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*President: Mr. Rüdiger von WECHMAR*  
(Federal Republic of Germany).

*In the absence of the President, Mr. Slim (Tunisia),  
Vice-President, took the Chair.*

**AGENDA ITEM 61**

**Development and international economic co-operation  
(continued):**

**(f) Natural resources: reports of the Secretary-General**  
**Special meeting to launch the International  
Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade**

**REPORT OF THE SECOND COMMITTEE (PART I)**  
(A/35/592)

1. The **PRESIDENT** (*interpretation from French*):  
I now call on the representative of Luxembourg, who  
will speak on behalf of the States members of the  
European Community.

2. **Mr. PETERS** (Luxembourg) (*interpretation from  
French*): Speaking on behalf of the European Com-  
munity and its member States on the occasion of the  
proclamation of the International Drinking Water  
Supply and Sanitation Decade, I wish to stress the  
great interest we attach to the matters that we are  
discussing today.

3. As the Secretary-General stressed in his state-  
ment [54th meeting], problems relating to drinking  
water and its conservation have reached global di-  
mensions today and require a commitment on the  
part of all States to unite their efforts in order to con-  
serve this irreplaceable resource which is part of the  
heritage of all mankind.

4. The European Community, for its part, is making  
every effort necessary to protect this common heri-  
tage, on the one hand by adopting internal measures  
and on the other, by giving financial assistance to the  
developing countries to help them to deal with their  
problems.

5. Within its own territories, the European Com-  
munity is confronted by problems of water supply.  
The high population density, the expansion of its  
economic activities and the high standard of living  
of its peoples certainly do not facilitate the solution  
of this problem. In order to deal with this situation  
and to promote general and concerted action on the  
part of its member States in the realm of the rational  
administration and purification of the water supply,  
the Community, since 1973, has been implementing a  
programme of action on the environment in which  
these problems are given priority treatment. Within  
the framework of that action programme the Com-  
munity has adopted several directives aimed in par-  
ticular at preventing, reducing and eliminating water  
pollution.

6. Nevertheless, the European Community is aware  
that drinking water and, above all, its supply, present  
problems which affect above all the most disadvan-  
taged populations of the developing countries, par-  
ticularly when those countries are located in regions  
of the world where water is one of the essential factors  
of survival.

7. The policy of co-operation with the developing  
countries to which the Community is committed  
within the framework of the renewed Lomé Con-  
vention<sup>1</sup> is based essentially upon the priorities indi-  
cated by those countries, as well as upon the com-  
plementary nature of their efforts within the framework  
of their own development programmes. Hence the  
Community is ready to devote to the drinking water  
supply and sanitation sector all the attention which  
the developing countries, as far as each is concerned,  
wish to devote to it during the course of this Decade.  
In this connexion, I would recall the meeting held  
in November at Bamako between the leaders of the  
African, Caribbean and Pacific States and those of  
the European Community, which enabled all par-  
ticipants to learn from past experience and to develop  
the basic principles that should underlie future co-  
operation in this field.

8. During the past 15 years the European Com-  
munity has contributed actively to the solution of  
problems relating to drinking water conservation in  
the developing countries. The first three European  
development funds devoted approximately \$216 mil-  
lion to projects in the drinking water and sanitation  
sector in several of the countries parties to the Lomé  
Convention.<sup>2</sup> The fourth European development fund  
allocated between 1976 and 1980 approximately  
\$40 million to projects in that field. Those projects,

<sup>1</sup> Second ACP-EEC Convention of Lomé, signed on 31 October 1979 at Lomé. For the text, see *The Courier*, ACP-EEC, No. 58, November 1979.

<sup>2</sup> ACP-EEC Convention of Lomé, signed on 28 February 1975 at Lomé. For the text, see document A/AC.176/7.

which are currently being implemented, lay particular stress upon the needs of the rural sector.

9. Along with its action within the framework of the Lomé Convention, the Community has contributed, within the framework of its programme of co-operation with the Mediterranean countries, a total amount of nearly \$135 million for the carrying out of projects in the area under discussion.

10. Annual programmes for non-associated developing countries are directed essentially to rural development and the satisfaction of the needs of the least favoured sectors of the populations. In this context, several specific water supply and sanitation projects in the rural sector are being carried out or have been approved to the total value of approximately \$22 million.

11. The figures I have just cited apply only to specific projects for drinking water and sanitation which have been carried out thanks to the different possible ways in which the Community is able to intervene financially in order to assist the developing countries. In fact these figures represent only the identifiable part of the credits devoted to installations of that type. Many other projects which have been also carried out as part of the Community's assistance for development make it possible to place water at the disposal of populations and to provide sanitation in certain inhabited zones, whether it is a matter of integral rural development, city planning, the provision of water in rural areas, public health or even the establishment of social infrastructures, and added to them are water supplies for multiple-purpose use and emergency operations for the benefit of populations that have suffered disasters.

12. The efforts that the Community has made in connexion with drinking water and sanitation only stress the importance we attach to these questions in our actions in favour of development. That is why we welcome the fact that the various programmes that have been undertaken in this area by groups of countries can now be co-ordinated within the United Nations system. I wish to give the assurance that, for their part, the European Community and its member States are determined to give their full co-operation.

13. Mr. EHRLICH (United States of America): It is a pleasure for me to be here today on behalf of the United States. I am honoured to speak before the General Assembly as it launches the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade.

14. The logic behind the Decade is compelling. Life expectancy in developing countries remains far below that in developed countries, particularly because of child and maternal mortality. Widespread disease damages labour productivity, learning capacity and the quality of life. The principal causes of mortality and morbidity in developing countries are common infections, exacerbated by malnutrition and by close birth-spacing. Scarce and polluted water and poor sanitation account for most of these infections.

15. Yet two thirds of the people of the third world lack safe water, three fourths lack basic sanitation and three fourths lack primary health services to explain the role of water and sanitation in preventing and treating disease. Moreover, the back-breaking

tasks of providing water absorb considerable time and energy each day, particularly among women, who might otherwise devote themselves further to improving incomes, to the production of goods for home consumption, to child care and to education. Ensuring safe water and basic sanitation would thus help substantially in reaching the United Nations goal of "Health for all" by the year 2000 and it would particularly help improve the lot of many women in developing countries.

16. The challenge of the Decade—providing safe water and sanitation for all by 1990 and continually thereafter—is awesome. The costs of providing safe water and sanitation to the 1 billion neediest people in the developing countries' rural areas alone would approach \$200-300 billion. Population growth at today's rates would increase the population of developing countries, excluding China, between 1980 and the year 2000 by at least another billion people. Environmental implications of the rising consumption of water must be adequately included in our plans. Technologies that are effective, affordable and maintainable in varying circumstances must be further expanded.

17. Yet the steps already taken to launch the Decade give cause for cautious optimism. Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements<sup>3</sup> and the United Nations Water Conference<sup>4</sup> focused worldwide attention on the need for improved water and sanitation and called for the International Decade for Drinking Water and Sanitation in the 1980s.

18. The United Nations has paved the way for the Decade over the past 18 months, through UNDP, which has co-ordinated United Nations efforts at the country level and provided the necessary technical expertise; the Economic and Social Council; UNICEF, which has increased its water and sanitation support fivefold in the last five years and now gives 28 per cent of its funds to water and sanitation; and WHO, which has assisted in "rapid assessments" in over 100 developing countries to provide a basis for planning Water-Decade efforts. Joint UNDP and World Bank planning have been essential, yielding specific project plans in 11 developing countries, analysis of potential developing country and donor resources, and a review of possible technologies and of social and cultural aspects of water and sanitation systems. The World Bank has exerted important programme leadership, allocating about \$1 billion annually to water, particularly for infrastructure, which is the costliest component of water and sanitation systems. The regional development banks have also undertaken impressive efforts in dealing with water and sanitation. The Interamerican Development Bank, for example, has allocated 14 per cent of its funding to water and sanitation in Latin America. Most important of all, the developing countries themselves have made increasing progress in formulating plans for water and sanitation systems that are technically, environmentally, socially and economically sound.

<sup>3</sup> *Report of Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, Vancouver, 31 May-11 June 1976* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.76.IV.7 and corrigendum).

<sup>4</sup> *Report of the United Nations Water Conference, Mar del Plata, 14-25 March 1977* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.77.II.A.12).

19. The United States supports the Decade, as part of our long-standing commitment to development. The United States is pledged to promote global development—development rapid and broad-based enough to improve living standards among today's poor people, development far-sighted enough to protect the environment and the resource base on which our future depends, and development grounded in human rights that nurture the human spirit.

20. Since 1948 the United States has strongly supported development assistance, acting bilaterally and through contributions to the multilateral development banks and international institutions, most notably the United Nations. Through international co-operative efforts, including multilateral trade negotiations, improvements in the operations of the multilateral banks, the development programmes of the United Nations Development Decades and, most recently, preparations for a new round of global negotiations, we have worked to foster the global climate needed for individual economies, developed and developing, to thrive.

21. We have supported the aspirations of the people of the third world to improve their quality of life. An important step in that direction came just a year ago when the U.S. International Development Cooperation Agency was established, to serve as a new, stronger, "voice for development" in the United States Government. The International Development Co-operation Agency bears primary responsibility for formulating United States international development policies and co-ordinating development programmes. It serves as the President's principal adviser on development.

22. Of necessity, we have established priority areas where the United States can help most usefully as a partner in the development process, and we are working on means to ensure that our various bilateral and multilateral development efforts are co-ordinated, efficient and effective. After reviewing needs and opportunities with third world countries, and the activities of other donors, we are focusing particular bilateral efforts in these areas: food, energy, population and health.

23. Food is, of course, the paramount need of poor people, and United States resources and scientific expertise—applied through both bilateral and multilateral channels—can do much to promote its production, its safe storage and its broad-based distribution. Rising energy costs threaten the viability of many developing economies, and United States resources and scientific expertise, again applied through bilateral and multilateral channels, can help promote more efficient production and use of traditional, modern and newly emerging sources of energy. Rapid population growth erodes development progress, and United States resources and scientific expertise can do much to extend family-planning services and promote development that makes smaller families a more attractive option. Malnutrition and infection, most of it water-borne, threaten the health particularly of young children and their mothers, and United States resources and scientific expertise can help particularly to extend basic health care along with family planning and also to support disease control and, of course, improved drinking water and basic

sanitation in the context of the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade.

24. Our principal financial contributions to the Decade will be channelled through the World Bank. The Bank, in conjunction with UNDP, is taking a welcome lead on this issue. We will continue to use our bilateral assistance programme to complement the UNDP-World Bank effort, particularly through innovative steps aimed at developing more effective and less costly ways of providing and maintaining basic water and sanitation systems in rural areas. We will continue to stress the importance of providing water and sanitation in conjunction with primary health care.

25. Through the Agency for International Development [AID], the United States has bilaterally supported water and sanitation projects for more than 30 years and we intend to continue that effort. During the 1970s, some \$600 million in development assistance funds were spent for water and sanitation projects; over \$1 billion more in economic support funds were used for similar purposes, particularly in the Middle East. In 1981, AID will provide about \$200 million for water and sanitation, assuming Congressional approval.

26. In supporting water and sanitation programmes, AID seeks to ensure that technology will be cost-efficient, geared to local circumstances and suitable for maintenance primarily by local communities; that trained personnel will be available at every level; that adequate administrative and management capacity will also be available; that sufficient complementary financial support will be provided by national authorities, particularly for recurring costs; that co-operation will be maintained among developing countries and donors alike to promote the standardization of equipment; that WHO drinking water standards will be applied as a goal for water quality and, finally, that genuine community participation will occur in all aspects of programmes through health education and through community committees.

27. In bilateral development assistance for water and sanitation, AID focuses on technical assistance, on training, on appropriate equipment and on other measures to complement the work of other donors and developing countries alike.

28. In short, we support the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade with enthusiasm as part of a broader partnership effort to promote development throughout the third world. The Brandt Commission report<sup>5</sup> underscores the importance of that effort. As stated by the Commission's Chairman, "development means interdependence, and both are preconditions of human survival".<sup>6</sup>

29. Mr. WHYTE (United Kingdom): I have a few comments, in addition to those which were made by the representative of Luxembourg on behalf of the European Community earlier this afternoon, on the subject of the Decade that we are debating.

<sup>5</sup> *North-South: A program for survival*: report of the Independent Commission on International Development Issues under the chairmanship of Willy Brandt (Cambridge, Massachusetts, the MIT Press, 1980).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

30. My first comment is that seldom can a subject which has such a simple, direct and vital connexion with the daily lives of all of us have been given such a dreary sounding title. Water—it is, after all, like the air that we breathe, the very key to our existence, the fount of our fertility, the recurrent metaphor of our poets and our philosophers. So let us remember that behind the prosaic connotations of the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade there runs what the Book of Revelation calls the “pure river of water of life” [*Revelation 22:1*].

31. My second comment is that water is a subject which my countrymen know a great deal about. We live on a collection of islands entirely surrounded therefore by water, all too frequently enveloped in low cloud and damp mist, as many of you who have travelled through our seaports and airports will know only too well. The England of our poet Blake is kept green and pleasant by that falling rain. The clear complexions of our English roses—and I refer to the two-legged rather than the horticultural variety—are nurtured not so much by the cosmetic manufacturers as by our damp southwesterly winds. It is natural that the Burberry overcoat and the Londong Fog should be renowned wherever the weather is foul. While, if I may put in a word briefly to give a commercial for my own native land, it is the water in the moorland burns and streams of Scotland that makes Scotch whisky something special.

32. And yet, despite the abundance of our watery endowment, we too are beset with problems. Like others, we have had to legislate and innovate to protect our rivers from industrial pollution, our coastal waters from untreated sewage and our beaches from the excreta of passing super-tankers. Like others, we face in the longer term the awful plight of the Ancient Mariner, the plight of:

“Water, water, everywhere,  
Nor any drop to drink.”

33. Which means, in more prosaic language, that we recognize just how basic is the provision of adequate water supplies and sanitation to the improvement of health and living standards. One of my compatriots has perhaps done more than any other human being to make people aware of the dangers to the water supply of our planet. I refer to—and I salute—Dame Barbara Jackson of Lodsworth, better known as Barbara Ward. Over many years, many British organizations, both public and private, have been active in extending to developing countries the expertise which they have built up in establishing public water supplies and applying up-to-date sanitary engineering and public health services. Within recent years, over 50 countries, mostly in Africa and Asia, have drawn on the services of our consulting engineers, manufacturers and construction enterprises in their endeavours to bring the most basic benefits of drinking water and sanitation to their people. In the British Commonwealth in particular, associations have been built up between Governments and individual firms which augur well for continued co-operation during the Decade.

34. The British Institute of Hydrology, our Institute of Geological Sciences, the British Schools of Tropical Medicine and more recently an Intermediate Tech-

nology Development Group—to name but a few of our institutions—have built up reputations in such areas as sewage treatment, rainfall behaviour and groundwater resources. Their services will be available to help to overcome some of the problems which the Decade will have to tackle.

35. Independently funded organizations like OXFAM and Christian Aid have organized self-help local water schemes using a minimum of imported or purchased material, thereby demonstrating how much can be achieved by local enthusiasm and effort at the community level when given suitable technical co-operation and direction. The public authorities in Britain which manage and maintain water services will continue to be happy to advise on water matters and to assist in providing training specially geared to the needs of developing countries at all technical levels. Advice and help in setting up local training schools will also be available.

36. Taking a brief glance at what the British Development Aid Programme is at present doing in this area, we are engaged in 41 drinking water and sanitation projects in 26 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East, and in the waters of the Carribean, the Pacific, the Mediterranean and the Atlantic. Our aid programme will continue to give projects to do with water the priority which they deserve. Aid to capital projects through technical co-operation and in the provision of training will also continue to be given within the resources that we have available.

37. In conclusion, let me acknowledge that water has often been despised, particularly by those who thrive on stronger stuff. Thus the poet Horace was particularly scornful of his teetotal colleagues. He wrote: “No verse can give pleasure long, nor last, that is written by drinkers of water”. But let us not laugh at the water-waggon. Water is important. My Government takes this Decade seriously, and I have treid to show briefly some of the ways in which it intends to contribute. So let us toast the success of the Decade in a suitable libation of H<sub>2</sub>O—with no more than the acceptable level of impurities.

38. Mr. DOMOKOS (Hungary): In connexion with this agenda item, the representative of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic has made a joint statement on behalf of several socialist countries [*54th meeting*]. That statement fully reflects the general position of my country. I can limit my remarks, therefore, to issues that are related more specifically to Hungary.

39. Prior to the Second World War, Hungary was backward, as far as community water supply and sanitation systems were concerned, by comparison with developed countries of Europe. However, as a result of a planned development policy followed in the post-war period, by 1980 the proportions of the population served by reliable drinking water and waste disposal systems were 73 per cent and 43 per cent respectively.

40. As regards the future, my Government has approved a strategy for the development of water supply and sanitation setting the priority objectives of water management up to the year 2000. Accordingly, every inhabitant of the country should enjoy safe drinking water by 1985 under one system or

another, while the proportion of the population supplied with piped water should reach 90 per cent by 1990 and 95 per cent by 2000 on the national average.

41. The attainment of those objectives calls for increasing efforts. The gradual deterioration in the quality of surface and subsoil waters will but accentuate the general requirement for water treatment, rendering the operation of water supply works more costly and more difficult.

