

economic study of the affected zones already held a priority position in requests for financing.

42. The United Nations offices in the three capitals were providing valuable services. They had been of great help for the meetings held there, especially the ministerial meeting in Minsk. Their orders were to keep abreast of developments in the situation and periodically report on it to Headquarters.

43. The PRESIDENT said that the countries affected by the Chernobyl disaster did not find it necessary to submit a draft resolution. He proposed that the Council should adopt the following decision:

“The Economic and Social Council has taken note of the report of the Under-Secretary-General for Hu-

manitarian Affairs on the strengthening of international cooperation and coordination of efforts to study, mitigate and minimize the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster, endorses the proposals contained therein for future action on this issue and decides to keep the matter under review.”

44. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Council wished to adopt that decision.

It was so decided [decision 1993/232].

45. The PRESIDENT announced that the debate was concluded on agenda item 8 on the Chernobyl disaster.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.

40th meeting

Thursday, 22 July 1993, at 3.35 p.m.

President: Mr. Olexandre SLIPTCHENKO (Ukraine)

E/1993/SR.40

AGENDA ITEM 7

International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction

1. Mr. ELIASSON (Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs), introducing the agenda item, said the United Nations was so occupied with major complex emergencies that there was a risk that natural disasters might not receive the attention they deserved. Given the incidence of natural disaster in the past four or five years, it was clear that the international community needed the capacity to deal also with natural disasters. Their cost to the world community in 1991 had been calculated at some \$44 billion. Some 80 to 90 per cent of that cost and of the casualties had been borne by the developing countries. Insurance payments, on the other hand, had gone largely to the 20 per cent of damage incurred in the developed world. The problem of the cost and the distribution of the burden of natural disaster was therefore enormous. The international community needed to develop a mechanism for prevention and mitigation in the areas most liable to natural disaster.

2. As an example of the relationship between natural disaster and poverty, he cited Bangladesh where, in August 1991, 140,000 people had been drowned by a six-metre tidal wave while planting rice in an area barely above sea level. He had visited the area in 1992 and seen

almost the same number of people working there again, their ranks swelled by a quarter of a million refugees from Myanmar.

3. It was important to harmonize the work of disaster mitigation with the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction. Arrangements were therefore being made to integrate the Decade secretariat into DHA. That secretariat, which had been established for the purposes of the Decade, would gain from working with the Disaster Mitigation Branch of DHA. He hoped Member States would provide sufficient resources to allow them to work efficiently.

4. The World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction, to be held in May 1994, offered an opportunity to mobilize resources for promoting disaster mitigation. The Department would work with the host Government, Japan, and with the specialized agencies and other partners in the preparations for the Conference, which would be a great opportunity for bringing the problem to the centre of attention of world public opinion.

5. Mr. ELO (Director, International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction Secretariat) said that natural disasters were continuing to occur in developing and developed countries alike, causing worsening damage. According to insurance statistics, financial losses due to natural disasters had been rising steadily. The developing countries

had invariably been the worst hit and most deaths occurred in the developing world.

6. Nevertheless, disasters were not unavoidable. The hazards threatening each country, sometimes aggravated by acts of man, such as deforestation or the spread of uncontrolled technology which destroyed the environment, were well known. The adverse consequences of natural events could be reduced and prevented from becoming a disaster through mitigation, prevention and preparedness. The scientific knowledge and technology for early warning existed, but their use must be improved. Simple structural improvements could produce earthquake-resistant housing, land-use regulations could prevent building in hazardous zones, and the lives of people living in flood plains could be saved by timely warning and evacuation. The application of appropriate technology, not always necessarily expensive, could prevent disasters, and awareness and information could prepare people to cope with events and save valuable lives and property. Even large-scale potential disasters could be prevented through timely and sustained effort, the most recent example being the current Southern African Drought Emergency Operation. The strengthening of national capacities for disaster management, which should be the ultimate goal, had produced remarkable results.

