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PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 25th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Wednesday, 5 July 1995, at 10 a.m.

<u>President:</u>	Mr. KAMAL	(Pakistan)
later:	Mr. TEJERA-PARIS (Vice-President)	(Venezuela)
later:	Mr. KAMAL (President)	(Pakistan)

CONTENTS

DEVELOPMENT OF AFRICA, INCLUDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS NEW
AGENDA FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AFRICA IN THE 1990s (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.50 a.m.

DEVELOPMENT OF AFRICA, INCLUDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS NEW AGENDA FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AFRICA IN THE 1990s (agenda item 2) (continued) (E/1995/81 and 105)

Mr. de MARIA y CAMPOS (Director-General, United Nations Industrial Development Organization) said that, on the threshold of the twenty-first century, when new prospects for global production systems had emerged, Africa remained the economically least developed region of the world. Notwithstanding major efforts, supported by international assistance, to build capacity for sustained economic development, Africa's socio-economic progress was, despite some success stories, facing severe constraints, stemming inter alia from growing foreign indebtedness and low levels of direct foreign investment, only 2 per cent of which had gone to Africa in recent years, as compared with 60 per cent to Asia.

The most urgent need was to recognize the complex tasks ahead and support Africa's own efforts through efficient international cooperation, so as not simply to make well-meant hand-outs but to build viable, sustainable and competitive industrial structures, at the sectoral and macroeconomic levels, through Africa's private sector. The United Nations system should provide support through targeted technical cooperation, with a view to promoting African industry's full participation in an expanding global partnership.

To that end, industries would have to be helped to gain or regain viability and competitiveness, by means of restructuring and, where relevant, privatization; the overall industrial structure made more resilient and dynamic by the development of technology, skills and entrepreneurship; small industries promoted by means of networking and institution building; the support of Governments, the private sector and financial institutions for product investment coordinated; and energy efficiency and pollution prevention systematically improved.

The formulation of consistent industrial policies and institutional measures was of key importance. Though repeatedly overlooked, that point was crucial, as was shown by the many recent requests for UNIDO advisory services. The concern of the ministers making those requests was prompted by the new role of Governments in a period of private-sector development, deregulation, international-trade liberalization and growing world competition; the implications of the GATT agreements for Africa's industry were a case in

point. Together with UNCTAD, UNIDO was initiating a programme to assist African Governments in implementing strategies and measures to improve the competitiveness and quality of specific industrial subsectors.

At the Twelfth Conference of African Ministers of Industry, the participants had reaffirmed the central role of industry in the continent's socio-economic transformation, and had indicated mechanisms for future action. An associated forum, organized by UNIDO in close cooperation with UNDP, the African Business Round Table, OAU, ECA and the Government of Botswana, had addressed key aspects of private-sector development, and had produced a comprehensive series of recommendations, requiring the involvement of Governments, the private sector and multilateral organizations, and had adopted a follow-up mechanism. Even more significantly, private-sector participants were already engaging in industrial ventures among themselves, with a view to promoting some African "lions" for the future. In view of the recognition given, in that regard, by recent African conferences and forums to the crucial role of industrial development, it was surprising that the latter was not stressed in the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF).

If the United Nations system - whose available resources were currently stagnant - was to respond to the new challenges, it must engage the private sector more than hitherto, provide more support for the African banking sector, promote technical cooperation among the developing countries, and design more inter-agency programmes interlinking technical cooperation in various productive sectors with information, investment promotion, financing, training and other services, for which capacity-building was fundamental.

In addition, the various agencies, including the Bretton Woods institutions and bilateral agencies, must improve their coordination, perhaps by means of a completely new mechanism for field-office cooperation, and the international organizations would have to prove that their programmes were relevant, successful and cost-effective and ensure a flow of funds commensurate to their mandates.

Mr. SCHAEFER (Germany) said that, since the General Assembly's adoption of UN-NADAF, the world had witnessed increasing political and economic changes in Africa, as well as some deeply disquieting developments which had caused terrible sufferings, hunger and poverty, and had driven millions from their homes. Development in once-flourishing countries had been

set back by years, if not decades. His Government was providing humanitarian assistance, in order to alleviate hardship and save lives, but it was well aware that relief measures must lead to reconstruction and long-term development aid.

Money spent on humanitarian relief was no longer available for development, whether bilateral or within the United Nations system. For instance, German bilateral humanitarian aid in 1994/95, in connection with the Rwanda conflict, had amounted to some 157 million marks, roughly 122 million of which had been originally earmarked for development projects. Peace was a precondition for sound development and assistance was also part of a strategy to prevent conflicts. Moreover, respect for human rights was an indispensable prerequisite for political and economic development.

His Government attached the highest priority to the protection of human rights everywhere, not excluding societies that were still developing. African countries had committed themselves to that responsibility by the adoption of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. The right to development could not be based on the refusal of the individual's basic rights; every State was required to create the best development opportunities for its citizens. Consequently, States which had made tangible progress in the fields of democracy and human rights deserved special support.

Another basic prerequisite for Africa's successful development was its greater integration into the world economy; that implied the adaptation of domestic macroeconomic policies to the global economic process. In that regard, a favourable legal and administrative framework, and a well-functioning market, would enhance the development of entrepreneurship and of small and medium-sized businesses.

Germany would continue, both individually and in collaboration with its European Union partners, to contribute towards Africa's development. Roughly one third of its bilateral development assistance went to African countries. Since 1978, such assistance to the least developed countries (LDCs) had been exclusively in the form of grants, so as to avoid creating additional indebtedness. Africa, however, must rely increasingly on trade and investment in the development process. In 1994 alone, Germany had imported goods worth more than US\$ 9 billion from Africa, and its trade with Africa was more or less in balance. In fact, German imports from sub-Saharan Africa in 1994 had exceeded its exports to that region. In the same year, German companies'

direct investment in Africa had amounted to nearly \$60 million, and their accumulated investment by 1993 was almost \$2.5 billion. Other regions had shown how an investment-friendly climate could attract even more capital.