42. We attach great importance to the stipulation in the existing documents on the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade that the achievement of the objectives of the Decade should be envisaged in soundly based national plans. According to the experience of Hungary, the plans for the development of drinking water supply and sewage disposal systems should reflect the need to meet the demands of the population and to serve the purpose of raising its living standards and ensuring the smooth operation and development of industry and agriculture, with maximum economy in the use of water. We cannot but support, therefore, the provision in the Mar del Plata Action Plan<sup>7</sup> according to which each country should ensure that community water supply and waste disposal planning is co-ordinated with over-all water planning and policy as well as with over-all economic development. Such co-ordination is a *sine qua non* if the targets set in the fields of reliable drinking water supply and the development of sanitation facilities are to be realistic and to be met.

43. The objectives of the Decade require enormous funds and considerable technical facilities and labour even if one only wishes to come close to them, let alone achieve them fully. Obviously, the securing of the necessary funds and facilities must basically be a task for the interested countries themselves, but international co-operation may be a significant element, complementary to national efforts.

44. Hungary is among the countries poorly supplied with surface waters. Given its natural endowments, it has been traditionally compelled to devote great attention to the constant development of water resources management and to the pollution control of its existing waters. We are ready to make our professional experience available to other countries, among other things by field-work of shorter or longer duration by our highly qualified specialists. We feel this is the way we can contribute effectively to the attainment of the objectives of the Decade in the developing countries. I should like to note on this score that Hungary already has a remarkable record in this field of international co-operation. In the water-related fields we have developed close co-operation with numerous African, Arab and Asian countries, such as Nigeria, Algeria, Syria, Mongolia, Libya, India and Tanzania.

45. Our experience has been used by developing countries, mainly in areas such as the exploration of water resources, the drilling of wells, river control, the construction of dams, the planning, organization and execution of public drinking water projects and

the technical planning of water extraction and treatment works, drainage and soil protection. We deliver complete water works for communities of various sizes. Whole projects of water supply works and sanitation facilities have been carried out according to the plans of Hungarian specialists for the full service of larger settlement areas.

46. Our scientific, technical and economic relations with developing countries are primarily of a bilateral nature in the field of water management. We are nevertheless prepared to make our professional experience and specialists available also under multi-lateral programmes of technical co-operation.

47. We believe that within the framework of multi-lateral co-operation UNDP, the regional economic commissions, UNEP, the Commission on Human Settlements and the Habitat Centre have primary responsibilities to fulfil. We expect those organs to contribute actively to the formulation of national drinking water supply and sanitation plans and projects to be implemented within the framework of the Decade, and to organize international co-operation and the exchange of experience with a view to achieving those objectives.

48. We are confident that the Action Plan for the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade, if serious efforts by all States can be relied upon, will achieve its goals of eliminating, or at least significantly reducing, by 1990 the health hazards resulting from the lack of safe drinking water and adequate sanitation facilities, thereby ensuring better and safer living conditions all over the world.

49. M<sup>r</sup>. LOPEZ PORTILLO (Mexico) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I wish to express the support of the Government of Mexico for such positive actions as those which the international community is currently carrying out so as to ensure that the entire world will be supplied with water for human consumption in sufficient amounts and of adequate quality. This initiative coincides with the efforts that Mexico has been making over recent years and has redoubled under its global plan, which will provide minimal levels of welfare for all Mexicans. That is why we feel that it is appropriate for us to report on Mexican experience.

50. The Government of my country, aware of the global problem of water, supported the Mar del Plata Action Plan which emerged from the United Nations Water Conference. On that occasion, we presented certain documents that pointed out the similarity of the actions proposed and the plans and programmes of our Government. We also reported on the balance of supply and demand of hydraulic resources and on our national hydraulic plan and gave data on our technological progress in this field, which could contribute to the development of third world countries.

51. At that Conference, held at Mar del Plata, as a result of the concern expressed by various countries, resolution II,<sup>7</sup> which deals with the water supply problem in communities, was drafted. In the pre-ambular paragraphs of that resolution emphasis was placed on the right of all people to a water supply adequate in both quantity and quality, "whatever their stage of development and their social and economic conditions". It was with that philosophy in

<sup>7</sup> See *Report of the United Nations Water Conference, Mar del Plata, 14-25 March 1977* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.77.II.A.12), chap. I.

mind that the plans and programmes for an adequate supply of water for human consumption have been designed and carried out in my country. Moreover, in regard to human settlements, the National Plan of Urban Development is being carried out. Its main goals are greater rationalization of economic development at the regional level, through the creation of new centres of attraction, and control of population growth in cities of average size. It is envisaged under that Plan that large cities should become somewhat less important.

52. Within the framework of that strategy, the participation of the citizens is fundamental. Specifically, the Ministry of Human Settlements and Public Works has established programmes and machinery with a view to facilitating the participation of the citizenry in public works, particularly the participation of the beneficiaries of public services in the construction and operation of those works.

53. In that context, the work of introducing and operating drinking water services and sewage systems is a vital element within the process of a participatory economic development aiming to bring social benefits to vast sections of the population. Since the financial factor usually has a restricting effect on water supply programmes, and since the drinking water and sewage systems are financed strictly by the users of the services paying their share, we changed the schedule of charges so as to improve these programmes financially and established quotas in such a way as to ensure solidarity. Thus, those who use large quantities of water or use water as input pay more than those who use water for domestic purposes.

54. From the sanitation point of view, I should indicate that water is chlorinated since that is the minimum treatment needed to guarantee its bacteriological quality and, consequently, the health of the population. When necessary, water is processed in chemical plants and samples are constantly undergoing physical, chemical and bacteriological analyses in laboratories as a means of control.

55. The present policy of the Federal Government is defined as a policy of "shared development", the objective of which is a comprehensive and balanced development of the society as a whole. Its framework is based upon the decentralization of functions so as to strengthen the states and the municipalities through the active participation of the population, which should assume its responsibilities in the search for solutions and thus identify with its place of origin.

56. In accordance with that policy of the Mexican Government, drinking water works and sewage systems are being delivered to state and municipal governments, together with technical guidance in their use and maintenance.

57. Mexico covers an extensive territory, with a population of approximately 70 million, 66.4 per cent of which lives in urban areas, while only 33.6 per cent resides in rural areas. Of that population, 53 per cent, or 37.1 million people living in the city or the country has access to drinking water, while 35.7 per cent of the population, or 25 million people, benefits from a sewage system.

58. We are well aware that the task we have undertaken for the next decade, i.e., to supply our growing population with drinking water, is enormous, since we face problems such as hydraulic imbalance and the uneven geographical distribution of precipitation in Mexico. The average annual rainfall is lower than 500 millimetres for more than half of the territory, whereas certain areas such as the Gulf Coast and the south-east region have heavy rates of rainfall of more than 2,000 millimetres annually. This situation causes alternate periods of drought and floods, which impose further restrictions as far as the optimum use of water resources is concerned. Added to this problem is the fact that the available sources that can be tapped to supply water are located increasingly further from the cities and the cost of transportation to the urban centres is thereby raised. Furthermore, the dense concentration of population in a few main centres causes great disproportion between the demand for and the availability of water. Indeed, 68 per cent of all water sources are located in the region of the Gulf of Mexico and in the south-east region, while those two areas consume only 8 per cent of the total amount. On the other hand, the northern and central sections of the Republic, in which 75 per cent of the population is concentrated, generate only 5 per cent of water sources while consuming 47 per cent of the total amount. The Ministry of Agriculture and Hydraulic Resources of Mexico is putting great emphasis on programmes aimed at resolving the current imbalance between the sources of water supply and the centres of consumption. In the light of the issues which I have discussed, and in addition to the programmes which are at present being carried out, we have decided to adopt the following policies related to drinking water systems.

59. First, we will provide communities of more than 2,500 inhabitants with drinking water, in sufficient quantity and of sufficiently high quality to satisfy their basic needs, to be made available in places near their homes and at convenient times.

60. Secondly, we will teach communities of under 2,500 inhabitants to be self-reliant in obtaining and distributing drinking water.

61. Thirdly, in communities where there is a scarcity of water, we will promote the following water-saving techniques: the use of self-closing sanitary installations such as sinks and showers; the use of water-saving toilets or latrines which, if they are well designed, meet sanitary standards similar to those of toilets that use 20 litres of water every time they are flushed; the replenishment of ground-water bodies; the recycling of irrigation water; the use of solar distillers for salty or polluted water; rainwater collection on roofs and in cellars; and the use of rainwater to wash clothes with lye soap, whereby one would avoid the use of non-biodegradable detergents.

62. Fourthly, we will launch a publicity programme concerning the importance of water conservation so as to ensure that the population will utilize water appropriately.

63. Fifthly, we will promote the decentralization of large clusters of population in the central plateau, directing those people to zones with abundant water and natural resources.

64. With these policies and following the outline of the Global Development Plan, it has become imperative to satisfy the demands for bulk water supplies for the main population, recreational and industrial centres as well as the needs for the development of agriculture and agricultural, piscicultural and other industries.

65. The public works planned for this year have required an investment of \$500 million, and this amount will allow us to increase the water supply by 4.9 per cent and by 2.4 per cent in so far as sewage is concerned.

66. Regarding sanitation, we have proposed the adoption of the following policies: the promotion of the use of non-conventional sanitary methods, such as dry biogas latrines and water-saving toilets in places where the use of sewage-works or conventional drainage is too expensive or inconvenient; a campaign to prevent the excessive use of water by the population, thereby reducing the production of liquid residues; endowing communities with more than 2,500 inhabitants with appropriate systems for solid wastes such as landfilling and with proper treatment and disposal systems for liquid residues, such as stabilization lagoons; and enabling communities with a population of less than 2,500 inhabitants to be self-reliant in the recycling, treatment and/or disposal of liquid and solid wastes.

67. I believe it is important to mention that as far as drinking water and the treatment of residual waters is concerned, we are at present carrying out various research programmes the main objectives of which are the development of desalinization systems based on non-conventional or clean sources of energy and the use of organic wastes for gas production.

68. The Ministry of Health and Welfare has one of its functions the surveillance of the quality of drinking water for human consumption throughout the country, via the Under-Ministry of Environmental Improvement. Thus the Under-Ministry of Environmental Improvement, in the context of its search for an integrated programme for a more effective control over the quality of water, has adopted and is officially about to enact a dynamic surveillance procedure which will basically ensure that water will be of proper quality for human consumption in its physical, chemical and bacteriological aspects. We are referring to the programme known as the certificate of water quality for human consumption, the main objective of which is to respect the permissible sanitary standards so as to reduce the mortality and morbidity rates due to enteritis and gastro-intestinal diseases, which are the principal causes of mortality in my country. The certificate of water quality will have an expiration date, to allow periodic reassessment of the quality standards. Nevertheless, the Under-Ministry of Environmental Improvement maintains the right to withdraw or cancel the certificate if the level of water quality falls below the required standards.

69. I have attempted to summarize the policies, plans, programmes and activities which the Mexican Government is at present carrying out to improve the well-being of our citizens. I believe that we have highlighted the concept of economic development advanced by our country and its President.

70. It is our wish that the international community should be informed of the Mexican experience because many of the measures I have described could be duplicated during the next decade in the implementation of plans to supply drinking water to all the peoples of the world.

71. Mr. ABDALLA (Sudan) (*interpretation from Arabic*): The statistics of WHO indicate that drinking water is available to only 43 per cent of the population of the developing countries and that only close to 25 per cent enjoy sanitation services. The same statistics also point out that 71 per cent of the population of the rural areas in developing countries do not have drinking water or any other kind of water, that 15 million children in the developing countries die annually from water-related diseases and that over half the population of the developing countries suffer from one of the parasitic diseases related to the lack of drinking water or sanitation services.

72. These are cold figures which may not mean a great deal on paper. However, they reflect a frightening reality when translated into the constant plight and suffering faced every day by the millions of inhabitants of the developing countries in their search for drinking water, which is their main daily task. It may take most of the hours of the day, including those most useful for work, and requires them to carry heavy quantities of water for long distances—a task usually performed by women and children.

73. In most cases, this water constitutes a definite threat to health, and indeed life, because the sources of the water are open and polluted, teeming with various germs and parasites that are carriers of infectious and contagious diseases. In addition, there is a lack of sanitation and adequate sewage and refuse-disposal systems. Thus millions of persons are inevitably exposed to such diseases. There is a high mortality rate among children, and the productive capacity of adults is seriously diminished. Undoubtedly, the availability of drinking water and the simplest sanitation systems is related to the development efforts of the developing countries. That is all the more true when we bear in mind the human energy that is wasted in obtaining access to water, or as a result of paralyzing diseases.

74. Our interest, as well as the interest of the international community, in the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade results from the fact that the Decade's objectives are closely linked to the most elementary factors of human and animal life, as well as to man's productive capacity. The international community has paid particular attention to this through the various programmes and institutions of the United Nations system, and also through bilateral co-operation. But most of the efforts have been individual efforts, lacking co-ordination. Recently we have seen a trend towards organizing and co-ordinating efforts at the national and international levels, concentrating on the necessity to secure drinking water and sanitation.

75. One result was the Declaration adopted by the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, held at Vancouver in 1976, which recommended that Governments should establish the definite objective of ensuring that all peoples had access to safe drinking

water and sanitation by 1990. That international objective was reflected in the Action Plan adopted by the United Nations Water Conference held at Mar del Plata in 1977. That Action Plan established national and international priorities that concentrated on the importance of the commitment by Governments to provide drinking water and sanitation by 1990, particularly to poor and rural areas, and areas suffering from a scarcity of water resources. They concentrated also on increasing the awareness of the problem, at the local and international levels, and on providing and allocating sufficient resources to that end in national development plans.

76. Among the priorities established in the Action Plan was the elimination of obstacles in relation to manpower, the international and organizational promotion of drinking water and sanitation services, the provision of low-cost and adequate technology, and the provision of the necessary technical and financial resources at the national, bilateral and international levels.

77. The Action Plan also emphasized the importance of spreading knowledge about health, and the importance of the participation of the people in planning, building, managing, maintaining and financing and emphasized the need for constant supervision of the quality of the water, to ensure its purity. The Action Plan also called on the international community to find new ways and means to assist the governments of the developing countries—particularly those of the least developed countries and of the countries most affected by international economic crises—in honouring their commitment to provide drinking water.

78. The United Nations Water Conference recommended also that the period from 1981 to 1990 be designated the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade, during which Governments should endeavour, through the use of their own resources and with the assistance of the international community, to achieve the objectives of the Decade, namely, to secure drinking water and sanitation for all peoples by 1990. Today we are holding a special meeting of the General Assembly to proclaim the launching of the Decade. We sincerely hope that the international community will be able, despite the difficulties, to achieve the objectives of the Decade, or at least to come as close to them as possible.

79. We reaffirm the commitment of the Democratic Republic of the Sudan and its Government to the objectives of the Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade. That is not a new commitment, for the Sudan has exerted tremendous efforts in the post-independence years—and especially during the past 10 years—to provide drinking water, in particular to the people in the arid rural areas in the western, eastern and southern parts of the Sudan, and to the many villages throughout the country. We have encountered many problems in the spheres of technology, financing, infrastructure, availability of trained personnel, and so forth, and that has impeded the success of the efforts to provide drinking water to the large population of the Sudan. It is perhaps appropriate at this point to describe the Sudan's efforts in this field and to review the geographic, economic and social situation of the Sudan in this respect.

80. The Sudan has an area of 1 million square miles, with a climate varying from the equatorial south to the desert north. The Nile river and its tributaries cross the country from the extreme south to the extreme north, but there are large areas in the east and the west that suffer from drought and a scarcity of water resources throughout the year, with the exception of a few months during the rainy season. Therefore, though the Sudan is very rich in water resources, the distribution of those resources does not coincide with the distribution of the population. The result is that there are large agglomerations that, basically, depend for their drinking water or rainwater and surface wells. Moreover, 80 per cent of the people of the Sudan live in rural areas, and a large number of them are nomadic breeders of sheep and cattle, who are constantly on the move, looking for food and water for themselves and their herds. It is therefore more difficult to provide such groups with drinking water and social services.

81. The problem of providing drinking water in the Sudan is a twofold problem. The first part relates to the provision of drinking water to the communities along rivers and in the artificially irrigated agricultural areas; the second, to the provision of drinking water to the settlements and communities of nomadic cattle-breeders in drought-stricken, arid areas with variable amounts of rain during the autumn season. In regard to the first part, even where we find water there is the problem of purity, storage and distribution. In regard to the second part, the efforts are directed towards finding the underground water, drilling the necessary wells, providing the reservoirs for water storage, and purifying the rainwater gathered during the rainy season for use during the dry season.

82. In both cases, there are environmental and health requirements, the need for sanitation services, and the fighting of water-related diseases, particularly in the artificially irrigated agricultural areas. The Government of the Sudan launched a broad campaign in the early 1970s to fight thirst and to provide drinking water for humans and animals in the arid parts of western Sudan. The Government encouraged the participation of the people of these areas in this campaign, and, in addition, mobilized the people in other areas to provide the resources necessary to the success of the campaign, which had as one of its objectives the drilling of wells in the communities in the western parts of the Sudan, as well as in the drought-stricken areas in the south, in order to provide a constant source of drinking water. Another objective was to solve the basic problem facing the people of these areas in a way aimed at encouraging them to stay there and reclaim the land, thereby enabling them to devote to productive work the energies wasted in the search for water.

