

active part in the work of the World Food Council, a body which existed to fulfil essential co-ordinating functions. Without security in world food supplies, development efforts in other fields would be doomed to failure. In order to be able to perform its tasks, however, the World Food Council had to rely on the active participation of all, and especially on the necessary information. He fully approved the provisions of paragraphs 64 and 65 of the report of the World Food Council regarding the size and the tasks of the Council's secretariat. He believed that its activities should be concentrated at Rome, in order to facilitate and further promote co-operation between the Council and other agencies in the same field.

45. Food aid could be only a temporary relief measure in emergency cases, and he therefore had strong doubts about setting further food aid targets. He considered that the attainment of almost 90 per cent of the food aid target of 10 million tons of grains was remarkable progress. EEC and his own Government had played a major role in that success, and he understood that the World Food Conference's appeal for an increase in food aid to 10 million tons of grains had been directed primarily to countries which had so far not participated in international food aid programmes or whose contributions had been inadequate.

In 1974 the Federal Republic of Germany had provided food aid to a value of DM 412 million. EEC's food aid accounted for more than 20 per cent of total international food aid.

46. His Government attached great importance to world food security and therefore subscribed to the principles proposed by FAO for an International Undertaking on World Food Security, as they were based on the recognition of the need for an increase in food production in the developing countries and underlined those countries' responsibility to establish and maintain adequate grain reserves of their own. His Government was prepared to make a contribution in that respect. In order to achieve more security in world food supplies, all countries would have to be parties to both the Global Information and Early Warning System on Food and Agriculture and the International Undertaking on World Food Security. World-wide co-operation in that field would provide the knowledge and technical capabilities necessary to meet the commitments which all countries had undertaken at the seventh special session.

The meeting rose at 4.40 p.m.

1671st meeting

Friday, 17 October 1975, at 10.45 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Olof RYDBECK (Sweden).

A/C.2/SR.1671

In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Hosny (Egypt) took the Chair.

AGENDA ITEM 60

Food problems (continued) (A/10003, chap. VI, sect. C):

(a) Report of the World Food Council (A/10019);

(b) Report of the Secretary-General

1. Mr. HAUGH (United States of America) expressed his delegation's appreciation to the Executive Director of the World Food Council for his lucid and thorough introductory statement at the 1663rd meeting. He agreed with previous speakers that urgent and co-operative action was required to deal with world food problems. The United States was the world's largest importer of food as well as the world's largest food producer. It was fully aware of the strategic importance of agriculture in the total development process and realized that its economic prosperity was inextricably bound to the economic prosperity of others. Furthermore, his Government was sensitive not only to the immediate problems of hunger and malnutrition but to the need to respond to people's hopes for a life of security and dignity in the future.

2. His Government's approach to food problems had been set forth in detail at the seventh special session, and he would like to underline the basic principles of that policy.

The problem must be approached globally, comprehensively and co-operatively, by consultation and negotiation among all significant producers and consumers; producers should recognize the global interest in stability of supply, and consumers should recognize the interest of producers in stability of markets and earnings; special consideration should be given to the needs of developing countries; and, where volatile demand was combined with limited ability to make short-term increases in production, buffer stocks might be the best approach to achieving greater security for both consumers and producers.

3. The World Food Conference had provided a programme of action¹ which must have the serious commitment of all Member States, especially major producers and consumers, if the informational exchanges and other activities required for a world food security programme were to be carried out effectively. The seventh special session of the General Assembly had not only marked a significant improvement in atmosphere, but had involved important commitments of a practical nature concerning, *inter alia*, increasing agricultural production, reducing post-harvest losses, assistance to developing countries for agriculture, support for research activities, acceptance of the principle of a minimum food aid target and the concept of forward planning of food aid, and the constitution and maintenance of world food

¹ E/CONF.65/20 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.75.II.A.3), part one.

reserves. Member States must now work to fulfil those commitments, despite the complex and sensitive problems involved and the efforts required.