Since 1978, Germany had released LDCs and other highly-indebted poor countries in sub-Saharan Africa from ODA debts amounting to over 9 billion marks, (about \$6 billion). As the second largest creditor in the Paris Club, it welcomed the latter's initiative to assist the poorest countries in reducing their debts, and urged full and constructive implementation of the existing instruments, including the Naples terms.

He appealed to the representatives of African Governments to unite in their efforts towards peaceful and sustainable development in Africa, taking into account the multidimensional approach stressed, inter alia, by the Secretary-General in his report (E/1995/81).

Mr. WOHLFART (Luxembourg) said that, while the world had welcomed the political progress made in Namibia and South Africa in recent years, economic, democratic and social development had been inadequate in many parts of Africa, despite the efforts of a number of countries. The world had made unprecedented material strides in the second half of the nineteenth century but its wealth was very unequally shared and the gulf in average per capita income between the industrialized and the African countries had continued to widen in recent years. Consequently, the campaign against underdevelopment and poverty was still as big a challenge as ever to the world community.

His Government had studied with great interest the report of the Secretary-General (E/1995/81) and welcomed its focus on the major problems besetting Africa, including the new wave of instability caused by conflicts, war, famine and migration, the adverse consequences of which affected the LDCs in particular and made any steps towards their lasting development impossible. A further burden was imposed by natural disasters such as erosion, drought and desertification, leading to food scarcity and yet more enforced migration.

Despite the general rise in world public-health indicators, not least those for Africa, over the past quarter of a century, including improved health and sanitary services and lower infant mortality rates, medical standards in the LDCs still remained very low. The need for continued international solidarity in that regard had been reflected in a recent meeting, held in Luxembourg, concerning the campaign against tropical diseases; the relevant WHO report rightly pointed out that poverty was a major

factor in health degradation. The population explosion in Africa in recent years had exacerbated the problem, making it of vital importance to implement the Programme of Action adopted by the International Conference on Population and Development.

International assistance was needed to supplement the African nations' own efforts to face such huge challenges; unfortunately, however, it had stagnated and even declined in recent years. Further efforts were therefore needed from all, with a view to promoting lasting development in those countries, which should be encouraged, inter alia, to develop the requisite stable political and economic systems essential to development.

His Government attached great importance to cooperation with the African continent, and its own bilateral cooperation measures focused chiefly on the sub-Saharan LDCs. In 1994, over 60 per cent of its bilateral assistance had been to those countries, as had over 34 per cent of the food aid it provided.

Luxembourg was already complying with the request embodied in UN-NADAF concerning the provision of financial resources and was devoting roughly 0.4 per cent of its GDP to assistance for the developing countries. It hoped to attain the 0.7 per cent target by the year 2000. As in the past, African countries would be the main beneficiaries.

The African Governments themselves had to do their share, however, by focusing their efforts on economic and political reform. Such reforms, including the promotion of and respect for human rights, were vital prerequisites to equitable and lasting development.

There was a growing awareness, at both national and international levels, of the complex interrelations between population growth, economic development and environmental concerns, and a recognition that trade and exchange liberalization measures, while positive in themselves, must not be allowed to marginalize the poorest countries. There was thus a new political, economic and cultural environment, in which it was recognized that the interrelating of concerns such as poverty, natural resources management, trade, debt alleviation and the control of epidemics should be among the priorities recognized by all nations.

His delegation fully supported such new development strategies, and felt that the importance of international assistance to poorer countries in overcoming their problems must be brought home to world public opinion.

Africa's development should thus remain one of the United Nations' priorities, since a deteriorating situation in that continent would have adverse consequences for all.

Mr. TOYAD (Malaysia) said that he welcomed the Secretary-General's report (E/1995/81), and associated himself with the call for more effective action to address the problems of Africa. That continent, so rich in natural resources and with such an enormous potential for development, was currently suffering from neglect, marginalization and underdevelopment, compounded in some cases by civil strife.

In many ways the situation had actually worsened, the impetus for growth having been inadequate because Africa's political system was in a process of consolidation. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Africa's GDP growth rate had declined to 1.6 per cent in the period 1990-1994, as compared to 2.6 per cent in 1975-1989, far below the 6 per cent target set in UN-NADAF. Serious problems associated with underdevelopment, such as poverty, starvation and disease, continued to plague most of Africa, and the sub-Saharan region continued to decline.

Africa's external debt was still growing, extreme poverty was still rising, and the continent remained economically backward. Most African economies had not diversified. According to the UNIDO report on 1994, the manufacturing and processing sectors were receding. Africa was also grossly overburdened with debt-servicing, which drained the resources that could have been applied to investment, and all too often the conditions attached to debt solutions were not in the recipient economies' best interests.

There must be a pragmatic approach to strengthening the economic and social infrastructures, and the public and private sectors must work together to promote investment ventures. Africa could hardly be expected to shoulder its environmental responsibilities in full if even the most basic development problems could not be effectively addressed. The choices were, however, limited. The African Development Bank was in difficulties, support for the African Development Fund was not yet forthcoming, ODA flows were declining and foreign direct investment (FDI) was becoming scarce. The diversion of resources to Eastern Europe was compounding the problem and studies indicated that Africa might be the loser in the new international trading regime.

The international community should take serious note of Africa's problems. If a Marshall Plan could be implemented to reconstruct Europe after the Second World War, an effective solution could surely be found for Africa, given the political will; UN-NADAF was a good framework for that purpose. A concerted effort by the international community working in partnership with the Africans to find a solution, was required. A progressive Africa would be better equipped to contribute to global progress and fulfil its international obligations and assisting it, therefore, should not be viewed as a burden.

Malaysia - a small country - fully supported the United Nations' initiative in Africa, including peace-keeping. The Secretary-General had rightly said, in his statement to the Council the previous day, that there could be no peace without development and no sustainable development without peace. Because it shared that view, Malaysia had been involved in most of the peace-keeping missions in Africa. As a developing country, it shared its experience with Africa through the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme, which emphasized human-resources development. Many African officials had participated in that Programme, particularly in the areas of macroeconomic planning, financial management and FDI. As for the private sector, Malaysia was actively involved in projects through various joint ventures. It was committed to a closer collaboration between the public and private sectors, and its programme would see greater involvement of both private sectors, the Malaysian and the African.