83. In addition, the provision of drinking water for the nomadic population would encourage it to settle down in specific areas and thus facilitate the provision of health and educational services by the Government.

84. In spite of that campaign to fight thirst, which resulted in the drilling of many wells in areas that previously depended on rain-water stored, according to very primitive methods, in ditches and tree-trunks and in watermelons in the drought season, the results



of the campaign have not come up to the expectations of the Sudanese authorities, i.e., to provide drinking water to all areas in the Sudan. Such a large campaign with such an ambitious objective, in one of the least developed countries, the Sudan, has met with many obstacles.

85. We have especially felt the lack of financial resources for importing the necessary excavating equipment, transportation fleet, spare parts and chemicals, in addition to the lack of trained personnel to drill wells and to maintain, manage and check the quality of the water. The campaign also faced obstacles in planning, implementing and providing the necessary infrastructures to achieve its objectives. As a result of experience gained in the campaign to fight thirst, the Government has rationalized the institutional and organizational structure of the drinking-water sector in the rural areas by setting up the National Water Department and in the cities by establishing a general authority for water and electricity.

86. The National Water Administration now carries out a national programme to provide drinking water to the whole population by drilling the necessary wells and providing the necessary water pumps and motor pumps, as well as providing storage facilities for well-populated areas. The National Water Administration receives technical and financial assistance from the programmes and agencies of the United Nations, particularly UNDP, UNICEF, WHO and the World Bank, in addition to bilateral assistance from friendly countries. But that assistance falls short of the requirements of the National Water Administration in implementing its national programme.

87. In spite of those intensive efforts, the Sudan's success in achieving the objectives of the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade depends on its overcoming obstacles which are faced by most developing countries that are similar to the Sudan, dealing with some urgent aspects that are peculiar to the Sudan and a few other developing countries and providing the infrastructure necessary for the realization of the objectives of the Decade. Those impediments and requirements necessitate expansion of technical and financial co-operation and provision of the necessary foreign exchange for the purchase of equipment and spare parts. We should also like to point out that the National Water Administration needs assistance concerning the management of the wells that have been drilled and the digging of new wells; \$4 million are required to provide the necessary spare parts for the drillers and the assisting transport fleet. Among the difficulties is the training of personnel at various levels, beginning with planners at the national level and ending with technicians at village level, and concentrating on ensuring the availability of trained personnel for operation and maintenance. We also require infrastructure support at the national and regional levels for the water sector and to undertake the applied research in the appropriate technology at a reasonable cost in order to overcome the lack of financial resources and to make the best use of those resources.

88. If the objectives of the Decade are to be attained it is also necessary to increase awareness of the problems, mobilize efforts and local resources and achieve

co-ordination among the various governmental departments and ministries dealing with drinking water and sanitation.

89. In addition, the Sudan faces other problems and difficulties which frustrate its efforts to achieve the objectives of the Decade and to provide the necessary resources. The main such difficulty is that the Sudan is now host to half a million refugees from neighbouring countries, who need not only food and clothing but also basic services—mainly drinking water, and health, sanitation and educational services. Furthermore, many areas of the Sudan have suffered from drought since the mid-1970s, in particular the western and eastern Sudan and the south-eastern part of the country.

90. The United Nations Secretary-General has recently, in response to a resolution of the Economic and Social Council,<sup>8</sup> sent a United Nations inter-agency mission, led by the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator to the Sudan, and the mission has submitted its report [A/35/561, annex] to the General Assembly at this session, explaining the dimensions of the problem and the needs that must be met.

91. We know that achievement of the Decade's objectives by 1990 is the responsibility of Governments, which should be self-reliant in providing the necessary resources to increase investment in drinking water and sanitation. But the necessary profound changes in the provision of drinking water and sanitation—at which the Decade aims—are particularly difficult to achieve in the current international economic circumstances, and they cannot come about without a flow of external resources: multilateral or bilateral. The international community is called upon to support the efforts of Governments to achieve the objectives of the Decade.

92. The General Assembly now has before it draft resolution A/C.2/35/L.29 on the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade. My delegation had the honour of presenting that draft resolution on behalf of many delegations to the Second Committee, which adopted it unanimously. We hope that the General Assembly will similarly adopt the draft resolution unanimously as an expression of the international will and commitment to achieve the objectives of the Decade, which are closely linked to the lives of the millions of people of the developing countries.

93. Mr. VEIZAGA (Bolivia) (*interpretation from Spanish*): It is a special honour to represent the Government of Bolivia in this world forum on this occasion of such vital importance for the inhabitants of all the corners of the earth—that is, the launching of the Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade.

94. First and foremost, it is an honour for me, on behalf of the Government of National Reconstruction of my country, to pay a most cordial tribute to the President of the thirty-fifth session of the General Assembly and to all delegations present here.

95. Despite the technological achievements and advances of the space era, most of the world has as yet not been able to solve problems related to the

<sup>8</sup> See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1980, Supplement No. 1A, resolution 1980/70.*

very survival of mankind. High levels of hunger, ignorance and disease persist in many places.

96. Drinking water and adequate sanitation, which would make daily living safer, should be provided or improved in many parts of the world. Many of our countries, despite their natural resources, varied geography and certain signs of progress, still have worrying standards of drinking water and sanitation.

97. My country has not been spared this concern, since, out of a population of more than 5 million inhabitants, unevenly distributed over 1 million square kilometres, more than 60 per cent have unprotected natural water sources, and nearly 80 per cent lack even minimal sanitation services.

98. The situation is even worse in the rural areas, which cover most of our country, where 92 per cent of the population lack water services and 96 per cent lack sanitation services.

99. Bolivia has a varied geography. It comprises all climates, all sorts of topography and every kind of landscape imaginable. The western region, mountainous and marked by high plains, making up the smallest part of the country, boasts the magnificence of high snow-capped peaks, a fertile mesa suited to cattle raising and agriculture, and deep valleys at the bottom of the Andean mountain slopes. The central and southern region, composed of open fertile valleys, heralds the tropical plains that occupy most of the Bolivian territory and are a fertile and torrid area furrowed by large navigable rivers which in the north are part of the Amazon basin and in the south feed the Plata basin. This ineffable variety led Alcides d'Orbigny, a wise French traveller of the past century, to say "Bolivia is the geographical synthesis of the world".

100. In the midst of that admirable confluence of climates, landscapes, products and topographies, it has always been, and continues to be, difficult and indeed expensive to carry out any infrastructural development, largely because of the difficult terrain.

101. Thus, when it comes to the matter before us now—the elaboration of suitable methods and systems of drinking water supply and sanitation—we confront immense difficulties, compounded by frequent limitation of financial resources. We are well aware that wherever there is a shortage of purified water resources, there is an increase in disease, with a resultant rise in the over-all death rate, and particularly the infantile death rate, ours being the highest in America, with 160 deaths out of every 1,000 live births.

102. To these factors must be added the deficit in trained personnel in this area. The low salaries paid by State agencies, coupled with the low demand for public services, has driven many skilled workers to other sectors. As a result, the shortage, particularly of middle-level and administrative technicians and specialized workers, has been a strong limiting factor in the development efforts in the sanitation sector.

103. In the 1920s and 1930s, when our country was enjoying a financial boom in the exploitation and export of tin, municipalities and mining enterprises built and operated adequate water supply systems and provided sewage systems in the main cities of the

high plains and valleys. The post-war economic slump which we shared with Paraguay meant that until 1965 almost no investment was made in this sector. Meanwhile, the systems that had been built 30 or 40 years earlier were seriously limited because of their age and because of population growth.

104. In order to meet growing needs and the demands of new communities, a series of institutions was established which gradually took over the responsibility for water supply and sewage systems from the municipalities.

105. Currently, more than 40 bodies are exclusively or partially devoted to building basic sanitation systems in Bolivia. For the most part, those bodies are working independently rather than in a co-ordinated fashion, and follow different norms and procedures. Only the local bodies established in eight of the largest cities are operating and maintaining those systems. In the other cases, the job has been left to community groups, with generally unsatisfactory results. Programmes frequently emanate from outside and are introduced by technical and financial co-operation agencies.

106. Planning in this sector has been sporadic: there have been the comprehensive engineering plan of 1963-1965, the subsequent master plans for seven cities, and the methodology provided by the national plan for rural aqueducts of 1970.

107. In 1974 the World Bank and WHO carried out a study of this sector, which highlighted the critical, limiting aspects. However, its recommendations did not take account of human factors or of the requirements for its proper implementation.

108. Within the context of the programme now being launched by the United Nations, in 1978 a theoretical model was drafted in my country which encompassed 10 programmes for developing basic sanitation and a resultant substantial increase in services. In order to develop that sector we must restructure institutions so that each entity will have a clear, specific function and be in a position to carry it out. This will require that institutions be strengthened.

109. The developing of human resources would mean more skilled workers capable of meeting the challenge of the Decade in this sector. Moreover, the generation of economic resources by charging for services and through other national sources and bilateral and international agencies should be the subject of appropriate financial planning.

110. The achievement of greater service coverage requires adequate entrepreneurial impetus for the strengthening of consulting firms, construction companies and national plants to enable them to meet the ever-growing demand for services. Thus the projects must be in keeping with the level of technological development of the country and of the populations served so that the latter can operate, maintain and refurbish the various systems without undue difficulty. The projects will be directed basically towards quality control of the water supply, the improvement of services and the establishment of new systems.

111. We consider that this proposed programme has a sound basis, as this idea, conceived by Bolivians, has been recommended and disseminated by the Pan

American Health Organization to other countries of the hemisphere.

112. However, we feel that the improvement of services and the establishment of new systems are not isolated projects; on the contrary, they are closely interconnected and indeed dependent upon other sectors.

113. Only in the larger cities which have an independent economic life can these projects be instituted and operated independently by autonomous bodies. In smaller towns basic sanitation must be part of other programmes, such as those of health and integrated rural development, which are of prime importance.

114. This is the only way in which basic sanitation can be provided on a permanent basis, as it includes the larger development programmes and as the investment required for it can be recovered. We also consider that the coverage, when compared with the target of water and sanitation to be provided for all by 1990, should be interpreted with some flexibility. While the larger towns could be provided with water and sewerage and with bath and kitchen units, the rural agglomerations might be served by means of public baths and latrines.

115. Beginning this year concrete steps are being taken in Bolivia within the context of technical programmes and objectives, ranging from a qualitative diagnosis to planning, followed by the carrying out of activities which will involve us in a genuine participation in the Decade.

116. We have established a National Group for the Decade at the highest technical and political decision-making levels: under-secretaries or vice-ministers of urban planning, public health and planning, who will be responsible for most of the work carried out in this field. The executive secretariat of the National Group for the Decade has been placed under the direction of the Director of the National Plan for Basic Sanitation for the years 1981-1990. Two national workshops have been established relating to basic sanitation, which will include all the bodies that are involved in these activities, and they are discussing policies and strategies for the Decade and co-ordinating the participation of all. We also have been working with the Co-operative Development Society of the Federal Republic of Germany and with WHO so as to define the activities within the context of the Decade programmes.

117. We hope that the industrialized countries and the bilateral and international agencies will recognize the efforts my country and Government are making and will provide us with the help we need in terms of technical assistance, for planning, as well as with economic assistance, to stimulate us into action.

118. We consider it appropriate to point out that, with the aid of the Government, my country will be host to the seventeenth Inter-American Congress of Sanitary and Environmental Engineers, to be held from 7 to 12 December this year, which will analyse the Decade in the Americas. This will be the first international meeting to be held after this historic launching. We should, of course, like to invite the delegations of the community of nations present here to attend that Congress.

119. Finally, my country has complete confidence that this meeting will achieve the lofty objectives it pursues, by the adoption of wise decisions that will help us to provide drinking water and sanitation for the benefit of all mankind.

120. As representative of the Government of Bolivia I have taken up some of the time of this important meeting, and I have done so because of the kind suggestion of the United Nations bodies which are working on this programme and because Bolivians wish to share with their fellow men throughout the developing world all the ideas, programmes and experiences which might aid others. Therefore I leave with this Assembly this statement of our experience with the hope that it may be of some use.

121. Mr. MUDAVADI (Kenya): First of all, on behalf of my delegation, I wish to convey the warmest felicitations to this Assembly from the President of the Republic of Kenya, His Excellency Daniel Arap Moi.

122. Secondly, since I am taking the floor for the first time, I wish to take this opportunity to express my personal congratulations to the President for the way in which he has so far conducted the work of the Assembly during the thirty-fifth session. On this occasion, when the Assembly is officially launching the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade, I am confident that his continued guidance will lead us to a successful conclusion of the work before us.

123. My delegation welcomes the statements made at the 54th meeting by the Secretary-General and the executive heads of WHO, UNICEF and UNDP on the subject before it. We also wish to echo the sentiments already expressed by the Chairman of the various regional groups.

124. The reports of the Secretary-General point to a very gloomy picture of the present status of drinking water supply and sanitation in developing countries, where over 13 million children lose their lives annually as a result of diseases occurring through lack of clean drinking water and poor sanitary conditions.

125. The rural areas where the majority of the population live—over 80 per cent in the case of Kenya—continue to rely on traditional sources of drinking water, with the implication that valuable and productive man-hours are lost every day in the process of fetching insufficient quantities of water from long distances for survival. Besides these problems, the indications are that the very climatic conditions in which mankind depends on its water are changing so fast that drinking water has itself now become a scarce commodity not only in many parts of the developing countries but also in some parts of the developed countries.

126. Kenya's interest in the agenda before us is well known. In 1974 Kenya became one of the few countries in the developing world to set up a full-fledged Ministry of Water Development. Kenya also took a very active part in the United Nations Water Conference held at Mar del Plata in 1977, which recommended that 1981-1990 be designated the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade and that it should be devoted to the implementation of the national plans for drinking water and sanitation.

127. The Mar del Plata Action Plan, as stated by WHO in its background paper for co-operative action on the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade, presented at its first consultative meeting in Geneva on 17 November 1978, calls for an improved co-ordination of the Decade activities at the country level and regular consultations amongst Governments and the international and non-governmental organizations concerned.

128. ECA, meeting at Addis Ababa from 4 to 8 August 1980, endorsed WHO's recommendation regarding the necessity of designating an existing institutional mechanism at the country level to serve as a focal point for activities of the Decade. It also endorsed the establishment of a National Action Committee, where necessary, as suggested by WHO in its basic document on assessment of the current position of African countries.

129. The Kenya Government adopted that recommendation as a follow-up of the meeting of ECA by establishing its National Action Committee at the country level. The National Action Committee will be the focal point for the Decade's activities. It will promote the Decade's activities in water supply and sanitation. The Committee, which was inaugurated on 22 October of this year, is composed of representatives from various government ministries and non-governmental organizations, including women's organizations, in Kenya. My Ministry of Water Development will therefore be the main implementing agency for the Decade.

130. The functions of the National Action Committee will include setting national targets for the Decade; focusing attention on population groups not served at present, including those in urban and rural areas; examining policy priority targets and plan strategy; planning and programming; increasing of absorptive capacity; resources mobilization project development and implementation; programme and project evaluation; and developing information systems and documentation.

131. In Kenya, at present, between 20 and 30 per cent of the population is supplied with safe water and that percentage is expected to reach between 40 and 45 per cent by the end of Kenya's current development plan in 1983. The Kenya Government carried out the first stage of the national Master Water Plan study, which was completed in 1979, and that study indicates that the water demand for domestic and industrial use will increase from 234 million cubic metres per year in 1978 to 1,546 million cubic metres per year by the year 2008—as a result in the main of an increase in population from 15 million to over 35 million by that year. To meet this increase in water demand will require considerable financial resources which will have to be raised from internal and external sources.

132. Although the national goal for Kenya still remains to supply water to the whole country by the year 2000, the Government of Kenya, with the support of international agencies and bilateral assistance, will commit extra resources to ensure that the following targets are achieved by the end of the Decade: first, water supply in urban areas with 100 per cent coverage and in the rural areas 75 per cent; and, secondly,

90 per cent sanitation coverage in the urban areas and 50 per cent in the rural areas. The National Action Committee which was launched last month has, therefore, a big task of drawing up programmes and following up on implementation to ensure that this goal is realized.

133. The Ministry of Water Development in Kenya has responsibility for water conservation and development, as well as operation and maintenance of water supplies, sewage facilities and pollution control. In particular, attention has been and will continue to be focused on the water supply programmes in rural areas where the majority of our people live. Attention will also be focused on water supplies to urban centres, livestock development in marginal areas and irrigation schemes. In the spirit of *Harambee*, which encourages community participation in development, the Kenya Government will continue to support the community-initiated self-help water and sanitation projects.

134. Admittedly, a number of problems have been encountered in the process of achieving the successful implementation of water and sanitation projects in developing countries. In Kenya formidable constraints—which include, among other things, inadequate funds, skilled manpower, insufficient means of transportation, lack of suitable equipment and adverse weather conditions—have constantly affected our rate of progress.

135. Considering that about 80 per cent of Kenya is arid or semi-arid, the Kenya Government is laying special emphasis on provision of water supplies for domestic and livestock use and for irrigation development in these areas. Adequate supply and proper management of water in these areas is considered by the Kenya Government as a major factor in curbing the desertification brought about by the encroachment of the Sahel.