4. In that context, the United States record had been good. During the current fiscal year, the United States food aid budget had provided for the shipment of almost 6 million tons of food grain—60 per cent of the world target and an increase of 20 per cent over the previous year's shipments. The United States was seeking to give effective priority to the problems of tropical products, which were a major source of earnings for developing countries, and in the multilateral trade negotiations held at Geneva in the context of GATT it had committed itself to expanding agricultural trade opportunities for all countries. It intended to participate actively in the commodity negotiations dealing with coffee, cocoa and sugar. It had recently submitted a proposal for the establishment of an international system of nationally held grain reserves to a working group of the International Wheat Council. His Government was seeking authorization from the Congress to contribute \$200 million to the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the establishment of which had been recommended by the World Food Conference (resolution XIII), provided that other States contributed a fair share so that a fund of at least \$1 billion could be established. Domestically, the United States was pursuing a policy of maximum agricultural production in order to continue its contribution to international food needs. Maximum efficient American production remained an essential element of United States policy goals, which also included increasing the capacity of the developing world to meet its own food needs.

5. Resolution VIII of the World Food Conference and several resolutions of the World Conference of the International Women's Year dealt with women and food. His delegation wished to stress that, in dealing with food problems, it must be borne in mind that, in many countries, women played the primary role in the production and processing of food. It was therefore essential that they should participate equally in the decision-making and implementing processes.

6. His delegation strongly supported Economic and Social Council decision 118 (LIX), which recommended the reconstitution of the United Nations/FAO Intergovernmental Committee of the World Food Programme as a Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes. His delegation affirmed its support for the \$750 million target for WFP for 1977-1978 recommended by the Intergovernmental Committee at its twenty-seventh session,² and felt that the increase from the present target of \$440 million could easily be handled. The United States would be announcing an increased pledge to the Programme's 1977-1978 biennium target, comprising, as was traditional, a pledge of moneys for commodities and their transportation and of cash for administrative purposes.

7. The United States firmly supported the establishment of the International Fund for Agricultural Development and had already initiated efforts to make a substantial contribution. It had participated in the meetings of the *Ad*

Hoc Working Group on the Fund and hoped that the second meeting of interested countries, to be held at Rome from 27 to 31 October, would be able to complete and adopt the draft Articles of Agreement of the Fund contained in the annex to the report of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group,³ and obtain indications of pledges from those countries which were in a position to contribute.

8. Lastly, his delegation agreed with those which had stressed the necessity for national and international action in the food sector, without which the development plans of many countries must fail. The technological means to ensure progress existed, and his delegation believed that the world community could generate the necessary political will and that an encouraging beginning had already been made.

9. Mr. PFANZELTER (Austria) thanked the Executive Director for his comprehensive report on the follow-up of the decisions of the World Food Conference. The long-term aspects of the food crisis should be borne in mind. By the year 2000 the population of the world would double, causing tremendous food, investment and employment problems. But the most pressing of those problems was that of food. The areas where population growth was highest were those where the potential for food production was weakest. Regional food crises could not, in the long run, be met by surpluses produced in the industrialized world. Consequently, a fundamental principle for the new international economic order must be that each major region should be able to find its own food balance and meet its own nutritional needs. His delegation therefore welcomed the heavy emphasis placed on rapidly increasing food production in developing countries at the World Food Conference and the seventh special session of the General Assembly.

10. Smaller industrialized countries with technical know-how in agriculture could make an effective contribution. He referred to resolution XII of the World Food Conference on seed industry development, which stressed the importance of the development of seed industries for increasing crop production and productivity. His Government had given high priority to helping developing countries to establish national seed production programmes and projects, including the training of competent technical and managerial manpower. In co-operation with FAO, it had organized an expert meeting at Vienna in December 1974, which had established basic guidelines for the formulation of national seed production programmes. A sizable contribution had also been earmarked for the establishment of seed processing and storage facilities in the Sahelian region.

11. To increase food production, the rural poor in developing countries should take part in the development process in an organized way. The studies undertaken by FAO in that context deserved wide attention and support. He also welcomed the initiative of WFP to support projects to improve the institutional framework for agriculture and thus ensure increased employment and better health, nutrition, education and housing.

12. His Government therefore attached particular importance to the implementation of General Assembly reso-

² See E/5694.

³ IFAD/CRP.1.

lution 3362 (S-VII), section V, paragraph 3, which stated that it was a responsibility of each State concerned to promote interaction between expansion of food production and socio-economic reforms, with a view to achieving an integrated rural development. Austria was ready to assist developing countries in achieving that goal.

13. His Government was alarmed by estimates that between 20 and 40 per cent of harvests were lost every year because of poor storage and damage caused by rats and insects. According to the estimates, it was possible that the damage caused by rats alone amounted to \$17 billion annually, equivalent to approximately one half of the world development assistance in 1974. Projects designed to reduce that kind of damage should be given high priority.