Mrs. FERRERO-WALDNER (Observer for Austria) said that Africa, in the mid-1990s, was at a turning point in its history. Over the past 30 years, the continent had been characterized by high rates of population growth, stagnant or declining food production and falling standards of living. On the other hand, the abolition of apartheid in South Africa and democratic reform in a number of other countries had given rise to a rapidly developing civil society and opened up new perspectives for political and economic development. Several African countries had also made encouraging progress in terms of sound economic management and African Governments had maintained their determination to strengthen regional cooperation with a view to economic integration.

African development required international understanding of and support for African efforts and the international community had repeatedly committed itself to that objective. Her Government attached particular importance to the development of Africa, a region that constituted the focus of its

bilateral cooperation. An Austrian foreign policy initiative "Africa 2000", for sub-Saharan African countries, had been drawn up in late 1993 and was being implemented since early 1994. From 1 January 1995, Austria had participated fully in the development assistance mechanisms of the European Union, including the Lomé Convention, and would participate in the Eighth European Development Fund; its engagement in Africa would thus increase considerably.

Assistance to development in Africa should, to be fruitful, be supported by a new impetus, and her delegation wished to suggest a few principles that the Council might consider. In the first place, countries with a stable and democratic political system and sound economic policy should receive full economic support from the international community though that focus on poles of growth and stability did not mean that other countries should be abandoned to their fate.

Secondly, development cooperation in all African countries should be based on the principle of sustainable development. Despite a low level of industrialization, the African continent was subject to one of the most serious ecological threats of the planet: the loss of arable land through desertification.

Thirdly, in crisis areas and in countries with ongoing civil wars, the role of the United Nations should have a clearer profile. The Organization should not limit its efforts to sending humanitarian assistance, sometimes under armed escort, to countries where the conflicting partners were receiving arms deliveries in a general climate of benign neglect. While the suffering of innocent victims of civil strife deserved all the relief that the Organization could provide, humanitarian assistance should, wherever possible, be part of a "package" of measures aimed at political solutions and be integrated into a concept of mid-term rehabilitation of economic and social structures.

Peace and security, economic growth, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and social justice should all be constituents of an integrated vision of a sustainable people-centred development. In view of the ongoing globalization of economies and social situations, the need for a partnership for development was evident. International cooperation for development was thus merely the expression of recognized mutual interest.

Mr. NAIDOO (South Africa) said that, in keeping with the fundamental changes within his country and its role in the international community, its participation in the various international forums, including the Organization of African Unity (OAU), reflected the fact that it was an integral part of the African continent. As such, a major source for its own policy formulation must be the African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programmes for Socio-Economic Recovery and Transformation (AAF-SAP), produced by the Economic Commission for Africa in 1989. Above all, his Government's position on major international issues would reflect the important development approaches and democratic processes of participation, transparency and accountability embodied in its Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP).

South Africa was concerned about the debt burden facing many of its neighbours and his delegation would support any initiative that sought to approach the problem systematically and comprehensively. It took the view that ODA was a temporary bridging measure to help Africa recover from its current crisis, not a permanent measure, and should be a catalyst for self-sustaining development and foreign direct investment (FDI). ODA recipient countries had an obligation to guarantee democracy, promote the quality of life of the poor and ensure clean administration. His delegation thus supported the many appeals for greater self-reliance in Africa, endorsed the Group of 77's call for a United Nations-sponsored South-South conference to encourage cooperation and reduce dependence on aid and other financial flows from the North, and supported the 20-20 proposal, whereby 20 per cent of the budgets of the developing countries and 20 per cent of the industrial countries' ODA would be allocated to human priority expenditure.

His delegation was very conscious of the inadequacy of international response to the destabilizing impact of international "market forces" on weak and vulnerable economies and urged the developed countries to maintain their aid and commodity-support programmes as long as they were needed in Africa. It also called upon the international community to support diversification away from commodity production, reorientation of African production towards domestic food requirements and processing industries and intra-African trade. One of the biggest weaknesses experienced in South Africa's own RDP was the lack of management capacity to improve the productivity of public and private investment, a problem also encountered elsewhere.

Most capital movements in the contemporary world were speculative operations in money markets and portfolio investments that contributed to the vulnerability of the African economies. African economic development required stable, long-term productive FDI, which would help to increase and improve production in and between all sectors and be accompanied by the transfer of technology and improved technical and management skills.

The trends in the trade strategies of some developed countries and the growing recourse to the creation of powerful trade blocs contradicted their insistence on free-trade policies in the poorest countries and exacerbated trade imbalances and global inequalities. The RDP stressed diversification of South Africa's production and trade relations, particularly towards southern African regional markets, while ensuring competitiveness in the international markets in targeted areas and not relying solely on trade concessions from abroad.

His Government was committed to participating in the lobbies and caucuses of countries affected negatively by the new trade regime. It supported a targeted and phased approach towards tariff reductions as part of broader programmes of industrial restructuring to enhance production and productivity as the most effective basis for international trade competitiveness. The RDP also called for specific legislation to protect workers' rights and institute mechanisms which strengthened the bargaining relationship between employers and workers.

His delegation supported plans for a review of the current functioning of United Nations structures and the democratization of all United Nations bodies, noted with concern the continuing civil strife and breakdown of law and order in various parts of Africa, and urged all international aid/trade partners to provide support to regional cooperation and integration in southern Africa. In addition, it appealed to Africa, and to the developing world in general, to adopt decisive measures for the attainment of the goals of the World Summit for Social Development.

Mr. KHANDOHYIY (Ukraine) said that the collapse of economic aspirations and the lack of sustainable development were the sources of the numerous conflicts that had been destabilizing the entire African region. The persistent development crisis in Africa was one of the main problems facing the United Nations system and the international community as a whole. The food problem in Africa remained unsolved and the need for food supplies from

abroad had increased significantly. Most African States still had great difficulty in servicing their foreign debt. Weak infrastructure, low industrial production and dependence on imports were fast becoming insurmountable obstacles to the achievement of sustainable economic development.

African development was not only a challenge to the population of the continent but also a serious test of the international system of cooperation for development. The failure of efforts to improve living conditions there was a serious moral and political setback for the international community.