7. Investment in disaster reduction was less burdensome than the ever-rising cost of disaster relief. Disaster mitigation was the key to containing disaster costs. At the initiative of the world scientific community, the General Assembly, in resolution 44/236, had proclaimed the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, and had set as its target the saving of lives and the reduction of the property damage and social and economic disruption caused by disasters. The resolution had also defined the International Framework of Action for the Decade, which was in place and functioning. Countries were beginning to act systematically to protect themselves from natural and other hazards.

8. The Special High-Level Council and the Scientific and Technical Committee established by the resolution had done well in steering the Decade through its first three years. The Special High-Level Council had met twice and at its second meeting had adopted the 12-point Plan of Action towards the 1994 World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction. The Scientific and Technical Committee had been instrumental in formulating the programme for the Decade, adopting an information strategy and setting rules for the approval of projects to be promoted during the Decade. Individual members of the Committee had participated in global, regional and national meetings. Its most significant achievement had been the definition of specific targets to be reached by each vulnerable country, which the General Assembly had endorsed in its resolution 46/149 in 1991. By the year 2000, each country should have in place a comprehensive national assessment of risks from natural hazards, the assessment being taken into account in development plans; mitigation plans at the national and local levels, involving long-term prevention and preparedness

and community awareness; and ready access to global, regional, national and local warning systems and broad dissemination warnings. The Secretary-General had also established a steering committee to coordinate the United Nations contribution to the Decade and provide a framework for coordinated action. As the Secretary-General's report (E/1993/97) showed, several United Nations agencies had made considerable progress in disaster mitigation activities.

9. Progress had also been made in consolidating the Decade secretariat. It was working on the strategies for the second half of the Decade. The approximately 100 national committees or focal points had been requested to report on their activities and information on the various ongoing demonstration projects was being updated. Several regional initiatives had been taken to promote the Decade and information on all those developments could be provided to the General Assembly at its next session.

10. The Decade continued to be the focus for disaster mitigation, including prevention and preparedness. It provided a platform for the promotion of disaster reduction by States, the scientific community, the United Nations and other partners in the Decade, and supported activities in both developed and developing countries. However, it would only be able to meet the expectations it had aroused if it was fully backed by the partners and if the programmes and projects selected for implementation received sufficient financial and technical support. Commitment to the Decade's goals and objectives was still very uneven, some Governments, agencies and scientific associations being very active while many others were not.

11. The Decade secretariat had been charged with a wide range of duties, including the promotion of disaster mitigation activities, the coordination of international agencies, national authorities and Decade committees, and communication with the scientific community and the private sector. Public information activities were a priority.

12. Unfortunately, the resources provided for the Decade were not sufficient for sustained work towards the objectives defined by member countries. Funding was entirely based on extrabudgetary contributions, including the funding of the core functions of the secretariat. Technical and financial support for the secretariat should be consolidated, as should voluntary contributions for disaster mitigation made either through the Trust Fund for the Decade or bilaterally.

13. Keeping disaster mitigation in mind in preparing national development plans would ensure that projects reduced, not added to, vulnerability. More Governments should become consistent supporters of the Decade. There should be more interaction between the national committees of developed and developing countries and between the United Nations and other agencies within the framework of the Decade. It would be desirable for

the private sector also to become a major force. In that way, the goals and targets of the Decade, particularly the strengthening of developing-country capacity at the national and local level, could be achieved.

14. The world had changed since the General Assembly proclaimed the Decade and established its framework: complex emergencies were currently overwhelming the international capacity for assistance. DHA had been established to provide an overall coordination mechanism, into which the Decade secretariat had been integrated. The agreed conclusions on the coordination of humanitarian assistance adopted by the Council on 9 July 1993 (E/1993/L.25), which contained several references to natural disaster prevention and preparedness, provided an excellent framework for future action.