14. Mr. OULD SID'AHMED (Mauritania) thanked the Executive Director for his introductory statement. The food situation in the developing countries remained critical, because, despite the increase in food aid during the past year, it had not reached the minimum target of 10 million tons of grain per year set by the World Food Conference in resolution XVIII. That was one of the tasks which should be given special attention by the World Food Council and which would require new food aid commitments by the producer countries. In that context, it was encouraging to note that the Governments of the United States, Canada and Sweden had considerably increased their food aid. However, the problem had by no means been finally solved, and his delegation therefore supported the Swedish proposal for the establishment of an international emergency reserve of 500,000 tons which would be administered by WFP (see A/10019, para. 48). That initiative would not only assist the most seriously affected countries, but would be a manifestation of true international solidarity in that field.

15. The results of the seventh special session of the General Assembly with respect to food and agriculture were encouraging. The measures recommended, if applied properly and in good time, would go a long way towards solving the world food problem. As the Minister for Planning of Mauritania had stated at the seventh special session (2330th plenary meeting), it was in the field of agriculture that international co-operation was most needed. It was therefore essential that the countries which provided aid should take the necessary steps to increase their financial and technical assistance for the development of agriculture and food production in the developing countries. They must also reduce tariff barriers because, although the developing countries accounted for only 30 per cent of world trade in agricultural products, three quarters of their production went to the developed countries. His delegation attached great importance to the meetings of countries interested in the establishment of the International Fund for Agricultural Development, which would be a great help to the developing countries in achieving their development objectives.

16. Mr. AHEER (Pakistan) said that his delegation attached great importance to the priority given in General Assembly resolution 3362 (S-VII), section V, to the need to increase food production rapidly in the developing countries, because his Government aimed as a matter of policy at achieving self-sufficiency in food production, particularly

of wheat, at the earliest possible date. It was intended to expand wheat production primarily by improving productivity from the existing cultivated acreage through the provision of high-yielding varieties of seeds and reasonably priced fertilizers, accelerated mechanization of farming methods and adequate irrigation, as well as the provision of proper housing and living conditions in rural areas.

17. His delegation welcomed the unanimous decision taken at the seventh special session that all countries should subscribe to the International Undertaking on World Food Security, which had been endorsed by the World Food Conference in its resolution XVII. It supported the creation of international food grain reserves to be held nationally or regionally, and felt that the figure of 30 million tons for the wheat and rice components of the total food grain reserves referred to in General Assembly resolution 3362 (S-VII), section V, paragraph 12, was the minimum amount necessary. It was to be hoped that the acceptance of the principle underlying the International Undertaking on World Food Security would be followed by concrete actions, and he urged FAO to speed up work on the operational aspects of the scheme. Since many of the developing countries might not be able to establish and maintain a safe level of food stocks in the immediate future, the primary responsibility for implementation of the scheme would devolve on the major food-producing countries.

18. His delegation also welcomed the measures referred to in resolution 3362 (S-VII), section V, paragraph 5, concerning fertilizers, and the decision in paragraph 10 that donor countries should also provide aid on soft terms to enable the most seriously affected countries to obtain their estimated requirements of about 1 million tons of plant nutrients during 1975/76. He suggested the creation of a scale whereby the prices of production inputs could be determined as "reasonable". For example, it might be decided that the export price of fertilizers supplied to developing countries should never exceed the farm-gate prices of the exporting countries. The World Food Council might adopt an annual target of 1 million tons of fertilizer aid for the most seriously affected countries, as recommended by the World Food Conference. The target could be revised annually to meet changing conditions. His delegation urged developed countries and others in a position to do so to implement the recommendations of the World Food Council (see A/10019, para. 56) concerning the earmarking of funds to help meet emergency situations arising from sudden pest attacks, as well as the provision of assistance which would enable developing countries to establish industries to produce various pesticides.

19. Food aid was essentially a transitional measure—a view clearly expressed in General Assembly resolution 3362 (S-VII), section V, paragraph 8. The target of 10 million tons for 1975/76 did not seem too high when considered against the background of total world food production. His delegation welcomed the Swedish proposal for the creation of an international emergency reserve of 500,000 tons of food grain to be administered by WFP and thanked the Swedish Government for its offer of 40,000 tons of food grains for such a reserve.