Creation of a stable political system and ensuring security and stability were the main prerequisites for the long-term sustainable development of the African continent. The international community should thus give more constructive support to the processes of political and socio-economic transformation in the African countries, assist them to overcome their deep structural crisis, help diversify the basis of production and employment, priority being given to the development of the private sector, and work out a stable macroeconomic policy. In that connection, it should not be forgotten that an improved economic situation in Africa would much enhance the entire system of international economic relations and open up new prospects for economic growth elsewhere.

However, the efforts made to date had failed to match the magnitude of the problems facing Africa. Since the United Nations operational bodies and specialized agencies were the most competent to settle the various problems of a socio-economic nature, they should coordinate the activities of the entire international community in the field of sustainable development in Africa. For its part, the Council should retain the role of global coordinator and act as a catalyst for those efforts.

The lack of trained personnel and relevant institutional structures for the implementation of development programmes at the country level was one of the major problems facing Africa. The development of human resources and strengthening of the intellectual potential to provide politico-economic reforms should thus become an important part of United Nations activities to promote the development of Africa.

Unfortunately, the continuing economic crisis in his own country did not permit it to participate in the direct financing of African development programmes. However, since it had the necessary scientific, technical and

industrial potential, experience and technologies, it could participate in implementing programmes and projects carried out in the developing countries, including those in Africa. His Government was ready and willing to discuss with the representatives of interested countries the forms such mutually beneficial cooperation might take.

Mr. DLAMINI (Observer for Swaziland) said that Africa was facing enormous problems and was the only region in the world to have experienced continuous stagnation and decline since 1980. In fact, in the 1980s, nine African countries had left the middle-income group of developing countries to become members of the group of least developed countries (LDCs). In 1993, of the 47 LDCs in the world, Africa had possessed 33. It was the only region in the world in which poverty would increase in the 1990s. Against that background, an urgent solution had to be found to salvage the situation through global partnership and solidarity, since it was not only a challenge to the Africa people but also an important test of international development cooperation.

The African countries would have to diversify their economies, particularly their primary commodities, with a view to modernizing their production, distribution and marketing systems. They also needed to enhance their productivity and increase their export earnings. Many African countries were dependent upon a limited number of commodities for their export earnings and that dependency prevented them from reaping the benefits of the Uruguay Round of trade negotiations. For its part, the international community could materially assist the diversification process by establishing a commodity diversification fund, which would enable Africa to export value-added commodities and thus enhance its sustainable development.

The heavy burden of debt and debt servicing posed serious constraints for the African countries. Meagre resources, that could otherwise have been allotted to development projects, were diverted to external destinations to meet their financial obligations. There, too, the international community had a vital role to play in finding effective, development-oriented and durable solutions. The question of increased financial resource flows to Africa was also of great importance, and the international community could help to ensure an increase in such flows which were badly needed to regenerate the growth and

sustainable development of the African economies. He thus urged those States that had reaffirmed their commitment to devote 0.7 per cent of their gross national product to ODA, and 0.15 per cent to assisting the LDCs, to implement their undertakings as soon as possible

Referring to some events that had given impetus to the common endeavour to combat the African crisis, he drew attention to the 1993 Tokyo International Conference on African Development at which Africa's multilateral and bilateral development partners had vowed to create an enabling environment for training, retraining and the effective utilization of human resources. In yet another encouraging development, the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) and the Committee on Programme and Coordination (CPC) had addressed the issue of African economic recovery and development and placed it high on their agenda.

His delegation also commended the efforts of the Office of the Special Coordinator, under the supervision of the Under-Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, to continue providing policy advice and leadership on African development issues. In that regard, it called on the international community to assist in the enhancement of such efforts and said that Africa had a great potential for development if it was given the necessary assistance.

Mrs. OGATA (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) said that the problems of development and displacement were closely linked in Africa, where UNHCR was assisting nearly 7 million refugees and almost 5 million internally displaced persons and returnees. The situation in the Great Lakes region remained extremely fragile, and refugee flows continued in other parts of the continent.

The picture was not all bleak, however. Five years previously, approximately one third of all African refugees came from four countries in southern Africa, but, thanks to statesmanly leadership, those refugees had returned home to Namibia, South Africa and Mozambique - the return of 1.6 million persons to the last-mentioned country being the largest ever African repatriation operation carried out by UNHCR - and plans were currently being made for the voluntary repatriation of some 300,000 Angolans.

The scale of both repatriation and possible future outflows would be largely determined by the way in which African leaders and the international community addressed the political, social and economic challenges confronting Africa. She had, accordingly, urged the OAU Council of Ministers, at its

recent meeting, to adopt a comprehensive and concerted strategy on refugees and displaced persons that would address the causes of refugee flows and protect and assist the victims. The Bujumbura conference had endeavoured to provide such an approach to the humanitarian problem in the Great Lakes region.

Economic development had a key role to play in any comprehensive approach to Africa's humanitarian crisis, whether by preventing refugee problems from arising, mitigating the adverse impact on the development of countries of asylum or resolving refugee problems. Poverty, environmental degradation, population pressures and competition for scarce resources often intensified ethnic, social, political and religious tensions, provoking violence that led to refugee flows. Economic development had to go hand in hand with political efforts to promote respect for human rights, the rule of law and accountable governance.

The steady decline in development assistance to Africa was not only discreditable but also short-sighted. In an increasingly interdependent world, apparently remote problems could rapidly become domestic ones, for example, when political insecurity and economic instability led to large-scale population movements. The development of countries of asylum, such as Tanzania and Zaire, which had their own daunting problems, could not fail to be adversely affected, and they could meet their obligations to refugees only if they had the financial support of the international community. International refugee assistance alone, however, could not compensate for the detrimental impact of refugees on the host country, and increased development assistance from the international community was sorely needed.

While acknowledging the burden imposed on countries of asylum and the generosity that they had shown, she was obliged, however, to express her concern at the more restrictive policies and practices which some countries were adopting. She appealed in the strongest possible terms to Governments to continue receiving refugees and providing them with the safety and protection they needed, in accordance with internationally recognized principles.

The situation in the Great Lakes region was a constant reminder both of the threat posed to regional peace and security by the unresolved refugee problem, and of the dependence of successful voluntary repatriation on political action to achieve peace, and economic action to rehabilitate war-torn societies.