136. Over-all development and management of water resources require trained manpower. In this regard, the Kenya Government has initiated its own water training school and makes use of the community-initiated institutes of technology in training some of our technicians. In addition, the University of Nairobi has a post-graduate diploma course in water supply and sanitation. Plans are now in hand for the setting up of a water training and research institute. The Government is taking full advantage of the training opportunities offered by other countries and international agencies.

137. In adopting the resolution on the launching of the Decade, let us remember that although this is but a "basic needs" resolution, the requirement to fulfil the objectives of the Decade tie in very closely with the problems of the development of the developing countries. We must work together to save the lives of the 13 million children who die every year from lack of clean drinking water and from poor sanitary conditions. We must also work together to increase the required investments in real terms to meet the targets for water supply and sanitation in the Decade ahead.

138. Let me end my speech now by quoting the wise words of our late President, the Father of our Kenya nation, mzee Jomo Kenyatta, who had this to say about water:

“Water is one of the most important basic resources. It is indispensable not only to human life but also for agricultural and industrial development. Water must be treated differently from other natural resources such as minerals, which can be preserved in their natural form and saved until required, so that if only a little is used in our generation, more will be available in the next.

He continued:

“The flowing water of a river cannot be preserved in this way. Any water unused today is lost to useful purpose forever. Each year by which development is delayed diminishes the potential value of life-giving water to mankind. Also, uncontrolled flowing water is a major cause of human suffering and misery. Regulated and put to use, the same water is the basis of life and civilization.”

139. Mr. THUNBORG (Sweden): We are launching today the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade. The goal for this Decade is ambitious: clean water and adequate sanitation for all by the year 1990. Enormous efforts will have to be made to implement objectives and strategies in national development plans that will contribute to the process of achieving this goal.

140. The problems that have to be tackled are, however, formidable. Water is a natural resource meeting ever larger demands. It is becoming a scarce resource under the pressure of developments in agriculture and industry and the growth of world population. Without a fundamental change in water management, some 30 countries are by the end of the century expected to have a demand for water that exceeds their maximum sustainable supply. They are heading for a water crisis.

141. We are simultaneously witnessing a steady increase in water pollution. In Sweden, my country, 20,000 lakes are seriously damaged by acid rains. The ongoing depletion of the ozone layer is creating the risk of extinction of micro-organisms in water. Water pollution from land-based sources is increasing the load of such pollutants as mercury, cadmium, polychlorinated biphenyl PCB and DDT, creating hazards in the use of surface water for drinking water supplies, as well as long-term risks for the environment.

142. Rational water management involves action in most sectors of development. This message was the main thrust of the Mar del Plata Action Plan. It preconditions increased operational knowledge on the interrelationships between development, environment, people and resources. Such knowledge will strengthen the factual basis for co-ordinated action in all relevant sectors, which is a *sine qua non* for the development of sustainable patterns of supply of and demand for water.

143. Water is essential to life. Without one or two litres of water daily, a person cannot survive. At the present time, approximately 60 per cent of the population of the developing countries does not have access to safe drinking water. Only one out of four persons is receiving adequate sanitation service. The consequences are alarming. Millions of children are dying. Women and children often have to spend many hours every day to fetch water. The physical strain

is highlighted by the fact that 70 per cent of the calorie intake of women in many regions of the third world is used up in the unavoidable tasks of carrying water, breast-feeding the baby and sustaining the physiological functions of the body.

144. The dimensions of the work ahead are consequently formidable. More than 2,000 million have to be supplied with water installations in order to achieve the goals of the Decade. Over 2,500 million will have to be given access to sanitation facilities. The World Bank has estimated that the total cost of investments to meet this goal could be as high as \$600 billion. By choosing suitable technologies this cost can, however, be brought down to \$300 billion.

Mr. Sarre (Senegal), Vice-President, took the Chair.

145. Are flows of resources of such magnitude realistic? In view of the trends of the flows of development aid, the answer would be no. The major share of the investments during the Decade will have to come from the developing countries themselves. For many of them the level of resources required, according to the estimates of the World Bank, will be difficult if not impossible to achieve without hampering the growth prospects of other important sectors of their economies.

146. This may give rise to the view that the Decade should not be taken seriously, that the goal is an empty declaration in a resolution. Such defeatism might, according to Sweden, be the consequence of a one-sided focusing on investment figures. This narrow approach might also cause other negative effects. It tends to hide all the multidimensional efforts that have to be made to attain the formidable objective of providing safe water for large populations within a decade. It might thereby cause a perpetuation of present resource-demanding strategies in the field of water supply and sanitation.

147. In Sweden we have asked ourselves why the development of water supplies has not managed to fulfil the intentions and objectives established at the beginning of the 1970s. The enormous investments have not had the desired impact. In some cases the installations have even turned out to become a resource-demanding burden on the economies. A reappraisal of the one-sided strategies, based on donor inclination to give priority to big investments schemes, is necessary. All the problems and constraints on the national level must be carefully identified, bearing in mind the multidimensional nature of the water sector. Such a reappraisal is well under way. It started at Mar del Plata and has continued during the preparations for the Decade. This is partly a consequence of the fact that targets and objectives have become more country-specific and therefore more realistic.

148. It is the firm view of the Swedish delegation that this reappraisal shall permeate the Decade. A process for development and implementation of the emerging new concepts must be created. The new concepts were discussed at a recent United Nations Interregional Seminar on rural water supply convened in co-operation with the Government of Sweden at Uppsala from 6 to 17 October last. The necessary modifications of the strategies of the 1970s will still require enormous financial resources.

149. Sweden has contributed an estimated \$350 million for water development during the period 1970 to 1979. The sum of \$275 million has been channelled in bilateral co-operation with 11 countries, primarily to rural water supplies. Approximately \$75 million have been distributed through the United Nations system. This corresponds to an annual average of 9.3 per cent of the total Swedish bilateral assistance for that period.

150. As a contribution to the Decade, Sweden will for the coming years make available approximately \$25 million yearly in bilateral support to the water sector. We have also allocated \$3 million over the period from the budget years 1979/80 to the budget years 1981/82 to cover the costs for special activities for the further development of the new multidimensional concepts related to the water supply sector.

151. In the reappraisal of the strategies of the 1970s for water supply and sanitation, the need to create links with all related sectors has to be stressed. Investments in water supply and sanitation have to be looked at in relation to development as a whole. They must become links in the development chain. This has to be done already at the planning stage in co-ordination between ministries concerned.

152. Water supply and sanitation have thus to be integrated with health education, hygiene campaigns and nutrition programmes. Safe drinking water alone does not make people healthier—several attempts to measure the impact on rural health of installations of safe water have been inconclusive. Sanitary disposal of human wastes is extremely important in preventing contamination of water and water receptacles and in keeping people away from direct contact with a variety of disease-producing organisms. Well defined drinking water and sanitation programmes in the developing countries may therefore probably best be handled by various systems of primary health care.

153. A national broad-front strategy will have to depend on community resources, emphasizing decentralization and local participation. Steps to remove constraints would include the motivation of communities and the enlistment of their support. Efforts must therefore be made to promote and then respond to local initiatives. Community participation must not just be an additional requirement, imposed by central sector agencies. It has to be based on a real local involvement in decision making. A pre-condition for this is a strong local government and a political will to make it work.

154. Again, the experience and knowledge of women will be indispensable in the local planning process. The future involvement and the further training of women are therefore of the utmost importance.

155. Another pre-condition is the use of suitable technologies, that are locally accepted. Installations have to be simple to operate and maintain through knowledge that can be taught at the village level. Technologies should also encourage foreign exchange savings and local employment. Equipment for the installations should, whenever possible, be manufactured locally. Suitable technologies must allow for continuous upgrading; they are not a second best but a transitional solution for a given level of development.

156. Suitable technologies have to be locally understood in order to be operated and maintained. Without proper operation and maintenance, installations will rapidly break down. Their expected benefits will not materialize and the investments will be wasted. The problems of operation and maintenance are therefore central to the whole concept of providing safe drinking water and sanitation. However, until recently, operation and maintenance of rural water installations have received much less attention than their design and construction.

157. The emphasis on construction of new installations has often led to neglect of operation and maintenance. The stress on capital investment has also led to problems concerned with absorptive capacity. Large expansions put pressure on the recipient governments' funds for operation and maintenance. Major additions for recurrent budgets do not come from donors but are normally financed nationally. The extent of this burden is sometimes too heavy. Another problem concerns the limited administrative capacity depending on supply of trained manpower and well-developed institutions adapted to the estimated growth of the water supply and sanitation sector.

158. The Swedish delegation thus recommends that substantial funds be channelled to programmes of training and education of manpower at all levels. Donors should also seriously consider possibilities of contributing to the financing operation and to maintenance.

159. Investments of the magnitude envisaged during the Decade make it advisable to carry out well-planned monitoring and evaluation. The results of such evaluation should feed back into programme or project cycles and influence decisions. In recent years many bilateral and multilateral aid agencies have been giving increased emphasis to the evaluation of water supply programmes. That has been encouraged, in part, by the seriousness of the problem of operation and maintenance. In order to stimulate such evaluations it would be advisable to consider the creation of an international mechanism for evaluation. Such a mechanism would assist in developing evaluation methodologies, encourage government agencies to conduct evaluations and provide support in their work.

160. In conclusion, let me stress that the attainment of the goals of the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade, 1981 to 1990 will require new approaches both in national strategies and in international development co-operation. The magnitude of the problem calls for qualitative, not only quantitative, change. It is encouraging to witness the ongoing reappraisal of strategies that have failed. Let us all unite in constructive efforts to develop and implement the new strategies. Only then will the Decade hold the promise of success.

161. Mr. MI Guojun (China) (*translation from Chinese*): The Chinese Government is in favour of and supports the initiative proclaiming the decade 1981-1990 as the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade. We have joined in initiating draft resolution A/C.2/35/L.29, which we hope will be adopted by consensus at this session of the General Assembly.

162. We have listened attentively, during the 54th meeting, to the statement by our Secretary-General, Mr. Kurt Waldheim, as well as to those made by the Director-General of WHO, Mr. Mahler, the Executive Director of UNICEF, Mr. Grant, and the Administrator of UNDP, Mr. Morse, respectively. We learned from those statements that the Secretary-General and the relevant organs of the United Nations have done much work over a period of time in preparation for the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade. We appreciate those efforts, which are most helpful for the launching of this activity. In principle, we agree with the planned arrangement for the launching of the Decade contained in the report submitted by the Secretary-General to the current session [A/35/367]. We also think that in preparing the background document entrusted to it by the United Nations, WHO has drafted guidelines and requirements which are basically realistic and useful to Member States for planning their own activities for the same Decade.

163. Drinking water supply and sanitation are directly and closely related to the health of the people and the economy of the nation. According to the descriptions and the statistics provided by the various reports, serious problems exist in the field of drinking water supply and sanitation in the vast rural areas of many countries, especially in the developing countries. WHO estimates that, at present, in the developing countries, three fifths of the population lack a safe drinking water supply and three quarters of them do not have adequate sanitation facilities, which accounts for the very serious child mortality rate and parasitic and other diseases. That has created grave economic and social problems, which impede the development of the developing countries.

164. The launching of the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade by the United Nations is a most timely action. According to the plans of the Decade, the international community will have to meet an ambitious objective: to provide clean water and adequate sanitation facilities for everyone by the year 1990. This is an extremely difficult task, the fulfilment of which requires great efforts from all sides.

165. In the first place, each country is responsible for providing clean water and sanitation facilities for its own people. It needs to mobilize its own forces to draw up and implement its national plans on drinking water supply and sanitation in accordance with its own development planning and priorities and based on its proper conditions and requirements. On the other hand, the international community should rally international support for these efforts, particularly those of the developing countries. The developed countries, regardless of their economic systems, should contribute more in that respect. The various bodies of the United Nations should increase their activities in this field, strengthen their co-ordination and ensure maximum effectiveness for such activities.

166. The Chinese Government attaches great importance to improving drinking water supply and sanitation facilities for its people. Over the past 30 odd years, following the development of our economy, a remarkable improvement has been made in urban and rural drinking water supply and sanitation. At

present 84.6 per cent of the urban population uses tap water. In our rural areas we have begun to work on water improvement and management. Reforms have been made by adapting measures to local conditions and introducing such measures as simple tap water supply systems, manual pumping wells, sand filter wells, improved water wells and so on. We have already solved the problem of water shortage for over 40 million people in regions where water is scarce and our Government has stipulated a decree on environmental protection, which signifies that greater concern is now shown on the problem of water pollution. Measures have already been taken to control it.

167. However, since ours is a country with dense population, complicated natural conditions and wide differences in the various geographical regions, a considerable proportion of our population still lacks water for daily use or drinks untreated surface water, and water pollution caused by industrial waste is still serious. The task of improving the environment and protecting our water resources thus remains arduous. For the speedy improvement of this situation, our Government has assigned to basic sanitation an important place in our urban and rural development planning. We shall first solve the problems of drinking water and sanitation in those rural areas with shortage or endemic diseases and strive to bring about a fundamental improvement in our drinking water supply and sanitation before 1990.

168. An expressive emblem has been designed for the Decade: a big drop of water formed by ten small ones. Like rivers merging in the sea, it symbolizes plenty as a result of accumulation. These drops of water will bring hope to the people thirsty for clean water and inspire them to fight for a better future. We, the Chinese Government and people, shall join hands with all of you here in making this hope come true.

169. Mr. BHATT (Nepal): This morning we heard opening statements by the Secretary-General and the executive heads of WHO, UNICEF and UNDP before this special meeting of the General Assembly devoted to the launching of the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade, which gave us a clear picture of the international dimension of the need and strategies for action in achieving the goals of the Decade.

170. My country is keenly aware of the importance of the launching of the Decade, the impact which it could have upon international awareness of the need for a supply of safe drinking water and the provision of sanitary facilities to the multitudes of the population of this planet who so far have been deprived of these basic human needs and the importance that it has for the over-all social and economic development of the developing countries.

171. It was Habitat, the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements held at Vancouver in 1976, which recommended for the first time that quantitative targets be established by nations to ensure that all peoples had access to safe water supply and hygienic waste disposal by 1990. This was followed by the United Nations Water Conference at Mar del Plata in 1977, which further recommended that the period 1981-1990 be designated as the International

Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade and to that effect formulated an Action Plan, as a result of which we are assembled here today.

172. A review of the present status of drinking water supply and sanitation in the developing countries presents a tragic picture. The report of the Secretary-General [A/35/367] states that some 13 million children die every year in the developing countries, one third of those deaths being attributed to the absence of reliable water supply and sanitation services. Diarrhoeal and other intestinal diseases, resulting in such a high rate of infant mortality and many other skin and eye diseases are traced to the lack or inadequacy of water supply for personal hygiene in the developing countries.

173. The social and economic cost of the lack of safe drinking water is no less high. In some arid and semi-arid lands, and particularly in the mountainous regions of countries like ours, there are millions of households where one has to spend more than half of one's time and energy each day collecting water from far-off sources, and in most cases the water thus collected after such painstaking labour is not guaranteed to be safe, as those sources are unprotected and generally polluted. Those who suffer most in those circumstances are usually women and children. The loss of school attendance by children and the loss of women's time and energy, which could otherwise have been spent in economic and other useful activities, further aggravate the already backward socio-economic conditions of the developing countries.

174. The survey shows that the situation in respect of sanitation is even worse. Only one out of five persons in developing countries has access to sanitation facilities. While, in the case of drinking water, approximately 75 per cent of the combined urban population in the developing countries receives some form of service as against 14 per cent of the combined rural population, in the case of sanitation it is only 53 per cent of the urban population that receives adequate sanitation service, as against 13 per cent of the rural population.

175. In our region, the percentage of the population with access to water and sanitation facilities is even lower. My country lags far behind most of the countries of the region in this domain. Though figures show that 81 per cent of the Nepalese urban population is provided with drinking water facilities, since the number of people living in the urban areas is just about 5 per cent of the total population, the remaining 95 per cent, the rural population, are faced with a very acute shortage of drinking water. Only 6 per cent of the rural population has access to drinking-water facilities. In other words, if we take the urban and rural populations together, only 10 per cent of the total population is deemed to have access to a supply of drinking water. In the case of sanitation, the figures in the report of the Secretary-General on the regional review of activities indicate that only 1 per cent of the total population is provided with sanitation facilities. These figures, with regard both to drinking water and to sanitation facilities, indicate a situation far below the average in the developing countries.

176. Nepal has just completed its fifth five-year plan and has embarked upon the sixth five-year na-

tional plan for economic development. The basic principles of the sixth five-year plan include satisfying the basic human needs for education, health, clean drinking water, housing and income. Greater stress is being laid on health and the supply of clean water. The community water supply and sanitation projects have been accorded high priority in hill communities where the highest population densities of Nepal are found. It is there that the maximum benefits accrue to children by the reduction of the water-fetching workload of their mothers and the alleviation of the constraints on hygiene imposed by the non-availability of water.

177. Because of the difficult topography of the hills and mountains of the region and the typical dwelling pattern of scattered individual houses in Nepal, a piped water supply system presents a special difficulty. However, gravity flow systems have been adopted wherever possible as a means of providing small villages with safe drinking water.