20. His delegation had always supported the creation of an International Fund for Agricultural Development. The

Fund should be financed through voluntary contributions, and his delegation welcomed the offers to contribute made by the United States and Iran. The criteria for allocation of the Fund's resources should take into account the capacity of recipients to increase production and the urgent needs of the most seriously affected countries. His delegation would have preferred the membership of the Governing Council of the Fund to be divided equally between donor and recipient countries. However, the arrangement contained in the draft Articles of Agreement whereby the recipient countries would account for one third of the voting strength of the Council was acceptable to his delegation, provided that care was taken to ensure that the interests of the recipient countries did not suffer as a result. Many developing countries, including his own, already possessed fairly sophisticated systems of agriculture, which if given the necessary financial and technical inputs could show a remarkable improvement in a relatively short period. In his delegation's view, the most important element in the provision of effective assistance to the developing countries was speed in meeting the targets set by the international community and by Governments themselves. His Government would therefore urge all countries to work towards the adoption of appropriate rules and procedures that would enable the Fund to work directly with Governments on the provision of assistance.

21. The World Food Council must devise a coherent world strategy for world food and agricultural development, with well-defined growth targets. For example, the Council might find it useful to work towards the adoption of a global target for growth in food production of 5 per cent annually within the framework of the International Development Strategy. The implementation of such a global growth rate for various sectors such as cereals, cash crops and edible oils could then be worked out by the Council secretariat with the help of relevant agencies, including FAO, UNDP and the World Bank.

22. Mr. PATTISON (United Kingdom) said that his Government was represented in the World Food Council and in the Council of FAO and had therefore already expressed its views on most of the questions under consideration in those more technical bodies, and also at the fifty-ninth session of the Economic and Social Council and the seventh special session of the General Assembly. The essence of his Government's approach to the problems under discussion was that the key lay in improved agricultural production in the developing countries themselves and that any outside assistance should be primarily directed to that end. His delegation was happy to acknowledge the favourable comments made on the Commonwealth Ministerial meeting on food production and rural development, held in London in March 1975. The organization of that meeting had been part of his Government's efforts to find ways in which renewed impetus could be given to the resolutions of the World Food Conference, which had subsequently been unanimously reaffirmed at the seventh special session. The focus had clearly been on the question of food production in the developing countries. The United Kingdom viewed food aid as an essential emergency tool, but one for which it hoped the need would be gradually eliminated as the developing countries, helped by the industrialized world, improved their own agricultural sectors. There were ways in which food aid could be

complementary to the development of a national economy, as for example in the work of the WFP, which his Government strongly supported. There would be a further opportunity for the Committee to focus on the fundamental question of the relative emphasis to be placed on productive investment of resources provided as development assistance as opposed to their use for the provision of items needed for immediate consumption. The representative of the Netherlands had stated that he proposed to introduce a draft resolution covering that general question, which was particularly well illustrated by the problem of food aid.

23. His delegation was impressed by the rapid work undertaken by the Executive Director to overcome the problems encountered at the first session of the World Food Council. The experience gained should prevent overloading of the agenda at the second session and should encourage publication of the items selected well in advance so that delegations were prepared for a decisive examination of major issues. In his delegation's view, relatively new bodies such as the Council should be given every opportunity to settle at their permanent bases in their earlier meetings; it would therefore be inappropriate for the Council to meet elsewhere than at Rome for the present. His delegation looked forward to taking part in the consultations on the date, place and agenda for the Council's second session.

24. He would reserve any comments on the International Fund for Agricultural Development until the Committee had been informed of the results of the second meeting of interested countries. However, he wished to record his Government's appreciation of the valuable and practical support for the Fund indicated by the Iranian delegation at the 1669th meeting of the Committee.

25. Mr. KANAZAWA (Japan) said that, as the Committee for Development Planning had recognized at its eleventh session,⁴ the agricultural sector had failed to meet the targets set in the International Development Strategy, thus impeding the implementation of the Strategy. Population in the developing countries had grown at a higher rate than food production, posing a threat of hunger and malnutrition, especially in Asia. His delegation felt great concern over that situation, especially in the light of the apprehension expressed at the World Food Conference about adequate production and world-wide availability of food supplies. It was essential that efforts to implement the recommendations of the Conference should be further intensified. In order to increase food production, each country should make full use of its productive capacity, and his delegation appreciated the efforts made so far to increase food production in both developed and developing countries. However, it believed that further comprehensive measures were needed, including the development of land and water resources, the intensification of agricultural research coupled with efforts to apply the findings, and the provision of fertilizers and other production materials. As stated in General Assembly resolution 3362 (S-VII), the solution to world food problems lay primarily in rapidly increasing food production in the developing countries.