Refugees often returned to countries in a process of profound change to find their villages devastated by war, their homes destroyed, schools and hospitals in ruins, and roads and fields heavily mined. In those circumstances, the reintegration of returnees was a major challenge and, under its mandate, UNHCR could not do much to assist. In Mozambique it had set up small-scale quick-impact projects to promote the self-sufficiency of returnees, but such measures fell far short of meeting overall needs, and more comprehensive, timely and sustained efforts were needed.

While appreciating the work of the development agencies and financial institutions, she felt she must press for new means and methods to respond faster and earlier to rehabilitation needs. Development should, wherever possible, be launched simultaneously with the provision of humanitarian relief and in a complementary and mutually supportive manner. Development and rehabilitation resources must also be provided on a continuing and sustained basis.

The costs of meeting the development and rehabilitation needs of Africa were enormous, but the cost of instability, conflict and displacement was still greater. Avoiding that greater cost would require both political will and international solidarity. She called once again upon African leaders to ensure good governance and respect for the rights and dignities of their citizens, and upon the international community to assist the countries of asylum and the countries of origin in reintegrating and rehabilitating returnees. Only by such joint efforts could the fragile opportunities of the present be turned into solid foundations for a better future.

Mr. ABUBAKAR (Nigeria), having endorsed the statement by the representative of the Philippines on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that, while other continents continued to record modest growth, Africa receded further into poverty and marginalization. The issues raised in UN-NADAF were the core areas namely, debt, financial flows, trade, commodity diversification and industrialization, which needed to be urgently addressed if African development was to be put on a firm footing.

Trade was an engine of growth and the African countries had entered into trade agreements with their partners in industrialized countries, but the preferences they had enjoyed had been eroded by the agreements concluding the Uruguay Round. Commodity-producing and food-importing countries were

projected to lose up to \$2.6 billion a year during the initial phase of implementation of the agreements, and urgently needed the assistance of the international community.

In the early years of their independence, African countries had invested heavily in human and institutional development, but growth in those areas had been arrested by structural adjustment measures, resulting in increasing illiteracy and institutional decay. In spite of their efforts to increase the resources devoted to education and capacity-building, investments were insignificant when compared with needs. They called on the international community, therefore, to provide training and financial assistance and to undertake joint ventures to enhance African capacity and to build institutions for social and economic development.

The international community could also play a useful role by encouraging regionally-based projects in fulfilment of the regional-cooperation components of the Lagos Plan of Action and the Abuja Treaty. African countries were also conscious of the advantages of cooperation with other developing countries and had been sharing their experiences and utilizing existing forums for cooperation. Such cooperative efforts should be accelerated and consolidated and his delegation called upon the United Nations system to provide the necessary impetus for further South-South cooperation.

With the support of the United Nations and the international community in general, Africa could overcome the problems of poverty, illiteracy, hunger and environmental degradation which were impeding its growth and development. The task itself was a challenge to Africa and the provision of adequate assistance was a challenge to the international community.

Mr. Tejera-París (Venezuela), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Mr. SMITH (Canada) said that the critical issue of development in Africa had been a preoccupation of the recent Summit of the Group of Seven major industrialized countries (G-7) and he intended to outline some of the ideas that had emerged from that meeting.

There was a widening gap between Africa - particularly sub-Saharan Africa - and the rest of the world in respect of development which it was imperative to close. While that task was primarily Africa's own responsibility, Africa's commitment to its development should be met by a sense of shared responsibility and full partnership. His own Government certainly intended to do its part. Agreement on a shared agenda for enhanced

policy and programme coordination between the African countries and their partners, including multilateral institutions and bilateral donors was essential.

His Government was ready to help strengthen African democratic institutions and support the protection and promotion of human rights, as well as OAU initiative in the field of conflict prevention, and would be hosting a conference of French-speaking countries in September 1995 on that subject, designed to prepare concrete proposals for the La Francophonie summit meeting later in the year.

A second objective was the reduction of poverty by addressing the underlying causes, which meant investing in primary health care, nutrition, basic education, water and sanitation, housing and family planning. The burden of poverty fell disproportionately on women, and the feminization of poverty was thus an essential element of any anti-poverty programme. His Government would ensure that 25 to 30 per cent of its bilateral aid to Africa was invested in meeting basic human needs, in keeping with the 20-20 proposal discussed at Copenhagen. It intended to focus on the most vulnerable groups and to emphasize the participation of women as agents of development. The third issue was environment: desertification, soil depletion and problems of water supply were serious challenges in a number of regions and called for concerted international cooperation. Canada was optimistic about Africa's future and was committed to a continuing dialogue and development partnership, as was evidenced by its provision to Africa of some \$900 million per year in development assistance.

The economic marginalization of the poorest countries, especially in Africa, had been a major concern of the recent G-7 meeting, and the Summit had decided to make poverty the focus of its next meeting in 1996. The G-7 had taken the view that sustainable development was the primary means of achieving a higher quality of life for all people and had identified it as the central goal for the multilateral institutions, which could make a decisive contribution by helping countries to adopt policies conducive to that end, such as the encouragement of a healthy private sector, public participation, public accountability, the rule of law and respect for democracy and human rights.

The G-7 meeting had urged that greater priority be given to the poorest countries in the allocation of concessional resources by multilateral institutions, especially in Africa. It had also urged institutions to devote more effort to basic social programmes, to which the recipient countries must also be committed. It had acknowledged its responsibility to show leadership in improving the environment and had emphasized the importance of the Rio de Janeiro commitments and the need to review and strengthen them as appropriate. It had thus undertaken to work with others to fulfil existing obligations under the climate-change convention and the biodiversity work programme. Priority had also been accorded to work on forests, fish and oceans. Within the United Nations system, it had advocated a clearer delineation of mandates between the Commission on Sustainable Development and the United Nations Environment Programme.

The role and functioning of the Bretton Woods institutions in relation to the United Nations system had also been considered. The institutions had a particular role to play in promoting macroeconomic stability, supporting favourable policy environments and mobilizing development resources.