15. Together with the other branches of the Department, the Decade secretariat was continuing to promote disaster mitigation, prevention and preparedness as an essential element in the continuum from emergency relief to development. Practical mechanisms were being worked out for coordinating its functions with the advisory and country support functions of the Disaster Mitigation Branch, the agencies in their implementing role and the support of donors.

16. At the invitation of the Japanese Government, the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction was to be convened at Yokohama from 23 to 27 May 1994. The Conference would contribute to the mid-term evaluation of the Decade which the Council was called upon to make in 1994 for reporting to the forty-eighth session of the following General Assembly. To that end, the aims of the Conference included a review of the progress of Decade activities at the national, regional and international levels; an exchange of information on the implementation of activities and the development of plans for the second half of the Decade; and the promotion of increased awareness of disaster reduction policies among high-level officials.

17. The Scientific and Technical Committee of the Decade had stressed the importance of the review progress, especially at the national level. The Decade secretariat, charged with the preparatory work, had been working extensively with the host Government, with the preparatory committee and with the United Nations and specialized agencies and other organizations and associations. The Conference programme had been defined, the first announcements circulated and the national committees requested to prepare their reports. The specialized agencies had joined in a truly collaborative effort.

18. The Decade secretariat had made the Conference its top priority. Additional resources were urgently needed and a firm commitment by the United Nations to the Conference would provide the support required for its success. It would provide an opportunity for further promotion of disaster reduction and a platform for closer collaboration between the countries and their national

committees, the United Nations, the scientific community, non-governmental organizations and other partners in the Decade, as well as an opportunity to review achievements, exchange views and participate in planning for the second half of the Decade and beyond. Much remained to be done to achieve the goals and targets set for the Decade: there must be a joint effort to map the road ahead.

19. Mr. SHIBATA (Japan) said that while natural disasters could occur anywhere they affected developing countries particularly severely and aggravated the problems of underdevelopment and poverty. That was why Decade activities were becoming increasingly important, and Japan, as one of the initiators of the Decade, would continue its efforts to ensure that the objectives set were achieved.

20. At the Special High-Level Council meeting in January 1993, the Japanese Government had, accordingly, offered to host the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction at Yokohama in May 1994. The Conference would provide an occasion for the mid-term review of progress made during the Decade and would lay down guidelines for the second half of the period. In order to ensure the success of the Conference, all Member States and organizations of the United Nations system should participate actively in the preparatory process, and his delegation intended, in collaboration with other interested countries, to present a resolution at the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly to that end.

21. Mr. SLEEUWAGEN (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the European Community and its member States, remarked that the cost of natural disasters in lives and economic losses had been illustrated once again by the recent disasters in India, Japan and the United States of America. The members of the European Community expressed their sympathy to all countries affected by disasters.

22. The United Nations was particularly well-suited for action in that area. DHA with its specific responsibilities for disaster management and capacity-building for prevention was already actively engaged in that work through the Decade secretariat. The Decade, with its interdisciplinary approach, could cover all relevant sectors and ensure the effective participation of the private sector, the non-governmental organizations, the media and scientific and educational institutions. It could generate global awareness, a spirit of partnership in disaster prevention, and the support of national institutions.

23. It was encouraging that national committees had already been established in 108 countries, but the Secretary-General's report (E/1993/97) did not indicate whether their geographical distribution coincided with areas particularly exposed to natural disasters. He hoped a table could be made available indicating areas in which the Decade should concentrate its efforts. As coordination was one of the essential aspects of disaster management, the operational agencies of the system should

work in close cooperation with DHA and the Decade secretariat through the Inter-Agency Standing Committee. It would be helpful to have more specific details about action on Decade objectives by relevant United Nations bodies.