⁴ *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Fifty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 4.*

26. In response to the firm determination of developing countries to increase food production, and in view of the important role played by the agricultural sector in their economic and social development, his Government had given high priority to that sector in its aid efforts. In 1973 its assistance to agricultural development had amounted to approximately \$195 million, and it had sent 612 experts and 276 Japanese Peace Corps members to developing countries, as well as receiving 820 trainees from such countries. It had also provided assistance to rural development projects, which helped to strengthen the base for increasing agricultural production by improving the economic and social infrastructure.

27. His delegation was of the view that increased production would be the fundamental solution to the problem of food aid, although it recognized the importance of continuing assistance to help developing countries through the current crisis. In 1974 his country had provided food aid grants of \$13.4 million, and it had co-operated substantially with developing countries in increasing their food production. From 1965 to 1973 it had assisted in the construction of 36 fertilizer plants, a few more of which were now under construction or being planned, and it had provided 513,000 tons of fertilizer to developing countries in 1973 on an aid basis.

28. His Government had made a contribution of \$6.5 million, intended for humanitarian emergency food aid, to the Secretary-General's Special Account, and had doubled its pledge to WFP for 1975-1976 to an amount of \$6 million.

29. With regard to world food security, his delegation attached great importance to the establishment of a world-wide information system. Correct and timely information on agricultural commodities was the key to world food security. In that connexion, the Japanese delegation at the World Food Conference had led the successful campaign for the adoption of resolution XVI on the Global Information and Early Warning System on Food and Agriculture, and it hoped that all countries would participate in the System as their first step to ensure world food security.

30. Mr. BENHOCINE (Algeria) said that there was no need to stress the seriousness of the world food problem or its repercussions on the economies and the well-being of nations, particularly those of the third world. Over the past two years many international bodies had studied in depth the problem of food and agricultural production and had adopted a number of measures for coping with the short-term situation and solving the long-term problem. Accordingly, his delegation did not wish to analyse the question again; rather, it would stress the vital need for the international community to implement the decisions which it had taken.

31. His delegation agreed with the World Food Council that the long-term solution to the problem of world food security lay in increasing production in the developing countries. However, that did not exclude the obligation to establish a permanent system of international reserves to cover production shortfalls and meet local emergencies, as proposed by the World Food Conference and reaffirmed by

the General Assembly at its seventh special session. Assistance must also be given to the developing countries in establishing their own storage facilities. His delegation had noted the intention of some donor countries to increase their food aid, but it shared the Council's regret that the total of firm commitments had not yet reached the minimum target of 10 million tons per year set by the Conference. His delegation endorsed the principles concerning the modalities of aid set out in resolution XVIII of the Conference, observance of which would constitute the best test of the willingness of donor countries not to attach political conditions to their assistance.

32. Agricultural production could not be separated from international trade in agricultural commodities. Action in only one of those two fields could not suffice if the aim was truly to find global solutions to the problems confronting developing countries. Various United Nations resolutions had already emphasized the need to apply suitable trade policies with a view to increasing agricultural production in the developing countries and the export earnings they derived from it. The resolutions in question also called on the developed countries to remove the restrictions they imposed on the agricultural exports of developing countries. The need to improve the market access and prices of agricultural exports of developing countries remained a vital element in the harmonious organization of world agricultural production. Structural reforms were also necessary in world trade. It was essential to eliminate the anachronistic system of commodity exchanges, where constant speculation in vital food-stuffs took place, and to establish a new market system which took account of the interests of both producers and consumers. He noted with interest that the importance of trade had not escaped the World Food Council, inasmuch as item 5 on the agenda of its first session (A/10019, para. 14) referred in particular to the implementation of Conference resolution XIX. In its consideration of that question the Council should, of course, take account of the relevant decisions of the General Assembly and UNCTAD.