The meeting had recognized the unique roles that the United Nations could play, for example, as a forum for building consensus on global priorities; acting as an advocate for core values, such as development and human rights; and providing a neutral framework for development and humanitarian action. It had, however, been concerned that the United Nations economic and social sectors were not equipped to respond adequately to the challenges of the twenty-first century.

One priority was to complete the agenda for development, and the hope had been expressed that it would set out a fresh approach to international cooperation, drawing on the human-centred vision that was emerging from the current series of major conferences. The Group intended to strive with others to ensure that the agenda clearly defined the role of United Nations institutions and initiated the necessary institutional realignment.

Improving the capacity of the Economic and Social Council to play its internal coordinating role was also a key objective. Closer cooperation with the specialized agencies was an area where a strengthened Council could make a contribution, and the current session was, of course, a good opportunity to set that process in train.

Efficiency and effectiveness were also a concern. The meeting believed that small programmes doing similar work should be consolidated and that the mandates of larger bodies should be re-examined to ensure that they remained relevant.

The meeting considered that the international financial institutions and the institutions of the United Nations system could work more effectively and with more complementarity to achieve the goals of the international community particularly in the interests of Africa and other poor areas. In general, it had expressed a sharp sense of the need for partnership with all countries in achieving the necessary renewal of institutions.

Mr. PATEL (Observer for Zambia) reaffirmed his delegation's support for UN-NADAF whereby the African countries had committed themselves to review their economic policies, enhance subregional and regional cooperation, encourage democratization and good governance, and secure peace on the continent. As the Executive Director of UNICEF had said, the world, the North in particular, had a moral debt to Africa accumulated during centuries of injustice, and repayment was long overdue.

Since achieving its independence, his country had, under autocratic rule and gross economic mismanagement, accumulated a debt of \$7.3 billion - a process to which the Bretton Woods institutions and many bilateral agencies had contributed. It had subsequently committed itself to a new economic agenda and was creating a framework for economic growth and investment through its programme of economic liberalization and reform.

In spite of the progress made, however, the vast majority of its people - 5.5 out of 8.6 million - faced absolute poverty. The social impact of the structural adjustment programme was severe, and the international donor community and financial institutions had not matched their words with adequate finance to cushion the impact on the poor. His Government estimated that, adhering to the International Monetary Fund and World Bank programmes, it would take 50 or more years to build the necessary socio-economic infrastructure and facilities to sustain a 3.5 per cent population growth rate and pay off the \$7 billion owed to the international community.

What his country, and all Africa, needed was a "Marshall Plan". It was increasingly difficult for countries like Zambia to sustain democratization and economic liberalization when over 60 per cent of their budget was foreign financed and over 40 per cent was used for debt servicing. Whilst

appreciating the assistance received and understanding the pressures exerted by taxpayers in the donor countries, the Africans did not wish to remain perpetual beggars, and it was almost impossible for them to reverse economic decline while carrying a debt burden that kept Africa at the mercy of the North, and of the G-7 countries, in particular.

Africa was, indeed, a test case for the United Nations. The reasons why it had lagged behind in the process of development made a long and sad story, laden with hypocrisy. Yet many developed countries remained indifferent to African needs. The period during which most African countries had pursued socialist programmes under autocratic Governments, aided and abetted by the developed countries, had come to an end. A change, similar to that in Eastern Europe, had occurred as a result of the demands and frustrations of their peoples, not of their Governments. The countries of Africa could succeed only if the developed countries paid them the same attention as they did to the former Communist countries of Eastern Europe. The IMF and World Bank programmes needed a truly human face. Africa had accepted the challenge, the question was whether the developed countries would do the same on Africa's behalf.

Mr. KHURSHID (India) said that the deteriorating economic situation of Africa had occupied a prominent place on the agenda of the United Nations since the early 1980s. India's ties with the continent dated back to the years of its independence movement. It was on African soil that Mahatma Gandhi had started his non-violent, passive resistance movement against racial discrimination and exploitation as a precursor to India's struggle against colonialism. India had thus felt its own freedom incomplete until all the nations of Africa had been emancipated from foreign rule.

Its support for the African liberation movements and the subsequent efforts of African countries to achieve economic development were, therefore, rooted in history and in its commitment to the fundamental principles of political morality. That support had taken some tangible forms: for instance, it was at his delegation's initiative that the Africa Fund had been established by the non-aligned movement.

The distressing symptoms of growing economic crisis in Africa were self-evident. Since the early 1980s, various United Nations agencies had been giving dire warnings that the African economies were faced with stagnation, or even decline from the already unacceptably low levels of income and output.

Food shortages, deteriorating health conditions, various types of emergencies and a rise in the frequency and intensity of epidemics had been forecast, and it had been repeatedly emphasized that such a situation could not be allowed to continue.

Those prophecies had been fulfilled and, in addition, the problem of external indebtedness had adversely affected development efforts, while growing problems of urban unemployment and infrastructural decay had further darkened that unwholesome economic scenario. Alarmed by the continuing adverse performances of the African economies, the international community had first adopted the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development (UNPAAERD) and then the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF). Nevertheless, economic recovery still appeared remote and elusive.

There was a consensus that the considerable investment-savings gap must be bridged by external resources, and UN-NADAF recommended a minimum annual level of \$30 billion in net ODA in 1992, if an average annual growth of real GNP of at least 6 per cent until the year 2000 was to be achieved. Those figures were far from being attained. The assessments in the Secretary-General's latest report (E/1995/81) indicated that the economic performance of the region had been sluggish in 1994, its share in world merchandise trade at 2.4 per cent being lower than in 1992, and the heavily indebted countries were still facing enormous payments difficulties.

Loud warning bells were sounding and their message was that the African continent would confront enormous perils and challenges in the years ahead. The ecological degradation which was constraining the long-term productive capability of Africa's farmlands, had to be reversed. Food-grains production would have to be raised from the current growth rate of approximately 1 per cent per year to at least 3 to 5 per cent, if the nutritional requirements of the growing population were to be met. That could be done. It had been achieved in India through the "green revolution" initiated in the late 1960s. Civic infrastructure had to be dramatically enhanced if current declines in many of the social development indicators, particularly in the fields of health, education and employment, were to be reversed.