24. The link with development should receive particular attention in formulating programmes. In order to enable the General Assembly to decide on the new budget of the Department at the forthcoming session, a full account should be prepared of the specializations, differences and complementarities within the Department, particularly as concerned the Decade secretariat and the Disaster Mitigation Branch. If it became clear that the Decade secretariat was experiencing difficulties in carrying out those functions because of its temporary structure, the General Assembly might consider the advisability of providing it with a more structured basis. The members of the European Community wished to thank the Department, the Decade secretariat and the Scientific and Technical Committee for the comprehensive report presented to the Council. They would, however, like to see more consideration given in the Secretary-General's report to specific tasks and the progress made by the Department in the field of disaster reduction, and to the real contributions made by the development organizations of the system and the Bretton Woods institutions.

25. The member States of the European Community wished to express their appreciation of the Japanese Government's offer to host the World Conference at Yokohama. The Conference would contribute to the conduct of the mid-term review and prepare an action programme for the second period. The contributions of the national committees, United Nations bodies and non-governmental organizations would be decisive, and should be preceded by extensive coordination on the ground, in which the national committees would play a major role. Resident representatives should cooperate closely with them and ensure that their organizations took account of Decade objectives in their programmes. The Conference would also be able to contribute to the formulation of a technical action programme and should review the results achieved at the national level. One of its main objectives, however, should be to make such results more widely known at the regional level both for their preventive value and as contributions to development. The developing countries exposed to natural disasters would undoubtedly be able to make available their extensive and specific experience to international and regional programmes.

26. Mr. WU Hailong (China) expressed his delegation's appreciation of the contributions made by the United Nations bodies concerned to work for the Decade, in particular the Special High-Level Council and the Scientific and Technical Committee. His delegation also wished to thank the Japanese Government for its offer to host the World Conference and had taken note of the 12-point Plan of Action.

27. China believed the Conference would provide an occasion both to carry out the mid-term review of the Decade and to plan work for the remaining years. To that end, it was imperative to ensure the full participation of all Member States in the preparatory process, which should set the objectives, identify the themes and establish the priorities for the Conference, as well as deciding on the appropriate procedures.

28. His delegation attached great importance to activities for the Decade, particularly in view of the frequent occurrence of natural disasters in recent times. They caused enormous economic losses and heavy casualties, which seriously affected the economic and social development of developing countries. Disaster reduction was, therefore, an issue to which the international community, and specifically the United Nations, should give high priority.

29. Developing countries were poorly equipped to take disaster prevention measures, and assistance from the international community, especially the developed countries, was sorely needed to transfer technical and scientific knowledge and provide financial resources for the establishment of monitoring and early-warning systems. Assistance to disaster-stricken countries was essentially humanitarian in nature and should not be tarnished by political or ideological preferences. The sovereignty and wishes of the recipient countries should always be respected.

30. The United Nations could strengthen its role in disaster reduction and ensure effective coordination of activities by the various members of the system. His delegation hoped progress would be made in that respect as a result of the integration of the secretariat of the Decade into DHA.

31. China had taken a number of effective steps to improve its disaster-reduction capability and had been actively involved in international cooperation to that end. With its extensive and repeated experience of disasters, China fully realized the importance of international cooperation. An international conference on disaster management had recently been held in Beijing, at which major issues had been discussed and useful suggestions and proposals made. His delegation strongly believed that concerted efforts and strengthened cooperation could reduce losses from natural disasters and promote social progress and economic development.

32. Mr. VOSKRESENSKY (Russian Federation) said his delegation strongly supported the objectives and activities of the Decade and wished to express its appreciation of the efforts of the Decade secretariat. A national committee had recently been established in the Russian Federation, with the primary task of deciding on the strategy for participation in Decade activities at the national, regional and international levels. One aspect was the analysis currently being conducted of the situation in all fields of activity relating to disaster reduction and mitigation of the social, economic, ecological and other