178. UNICEF has been assisting in a very effective manner in providing pipes, fittings and transport, including the airlifting of supplies to remote villages where the mountainous terrain makes transport especially difficult.

179. In the rural community in the lower and flat land of Terai, the water supply programme relies mainly on shallow tube-wells. As the terrain is less difficult and the dwelling pattern is of a less scattered nature compared to that of the hills, the community water supply project presents fewer problems. My Government has formulated a plan to drill shallow tube-wells at convenient locations in these areas on the basis of 200 persons per well.

180. My delegation would like to express its gratitude to UNICEF for its continued interest and the invaluable assistance it has been providing to my country in the field of drinking water supply and that of nutrition.

181. In the urban sector, my Government has drawn up a very comprehensive plan to provide all the towns with drinking water and sewage facilities by 1990. The assistance we have been receiving in this sector from the World Bank is noteworthy. At the end of the current year, the supplying of drinking water and sewage systems will be completed in six major cities. In the remaining two phases of five years each—that is, from 1980 to 1985 and 1985 to 1990—my country, with the assistance of the World Bank and donor countries, aims to provide all the urban sectors with supplies of safe drinking water and sewage facilities.

182. Nepal has also formulated a programme of its own with a view to achieving the goal of the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade in both urban and rural areas by 1990. There are no doubt manifold constraints. The shortage of internal financial resources and of technical staff at all levels, the lack of external resources required for the purchase of equipment, materials and supplies, the poor maintenance of the existing system and quality control norms, the lack of public education on sanitation and hygiene, the dispersal of the community population, topographical difficulties posed by mountainous terrain and the high rate of population



growth are the main constraints faced by my country. These constraints are shared by almost all the developing countries and even more by the least developed countries like ours where the depth of the constraints is no doubt more acute.

183. In spite of the setting of the national target for the Decade and the vigorous drive my country plans to launch to achieve this target, it is estimated that 6 per cent of the urban population and as much as 38 per cent of the rural population in Nepal may still have to live without adequate and safe drinking water at the end of the Decade, mainly as a result of the aforementioned constraints and in view of the number of persons to be added to the existing population between now and 1990.

184. However, in recent years there seems to have been a growing interest among some of the bilateral and other donor agencies in water supply and sanitation programmes in the developing countries. It is also gratifying to see that many donor Governments are changing their terms of assistance and now providing support for water supply and sanitation in rural areas in the least developed countries on a grant basis. There is also a tendency, albeit limited, among most development banks to provide soft loans to the least developed countries in this field.

185. Nevertheless, in view of the magnitude of the large investment fund required to meet the goal of the Decade, the present level of the flow of external assistance seems to be highly insufficient. According to the World Bank estimate, the total cost of meeting the goal of adequate drinking water and sanitation for all could be as high as \$600 billion, although, by the choice of suitable technology for both urban and rural subsectors, it is said that that figure could be reduced to \$300 billion. It is, however, deemed essential for the present level of investment to be increased by somewhere between five and ten times in order to meet the objective of drinking water and sanitation for all by 1990.

186. An awareness of the urgency of the problem and firm commitments on the part of the countries concerned are no doubt essential, but the crucial need for a higher level of external assistance, which includes grants, low-interest-bearing loans and technical and capital assistance for the Decade, can hardly be overestimated. The international community must adopt a more liberal approach and support increased national commitments with particular reference to the least developed and most seriously affected countries. Financial contributions have to be increased in order to strengthen the capacity of United Nations bodies and other international and bilateral agencies that are co-operating with Governments in this field. Manpower surveys, the establishment of national training programmes, research, the development of the appropriate technology suitable to local conditions, massive campaigns to mobilize public opinion and the promotion of community awareness and participation should be undertaken and vigorously pursued in order to achieve the objective set forth in the Mar del Plata Action Plan and the International Drinking Water and Sanitation Decade.

187. My delegation is of the view that the Decade is not an end in itself and believes that it will provide

great momentum for the beginning of a major effort to provide the bulk of humanity with these two essential services, the absence of which has long been responsible for human suffering on a large scale. What we need are drastic measures and firm commitments by countries and the international community in the pursuit of that goal.

188. Mr. ALBORNOZ (Ecuador) (*interpretation from Spanish*): For the delegation of Ecuador, the launching of the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade provides an opportunity to assess the progress our country has made in this vital area and to look to the immediate future by devising technical plans and ensuring the best possible allocation of resources.

189. The provision of pure water to all inhabitants and environmental improvement in general are basic to social progress and to enhancing the quality of life in both rural and urban areas. Here theoretical pronouncements must be abandoned and we must begin the practice of protecting the dispossessed sectors and of adequate investment in a genuine redistribution of income, which would be reflected in the protection of our human resources that up to now have been afflicted with the scourges of disease and malnutrition.

190. President Jaime Roldós's National Plan for Development of the Democratic Government of Ecuador provides for 1980-1984 a dynamic programme of highest priority for improving the environment which is geared to significantly increasing the services providing drinking water and sanitation, in addition to reducing the contamination of the environment and protecting the ecology. That is how our Government adapts its action to fit its purpose of achieving economic development and social justice.

191. Ecuador's plan is aimed at achieving improvement in the situation of populations in both the urban and the rural areas. It intends to guarantee a continuous and sufficient supply of drinking water to human settlements, while proceeding to make an inventory of surface and subterranean water resources. To protect this precious element, we are trying to prevent pollution at the source and the inclusion of contaminants. At the same time, progress is being made in technology for the local manufacture of construction materials and equipment for the drinking water and sanitation services.

192. The Ecuadorian Institute of Sanitary Works, which is a part of the Ministry of Public Health, is responsible for planning, financing, design and construction, and it also has training and advisory functions. The policies for action include the provision of services for drinking water, sewage, the treatment of solid waste, and the monitoring of pollution in the basic national infrastructure.

193. There are master plans for sanitation infrastructure in the larger cities of Ecuador, Quito and Guayaquil, covering the next 30 years, and similar plans are being studied for other cities. In urban areas having less than 40,000 inhabitants, we are seeking to form municipal associations so that there may be uniform systems. In addition, particular attention is being paid to rural areas and to integral rural development projects.

194. What is important is that our country, in order to progress in its struggle through the greatest self-reliance, has utilized an appreciable portion of its oil income to enable the Ecuadorian people, at the lowest income levels, to benefit most directly from this new resource. However, to make up for lost time and to accelerate progress, our country is also seeking international credit and technical support.

195. The Ecuadorian Institute of Sanitary Works has obtained credits from the Interamerican Development Bank; the enterprise supplying drinking water for the municipality of Quito and the Municipal Sewage Works of Guayaquil have obtained credits from the Interamerican Development Bank, which has just contracted a Japanese consortium to work on drainage projects in peripheral areas.

196. WHO, through the Pan-American Health Office, with the aid of UNDP, is providing technical co-operation. Joint studies have been carried out in consultation with the World Bank and WHO.

197. Studies are being made concerning the quantification of water resources and the organization of regional service systems and systems for areas cut off from such basic services. Aid is sought from the organized community. The largest municipalities have their own public works. In addition to Guayaquil and Quito, these include Cuenca, Ambato, Ibarra, Esmeraldas and Loja.

198. With regard to pollution control and the processing of solid wastes, we are attempting to prevent any environmental damage that would harm human beings, and we are also attempting to prevent any ecological imbalance that might be caused by such damage. The plan also emphasizes the transfer of technology and expertise as a component of investment projects. It is designed to strengthen the existing national capacity and the academic and research activities carried out in higher institutes which will develop suitable technology and train personnel at all levels. The establishment of a centre for information and reference services dealing with sanitary engineering and environmental science has been contemplated.

199. A national sanitary survey is being carried out to provide data for the orientation of those programmes.

200. Ecuador is moving into the Water Decade, 1981-1990, with the aim of providing its inhabitants with sufficient unpolluted drinking water and adopting sanitation measures that will have a positive impact on the quality of human life. In the process, dams and reservoirs are being built, as are wells and canals that will take the place of obsolete pipe systems. We are refurbishing old aqueducts; we are setting up pumping systems. All of this is designed to meet the growing demands of the inhabitants of cities and rural areas.

201. Therefore the delegation of Ecuador supports draft resolution A/C.2/35/L.29 on the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade that is now before the General Assembly. We hope that the international agencies that provide technical services and credits will proceed in the proposed direction in order to speed up progress and to foster, by means of drinking water, sewage and environmental

protection programmes, the higher standards that the deprived inhabitants of our countries deserve for the promotion of their well-being.

202. Mr. DORTICOS (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): In order to set forth my country's views and to explain how our authorities consider the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade should be carried forward so that in the near future all humanity may fully achieve the noble objectives that will justify 10 years of international collaboration, it is necessary for me to give a general outline of present conditions in regard to the questions of interest to those present here and briefly to expound on the principal aims this Decade sets for itself.

203. I am not going to dwell on an analysis of the causes of the situation in which my country found itself scarcely two decades ago, when a sufficient quantity of high-quality water was a privilege reserved for a relatively small part of the population and when health conditions could have been qualified as the worst. Rather, let me start from contemporary reality.

204. My people, once it became a political force, itself decided to carry out a radical transformation of the old social systems and fully to guarantee as part of the material, political and moral work of the revolution, among other things, the right of all to work; the right of every young child, youth and adult to free public education; the right of every sick person to free hospitalization; and, finally, the right to social and economic development and full exercise of human dignity. Logically, our not very distant past, which was lived through by the generation that is now part of the work force, and our plans for our own future should permit us to understand the just interest which so many of the countries here united have in this very important plan of action, which the international community proposes to carry to a successful conclusion.

205. During the last 20 years my country has dedicated enormous resources to its economic development. Today, as a logical consequence of that effort, it is becoming increasingly clear how important it is to discover new sources of water and jealously to protect our environment. In the year 1978 no less than 5.7 million persons benefited from our centralized system of water distribution, in contrast to the 2.5 million who benefited therefrom in 1958. During that period the number of towns with a water supply increased by a factor of 2.4. There was a 2.2 increase in the number of towns having a sewage service, and we also constructed 27 purification plants. As far as water-borne diseases are concerned, I should point out that the morbidity rate from typhoid was 1.8 persons per 100,000 inhabitants in 1979; the morbidity rate from malaria, though substantially higher than five years earlier, because of imported cases, was 2.4. Deaths due to gastro-enteritis are minimal. Infant mortality, which in the pre-revolutionary period was more than 60 per thousand live births is now only 19.3, and the life expectancy is now 70 years—17 years more than in 1958.

206. Those figures make clear the enormous effort made by my Government in the field of public health in order to develop an adequate infrastructure, to

supply drinking water and to carry out environmental sanitation.

207. Cuba has always participated in a spirit of frank co-operation, and with the aim of finding the most appropriate ways to solve the most urgent questions, in events and programmes supervised by the United Nations or its specialized agencies. In the international water programme, at the United Nations Conference of Human Settlements, the United Nations Water Conference, the meeting of the Ministers of Public Health of the Americas, held at Santiago in October 1972, and in the World Health Assembly, we have repeatedly pointed out the importance of international co-operation, both co-operation arising out of inter-State relations as such and co-operation involving the technical and financial assistance of intergovernmental agencies.

208. President Fidel Castro, speaking in his capacity as Chairman of the non-aligned movement at the thirty-fourth session of the General Assembly,<sup>9</sup> emphasized the responsibility incumbent upon the international community to find prompt and effective solutions to the main problems confronting mankind.

209. Drinking water supply and environmental sanitation are questions which fit in perfectly with the substance of that speech. The world situation is delicate, and a high percentage of its population lives in deplorable conditions. This very meeting is a sign that there are still pressing human problems which are unresolved, and that many nations, however efficient they may be in administering their resources, will require financial assistance to give their populations reasonable and effective access to wholesome water, to wipe out water-related sicknesses which cause incapacity, death or inability to work, and to promote adequate development capable of ensuring world peace.

210. For the first part of this Decade my country plans to devote great effort to the financing of water supply and sewage systems. The investments to be made in the five-year period starting in 1981 for water supply and sewage disposal in the main provincial cities and other urban centres, in order in that period to extend water supply to 91 per cent of the urban population, and sewage service to 55 per cent, will amount to \$US 300 million.

211. Among the objectives of its plan of action for the Decade, Cuba proposes for the rural area, among other things, the following: to provide household water supply to 70 per cent of the population and community facilities to the rest; to improve and extend water supply to the dispersed rural population so that 30 per cent have community supplies and 70 per cent have easy access to water; also, to increase to 40 per cent the population benefiting from sanitary sewage disposal; and, as far as the rest are concerned, to make sewage facilities available and to provide 30 per cent of the dispersed rural population with in-house toilets, and the rest with sanitary public latrines. These goals will require an additional investment in excess of \$300 million.

212. But conspiring against these attempts, first and foremost, is the criminal blockade imposed on Cuba by a powerful nation, coupled with the financial constraints on the acquisition of supplies from abroad—the latter being a problem which, in general, affects all developing countries.

213. International co-operation for the benefit of developing countries should be the focus of this Assembly's attention. There can be no doubt that our own efforts and the implementation of just and equitable national policies in the interest of the majority of the population are basic, indispensable prerequisites for achieving the goals we set ourselves. But a major factor is international co-operation, both multilateral and bilateral—the granting of the necessary resources to developing countries, which are today suffering tragically from the world-wide economic crisis as victims of colonial and neo-colonial exploitation, inflation imported from the developed capitalist countries, unjust terms of trade, commercial discrimination and protectionism.

214. We hope that as a result of the efforts made today to initiate this Decade our peoples will be able to achieve a happier life.

215. Mr. PARASHAR (India): Today, the General Assembly is holding a special meeting to launch the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade. The Decade will cover the period from 1981 to 1990. Its formal inauguration is the culmination of deliberations among the Member States of the United Nations in several conferences, beginning with the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, held at Vancouver in 1976.

216. The United Nations Water Conference, held at Mar del Plata in 1977, adopted the goal of access to safe water and sanitation for all by 1990. The Conference also recommended closer collaboration among the organizations of the United Nations system and increased technical and financial co-operation from external bilateral and multilateral agencies in support of the Decade goals.

217. In India, we appreciate the collaboration of the different United Nations bodies, particularly UNDP, WHO, UNICEF and the World Bank, as well as several external bilateral agencies, in our ongoing water supply and sanitation programmes. We look forward to the prospects of an even greater degree of co-operation and involvement of these agencies in the coming years, to help us in achieving the challenging objectives of the Decade.

218. Safe drinking water supply and hygienic waste disposal are indispensable to human health and well-being. Most of the developing countries lag behind the developed nations in the organization and delivery of these basic needs to their large populations. Women and children are the worst sufferers. In fetching water from long distances our people in the rural areas have to waste considerable time and energy which could otherwise be gainfully utilized to improve their economic condition.

219. Water-borne diseases are a major cause of death, especially among infants and young children. Increased investment in the water supply and sanitation sector will, therefore, benefit the vulnerable sec-

<sup>9</sup> See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-fourth Session, Plenary Meetings, 31st meeting.*

tions of the population and contribute not only to reduced mortality and morbidity but also to increased productivity and all-round development.

220. We in India are conscious of the vital role of drinking water and sanitation in the health of our people, particularly in the rural areas, where the large majority of our population lives. In thousands of our villages there are no protected sources within a reasonable distance. Sources of water in many other villages have endemic cholera or guinea worm infestation or contain toxic elements which are hazardous to health. We have designated these villages as problem villages and my Government has resolved to provide safe drinking water to them within the next five years. Care will be taken to ensure that drinking water is available to all weaker sections of the community, with special attention to hilly and backward areas having difficult geographical terrain. An idea of the enormous size of the problem in the hilly terrain can be had from the fact that, as against the national average of 177 persons per square kilometre, the density of population is as low as 6 persons per square kilometre in Arunachal Pradesh, and 62 in Himachal Pradesh, two of the hilly regions.

221. The Government of India, with Shri Jawaharlal Nehru as Prime Minister, in the very first Five-Year Plan, launched in 1954 the National Water Supply and Sanitation Programme as part of the health plan to assist the states in their urban and rural water supply and sanitation schemes so as to provide adequate water supply and sanitation facilities in the entire country. A Central Public Health and Environmental Engineering Organization was also set up in 1954 to provide technical advice and guidance to state governments in the preparation and execution of these schemes. The programme and organization were transferred to the Union Ministry of Works and Housing in February 1973.

222. According to one estimate, by now 2,108 towns have been provided with water supply, which benefits a population of 10 crore, or 100 million. Also 217 towns with a population of 40 million—36 per cent of the total urban population of India—have been provided with partial sewerage systems. Of the 576,000 villages, more than 97,200, with a total population of over 65 million, have by now been provided with piped water supply and hand-pump tube-wells. Of the remaining villages, about 400,000 have some kind of water supply, such as conserved water wells and springs, but in about 79,000 villages water is not available within a depth of 15 metres or a distance of 1.6 kilometres.

223. Rural sanitation is an area where a serious beginning is yet to be made in many parts of our country. We propose to tackle the problem of rural sanitation on a wider scale in the coming years and would strive to provide a larger coverage to our rural population in the coming decade.

224. The urban areas in our country are relatively better served by drinking water supply facilities. However, there are certain distortions, like inadequate and intermittent supplies, which have to be corrected. The small and medium towns, a large number of which do not have protected water supply facilities now, have to be given greater attention. Even

in the larger cities, the distribution facilities have to be nationalized and adequate attention paid to the slum areas. Our aim will be to provide access to safe drinking water to most of our urban population during the Decade.