India had sought to participate in Africa's economic endeavours. Under its Technical and Economic Cooperation Programme (ITEC) it had interacted with several African countries through technical assistance in the form of project execution, providing training facilities, carrying out feasibility studies, providing consultancy services, and organizing study visits. More than 20,000 persons, mainly from Africa, had been trained in India under ITEC. Further programmes of South-South cooperation in various areas, including new and renewable energy resources, biotechnology and gene banks, were also being coordinated by India on behalf of its fellow developing countries. Africa was the principal beneficiary and, in 1994-1995, some 60 per cent of ITEC technical assistance had gone to African countries.

Africa would require considerable support from the international community if it was to achieve its basic development goals. Economic reforms and structural adjustment programmes would have to be dovetailed with international support for environmental protection, the encouragement of agricultural and rural development, food security, investment promotion and the integration of population trends with development.

African economies would also need support in the form of additional resource flows, improved terms of trade for commodities, diversification of production and trade, and enhanced FDI. Debt reduction and rescheduling measures were also an essential part of that strategy.

African countries were aware that external assistance could at best only complement self-help and self-reliance. His delegation was confident, however, that a modern and vibrant African economy would one day be built by harnessing the resilience and inner strength of the continent. His Government was willing to continue its support and assistance in enlarging the African human-resource pool of essential skills and training.

What was clearly lacking for the attainment of the goals of UN-NADAF was not a vision or a set of plans and programmes but the will to translate them into reality. The Council's discussions and attention should, therefore, focus on specific steps towards the fulfilment of the international community's commitments and responsibility to its brethren in Africa.

Mr. Kamal (Pakistan) resumed the Chair.

Mr. FULCI (Observer for Italy) said that, over the last 50 years, the United Nations had played a major role in promoting peace, security, self-determination, fundamental rights and freedoms and economic and social

development. In the context of the ever-growing interdependence of nations, a just international economic order was a prerequisite for peace, security, stability and welfare. A consensus seemed to have emerged that the proper approach was sustainable, people-centred development, and UN-NADAF drew its inspiration therefrom.

Every effort should be made to focus international attention on Africa's demands for prosperity and security and to avoid marginalizing that continent. Experience suggested that equitable and environmentally sustainable growth required not only investment in human resources and basic infrastructure but also broad-based domestic commitment. The widespread political and economic liberalization over the last few years indicated that Africans were beginning to play an active part in their own development process. The emergence of a remarkable degree of freedom of association would not only contribute to domestic stability but would also strengthen regional economic integration by increasing the level of trade between neighbouring countries and opening up new investment opportunities. In addition, a commitment to and participation in political and economic reform would help the international community identify countries where scarce aid resources should be allocated.

Italy would continue to support sub-Saharan Africa: over half its total grant resources was committed to that region. That contribution was meant to assist the international fight against poverty, one of the main causes of the growing migration within developing countries and from them to the industrialized world. To that end, developing countries must be helped to strengthen their local institutions, foster local entrepreneurship and encourage broader public involvement in political and economic decision-making by giving local non-governmental organizations more of a say in development projects.

If one of his Government's cooperation priorities was support for regional integration, another was the achievement and maintenance of peace. It was willing to take action on the African continent whenever crises arise and its resources were being primarily channelled into emergency programmes to alleviate the most critical social situations and promote national reconciliation so that ex-combatants and refugees could be reinserted into society.

However, if there was no real commitment to building peace, there was little room for cooperation initiatives. Settling conflicts and reducing military expenditure in Africa must thus be the goal of everyone concerned. Consequently his country, like its partners in the European Union, welcomed the intention expressed by the Organization for African Unity (OAU) to take on a more direct role in preventing, managing and resolving conflicts on the continent. Assistance should be provided to enhance the peace-keeping capability of OAU, a process in which his Government was willing to participate.

Mr. BAYOMI (Egypt) said that the adoption of the topic "Development of Africa" for discussion at the Council's high-level segment was a judicious decision in the light of the complex problems facing the region, particularly the issues of global development and the continent's marginal presence therein, at a time when the international community was attempting to establish a new order. The features of that new order had not yet become apparent, and the African countries wanted to help ensure that it was just and effective.

Four years after the adoption of UN-NADAF and a year before its mid-term review, it had become clear that most of the efforts to solve African economic and development problems at the regional and international levels had been half-hearted and their results had been very mixed. His delegation thus welcomed the decision by ACC to establish a high-level steering committee, co-chaired by the Executive Secretary of ECA and the Administrator of UNDP, and was looking forward to its suggestions for the implementation of UN-NADAF. The Secretary-General had rightly stressed in ACC the need to develop further joint practical initiatives with clear targets in order to maximize the support provided by the United Nations system to Africa's development.

Primary responsibility for implementing UN-NADAF rested with the African countries themselves. They had already made great sacrifices to deal with such problems as poverty and unemployment, the control of diseases and epidemics, especially AIDS, the flows of refugees and displaced persons, and the need for economic reforms and structural-adjustment measures. They had also taken bold initiatives to liberalize international trade through their effective participation in the Uruguay Round, even though they had little to gain therefrom.

They had also made great efforts to achieve regional economic integration, as reflected in the conclusion of the Abuja Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community in 1994 and the adoption of the Cairo Agenda for Action of the Council of Ministers of OAU in March 1995. The Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, adopted at Cairo in 1993, could conserve considerable resources currently being squandered on conflicts which could then be allocated to resettle the over 7.5 million refugees in the region and to implement UN-NADAF. To that end, all regional organizations, including OAU and ECA, should play an important role and the African Development Bank should be strengthened as a regional development financing institution.

For its part, the international community should increase its official development assistance for Africa at both the multilateral and bilateral levels and should seek radical solutions to the external debt problem. It should convene an international conference for that purpose.

He supported the proposals in the Secretary-General's report (E/1995/81) aimed at alleviating the African debt burden and creating a favourable environment for foreign investment within a framework of partnership beneficial to all parties.

Modernization of the production, distribution and marketing systems in Africa and improvement of productivity required diversification of the African economies, with particular regard to commodities. Stability must be achieved in export earnings, which must likewise be increased to offset the continuous decline in the prices of raw materials and the ongoing deterioration in the terms of trade of the African countries. In those endeavours, an important role must be played by the development fund established by the African Development Bank and the African Export-Import Bank, especially with a view to strengthening external trade to alleviate the African countries' disadvantages resulting from the Uruguay Round, such as the erosion of preferential terms for their principal exports in various developed countries, particularly the European Union.