consequences. The results would be taken into account in preparing the Russian Federation's programme of participation in the Decade and in concrete research and practical work, with appropriate scope assigned to international cooperation. It was already clear that, as far as the Russian Federation was concerned, a particularly appropriate form of cooperation would be the exchange of experience on a number of important topics, including: natural disaster monitoring, risk assessment, early-warning and prevention measures; preparedness of the public, and of State and socio-economic structures to manage disasters, and respond rapidly to them; the training of specialized personnel to deal with emergency situations resulting from disasters; ensuring that the public was properly informed and trained on what to do on receiving advance warning of a disaster; during the disaster itself, and in dealing with its consequences. His country attached great importance to regional cooperation and had entered into closely coordinated arrangements with other members of the Commonwealth of Independent States, including the establishment of an international council on natural and industrial emergencies, which had adopted a special decision on joint participation of member countries in the Decade. That measure was in the spirit of the Decade and would enable the countries concerned to participate jointly and more effectively in Decade programmes. The Russian Federation's efforts alone were, however, clearly insufficient, and he hoped that the Decade secretariat would draw the attention of the representatives of other member countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States to the Decade programmes and would provide assistance for the prompt establishment in those countries of new specialized structures. The national committee of the Russian Federation was prepared to participate practically in cooperation within the framework of the Decade with other countries, and to organize transfer of the experience of Russian institutions in disaster reduction. It was also interested in receiving information on the experience of other countries and international organizations.

33. Mr. MILLER (World Meteorological Organization) reiterated the support of WMO for the International Decade on Natural Disaster Reduction.

34. Natural disaster reduction was a major concern of the national meteorological and hydrological services in member countries of WMO and had been adopted as a major objective for the period 1992-2001. WMO had adopted a plan for the Decade, which noted that many WMO activities, particularly those under the World Weather Watch and Hydrology and Water Resources Programmes had similar objectives to those of the Decade.

35. WMO felt that the most important task of the Decade was the application of existing technologies and procedures to disaster reduction, and it placed particular emphasis on technology transfer, institution building, the provision of equipment and facilities, and human resource development. Its plan designated three special

projects for the Decade: tropical cyclone warning for the south-west Indian Ocean region; comprehensive risk assessment, and a system for technology exchange. It was also cooperating with the International Council of Scientific Unions on research into the mechanisms causing tropical cyclones. Owing to lack of resources, progress had not always been as fast as had been hoped, and WMO was grateful for the extra-budgetary assistance it had received. WMO supported the work of the organs of the Decade and had attended sessions of the Scientific and Technical Committee and the Inter-Agency Working Group. It was planning to participate actively in the Yokohama World Conference, which it saw as a valuable opportunity to review decade activities and make the aims of the Decade more widely known. WMO would be organizing the session on warning systems during the Conference and would make presentations of its work in support of the Decade. It noted with some concern that the form of the Conference had not yet been finally agreed, and believed the Conference should be organized by the Decade secretariat on behalf of the United Nations Steering Committee, with co-sponsorship of other bodies represented on that Committee.

36. Mr. VERGA (Italy) observed that his delegation endorsed the statement made by the representative of Belgium on behalf of the European Community. In 1992 the Italian Parliament had adopted a law on national civil protection, whose provisions also covered disaster response, forward planning and prevention, thus according with the aims envisaged by the General Assembly for the International Decade. It focused on the vulnerability of areas and their populations, and aimed at a better understanding of the various regions and the preparation of medium-term plans to reduce vulnerability.

37. The financial aspect was a matter for concern. In that connection, the Italian Senate had before it a bill to establish a national disaster insurance fund. The background to the bill was the *post facto* cost of disasters, amounting since 1947 to roughly 140,000 billion lire—an amount which corresponded in scale to the costs reflected in the Secretary-General's report (E/1993/97). With regard to the latter, his delegation awaited the second annual report of the Scientific and Technical Committee.