33. National and international efforts must converge on increasing food production in developing countries, a goal which must have absolute priority. Like the other developing countries, Algeria was relying primarily on its own resources and was doing everything possible to mobilize its human and material resources for the economic and social benefit of all. The agrarian revolution had created new structures for agricultural operations which ensured that the workers enjoyed the profits of their labour, as well as providing for transfers of income to rural areas. However, while it was necessary to redouble national efforts to bring about structural changes, complementary international action was also essential, especially in the case of the poorest countries. Therein lay the importance of the International Fund for Agricultural Development. His country endorsed the recommendation of the seventh special session that the Fund should become operational in 1976. It also thought that the Fund's financial assistance could be in the form either of grants, especially to the least developed countries, or of loans on more favourable terms than the usual commercial loans. Moreover, projects financed by the Fund should not be limited to food problems but should extend to the whole agricultural sector. With regard to specific measures to be taken by

developed countries, it should be stressed that the General Assembly, in resolution 3362 (S-VII), had once again called on the industrialized countries to adopt policies aimed at ensuring a stable supply and sufficient quantity of fertilizers and other production inputs to developing countries at reasonable prices. Moreover, there must be a radical change in the agricultural policies of the developed countries; in the case of the most important commodities, the concept of production according to the market should be replaced by that of production designed to meet the needs of mankind, taking into account the foreseeable production of developing countries. In short, the international community must carry out a world food policy encompassing all aspects of the problem. It was for that purpose that the World Food Conference had decided to establish the Council. The Group of 77, in the Declaration reproduced in paragraph 74 of the Council's report (A/10019), stressed that the Council must command means which would allow the realization of the objectives set out by the Conference and the General Assembly.

34. The widening of the gap between developing and developed countries, the crisis in the trade and monetary system, and the flagrant injustice of an anachronistic economic order had further worsened the food situation of the developing countries. The problem could not, therefore, be considered in isolation from the other sectors of the economy, for it was not merely a problem of food shortage but also, and primarily, one of maldistribution of resources. Accordingly, specific action to bring lasting solutions to the problems of food and agriculture must form part of broader measures leading to the establishment of the new international economic order.

35. Mr. TARZI (Afghanistan) recalled that the World Food Council had been established to co-ordinate and mobilize efforts to attain the objectives set by the World Food Conference. The Council's task was important because food was vital, and difficult because the moral commitments made by the developed countries were not being matched by specific pledges. The minimum goal of 10 million tons a year of food aid to developing countries had not yet been reached. The difficulties encountered at the Conference in persuading the developed countries to give the developing countries additional trade preferences, and their reluctance to match promises with commitments, gave cause for concern. Nevertheless, the establishment of the International Fund for Agricultural Development was a positive step, and it was reassuring to hear that the Fund was receiving declarations of support. His delegation hoped that such declarations would be transformed into operational commitments so that the Fund could be established as soon as possible.

36. In its resolutions,⁵ the Conference had recognized the importance of material inputs in order to achieve integrated agricultural production. His delegation appreciated the Council's efforts to decrease the gap in the fertilizer requirements of the developing countries, and it commended the collaboration between FAO, UNIDO and the World Bank in the Working Group on Fertilizers, which had pioneered intensified action leading to the establishment of the FAO Commission on Fertilizers and the International

Fertilizer Supply Scheme. The Fertilizer Industry Advisory Committee held out much promise for practical training in the fertilizer industry. As a land-locked least developed country, Afghanistan had always found transportation costs an obstacle to its export and import trade and general development efforts, and such costs often consumed a large part of the value of fertilizers imported under assistance schemes. His delegation hoped that that point would be taken into account with regard to future fertilizer assistance. It also thought that the Consultative Group on Food Production and Investment in Developing Countries should investigate further the production of fertilizers.

37. Fertilizers were of course an important input in food production, but large quantities of water were also required, together with the other material inputs referred to in the resolutions of the Conference. In the case of water management, inputs might take the form of improvements in the utilization of groundwater, drainage and flood control, and prevention of erosion. His delegation hoped that, with the establishment of the Fund, consideration would be given to assistance in such fields.

38. More than 75 per cent of the working population of his country was engaged directly or indirectly in agriculture or pastoral activities: agriculture accounted for more than 53 per cent of the gross domestic product and more than 80 per cent of total exports. His Government had therefore launched a massive programme to increase agricultural production and had introduced agrarian and agricultural reforms based on social justice and designed to bring about an improvement in the living standards of the people. Such changes required massive investments which were beyond the capacity of a land-locked least developed country, and his Government appreciated the assistance of friendly countries and international organizations. But more assistance was needed, and the Fund would prove beneficial in meeting some of the urgent financial needs of the developing countries. As a sponsor of Conference resolution XIII, his country of course attached great importance to the Fund. Afghanistan had a great potential for agricultural development and it hoped that the Fund would assist in the implementation of its national agricultural development plans.

39. It was ironic to note that, because the developing countries had extremely vulnerable economies, even such seemingly beneficial measures as the "green revolution" might present them with difficulties—for example, increased migration from the land. Likewise, despite good harvests and increased imports, the domestic supply and exportable surplus of agricultural and food products were constantly menaced by economic factors and remained vulnerable to climatic variations.