225. Sanitation arrangements in our urban areas, even in most of our bigger cities, continue to be inadequate. Our effort will be to extend the facilities substantially by 1990. Particular attention will be paid to the problem of pollution in the cities caused by the discharge of domestic and industrial wastes in water courses. Priority will be given to urban areas with endemic diseases like filariasis and to small and medium towns which require urgent attention.

226. The training of different categories of personnel involved in the water supply and sanitation programmes and the acquisition of skills in the operation of new techniques and equipment are essential to secure maximum benefit from the massive investments. Equally important are the proper maintenance of the assets created and the monitoring and evaluation of the programmes to observe the realization of their objectives. Greater attention is required to be paid to these matters in the course of the Decade.

227. We pledge our full support to the aims of the international Decade and we will strive to provide access to the maximum number of our people to safe water supplies and hygienic waste disposal facilities during this period. A beginning has already been made by declaring our intention to accord high priority to rural drinking water supply in our new sixth Five-Year Plan.

228. Regarded as the elixir of life—*Amrita*—water has been an essential component in the ancient oriental tradition. The provision of drinking water to those in need has always been accorded a high priority in our way of life. Quenching the thirst not only of human beings but also of the birds and animals, has been considered an act of merit—*punya*. Water has also been used as a sacred vehicle for the transfer of merit from one person to another person or group of persons.

229. Our deep commitment to the objectives of this Decade and our sincere belief in the relevance and timeliness of this endeavour have been beautifully epitomized in the message sent by the Prime Minister of India, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, to WHO on this occasion:

“Gracious be divine Waters for  
our protection, be they for our drink,  
And stream on us bliss and happiness.  
Sovereigns over precious things  
and Rulers over men, Waters!  
We seek healing balm of you.”

This is an invocation from India's ancient religious book, the Rig Veda:

“Water is essential to life, and civilization is something of a dialogue between man and water. The earliest humans settled on river banks, besides lakes and on the sea-coast, and there too flourished agricultural and much of industrial activity. The proper management of water, for domestic and economic purposes, is a basic aspect of social management and government...”

"Today mankind as a whole has the knowledge and the means to ensure basic sanitation all over the world. International co-operation can and must supplement the inadequate resources of poor countries to ensure the supply of clean drinking water and improve their arrangement for sewage disposal. I welcome the plans of the World Health Organization to observe the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade. Every nation should offer its fullest co-operation to the Organization so that the World Health Assembly's resolve to provide clean water for all the people of the world by 1990 can be a reality...

"May the United Nations Water Decade prove to be an example of international co-operation in helping people everywhere to realize one of their basic needs—a clean living environment."

230. Mr. SERANI MARTELLI (Chile) (*interpretation from Spanish*): It is a great honour for me to convey the cordial greetings of the Government of Chile to each and every one of the representatives of the nations that have come together now to witness the official launching of the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade.

231. The event in which we are taking part is without doubt one of the most important spiritual contributions of the United Nations, because through its actions and its inspiration it makes it possible to create a real bond among those of us whose responsibility it is to promote development in our special field. At the same time it offers an opportunity for an analysis of what has been achieved so far, to ascertain what has impeded greater progress in our plans and to identify guidelines which may lead to the carrying out of programmes which will enable us definitively to resolve the problems of drinking water and sanitation.

232. The Chilean Government, through me, expresses once again its unwavering determination to support to the greatest possible extent the sector of sanitary engineering, contributing to its progress by means of proper measures.

233. As a contribution to the launching of the Decade, I should like now to state briefly the developments that have occurred in Chile in the subsector of drinking water and sanitation, in the institutional, national, technical and administrative aspects, in accordance with the rationalization policies formulated some time ago. These policies have been strengthened and supplemented by those laid down by Chile as it joins in the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade.

234. In Chile until 1973 a great many bodies were working in similar areas, without administrative or financial independence, with a minimum supply of human and technical resources, with a lack of training, a lack of planning and inefficiency in administration and funding. For example, in 1973 only 3 per cent of the budget of the Directorate of Sanitary Works was self-financing.

235. The Government of Chile, aware of the great importance of public drinking water supply and sanitation to the social and economic development of the country, established in 1977 the National Service for Sanitary Works [SENDOS]. I am the National Di-

rector of that body. Under the terms of the law in accordance with which it was established, SENDOS is an independent public-law institution, a separate legal entity with its own assets. It is geographically decentralized. It is composed of a national directorate and 12 regional directorates. Its present organization, through its regional offices has made it possible to take more effective action in the handling, exploitation and recovery of resources.

236. This new institutional approach, obtained with the establishment of SENDOS, has enabled Chile consistently to apply and implement the general objectives and policies which had made it possible to overcome the difficulties that had previously limited the subsector's growth, and which are detailed in the national reports for the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade submitted by Chile to the United Nations in July 1978 and January 1980.

237. Among the most important of those objectives are those which relate to the attainment and maintenance of proper levels of quality and coverage for drinking water and sanitation services, both urban and rural, thus coinciding with the objectives of the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade.

238. Thus, Chile has adopted the goal of 100 per cent coverage of drinking water in the urban sector by the end of 1982. As for household sewage evacuation, the goal is 70 per cent coverage in 1982 and 100 per cent coverage by 1990. As a percentile, that coverage plan in Chile has meant that household supplies of drinking water have been increased for the total urban population of the country from 72.4 per cent in 1973 to 91.9 per cent in 1979.

239. In urban sanitation the plan for coverage has meant increasing the number of hookups to the waste water public network from 34.2 per cent in 1973 to 60 per cent by the end of 1979.

240. In rural communities, Chile has a strict plan for supplying drinking water to the households of 60 per cent of the population by 1982 and to 100 per cent by the end of 1990. Within the coverage programme for urban localities established by Chile, a programme to improve the quality of the water is being carried out in addition to the increase of household hookups.

241. Financially speaking, these programmes are supported by a greater fiscal contribution allocated by the Government as well as by the resources of the water services themselves, which, thanks to a policy of administrative and financial rationalization, have increased in the last five years from \$US 1.3 million to \$US 45.4 million a year. Furthermore, starting in 1981 there will be a major contribution from the World Bank, with which a loan for \$US 38 million was signed on 15 August last.

242. In order to implement the programmes for drinking water in the rural communities, we are relying on the State supplying the resources as well as on the valuable collaboration of the Interamerican Development Bank with which we are working in close relation in this area.

243. Both the World Bank and the Interamerican Development Bank have offered financial co-operation in the coming years for the carrying out of other

major drinking water and sewage projects in both urban and rural areas.

244. In order to pursue those major programmes and to integrate the scattered rural population, Chile can avail itself of the advice of the National Committee for the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade, made up of representatives of several ministries which are in some way related to water and sanitation. This Chilean Committee for the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade works regularly, has established working groups and enjoys the valuable co-operation of representatives of United Nations agencies in Chile who work in close co-operation with the National Committee. The interdisciplinary Committee has been working in Chile since July 1978, when this sector underwent a rapid assessment the results of which were communicated by Member States to the United Nations.

245. This co-operation, both with United Nations agencies and international financial bodies, must continue and be broadened as far as possible to attain the aim of the Decade—water and sanitation for all in 1990. In any case, Chile will spare no effort for that to be achieved.

246. Finally, it is with pride that I inform the Assembly that the problem of sanitation is of such importance to the Republic of Chile that the Political Constitution recently adopted, on 11 September, embodies a rule which ensures the right of all persons to live in a pollution-free environment and makes it the State's duty to ensure that that right remains unimpaired and to see that nature is preserved.

247. Mr. MORDEN (Canada): With two thirds of the population of developing countries without adequate safe drinking water and sanitation, the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade offers a much needed impetus to focus world attention on the global goal of access to safe water and sanitation for all by 1990.

248. The Canadian Government has been impressed with the considerable international efforts which have been made to date to promote and support the Drinking Water Decade. Both Habitat and the United Nations Water Conference have helped to focus world consciousness on this critical global problem.

249. We are pleased to note that, in response to the Mar del Plata Action Plan, many Governments have incorporated plans for the Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade in their national development plans. We encourage those which have not done so to initiate similar actions. On the other hand, we think that the United Nations system is to be congratulated on its excellent efforts at co-ordination at the country level.

250. We are pleased with the success that UNDP has had in most countries in establishing technical support teams consisting of representatives from relevant United Nations agencies—and I would mention particularly UNICEF and WHO, not forgetting the many contacts which they have had with bilateral donors. I can say today that Canadian officials resident in some 25 developing countries are prepared to participate in these working groups.

251. At the United Nations Water Conference, Canada indicated its commitment to the goal of a community fresh-water supply and the high priority we attach to integrated rural development. We believe that the best approach to drinking water and sanitation is a multisectoral integrated approach in which fresh water and sanitation are co-ordinated with other components essential to successful community development. For example, a programme of health education should, in our view, be an integral part of water supply projects, particularly in rural areas. Project design should incorporate the maximum use of local knowledge, traditions and cultural norms, and we think that special attention should be given to the development and use of appropriate technology.

252. Great efforts will be required of both national Governments and development agencies to achieve the goal of universal access to safe water and sanitation by 1990. Canada continues to accord high priority to requests from developing countries to provide financial and technical assistance for this purpose. National Governments can assist in promoting the Decade's goals by incorporating sectoral goals within their national development plans and by using available expertise for good project formulation. National Governments may also find that efforts to determine consumer demand and a general willingness to pay for water and sanitation will justify increased funding to this sector.

253. On the multilateral front, Canada has encouraged and will continue to encourage international institutions to which we make financial contributions to commit increasing percentages of their programme resources to projects in the water and sanitation sector. This applies both particularly and specifically to UNDP, UNICEF, the World Bank and the regional development banks.

254. In conclusion, let me say that we consider that safe water and sanitation are a development priority, first because of their importance to health, and also because of the important contribution that they can make to improving economic productivity. The Canadian Government is pleased to participate in this launching ceremony, and we intend to be actively involved in efforts over the next decade to achieve the goals established here today for the entire international community.

255. Mr. FERNANDEZ (Dominican Republic) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I should first like to express to the Secretary-General of the United Nations my delegation's satisfaction at the efforts being made by the Organization for the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade. We have also noted the statements made today by representatives of international agencies within the United Nations system and the statements of previous speakers. We thank the Secretary-General for the report he has submitted [A/35/367].

256. The delegation of the Dominican Republic wishes on this important occasion to express first of all its deep satisfaction at the endorsement given by the Second Committee to draft resolution A/C.2/35/L.29 "Proclamation of the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade, 1981-1990". It is appropriate to stress that that document is of the

greatest importance not only because it sums up the deepest aspirations of our peoples with reference to drinking water and sewage facilities, but also because it sets forth clearly the firm commitment of the Governments represented here to achieve a substantial improvement in such services by establishing and maintaining sufficiently high goals in the decade that begins in the year 1981.

257. It is relevant to point out that in our country during the past decade 1971 to 1980, measures were adopted in an attempt to remedy the shortcomings of the public water supply and the treatment and disposal of waste water. The activities undertaken in that period represented important progress in urban drinking water supply and the disposal of waste water, and some improvements in the rural environment.

258. According to the official figures available, which are still preliminary, it is calculated that 60 per cent of the population of the country living in an urban environment as of 31 July 1980 was connected to the public drinking water supply in its homes. These figures show that of the rural population, 10.5 per cent enjoyed the benefits of a public supply of drinking water. From these figures, we can deduce that 35.4 per cent of the total population of the country enjoys a household drinking water supply. The population actually connected to sanitation services amounted to 25 per cent of the country's urban population.

259. However, despite the growth in public services for the supply of drinking water and for the treatment and disposal of waste water, such progress has been insufficient compared to the magnitude of current and expected requirements and to the objectives established at the meeting of Ministers of Public Health of the Americas held at Santiago in October 1972.

260. The most recent data show that at present a high percentage of the country's inhabitants do not yet have a household drinking water supply and that the most acute deficiencies are in sewage facilities. A simple analysis of these figures shows that there is still a great deal to be done, and that more resources are required in order to meet the needs.

261. The results of the last census held in the country show that the population is increasing at an annual rate of 2.9 per cent, and that there has been a marked exodus from rural areas to towns that has increased notably in the last 10 years. As a result, it is clear that the existing deficiencies in the service are aggravated by the new calls being made upon it, in addition to the parallel rapid demographic growth and the urbanization process.

262. In order to meet existing needs and to provide an ever-increasing population with drinking water and sanitation services, the Dominican Government, in full agreement with the objectives set forth in the draft resolution on the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade, has decided to intensify considerably the effort it has been making in the drinking water and sanitation sector, mobilizing an increasing proportion of its resources in that field. This endeavour will take the form of a number of goals set for the 1981-1990 decade, all within the framework of the general economic and social policy of the country and fully compatible with it.

263. Taking account of the demographic growth and the country's over-all economic development goals, it has been considered possible to set ambitious objectives and targets for the drinking water and sanitation services in the forthcoming decade. These goals have been set on the basis of an assessment of real needs, limitations and available resources.

264. Without minimizing the importance of waste water disposal, the first priority for the decade 1981-1990 is the supply of drinking water, with particular emphasis on rural areas.

265. In order to achieve the goals established, a global strategy for the drinking water and sanitation sector has been drawn up and a national plan for drinking water and sanitation has been formulated that will govern all the country's activities during the Decade. Similarly, parallel programmes have been drawn up for different kinds of localities and, in the case of small rural communities, criteria for design, organization and administration have been set, adapted to their particular needs.

266. The tentative global target for 1990 consists of supplying drinking water piped into households to 52 per cent of the entire population of the country and of raising to 35 per cent the number of people receiving sewerage facilities. If we add to that target the inhabitants who will have easy access to drinking water, the percentage of the population that will enjoy such service by 1990 will exceed 70 per cent of the total population of the country at that time.

267. In order to achieve that figure, in accordance with the targets established for the Decade, a total investment of 620 million pesos at the current rate will be required. It has been projected that the funding of those investments will be done basically through budget appropriations by the Dominican Government, loans from international financial organizations, resources generated by the institutions concerned with this sector and contributions from the communities receiving the services, as occurs in rural communities. The minimum foreign investment for the Decade will be 30 per cent, with the remainder covered by national resources.

268. To achieve these goals, national and regional development plans for water and sanitation services consistent with the economic development plans of the country will have to be developed, more resources allocated to the implementation of those plans, institutional development speeded up in order to strengthen the entities responsible in the sector, human resources trained as required to carry out those plans and programmes, technology developed appropriate to our socio-economic and cultural characteristics in order to reduce the unit cost of service, pre-investment studies prepared and the necessary information collected, applications for loans prepared in order to have domestic and foreign funding on favourable terms, methods of funding developed based on proper tariff policies and in accordance with the requirements of good administration, and mass techniques and concepts of community self-help applied to rural water supplies.

269. These goals represent a considerable challenge for our country. However, despite the magnitude of the task, we are fully convinced that we can carry

out this programme within the time-frame established, thanks to the determination of the highest levels of government and the co-operation which we hope to continue to receive from the international financial and technical assistance agencies.

270. Mr. SAKA (Ghana): I wholeheartedly join preceding speakers in expressing my delegation's appreciation to the Secretary-General and the executive heads of the various agencies for their statements this morning's meeting on the launching of the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade.

271. It was in recognition of the primary importance of good drinking water and sanitation to the quality of human life that the international community took the decision at the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, held at Vancouver in 1976, which it subsequently reaffirmed at the United Nations Water Conference at Mar del Plata in 1977, to the effect that nations establish quantitative targets to ensure that all their peoples have access to safe water supply and hygienic waste disposal by 1990.

272. It is indeed a blemish on mankind and on international economic co-operation that in spite of all the scientific and technological innovations and achievements over the years, at the present time approximately three out of five persons in developing countries do not have access to safe drinking water, one of the basics of all human needs, and even such facilities as do exist in some places leave much to be desired. The situation with respect to sanitation is generally known to be worse, with only about one out of four persons in those countries having any kind of sanitary facility.

273. We deem it appropriate and important, therefore, that today we are all assembled here formally to launch a Decade, whose main objective is to correct this untenable situation and help to improve the lot of people, especially those in the developing countries who have generally not benefited much from the economic development which the world has witnessed over the past three decades.

274. This is not the first time that the international community will be launching a decade on an issue of fundamental importance to all nations. We are all familiar with the achievements and failures of past international decades. Our failures, in particular, have been many, but they have not deterred us and should not prevent us from trying again to launch another international decade. It is my fervent hope that the lessons learned from similar undertakings would help to strengthen our resolve to attain the goals and objectives we have set for ourselves under this Decade.

275. As the report of the Secretary-General [A/35/367] makes clear, the lack of good drinking water and sanitation facilities reflects the general pattern and level of development, with the least developed among the developing countries generally lacking those facilities. It is equally disturbing to note the imbalance in the existence of such facilities between urban and rural areas in those countries.

276. The main objective of the Decade should be to take positive action to help the developing countries to establish good drinking water systems and provide sanitation facilities where those are lacking as

well as support for measures to improve upon the quality and maintenance systems of those already in existence.

277. As regards the strategy for the implementation of the Decade, my delegation shares the view that, bearing in mind the wide variety of economic and social conditions in the different countries, even in those of the same region, the targets and objectives should be country-specific in order to be realistic.