38. It was clear why Italy had been a sponsor of the Decade since 1987. It was contributing financially, its latest contribution having been 400 million lire, and also in human resources and initiatives, some of which had been adopted in the programmes for the Decade. One such initiative was the publication of *STOP Disasters*, the Decade newsletter, in four languages and 16,000 copies. Others included three projects for risk monitoring and management in real time, the creation of a geographical database to permit the computer preparation of forecasting scenarios, and an emergency communication system integrated with computerized handling of assistance priorities and international response. In addition an international seminar had been organized by the Italian Space Agency with the Decade secretariat and had iden-

tified the space-based technology available for disaster reduction.

39. Mr. HUMMON (United States of America) said that the international community rightly devoted a great deal of attention to natural disasters, with their toll in lives, financial and material losses, and adverse effects on development. Much could be done to promote preparedness, for example through adequate training and the establishment of early warning systems. The Secretary-General's report (E/1993/97) drew attention to the efforts to enhance the capacity for preparedness and response, with the collaboration of WHO, WMO, UNICEF, FAO and other agencies as well as non-governmental organizations and national authorities. The subject was clearly being studied much more closely, with some successes such as the Southern African drought emergency operation in which the countries of the region had collaborated with DHA, WFP and donors in successfully averting a potential tragedy.

40. He wished to make two observations concerning the Secretary-General's report. His delegation noted the further integration of efforts with the work of DHA, whose role must be further stressed, since improved co-ordination was essential. After a rather difficult beginning, the Department was clearly growing in effectiveness, and should be given strong international support.

41. In respect of the relationship to development, his delegation felt that the report should have contained more reference to the participation of donors, the World Bank and regional banks. It was important to develop the concept of the continuum to sustainable development. Prevention and follow-up were parts of the development process. Many spheres could be cited, such as food production, environmental protection and drought prevention.

42. His delegation expressed its thanks to the Government of Japan for its offer to host the Conference to be held at Yokohama in May 1994.

43. Mr. BENMOUSSA (Morocco) regretted the delays in circulating the relevant documentation, at Geneva, in New York and elsewhere, and especially the late arrival of the information annexed to the Secretary-General's report (E/1993/97). The delays might give a false impression of indifferent support for the Decade by delegations. It also deprived delegations of an adequate opportunity to consult their authorities and prepare statements. He also recalled that Morocco was one of the first to sponsor the initial resolutions which had led to the proclamation of the International Decade and the International Framework of Action for the Decade.

44. It was often overlooked that natural disasters could be a part of, or possibly provoke, other calamities, such as a reported earth tremor in central Italy, not far from a nuclear power installation, with the potential risk of a catastrophe on a scale 12 times that of Chernobyl. It was important to bear in mind the consequences of the devel-

oped and developing countries' differing response capacities to disasters; a volcanic eruption in the United States in 1983 had caused 57 deaths, while the death-toll from a similar eruption in Colombia the following year had been roughly 23,000.

45. There were no longer grounds for saying that the world could do little or nothing in the face of natural disasters. As the Secretary-General's report showed, advances in science and technology had made possible great advances in averting and mitigating disasters. In Japan, for example, landslides were no longer the threat that they once had been. His delegation strongly supported the idea of developing a disaster-prevention policy, supported *inter alia* by studies at the national level. The aim should be, at least, to develop effective means of forecasting and of alleviating impact. Science and technology should play an important role in concerted international efforts to that end, through measures such as warning systems and standards for hazard-resistant structures.

46. Despite the action taken for the International Decade, under General Assembly resolutions 44/236 and 46/149, as well as in humanitarian assistance under resolution 46/182, a number of regional meetings which had helped to raise the awareness of Governments, and the measures being taken by ACC to promote project integration, much remained to be done.