40. For developing countries the agricultural sector lay at the heart of the development problem, but the difficulties facing the agriculture-based economies of the third world had not been solved by sectional and fragmented efforts. International policies and other factors beyond the control of the developing countries had far-reaching consequences for them. For example, the rationalization of world sugar production to permit the low-cost sugar of many developing countries to replace the high-cost, heavily subsidized sugar produced in certain developed countries would help

⁵ See foot-note 1.

to increase sugar production and employment opportunities in developing countries. In the same way, curtailment of the production of synthetics, which threatened some of the major agricultural exports of the developing countries, would benefit the developed countries by conserving energy and the developing countries by providing increased access to foreign markets. Despite certain changes in GATT, the record of trade liberalization with respect to the agricultural and primary commodities of developing countries was not very pleasing. Even in the generalized system of preferences, much remained to be achieved by way of extended coverage and removal or reduction of tariff and non-tariff barriers. Non-tariff barriers were especially harmful, and his delegation proposed that the relevant bodies should seek to eliminate them in all their forms.

41. He had gone into some detail regarding the need for increased access to markets for the primary agricultural products of the least developed countries, because that was one of the main factors in increasing agricultural production; food self-sufficiency should be achieved through trade rather than aid. Accordingly, his delegation urged the early implementation of section V of General Assembly resolution 3362 (S-VII), dealing with food and agriculture, in particular paragraph 1 to the effect that changes in the pattern of world food production should be introduced and trade policy measures implemented, in order to obtain a notable increase in agricultural production and the export earnings of developing countries.

42. The sixth and seventh special sessions, apart from the substantive achievements, would always be remembered for the spirit of co-operation and understanding generated by the collective will of nations. It had been demonstrated that a more interdependent, equitable and integrated world society based on a new international order could no longer be regarded as Utopian. The old order was no longer adequate, and change was not only essential but inevitable. The World Food Conference had demonstrated a similar spirit and could be termed a remarkable achievement. His delegation wished the Executive Director of the Council every success and was convinced that his efforts would bear fruit.

Mr. Rydbeck (Sweden) took the Chair.

43. Mr. IJEWERE (Nigeria) said that as a developing country characterized by a high rate of population growth, an agricultural sector whose output was being progressively determined by cash cropping as distinct from food cropping, and a continuous movement of the young from the land to the urban areas, Nigeria had an interest, which could not be over-emphasized, in a systematic programme to increase food production, particularly in developing countries. His country had participated in the first meeting of interested countries, held on 5 and 6 May 1975, at Geneva, and its representatives had been elected Chairman of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group.

44. His delegation considered that the item under discussion should be accorded the highest priority. During the past three years, Nigeria had spent an average of \$208 million on food imports, representing some 10 per cent of its total imports; food imports had been increasing at approximately 25 per cent annually for several years. That

situation implied that international effort must now be directed to increasing food production if even the current level of nutrition was to be maintained. His Government had accordingly allocated some \$3.5 billion to food and agricultural projects in its current five-year development plan, emphasis being given to the increased production of food. It believed that the objective of eradicating hunger and providing greater food security could be achieved by careful planning and objective national and international policies. He recalled that, in its resolution 3362 (S-VII), the General Assembly had urged developed countries to increase substantially the volume of assistance to developing countries for agriculture and food production and to adopt policies aimed at ensuring a stable supply and sufficient quantity of fertilizers and other production inputs to developing countries at reasonable prices. Many developing countries had embarked on programmes aimed at increasing food production and agricultural productivity, but greater international support was necessary for the realization of those objectives.

45. His delegation had noted with appreciation from the Executive Director's statement that no effort had been spared in implementing the decisions of the World Food Conference. It was confident that the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on the International Fund for Agricultural Development would complete its work in time, so that the Fund could start its operations within the time frame established by the Conference. However, it was concerned about the failure to achieve the 1975/76 food aid target of 10 million tons, and it urged all food surplus countries to donate more generously, within the context of resolution 3362 (S-VII). His delegation expressed its appreciation to Canada, Australia, Sweden and the United States for the support they had given to that programme. It congratulated the World Food Council for the initiatives it had taken, and it supported the proposal (see A/10019, para. 45) that the President and the Executive Director should undertake consultations with potential grain donors with a view to meeting the food aid target. It endorsed the Council's programme of action (*ibid.*, chap. V). It accepted the idea that the Council should not involve itself with technical studies, but it suggested that technical assistance programmes in food production should nevertheless be in conformity with the objectives and priorities established by the Council. His delegation supported the proposal in the draft Articles of Agreement of the International Fund for Agricultural Development that the Fund should function as a specialized agency of the United Nations system; however, serious consideration should be given to the type of operational relationship to be established between the Council and the Fund, which should always consider carefully the Council's recommendations.