It was particularly important to meet the challenges facing African agriculture as a result of drought, desertification, soil erosion and locust plagues, so as to achieve food security in accordance with UN-NADAF. To that end, it was necessary to apply the decision taken, at the close of the Uruguay Round, to compensate the LDCs and countries that were net importers of

foodstuffs for the expected rise in the prices of their food imports by providing the requisite level of food, technical and financial assistance. He hoped that the donor countries, international financial institutions and organizations concerned would fulfil their commitments in that regard.

South-South cooperation was one of the pillars of the development process in Africa. In that connection, he wished to mention the Group of 15, in which developing countries from various parts of the world were striving to support and develop such cooperation, and the Egyptian Fund for Technical Cooperation in Africa.

The United Nations and its various organs and agencies should also play a major role in implementing UN-NADAF. Vital tasks should be undertaken by UNCTAD, UNDP and ECA and the work of WTO, the World Bank and IMF should be coordinated to ensure a correlation of trade, financing and development activities.

Mr. MROZIEWICZ (Poland) said that the Secretary-General's report (E/1995/81) accurately reflected the main economic and social problems of the African continent. Developments in the world economy and international markets had serious implications for the already difficult situation of many African States. Unfavourable terms of trade and the fall in commodity prices had forced many African countries into heavy external borrowing. The debt of sub-Saharan Africa had grown steadily from \$6 billion in 1970 to its current level of \$270 billion. The African countries were thus constrained to spend 35 to 40 per cent of their export earnings on debt servicing rather than development. Drought, social unrest, armed conflict, refugee flows and rapid population growth were all undermining efforts to achieve development.

Existing institutions and mechanisms on the African continent were not efficient enough to cope with the growing political, economic and social problems. His delegation welcomed the fact that, despite difficult economic conditions, some African States were firmly introducing democratic and political transformations. The Republic of South Africa was an outstanding example, and the peace processes in Angola and Mozambique were also encouraging. It was to be hoped that prospects for peaceful solutions based on discussion, mutual concessions and compromise were also available for Somalia, Liberia, Rwanda, Burundi and Sierra Leone, where armed conflicts were

still under way. His delegation would be happy if the Polish military observers currently on mission in Rwanda and Angola could contribute to resolving the conflicts there.

On the basis of Poland's experience in overcoming difficult problems with the transition to a market economy after the fall of communism, he was able to say that much depended on work and on painful sacrifice. External support was necessary and welcome, but could not replace national efforts. Similar processes were taking place in Africa, and it was to be hoped that positive results would be achieved through the introduction of democratic and economic reforms.

His delegation agreed with the Secretary-General that, in Africa, an important role could be played by regional initiatives, and the role and tasks of the African Economic Community should be seen in that light. Acceleration of the economic integration of the continent would not only help to consolidate the young African democracies but also to strengthen Africa's position in the world. The role of the Economic Commission for Africa in such efforts was an important one and the Organization of African Unity could also help greatly by its mediation role in the search for solutions to local wars and conflicts.

Private foreign investors should be encouraged to go to Africa to support national development efforts. The liberalization of foreign-exchange policies, foreign-trade regimes and other economic reforms implemented by African Governments created a positive environment and laid the foundations for future economic growth, which should be supported and strengthened by the international community.

A significant number of bilateral agreements had already been concluded between Poland and various African States and others were envisaged. Poland was also contributing, however modestly, to Africa's development and capacity-building. Scholarships were offered by his Government for post-graduate studies and for specialized training, provided either by the Polish authorities or by UNESCO. Since the early 1960s, over 2,500 Africans had completed their studies in Poland and some 800 African students were currently studying there. Once well trained and educated, they would be better able to serve their countries.

Poland's trade with many African countries was developing well, but it could and should be better. There was room for further dialogue and closer relationships in many fields, and his Government had the political will and economic potential to see that process through.

Mr. GONZALEZ (Colombia) said that the General Assembly had adopted UN-NADAF because it had become clear that Africa had been left out of global development and yet had been severely affected by the world's pervasive ills. The so-called lost decade of the 1980s continued to create serious problems for African economies, which had not yet overcome the external-debt crisis and were involved in restructuring programmes that failed to achieve their objectives.

African leaders had recently met at Addis Ababa to revise their development strategies and search for alternatives. His delegation supported that initiative, for it was convinced that it was regions and countries themselves that could best define their own development models. New economic models had to be devised, differing from neoliberalism, that had been proved incapable of ensuring adequate distribution of economic growth and solving social problems, and also from the centralized-economy models that had been conspicuous failures. An alternative model designed to produce a new citizen was required, a citizen more productive in economic matters, more involved in political affairs and more supportive in the social sphere.

The World Summit for Social Development had revealed the magnitude of poverty throughout the world, and of unemployment and the breakdown of society in the developing world, particularly Africa: the Programme of Action adopted at the Summit must be put into effect. It was a moral imperative to eradicate absolute poverty, and for that the support of all States was required. Such support must take the form of effective cooperation in terms not only of financial resources but also of access to technology, markets, education and basic services. UN-NADAF should devise some viable strategies for achieving those goals, and Member States must support those strategies in bilateral and multilateral arrangements.

Colombia would take on the presidency of the movement of non-aligned countries in October 1995 and was well aware of the challenge facing the countries concerned. They had serious problems, most of which required global action. His Government's objective would be to strengthen South-South cooperation in order to find true solutions to the problems of the developing

countries and to achieve a more equitable international system. Through its presidency of the non-aligned movement, Colombia would be working side by side with the African States towards the desired improvements. The summit meeting of the non-aligned countries, to be held at Cartagena, would, he hoped, be attended by African heads of State. A strategy of working together to achieve development could be discussed jointly there. Topics such as the eradication of poverty, the fight against drug trafficking and organized crime and environmental conservation would be high on the summit's agenda, and a commitment to the future of the African continent could, he hoped, be reaffirmed.

The meeting rose at 1.25 p.m.