47. With regard to the 12-point Plan of Action outlined in the annex to the Secretary-General's report, his delegation had four basic observations. First, with regard to national committees, national bodies should be closely associated with international efforts to implement Agenda 21. Every effort should be made to enhance coherence and coordination, bearing in mind the basic goal of sustainable development. Secondly, there must be effective coordination of all bilateral and multilateral aid, bearing in mind the need to reduce, as far as possible, the cost burden on the developing countries, which they could not shoulder alone. Thirdly, his delegation attached the utmost importance to a joint meeting of the Special High-Level Council and the Scientific and Technical Committee, with the participation of the relevant development organizations, with a view to aligning means and ends. Fourthly, disaster prevention projects should be automatically eligible for funding from the Global Environmental Facility.

48. It was important to ensure the participation of peoples in all activities in pursuit of the aims of the Decade. Banks and international financial institutions must also play their part.

49. His delegation welcomed the Government of Japan's offer to host the 1994 Conference and would contribute to the deliberations, at the General Assembly's forthcoming session, on preparations for that event. In that connection, the preparatory committee could perhaps consist of two segments: one at government level, open to all Member States of the Organization, to define

rules and procedures; and a substantive segment, in which the Scientific and Technical Committee, outside experts, academic institutes and private-sector bodies could participate. An equitable share of resources should be earmarked for the Conference, whose successful outcome was the responsibility of all. After the disappointing performance recorded hitherto in implementing the Decade, and in view of the aims proclaimed by UNCED it was essential that political will should be combined with firm action, including the provision of adequate resources for scientific and technical measures such as the speedy establishment of an international database in the hands of DHA, to enable the Department to carry out its tasks effectively and make disaster prevention and preparation everywhere a priority issue. His delegation hoped that the 1994 Conference would make an effective contribution towards a safer world in the twenty-first century.

AGENDA ITEM 3

Operational activities for development (*continued**)

50. The PRESIDENT drew attention to the draft resolution entitled "Operational activities for development" (E/1993/L.28), which he had submitted to the Council at its 38th meeting. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Council wished to adopt the draft resolution.

It was so decided [resolution 1993/7].

51. The PRESIDENT said it was his understanding that a representative of the Secretariat wished to make an interpretative statement regarding the resolution.

52. Mr. HAEMMERLI (Department for Political Coordination and Sustainable Development), speaking on behalf of the United Nations system and with the full knowledge of the delegations most directly involved in the preparation of the draft resolution, said that the system welcomed the resolution as a reaffirmation of the Council's commitment to the system's role in the economic and social development field.

53. In both the formal and informal discussions delegations had recognized the progress reported to the Council in reaching common understanding on issues such as national execution, the programme approach and the preparation of country strategy notes. The system was fully committed to continuing its efforts to improve the effectiveness of operational activities and recognized the Council's desire to see those processes translated into coordinated results by the system, particularly at the field level. The United Nations system would need to continue to be fully responsive to the particular situation of each recipient country. As requested, the system would report to the Council in 1994 on that aspect.

54. A number of organizations of the system had raised the question of resource implications, particularly in connection with the provisions of paragraphs 7 and 12 of the resolution. They had noted that in a period of contracting resources for operational activities, there was little leeway to contribute resources to country-level coordination beyond currently planned and approved levels.

55. Those concerns had been brought to the attention of delegations involved in the preparation of the draft resolution and the delegations had provided explanations which had greatly facilitated a full understanding of the intention of the paragraphs in question. It was the understanding of the Secretariat and the United Nations system that there was no intention to request the contribution of additional resources to the office of the resident coordinator. The text left it to the organs of the United Nations system to decide the level and type of resources (not necessarily financial) provided to assist the functioning of the resident coordinator system. Those resources would consist in most cases of the active and full involvement of the United Nations organizations concerned in thematic and substantive working groups, and other activities at the country level which formed part of the resident coordinator system.

56. The United Nations system welcomed the attention given to the resource requirements of country-level coordination. The continuing effort to strengthen the resident coordinator system would involve steps to implement the provisions of subparagraphs 39 (d) and (g) of General Assembly resolution 47/199, widening of the pool of qualified development professionals eligible for appointment as UNDP resident representatives/resident coordinators and enhancing the authority of the resident coordinators. In strengthening the resident coordinator system, full use would be made of the existing resources of the United Nations system at the country level, which together constituted the underpinning of the resident coordinator system.