46. His delegation endorsed the tone of urgency which the Executive Director had used in his introductory statement. Food and agriculture were not subjects for rhetorical statements; rather, they called for urgent and concrete action to save mankind from hunger.

47. Mr. LUCHTERHAND (German Democratic Republic) said his delegation shared the view that overcoming hunger and ensuring adequate availability of food were fundamental elements of social and economic progress in the developing countries. The German Democratic Republic

69. While his delegation supported the decision adopted at the seventh special session that the Consultative Group on Food Production and Investment in Developing Countries should identify developing countries having the potential for most rapid and efficient increase of food production, it believed that the criteria used in identifying such countries should also take account of the need for adequate geographical distribution of food production. In other words, the criteria laid down for that purpose should seek to create a network of regional food security systems, in which particular countries within the main geographical regions could be identified as the main suppliers of that region, in preference to a system in which the regions depended on a few major centres of production, established in one or two regions noted for their traditional association with large-scale agricultural production. The creation of such a system should, of course, be without prejudice to the need to increase food production in individual countries.

70. The consideration of the problem of world food production could not be divorced from the existing patterns of world food consumption in certain countries, which were not only wasteful but were positively hazardous to health. It was necessary, therefore, that in seeking to promote increased food production efforts should be made to implement positive measures aimed at rationalization of the use of world food resources.

71. His delegation considered that the establishment of the International Fund for Agricultural Development represented a crucial element in the long-term strategy aimed at increasing food production, since it could provide the much-needed resources to enable the developing countries to improve their production methods through agricultural research, extension services and training, as well as through the development of programmes designed to improve

human nutrition and drainage and irrigation facilities. His delegation therefore welcomed the report of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group and urged generous support for the Fund by all countries in a position to do so, in order to enable the Fund to begin operations early and to achieve its initial target of SDR 1 billion.

72. Recent developments suggested that the provision of adequate food supplies represented one of the major challenges facing mankind during the twentieth century. The question was at the very heart of human survival. It was incumbent on all members of the international community to eschew narrow national considerations and to join together in a common effort to create a world free of want and hunger.

73. Mr. HANNAH (Executive Director, World Food Council) thanked all those who had participated in the debate for their kind remarks about the World Food Council. He had noted all the points made, and the Council would be governed by the many constructive ideas offered. The Council would also be willing to consider comments by those who had not participated in the debate.

74. He shared the view of numerous representatives that the task before the world community was of the highest importance. Co-operation was essential for success. The efforts of the Council would have to be complemented by efforts at the national level to achieve its objectives.

75. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee would resume its consideration of the item relating to food problems after the meeting of interested countries at the end of October.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.

1672nd meeting

Monday, 20 October 1975, at 3.15 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Olof RYDBECK (Sweden).

A/C.2/SR.1672

In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Hosny (Egypt) took the Chair.

AGENDA ITEM 59

United Nations Environment Programme (A/10003, chap. IV, sect. F; A/10169, A/C.2/L.1428/Rev.1, A/C.2/L.1434, E/5689):

- (a) Report of the Governing Council (A/10025);
- (b) Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements: report of the Secretary-General (A/10234);
- (c) Criteria governing multilateral financing of housing and human settlements: report of the Secretary-General (A/10225)

1. Mr. STRONG (Executive Director, United Nations Environment Programme) said that, since the twenty-ninth

session of the General Assembly, UNEP had made significant progress towards realizing the objectives for which it had been created. Its activities had taken place within the broad context of the movement for change within the United Nations system brought about by the drive for a new international economic order and based on the impact of the sixth special session of the General Assembly. Indeed, the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (Stockholm, 5-16 June 1972) and the creation of UNEP itself had heralded those changes. The deliberations of the Governing Council at its third session (17 April-2 May 1975) had reflected a timely awareness of the new developments within the United Nations system as a whole, and of their relevance to UNEP's own activities and future direction. The UNEP secretariat had contributed actively to some of the preparatory work for the seventh special session of the General Assembly, and was now