278. We in Ghana attach great importance to the Decade. Our support for its goals and objectives stems from our conviction that the provision of good drinking water and sanitation facilities to all our people is not only indispensable to their good health but is also essential to their effective contribution to and sharing of the benefits of the general economic development of our country.

279. In pursuit of this goal, therefore, in the 1980-1981 financial year, the Government of Ghana has made the supply of potable water to every citizen one of its main policy objectives. At the moment, about 48 per cent of the population enjoys good drinking water. This represents 94 per cent of the city and urban population and 30 per cent of the rural population. The Government has set aside 50 million cedis for 1980-1981 to help increase water development, especially in the rural areas. We expect that the sectors of water development and sanitation will continue to be accorded high priority in subsequent budgets in the course of this Decade. Indeed, as part of our national action in the implementation of the Decade, the Government of Ghana has already established an inter-ministerial committee charged with the task of formulating concrete plans for the Decade. We have set as our targets for the Decade the provision of good drinking water to 77 and 61 per cent of the urban and rural populations respectively by 1990. Equal attention is now being given to the area of sanitation.

280. I have dwelt at some length on our national plans mainly to underline the fact that the Government of Ghana, like most others, accepts its primary responsibility for the provision of good drinking water and sanitation facilities and general economic and social development. We are none the less convinced that the goals and objectives of the Decade would not be attainable without the strong commitment of the international community.

281. In view of the limited resources and the competing claims of other sectors, it is evident that without external assistance we, like most other developing countries, should find it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to attain the targets we have set for ourselves under the Decade.

282. We recognize that there has recently been a rise in investments in these fields in real terms from 20 per cent to 40 per cent over the period 1971 to 1979. Yet we are convinced that more remains to be done if the target of clean water and sanitation for everyone by 1990 is to be met.

283. The crucial role of external assistance is borne out by the fact that in Africa, for example, which has the highest proportion of external input, two thirds of development funds come from external sources. We hope that the donor countries will continue to provide external assistance in the form of grants,



loans and technical and capital assistance to help the recipient countries attain their targets. In that regard, we should like to stress in particular the need for untied aid which would enable the developing countries, *inter alia*, to import the appropriate technology for the provision of necessary facilities to the greatest number of people at the cheapest cost.

284. The role of the United Nations system in the area of external assistance cannot be overestimated, even without the launching of a decade. The role of the various agencies, especially the World Bank, UNICEF and WHO, in the provision of good drinking water and sanitation facilities has been growing, and we take consolation in the renewed commitments of the various agencies, which their executive heads gave this morning in their statements.

285. We should like to stress, however, that such external assistance would only be supportive of national plans and priorities if recipient countries helped to correct the imbalance in the provision of such facilities between urban and rural areas. It is imperative, for the United Nations system to be able to strengthen its delivery capacity and its general supportive role, that over-all co-ordination be improved. In that regard, we welcome the steps that have been taken to implement the decisions contained in the Mar del Plata Action Plan to ensure effective co-ordination among organizations providing technical and financial assistance. We support the view that the main thrust is to improve co-ordination and delivery at the country level, since that is the place for the actual implementation of the Decade. We fervently hope that the UNDP resident representatives, who are to serve as focal points for co-ordination at the country level, will co-operate fully with the Governments of the recipient countries to ensure that the latter receive speedy responses to their requests for external assistance.

286. Our experience of other international decades or anniversaries leads us to emphasize the obvious: the need for an effective information system. Here again, we hope that the United Nations itself will play a more decisive role since an effective information system is indispensable in promoting and increasing public awareness of the goals and objectives of the Decade. We believe that one of the main thrusts of the information system could be, for example, informing recipient countries of the type of external assistance available as well as informing donor countries of the type of projects for which such assistance is needed.

287. In conclusion, I should like to appeal to the international community to do its utmost to ensure that the goals and objectives, and specifically the targets of the Decade, do not remain merely pious declarations of intent but are meaningfully and effectively translated into reality. That calls for mutual understanding and genuine commitment on the part of all countries, developed and developing alike. We hope that the Decade will be a success and a trail-blazer for subsequent international decades and anniversaries and for international co-operation in general.

288. Mr. PEIRIS (Sri Lanka): The date 10 November 1980 will be a significant one in the annals of mankind in its progress towards the achievement of a better

world, where man will be free from disease and misery. The importance of water for the well-being of man was recognized throughout human history. One of Sri Lanka's ancient kings, Parakrama Bahu the Great, decreed that the people should not permit a drop of water that fell on our land to reach the sea without first being utilized by man. His command was directed to ensuring that an adequate supply of safe and accessible drinking water was available to his people, in addition to its vital use for irrigation purposes.

289. Yet the people of Sri Lanka in our own time are not in a position to adhere to the command, or may I say the words of wisdom, of their ancient king. The problems connected with the population explosion and environmental pollution are some of the factors responsible for the present state of affairs, in which more than half the population in Sri Lanka lacks safe and accessible drinking water supplies as well as sanitation facilities.

290. Sri Lanka is not unique in that respect. Many countries of the developing world are in the same position, if not a worse one. Statistics show that half the world's people, nearly 2,000 million men, women and children, are without adequate access to a safe water supply. The lack of a safe water supply and sanitation facilities is the cause of 80 per cent of the sickness and disease in our world. This situation is a major factor affecting the development efforts of the third world countries and it is appropriate that the world community has considered it essential to focus attention on a problem which has perpetuated so much human tragedy and misery.

291. The launching of the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade, aimed at reaching the goal of clean water and adequate sanitation for all by 1990, could not have been more timely.

292. The international community noted the need for a global approach to this problem only a few years ago. The last four years have seen a number of international conferences emphasizing the need for an urgent programme of action, at both international and national levels, to take concerted action to provide safe and accessible drinking water and sanitation for all.

293. The United Nations Water Conference, held at Mar del Plata in 1977, outlined certain recommendations for action at the national level. Successive Governments of Sri Lanka have given their attention to the problems of water and sanitation, but it was after the United Nations Water Conference that the present Government of Sri Lanka decided to co-ordinate and unify the efforts hitherto made, giving special emphasis to ensuring adequate, safe and accessible water supply and sanitation facilities for the entire population.

294. I propose to refer briefly to the action taken by the Government of Sri Lanka in terms of the recommendations of the United Nations Water Conference.

295. One of the recommendations of the United Nations Water Conference was the development of national plans and programmes for community water supply and sanitation. In 1977, the Government of Sri Lanka embarked on a massive six-year development programme which gave high priority to the provision

of safe drinking water and sanitation facilities. Following a regional workshop to review the goals of the United Nations Water Conference, a national steering committee was set up in Sri Lanka in 1979 to co-ordinate the activities in this field and to prepare a plan for the Decade.

296. Early this year a workshop was held in Sri Lanka which prepared a preliminary draft plan of action which was later finalized with foreign technical assistance. The plan of action outlines a programme to be followed to achieve the targets and identifies the difficulties envisaged as well as the resources required.

297. The amount of investment required to implement the Decade's plan of action is approximately \$1 billion, which can be mobilized only with external assistance. In spite of the difficulties faced by the Sri Lanka Government in providing resources to meet the cost of its over-all development plan, the Government has more than doubled its capital outlay on programmes relating to water supply and sanitation, from 2 per cent to 5 per cent of its annual budget.

298. Sri Lanka's plan for the Decade visualizes a three-stage approach. The first stage, from 1980 to 1984, will be primarily the mobilization period, emphasizing programmes of training, health education and community participation and the setting-up of appropriate institutional arrangements. The years 1985 to 1990 will be the second stage, marked by an accelerated action programme to enable final targets to be reached in the next decade, which will be the third stage of the programme.

299. The key to the achievement of the targets of the Decade lies in the availability of massive resources to undertake the planned programme of action. Those resources can come from one source—the developed countries, which I am confident will respond favourably to the present call for urgent international action.

300. Before concluding, the Sri Lanka delegation would like to thank the Administrator of UNDP, Mr. Bradford Morse, whose valuable statement at this morning's meeting has been widely acknowledged, the Director-General of WHO, Mr. Mahler, and the Executive Director of UNICEF, Mr. James Grant, whose co-operative endeavour for the success of this venture which we inaugurate today must inevitably contribute to the well-being of people everywhere, particularly the people of the developing world. Let me also take this opportunity to express the appreciation and thanks of the Government of Sri Lanka to the donors, both bilateral and international, for the assistance they have provided to Sri Lanka in this field.

301. Mr. MIYAKAWA (Japan): My delegation is happy to join in the launching today of the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade.

302. According to the report of the Secretary-General [A/35/367], between 40 and 72 per cent of the people in developing countries do not have access to safe drinking water at the present time. The situation with respect to sanitation is even worse, with three out of four persons being without sanitary facilities of any kind. My Government is fully aware that securing an ample and safe water supply for those developing countries not only is indispensable for the develop-

ment of their industrial activities but also is vital in improving the quality of their people's lives.

303. In implementing the goals of the Decade, the self-help efforts of the developing countries concerned are no doubt most essential, but the international community could assist those countries through the provision of relevant financial and technical assistance as well as through the building-up of the network of pertinent knowledge and information, including the exchange of such information and the provision of technical advisory services.

304. In view of the unique nature of the problems of water, the development and expansion of co-operation at regional levels seems to be particularly pertinent, and maximum utilization of the relevant organs within the respective regional commissions, such as the Committee on Natural Resources of ESCAP, will be extremely useful.

305. As for technical and financial assistance, it should be noted that the International Conference on Primary Health Care convened at Alma-Ata, USSR, from 6 to 12 September 1978, was held under the joint auspices of UNICEF and WHO, and since then the international organizations within the United Nations system such as UNICEF, WHO, FAO, UNDP and so forth have been actively engaged in strengthening primary health care activities in the developing countries. It is sincerely hoped that these organizations and bodies will continue to give their maximum consideration to water-related projects, in terms both of volume and quality, within their available resources.

306. The concept of the Decade—to secure an ample supply of safe drinking water and sufficient drainage facilities by 1990—has already been incorporated as one of the elements of social development of the draft international development strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade. My Government, for its part, will be prepared to provide assistance to the self-help efforts of the developing countries concerned to attain the goals of the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade, and it intends to give priority to co-operation in the fields of drinking water along with those of sanitation and food as a part of the humanitarian assistance programmes.

307. I wish to point out in this connexion that Japan, in providing financial and technical assistance to the developing countries, has been carrying out assistance in the building of various infrastructures which are basic to economic and social development and has, as such, given full attention to the development of ground-water as drinking water and to the improvement of waterworks and drainage systems.

308. The development of human resources has also been given greater emphasis in our development co-operation policy in recent years, and we believe that we shall be able to give full co-operation in the development of technical expertise in the developing countries through the acceptance of fellows and trainees and through the dispatch of experts as a part of our efforts in the implementation of the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade.

309. Mr. KAMANDA wa KAMANDA (Zaire) (*interpretation from French*): In the preamble of the

Charter of the United Nations, the peoples of the Member States have declared themselves determined "to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom" and "to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples". Article 1, paragraph 3, of the Charter states that one of the purposes of the Organization is "to achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character".

310. Pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 1979/31 relating to the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade, the General Assembly, in its resolution 34/191 of 18 December 1979, decided to hold a special one-day meeting during its thirty-fifth session formally to launch the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade, 1981-1990. This initiative is not only consonant with the United Nations mission but, furthermore, while opportunely drawing their attention to a pressing problem, it offers the nations of the world an opportunity to co-operate in the solution of one of the most serious development problems of our time, especially in developing countries, in accordance with Article 1, paragraph 3, of the Charter.

311. The delegation of Zaire therefore welcomes the proclamation by the United Nations of the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade, which is beginning under the symbol of international solidarity, and supports draft resolution A/C.2/35/L.29, recommended for adoption by the Second Committee.

312. Water is a resource that is essential to life. Nevertheless, it seems that today this condition for human existence is no longer equally available to everyone. The pollution of the environment has given this problem a new extremely disquieting and distressing dimension.

313. The oceans, seas, lakes, rivers, springs and tributaries have become the favourite places for dumping refuse and depositing disease-generating agents engendered by industrial and technological civilization. Urban and industrial wastes are poured into them and, although their self-cleansing ability is considerable, their water is no longer drinkable in its natural state. It is more and more losing its essential characteristic as a procreative environment for aquatic fauna and flora and its treatment requires costly investments and enormous capital resources, which the majority of the peoples in the southern hemisphere do not possess. Hence, access to drinking water seems to have become a rare luxury and even a privilege.

314. Generally speaking, the problem of water and sanitation in the world is as varied as it is complex. However the question is put, the difficulties which arise in the elaboration of appropriate techniques to enable man to enjoy good quality water for his basic needs wherever he lives and to make it possible for aquatic life in all its forms to be protected so as to contribute to the maintenance of balance of the biosphere, appear as a constant factor, particularly in the least developed and poorest countries.

315. The Republic of Zaire, like many other developing countries, is faced with drinking water and

sanitation problems. During the decade that has just ended, it has striven within the limits of its means to provide access to drinking water to its population in a healthy environment. The national economic and social recovery plan outlines in the drinking water sector a series of projects whose achievement, spread over a period of time, will undoubtedly help to solve this grave problem.

316. It is within that context that the achievements of recent years in the production and distribution of drinking water in the Republic of Zaire should be viewed. Indeed, thanks to the financial contributions of the Zairian State and of international institutions for financing and co-operation, such as the World Bank, the European Development Fund, the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa, the African Development Bank, UNDP, UNICEF and WHO, the portion of the urban population of Zaire supplied with drinking water, which was 32 per cent in 1970, will be 70 per cent by 1985. In contrast, the present level of such services nationally—that is to say, for urban and rural populations combined—is only 25 per cent.

317. The priority accorded to the development of the drinking water and sanitation sector to the benefit of the largest urban centres stems from a choice which, in particular, took account of the urgent and pressing needs of towns as well as of the risks resulting from the demographic explosion that took place in the urban centres starting in the 1960s—risks which have considerably increased in the fields of health and the environment.

318. The second part of the national development programme, starting in 1981, which, most fortunately, coincides with the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade, places particular stress on combining efforts to provide equipment and services in the rural and semi-rural centres where, on the one hand, the shortage of the supply of drinking water has not become an alarming situation, and, on the other hand, the health data compared to those of the towns show fewer immediate and large-scale risks.

319. Nevertheless, such problems remain considerable for the whole of Zaire, because the available data today point to a direct link between shortages of drinking water and the renewed outbreak of water-borne diseases, as well as the repercussion of endemic and debilitating diseases in all regions of Zaire. Everywhere the shortage of drinking water is the result of the non-hygienic nature of the environment, which fosters the spread of such diseases. Also everywhere there is a sanitation problem due to the inadequate disposal of organic wastes and insufficient knowledge about health practices.

320. I should like to take this opportunity to express the sincere gratitude of the Government of the Republic of Zaire to friendly countries and international organizations which are giving it their precious assistance to attain the objectives it has set itself, and we welcome this example of solidarity and co-operation.

321. The Republic of Zaire intends to support the national effort in this sector so as to supply drinking water on a priority basis to the poorest sections of towns and the inhabitants of rural areas by a system of drinking fountains.

322. The ongoing development programme, whose execution we pledge ourselves to intensify throughout the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade, is underpinned by a broad-based programme to renovate older facilities and to train personnel so as to maintain and improve the present scale of services.

323. That programme comprises three aspects: first, development of the infrastructures; secondly, renovation of older facilities; and, thirdly, training of personnel.

324. The cost of the achievements to date amounts to \$75 million for the development of the infrastructures, \$2.3 million for renovation and \$2.5 million for training. The cost of future programmes, particularly within the framework of the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade, is estimated as follows: \$232,253,000 for development; \$31 million for renovation; and \$4.5 million for training.

325. With regard to sanitation and, in particular, the urban environment, our efforts are still short of our goals. The Republic of Zaire would therefore wish to be able to rely on the financial support and technical assistance of international institutions for financing and co-operation as a back-up to its national effort. The Republic of Zaire is happy to note that institutions such as the African Development Fund, the Special Fund of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and the Kreditanstalt are prepared to support its national effort so that by the year 2000 almost the entire population of our country will have access to drinking water in a healthy environment.

326. The Republic of Zaire will make all necessary efforts to bring its modest contribution to the success of the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade. It is in that spirit that the Republic of Zaire has, on the one hand, submitted its national report on the Decade, in response to the desire expressed in Economic and Social Council resolution 1979/31 and, on the other, responded to the recommendations contained in the Mar del Plata Action Plan and the questionnaire relating to progress and prospects with regard to activities to develop water resources.

327. Furthermore, my country has established a National Action Committee for Water and Sanitation, the goals of which are: first, definition of the main choices, priorities, and development strategy within the drinking water and sanitation sector; secondly, planning and programming sectoral studies, choice of projects and the establishment of guidelines; thirdly, mobilization of resources, the search for capital and the development of financial and technical resources; and, fourthly, increasing the absorption capacity through strengthening the institutional infrastructure.

328. That is what we intend to do, and all those actions, it will be agreed, show the degree of commitment of my country to the efforts being undertaken by the United Nations within the framework of the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade.