57. Mr. SLEEUWAGEN (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the European Community and its member States, welcomed the adoption of the draft resolution, which was a follow-up to General Assembly resolution 47/199 and reflected new elements that had arisen since the adoption of the General Assembly resolution.

58. With regard to Mr. Haemmerli's statement, it was the understanding of the members of the Community that nothing in the resolution obliged specialized agencies, funds or programmes to act in a way that was inconsistent with the decisions taken by their governing bodies or with the available level of resources.

59. With respect to the provision of resources mentioned in paragraphs 7 and 12 of the resolution, he noted that such support need not necessarily be financial. In any event, assistance could be provided only where resources were available.

* Resumed from the 38th meeting.

60. He recognized the importance many delegations attached to paragraphs 10 and 11 of the resolution. However, the effectiveness of implementation of General Assembly resolution 47/199 could not be judged by the resources devoted to the task by the United Nations system. The key issue was the impact the resources had in the field.

61. Mr. BARNETT (United Kingdom) said that his delegation welcomed the adoption of draft resolution E/1993/L.28.

62. His delegation had expected the Council to take up the item at the beginning of the meeting, but had acquiesced in the request to postpone consideration of the item until the Council had taken up the item on the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction. In that connection, he drew attention to the difficulties changes in the scheduling of items created for delegations when several meetings were being held simultaneously and hoped that efforts would be made in future to adhere to the order of the programme announced in the Journal.

63. The PRESIDENT regretted that the order of the items had had to be changed for reasons beyond his control and said that efforts would be made to avoid the recurrence of such situations in future.

AGENDA ITEM 4

Coordination questions (*continued**):

(e) Multisectoral collaboration on tobacco or health (*continued**)

64. Mrs. BIRGIN (Australia), introducing draft resolution E/1993/L.32 on behalf of the delegations of Canada, the United States of America and Australia, said that, in the English version, in paragraph 5, a semicolon should be inserted after the word "strategies" and the remainder of the sentence should be deleted. In paragraph 7, the words "been adversely affected by" should be replaced

by "decreased as a result of". Lastly, in paragraphs 4, 5, 8 and 9, the word "system" should be inserted after the words "United Nations".

65. The draft resolution recognized the problems some Governments faced in tackling the issues of tobacco consumption and production. Some nations earned significant foreign exchange from tobacco production, which also provided employment opportunities for their people. Other Governments received revenue benefits from taxation on the tobacco industry and on smokers. Consequently, the continued viability of the international tobacco industry or an evaluation of the significance of health issues were mainly matters of economics. Member States needed to weigh the apparent economic benefits of production against the economic cost of tobacco consumption. That could best be achieved through a multisectoral approach to tobacco issues.

66. The effectiveness of demand reduction problems in many developed countries demonstrated that severe economic dislocation might result in developing countries as global tobacco demand decreased if plans were not put into place to deal with supply issues. The illicit drug situation had shown that attempts to control supply were significantly less effective if demand remained high.

67. In the view of the sponsors there would be value in establishing a focal point within the United Nations to consider the multisectoral implications of tobacco consumption and production. Such a focus would provide an opportunity for the variety of issues to be considered and a negotiated strategy responding to concerns from all interests to be developed. The focal point would need to negotiate with relevant international organizations on the full range of socio-economic matters from identification of tobacco-related health and welfare costs to agricultural diversification, trade and employment and adopt appropriate strategies to address those issues.

68. The draft resolution recognized the need for all countries to take due account of the economic issues arising from reduced global demand and, where appropriate and possible, to assist in mitigating the problems.

* Resumed from the 32nd meeting.

The meeting rose at 5.25 p.m.