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PREPARATIONS FOR THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT

Comments of the delegations of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, the People's Republic of Bulgaria, the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, the German Democratic Republic, the Hungarian People's Republic, the Mongolian People's Republic, the Polish People's Republic, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the document entitled "Preliminary draft programme of action" (A/CONF.81/PC/28)

The countries note that document A/CONF.81/PC/28, prepared by the secretariat of the Conference on the basis of document A/CONF.81/PC/21, is more specific and goal-oriented and that it takes into account certain observations made by the representatives of the countries in question in the course of the third session of the Preparatory Committee and in their joint statement at the 30th meeting of the Preparatory Committee on 5 February 1979.

However, document A/CONF.81/PC/28 is not without short-comings and if these could be eliminated it would have a more universal character.

The comments of the delegations on the various sections of the document are as follows:

Introduction

This section of the document is of a descriptive character. It does not sufficiently emphasize the most important prerequisites for promoting the planned and dynamic social and economic development of all countries of the world and for accelerating scientific and technological progress, especially in the developing countries, and, in particular, it does not indicate with sufficient clarity the basic conditions necessary for successful international co-operation in the field of science and technology. These conditions include the following:

Uninterrupted progress in the strengthening of peace and the security of peoples, the deepening of détente and the extension of détente to the military

sphere, the cessation of the arms race, the reduction of expenditure on armaments and the utilization of part of the resources thus released for the development of the developing countries;

The close interrelationship between the process of restructuring international economic relations on a just and democratic basis and the struggle for peace, détente and disarmament;

The interrelationship between the process of development and social and economic changes;

The development and strengthening of international scientific and technological co-operation on the basis of the full equality of rights of the parties, mutual benefit, non-interference in internal affairs and respect for sovereignty.

TARGET AREA A: Strengthening the scientific and technological capacities of developing countries

This section should be shortened by the elimination of unnecessary detail and repetition and by a clearer statement of the basic provisions relating to the most important tasks. In view of the importance of the provisions of this section concerning the need to develop a national scientific and technological policy, it is suggested that it should be supplemented by clearer recommendations concerning the need to establish the appropriate basis for a decisive transition from indicative forms of planning to directive planning and the strengthening of the role of the State sector in the application of science and technology for development in the developing countries.

The paragraph on "Development of human resources" (para. A.28) should be strengthened; in other words, the problem of the training of cadres is of paramount importance for developing countries.

In the subsection entitled "Technological transfer" (paras. A.29-A.38) it must be emphasized that the transfer of technology should not lead to technological dependence, which in certain circumstances could become a serious obstacle to the independent economic development of the developing countries. The basic prerequisites for the successful application of transferred technology in the developing countries are the attainment in those countries of a certain scientific and technological level and the establishment of their own scientific and technological capacities.

Thus, scientific and technological co-operation between developed and developing countries in the transfer of technology should be directed towards:

The creation and broadening of the scientific and technological capacities of the developing countries and the relevant infrastructures;

The development of mutually beneficial relations characterized by equality of rights, on a planned, long-term basis, precluding the emergence of any kind of dependence;

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The establishment of a close link between science and production in the developing countries;

The involvement of the developing countries in the process of creating new technologies so that they may effectively resist technological domination by the imperialist countries and transnational corporations.

In paragraph A.35 there must be a clearer indication of the need to make sure that the activities of foreign capital, and, in particular, the activities of transnational corporations in the developing countries are carried out in conformity with the national interests, which will help to enhance the ability of the developing countries to follow an independent policy in the field of science and technology.

In the recommendations on the formation of international funds (paras. A.45, A.69) it must be indicated that such funds, like any international funds set up within the United Nations system, should be of a voluntary character.

TARGET AREA B: Restructuring the existing pattern of international scientific and technological relations

In paragraphs B.6, B.7, B.9 (a) and B.21 it is indicated that all developed countries have an equal responsibility for the activities of transnational corporations. This is not in accordance with the facts. Socialist enterprises, unlike transnational corporations, build their relations on a planned basis with independent partners in the developing countries and they do not discriminate against but support the State sector. Restrictive business practices are foreign to their economic activities. Enterprises set up in the developing countries to provide economic and social and technological assistance pass into the full ownership of those countries.

Therefore, it is suggested that the appeals to "the Governments of developed countries" in the relevant paragraphs of section B should be addressed to the capitalist countries which have transnational corporations.

The recommendations in paragraphs B.12, B.14 and B.15 are fraught with opportunities for the uncontrolled growth of the United Nations budget, for experience has shown that the establishment of international information systems is very expensive and not very effective. Therefore, preference should be given to the creation of national technological information systems in the developing countries, or of regional systems. The United Nations could provide methodological guidance for those systems.

Paragraph B.24 (b) should be worded as follows: "Participate in promoting exports of manufactured goods for which new technology transferred by transnational corporations has been used". Thus the paragraph would be directed against the restrictions imposed by transnational corporations on the use of technology imported by them for the production of goods for export in the developing countries.

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TARGET AREA C: Strengthening the role of the United Nations
in the field of science and technology and the provision of
increased financial resources

In the introduction to this section attention is quite rightly drawn to the need to enhance the effectiveness of the activities of the United Nations system, particularly in inter-sectoral fields. Considering that CMEA has gained positive experience in the organization and realization of scientific and technological co-operation among countries, the developing countries could be recommended to make broader use of that experience within the framework of the United Nations system.

The recommendations which are contained in paragraph C.4 and are aimed at the creation within the United Nations system of new machinery for co-ordination and over-all policy-making for science and technology are also inappropriate. The effectiveness of already existing bodies should be enhanced and, in particular, their functions, purposes and tasks should be more clearly defined.

In the recommendations in the subsection entitled "Financing" (paras. C.10-C.15) the responsibility of the developed capitalist States for the economic difficulties of the developing countries should be more definitely indicated. That responsibility did not end with the period of colonialism. The developing countries find themselves, as before, in a dependent position, in which they do not have equality of rights, in the capitalist economic system. The old order also finds protectors in those international financial organizations whose procedures continue to be undemocratic and to deprive the developing countries of the opportunity to use their services on the basis of equality of rights.

The delegations of the countries mentioned above, which are in no way responsible for the serious economic situation which has been created in the developing countries, again emphasize the inacceptability for them of the principles of forming international funds by means of international taxation and other fiscal measures providing for the automatic receipt of funds.

Such proposals are at variance with the Charter of the United Nations, which prohibits the United Nations from interfering in the internal affairs of States, and with the principle which has emerged in the United Nations of the voluntary nature of the formation of international funds.

The recommendation in paragraph C.14 should be addressed to countries which use skilled manpower from the developing countries, in other words, it is precisely those countries which should reimburse on a bilateral basis all expenditures connected with the "brain-drain".

In the subsection entitled "Global problems" a recommendation should be added concerning the need for the further development of international scientific and technological co-operation and for uniting the efforts of all countries in solving the global problems facing mankind, i.e., the successful solution of those problems and, in particular, the provision of food for enormous masses of people, the control of dangerous diseases, the rational use of natural resources, the solution of fuel and energy problems and the protection of the environment, which are decisive factors in solving the basic problems of the developing countries.