329. Mr. HELSKOV (Denmark): At the 54th meeting the representative of the Netherlands, on behalf of

the group of Western European and other States and, at this meeting the representative of Luxembourg, on behalf of the European Economic Community, already expressed our views in connexion with the launching of the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade, which, of course, Denmark supports totally. I would like, however, on this occasion to add a few supplementary comments on behalf of the Government of Denmark.

330. The Danish Government considers it very important that it will be possible, through the launching of the Decade, to undertake common efforts at all levels to ensure fulfilment of the basic need for drinking water supplies and sanitation all over the world. Denmark itself is privileged because it has already been able almost to achieve the objectives of the Decade, and for that reason we would of course like to share our experiences to the fullest extent possible in order to contribute to the attainment of the objectives at the global level.

331. Over the years Denmark has considered the establishment of drinking water supply and sanitation facilities in the developing countries to be of great importance. The Danish Government has, since the United Nations Water Conference, held at Mar del Plata, contributed in multilateral and bilateral assistance approximately 600 million Danish kroner, or approximately \$US 100 million, within this area.

332. Furthermore, in order to alleviate the problems of the developing countries in connexion with drinking water supply and sanitation, Denmark has provided experts for the developing countries and has arranged for trainees to come to Denmark.

333. The Danish Government will maintain its positive attitude concerning drinking water supply and sanitation projects in the developing countries in accordance with the high priority set by the developing countries within their own development programmes.

334. It is the view of my Government that my country's comprehensive know-how in this area could contribute towards the realization of the objectives of the Decade, and we pledge our fullest support in this respect.

335. Mr. MALINGA (Swaziland): As has been said by many preceding speakers, the necessity of a universal approach towards a safe water supply and sanitation was first highlighted at the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, held at Vancouver in 1976. It was that Conference that set the 1990 target. That concept was subsequently approved by other international conferences, among which was the United Nations Water Conference, held at Mar del Plata in 1977, at which it was agreed that the years 1981 to 1990 would be considered a water and sanitation decade, with the object of ensuring that by 1990 there would be a clean water supply and sanitation for all.

336. It will be recalled that in paragraph 2 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1979/31, of 9 May 1979, concerning the launching of the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade, the Secretary-General was requested to prepare as a framework for the launching of the Decade, prior

to this session, a comprehensive report on the basis of information supplied by Governments covering various fields with regard to drinking water supply and sanitation. That report [A/35/367] presents a comprehensive picture of the state of the water supply and sanitation problem confronting mankind. My Government co-operated with the Secretary-General providing the required information.

337. My delegation also supported General Assembly resolution 34/191 of 18 December 1979, in which the Assembly decided formally to hold a special one-day meeting during the thirty-fifth session to launch formally the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade, 1981-1990. We are convinced that its inauguration will generate the momentum needed for a sustained commitment by Governments to provide clean water to all people.

338. My Government is committed to the attainment of the goals of this Decade. We have evolved a five-year plan of action. To implement it, the Swaziland Government has created a number of sectors which deal with the supply and management of water. There is a sector which concentrates on promoting the supply of clean drinking water in the rural areas. Within the Ministry of Works, Power and Communication there is also a water-resource sector, and in addition to that there is a para-statal body called the Water and Sewage Board which deals with the maintenance of water and sewage services.

339. As a developing country we face the problem of a lack of qualified technical staff and that affects the implementation of our action programme. In this regard we make a plea and say that we need more resources to advance the training of much needed water technicians.

340. The Water and Sewage Board has done its best to provide clean water and efficient sewerage services in the urban area and also for the construction and maintenance of rural water supply systems. Sixty per cent of the urban population are supplied with water that meets the standards of WHO. The present construction-phase target is to extend water to 6 per cent of the rural population. The Water and Sewage Board's major problem is the heavy cost of capital equipment. We need international assistance in order to meet the following goals, which we have set for ourselves.

341. First, we want to extend further the water and sewage services to cover every home in the urban areas. Secondly, we want to continue and intensify the programme to provide clean water supplies in the rural areas. Our immediate need is to meet the following specific short-term targets: to extend water supply services to 80 per cent of the urban population by 1983; to provide water supply services to 25 per cent of the rural population by 1983 so that by the end of the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade all of Swaziland's population will have access to clean water.

342. A significant percentage of men, women and children in this world are without reasonable access to safe and adequate water supply and lack proper sanitation. This has resulted in low standards of hygiene. No community, no village, no human being can exist without water. Water is life itself. This was

pointed out by the President of the General Assembly this morning, when he said that 60 per cent of the human body consists of water. Without a supply of clean drinking water the health of any nation would be affected. According to WHO estimates, inadequate water and sanitation are responsible for 80 per cent of the sickness and disease which chronically hinder people's ability to function. The developing countries are seriously affected by this situation and it constitutes a serious constraint upon their development.

343. It is the realization of the gravity of this problem and its critical nature that has led to the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade being launched today by this Assembly in a concerted effort to alleviate the situation. There are differences among the needs of nations and the importance of realism and flexibility in earmarking national targets within the framework of the Decade must be noted.

344. However, despite the existence of differences in the needs of countries, it should be recognized that the implementation of the tasks of the Decade will require concerted action by all countries, with all possible support from international organizations. We welcome the formation of the steering committee, which will include representatives of, among other international bodies, UNDP and the World Bank.

345. After hearing the pledges of rededication of efforts by the heads of various United Nations agencies at this morning's meeting, my delegation is convinced that they will be instrumental in the implementation of the Action Plan. We are also grateful for their present involvement in the ongoing projects in our country. Those members of the international community which have the means could be of help by providing more financial and technical assistance to the developing countries. Without such assistance it will be impossible to attain the goals we have set for ourselves.

346. Mr. ZWAYNE (Syrian Arab Republic) (*interpretation from Arabic*): No one can deny the importance of water to human life and the life of plants and animals. However, nature has deprived some of us of it in certain areas of the world and made it abundant in other areas. Thus it is that we see arid areas, and other areas that are replete with water in the form of rain, rivers and lakes. This variety might have been intended by nature so that man would work to harness the flow of water, purify it and make it useful for his purposes.

347. Since the beginning of time my country has exerted tremendous endeavours to control and organize the flow of water, especially in the construction of dams and reservoirs and the channelling of rivers and springs. A few years ago the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, with technical assistance provided by the United Soviet Socialist Republics, was able to complete construction of the largest reservoir on the Euphrates. Today my country wishes to express its optimism and the importance it attaches to the recommendations and aims of our forthcoming Decade. Such recommendations and aims represent positive steps by drawing the attention of the developed and the developing countries to this important issue.

348. My Government believes that these objectives cannot be attained unless there is genuine and sincere co-operation between the international organizations of the United Nations system and the regional agencies and between the rich countries and the developing countries in the search for a solution to the financing problems, the drawing up and implementation of programmes for each country individually and the provision of opportunities for training and rehabilitation in this respect.

349. The Government of my country considers it important that a voluntary international fund be set up so that the fulfilment of the needs of the developing countries as regards drinking water and sanitation can be properly planned during the forthcoming Decade. Contributions to that fund should be made by the developed countries, with long-term low-interest loans for the building of vocational training centres and the provision of technical training in the developing countries, which should be given priority.

350. The increase in population, especially in the cities, demands unstinting efforts to provide water, that vital resource. This could be done through the exploration of new sources of water on the one hand and on the other the building of adequate reservoirs and the dissemination of information to the public on the use of fresh water and the avoidance of waste. We believe it important to make people more aware of the uses of water, drainage, the conservation of springs, rivers and wells, especially in arid areas, and economic ways of using impure water.

351. My country stresses the importance of co-operation in the field of the supply of drinking water and sanitation because of its importance for the well-being and the life of present and future generations.

352. Mr. S. R. ALI (Bangladesh): Bangladesh welcomes the initiative concerning the holding of a special meeting of the General Assembly to proclaim the start of the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade, 1981-1990. The launching of the Decade today is the culmination of the decisions taken at the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements at Vancouver in 1976 and the United Nations Water Conference at Mar del Plata in 1977.

353. At the beginning of this morning's meeting we heard the President of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General presenting their thoughts on the subject before us. We have also heard very stimulating statements from Mr. Mahler, Director-General of WHO, Mr. Grant, Executive Director of UNICEF, and Mr. Morse, Administrator of UNDP. Their statements presented very eloquently the need for provision of safe water and adequate sanitation for all of us by the end of the coming Decade.

354. The launching of the Decade symbolizes the beginning of a major effort to provide the bulk of humanity with essential services, the absence of which has long been responsible for human tragedy on a great scale.

355. Bangladesh joins previous speakers in underscoring the special significance that it attaches to this very vital endeavour undertaken by the United Nations system. The gravity of the challenge that faces us today is highlighted when we note that one

person out of two on the surface of the earth is at present denied the basic requirement of safe drinking water and adequate sanitation. More than 15 million children under five die every year, mostly from water-borne diseases. We are also told that half of the world's hospital beds are filled with people stricken with diseases from the same sources. The economic and social costs of the lack of safe drinking water are also high. In this sense, the attainment of the goals of the Decade is of crucial importance to the developing world.

356. If we achieve the targets set for this Decade, the cost of which has been estimated at \$US 30 billion a year for 10 years, infant mortality will be cut by half and sickness and suffering throughout the developing world will be dramatically reduced. The cost should not be a factor in delaying the programmes for the Decade, particularly when this world is spending more than \$US 500 billion every year on armaments.

357. In the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade we have agreed that prompt measures are to be taken to promote the general welfare of children and that the basic services benefiting children, including water and sanitation, should be extended and strengthened. This underscores the importance attached on a global basis to the provision of safe water and sanitation for our future generations. However, very few of the developing countries are in a position to finance the programmes necessary for the attainment of the targets of the Decade. For countries like Bangladesh the problem assumes greater magnitude because of poverty and lack of development. Broad international co-operation is, therefore, necessary. I should like to emphasize that without international effort the objectives of the Decade will remain unattained.

358. The Government of Bangladesh has duly reflected its commitment to expand the supply of essential services to its citizens, including safe drinking water and sanitation, in the second five-year plan for the period 1980-1985. Bangladesh has already established a National Action Committee for the implementation of the objectives of the Decade, and appropriate programmes have been incorporated in over-all plans in the health sector as a whole. We have already taken steps concerning institutional improvements and required human resources development to enhance our state of preparedness for the attainment of the targets of the Decade. In this connexion, Bangladesh notes with deep appreciation the role played by UNICEF in our country. This agency has greatly assisted the Government in its programmes for providing safe drinking water and undertaking adequate sanitation measures for its people. We also thank WHO and UNDP for their active participation in these programmes. In expression of the importance attached to it by Bangladesh, we have sponsored the draft resolution on the proclamation of the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade.

359. In concluding, we express our fervent hope that the goals and objectives of this Decade will be achieved in their totality and that a lasting change will be brought about in the quality of life of hundreds of millions of human beings on this planet.

360. Mr. YOUSSEF (Egypt): Allow me at the outset to express the Egyptian Government's full appreciation of the great endeavours undertaken by the United Nations and its specialized organs during the preparations for the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade, which is aimed at bringing safe water and sanitation to all the world's people by 1990.

361. During the morning meeting the representative of Senegal has already spoken on behalf of the group of African States. However, I wish to make a supplementary statement with the objective of reflecting some of the Egyptian Government's views on the activities of the Decade.

362. Early in the 1930s Egypt sensed some of the dimensions of the problem. Since 1936 the Egyptian Government has initiated concerted efforts aimed at providing safe water supplies to rural and poor urban areas. At present almost 70 per cent of those areas enjoy safe drinking water services. Sanitation systems are generally confined to larger cities and capitals of the provincial governorates. Thus, rural sanitation at the present time remains far below acceptable levels.

363. The Government of Egypt has participated in and supported the international and interregional efforts initiated by the United Nations Water Conference held at Mar del Plata in 1977. Representatives of the Egyptian Government have participated in many of the international and regional meetings convened for the preparation of the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade activities, including the African regional meeting on problems and needs in community water supply and sanitation at Addis Ababa from 4 to 8 August 1980.

364. Acknowledging the need for a high-level co-ordinating authority to act as a focal point for national activities within the framework of the international resolutions, the Government of Egypt has established the National Action Committee at ministerial level. Although that Committee has only started to take up its functions, continuous monitoring has already been carried out of the actions taken by the various governmental agencies concerned. Exchanges of views and opinions have taken place with the technical support team set up by the United Nations organs and the Resident Representative of UNDP.

365. Earlier, in 1977, WHO and the World Bank, at the request of the Egyptian Government, carried out a preliminary study of the drinking water and sanitation sector in Egypt. This report, together with other governmental reports, highlighted the need for national action and international co-operation to achieve substantial development of the sector.

366. The reconstruction and development programmes for the Suez Canal zone called for pre-investment plans for water supply and sanitation services in the area. These have been completed and the actual implementation phase has been started at the three main cities along the canal. Meanwhile, the water-supply master plans for Cairo and Alexandria have been finalized and their execution has begun, supported by partial financial assistance from several bilateral and international agencies. Bilateral agencies have participated in the planning for the rehabilitation and development of the sewerage systems for both

Cairo and Alexandria. The implementation phase has started in Cairo and is due to start soon in Alexandria.

367. Giving priority attention to the rural and urban poor, the Egyptian Government, in association with the World Bank, has sponsored the "Master Plan for Provincial Water Supply". This plan, which was finalized towards the end of 1979, includes a 10-year development programme coinciding with the period of the Decade 1981-1990 for the whole of provincial Egypt. The capital investments for the programme amount to \$US 750 million.

368. As an institutional background for the development programme during the Decade, the Egyptian Government has started revolutionary changes for more decentralized activities connected with the implementation and management of water and sewage facilities, together with better organized central planning and policy-making support. This approach is believed to be a prerequisite for more community involvement and for better chances of successful implementation of the Decade projects.

369. I should like to give a renewed assurance of my Government's deep appreciation of the co-operation and participation of the relevant United Nations agencies in the national efforts during the preparation for the Decade. For instance, UNICEF approved a "noted project" of \$7 million over a four-year period for upgrading water supply and sanitation which covers 500 villages in the rural areas. UNDP headquarters has initiated two projects in Egypt: the first is "the low-cost water and sanitation techniques" project, executed by the World Bank; the second is the interregional project of "development of drinking water supply and sanitation programmes". At the national level UNDP is acting as a focal point for co-ordination purposes and has encountered some difficulties that can be well understood at this preparatory stage. WHO, in addition to being the Executing Agency for the UNDP interregional project has indicated a firm willingness to participate in a concrete co-operative action proposal. The World Bank has started an appraisal of the "Master Plan for Provincial Water Supply" so as finally to identify a proposed five-year investment programme in one of the first priority provincial areas. The objective is to establish a new semi-autonomous entity which will manage affairs locally in line with the Government's decentralization policy. The project is considered to serve as a pilot scheme for other provincial projects to cover the rural and poor urban areas.

370. The Government of Egypt has approved in principle the holding of a ceremony to launch the Decade in the country. The ceremony is scheduled to take place in Cairo on Monday, 24 November 1980. It will include the dissemination of information among various concerned agencies. Programming for mass information campaigns for community appreciation and participation will be started early after the ceremony.

371. In spite of a great deal of effort exerted during the preparatory period, both at the national and the international levels, the goals are still calling for more sustained dedication and persistent co-ordinated actions. One crucial issue is the enhancement of the co-ordinating activities of the two counterpart groups,

namely, the Technical Support Team and the National Action Committee.

372. The Egyptian Government considers that the Master Plan for Provincial Water Supply is filling an essential gap in providing basic and broad-line information related to plans for water supply in rural and poor urban areas during the Decade. However, more detailed pre-investment and feasibility projects are required for those areas.

373. On the sanitation side, a comprehensive programme is urgently needed to provide plans complementary to the expected augmentation of domestic water use, particularly in the rural areas.

374. The targets of the Decade should be considered as a fundamental, down to earth need for the developing countries. The enthusiasm of the international society should be translated into actual provision of basic needs for the development of safe water supplies and adequate sewage disposal facilities. Almost all national, interregional and international meetings recognize the lack of capital funds and trained manpower as the two main obstacles confronting the developing countries. The Egyptian Government believes in this respect that sincere efforts should be made to provide free funds for technical training and pre-investment studies for the developing countries during the early years of the Decade. Long-term soft loans with grace periods should be made available to secure the steady flow of substantial funds needed for the implementation of the plans for the Decade.

375. In view of the importance which my Government attaches to the goals of the Decade, my delega-

tion would like to reaffirm my Government's support for draft resolution A/C.2/35/L.29 entitled "Proclamation of the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade, 1981-1990".

376. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): I now invite representatives to turn to paragraph 17 of the report of the Second Committee [A/35/592] and the draft resolution therein, entitled "Proclamation of the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade, 1981-1990" and recommended by the Committee. May I take it that the General Assembly adopts the draft resolution?

*The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 35/18).*

377. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): May I also take it that the General Assembly adopts the draft decision recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 18 of its report?

*The draft decision was adopted (decision 35/405).*

378. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): With the resolution just adopted the General Assembly has proclaimed the period 1981-1990 as the "International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade", during which Member States will assume a commitment to bring about a substantial improvement in the standards and levels of services in drinking water supply and sanitation by the year 1990. I express the hope that the goals of the Decade will be fully achieved.

*The meeting rose at 8 p.m.*