without

(Mr. Saab)

the support of rural women. In that connection, the Forward-Looking Strategies adopted at Nairobi specifically referred to two FAO initiatives on rural women.

74. FAO had co-sponsored a meeting in Finland on women in development checklists and guidelines for use in-house, and a workshop had recently been held at Harare as part of the FAO project "Improving the Effectiveness of Agricultural Extension Services in Reaching Rural Women in Africa". FAO's second report on the implementation of the Programme of Action of the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development was based, inter alia, on 50 country progress reports and it contained a chapter on the role of women in rural development. The report would be submitted to the 1987 FAO Conference, which would also have before it a document entitled "Women in Agriculture and Rural Development: FAO's Programme Directions". FAO had also taken part in the post-Nairobi meeting of donors on women in development and it was to act as convener of two of the sub-groups.

75. In the context of its leadership role in the ACC Task Force on Rural Development, FAO had initiated inter-agency activities for implementing the Forward-looking Strategies. In the Task Force FAO would continue to encourage greater inter-agency co-operation concerning rural women and it would support parallel inter-agency initiatives in other ACC bodies.

76. He gave several examples of FAO's long involvement with environmental and conservation issues, noting that its work provided internationally accepted frameworks for tackling those problems. FAO was seeking to emphasize the environmental component of its development activities through an inter-departmental mechanism supported by an Environment Co-ordinating Centre. It had recently begun implementing environmental impact assessment procedures for those of its projects which might have negative environment effects. Environmental guidelines would also be used to improve project formulation.

77. With regard to drought and desertification, FAO believed that the major environmental issue in its work was the management and conservation of the productive capacity of natural resources. Where food production was concerned, the FAO Global Information and Early Warning System played an important role; agro-meteorological and crop monitoring in the Sahel since 1977 had made it possible to alert the international community of likely shortfalls in production in time for remedial action to be taken. FAO gave special attention to water resources, and forestry had an important contribution to make in combating drought. To increase awareness of the threat to forests, in 1985 the FAO Council had proclaimed the International Year of the Forest, and a Tropical Forestry Action Plan had been developed jointly with UNDP, UNEP, the World Bank and the donor community. In view of the key role of livestock production in areas affected by drought, FAO gave considerable emphasis to the management of grazing lands.

78. In conclusion he stressed that it was through those and similar programmes and projects that FAO carried out its ongoing commitment to environmentally sustainable development.

79. Mr. FANG Xiao (China) noted that his delegation had already spoken at length on the environment in a plenary meeting of the General Assembly. It hoped that the Committee would adopt suitable resolutions on decisions 14/13 and 14/14 of the Governing Council of UNEP. In recent years UNEP had done much to promote international co-operation and had helped to establish models of sustainable development in several countries. His delegation commended that work and hoped it would continue.

80. China had made environmental protection a fundamental State policy and its development policies were consistent with the concept of sustainable development. Nevertheless, his Government still had many environmental protection problems and it was ready to work with all Governments to attain the objectives of sustainable development both nationally and internationally.

81. His delegation endorsed the appeals made in the Committee for increased international co-operation in science and technology, for the economic development of the developing countries hinged thereon. It was regrettable that some quarters preferred bilateral co-operation to multilateral co-operation within the United Nations system. There were several reasons why bilateral co-operation could not replace multilateral co-operation. First, scientific and technological questions and social and economic problems could be resolved only by collective efforts. Second, multilateral co-operation promoted the collective self-reliance of the developing countries and improved North-South relations. Third, bilateral and multilateral co-operation supplemented each other. Fourth, the solution of global problems required global arrangements. His delegation therefore hoped that the United Nations would give renewed impetus to the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action.

82. China expressed the same support and expectation of the Fund for Science and Technology for Development as it had had for the former Financing System for Science and Technology for Development, and called on all countries, the developed countries in particular, to make greater financial contributions to the new Fund. The Centre on Science and Technology for Development should continue to function, for it had a unique role to play: it should review the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action and seek to rekindle the enthusiasm for international co-operation in science and technology which the Vienna Conference had aroused.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.