

1864th meeting

Monday, 9 July 1973, at 10.45 a.m.

President: Mr. S. A. FRAZÃO (Brazil)

E/SR.1864

In the absence of the President, Mr. Rabetafika (Madagascar), Vice-President, took the chair.

AGENDA ITEM 3

General discussion of international economic and social policy, including regional and sectoral developments (continued) (E/5310, E/5311, E/5312, E/5313, E/5314, E/5315)

1. Mr. DAVIES (Secretary-General, World Meteorological Organization) said that WMO, which was celebrating its centenary in 1973, had been one of the two specialized agencies whose activities had been examined in depth by the Economic and Social Council at its fifty-third session, in 1972. That procedure, which had been used for the first time, had been stimulating and encouraging for WMO, and it continued to be useful because, in support of its activities, WMO could refer to resolution 1728 C (LIII), which the Council had adopted as a result of that examination. It was by the adoption of constructive and far-sighted resolutions of that kind that the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly could exercise great influence on the specialized agencies.
2. Referring to the operative part of resolution 1728 (LIII), he said that, in drawing attention to the need for activities relating to the protection of life and property against weather-related disasters, the Council seemed to have foreseen the tragic events which were taking place in the Sudano-Sahelian area. WMO was co-operating and would continue to co-operate to the full extent of its resources in immediate relief operations in the Sahelian zone, as well as in medium and long-term activities. It was obviously particularly competent to deal with the meteorological and hydrological aspects of the situation, but those aspects should not be allowed to obscure the existence of other problems, such as population changes, human settlement policies and land management practices, or the need to adopt an inter-disciplinary approach. The agroclimatology studies of semi-arid areas undertaken by WMO in co-operation with FAO and UNESCO and the investigations on drought carried out by WMO should prove most useful now that a response had to be given to the requests for assistance made by the Governments of the six Sahelian countries. WMO had appointed a consultant to prepare a detailed programme covering the medium and long-term activities it would undertake in that field in consultation with the countries concerned and in co-operation with other international organizations.
3. With regard to WMO's other activities, he drew the Council's attention to an important new development relating to meteorological satellites. In accordance with a new plan, Japan and the countries of Western Europe which were members of the European Space Research Organization were to participate, in association with the United States and the Soviet Union, in a global system of meteorological geostationary satellites, which would, for the first time in history, enable man to keep a continuous watch on the world's weather systems. The information thus obtained would be made available to all countries, both developed and developing.
4. With regard to research activities, WMO's main efforts were directed towards the Global Atmospheric Research Programme (GARP) undertaken in co-operation with ICSU. That programme provided, *inter alia*, for the organization of a collective scientific observation experiment in the tropical Atlantic Ocean; the operational centre for that unprecedented and large-scale experiment was located at Dakar. The aid given by the Government of Senegal in that connexion had indeed been invaluable.
5. Where hydrology and water resources were concerned, WMO was co-operating closely with UNESCO, as was demonstrated by the fact that the major world conference to be held in 1974 to decide on the nature and importance of future activities in that field was being convened under the joint auspices of the two organizations.
6. In addition to continuing to participate in UNDP, WMO had developed its own assistance programme for aiding the developing countries in the implementation of the main WMO operational programme, the World Weather Watch. Finally, WMO was obviously particularly interested in a number of environmental problems and was co-operating closely with UNEP and the other specialized agencies, particularly WHO.
7. In conclusion, he said that, in resolution 1728 (LIII), the Council had recognized the importance of WMO's scientific and technical activities in maintaining progress in economic and social development.
8. Mr. SZARKA (Hungary) welcomed the fact that the opening of the Council's session coincided with the successful conclusion of the first stage of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe. That Conference was of major importance, first, because it was an expression of the basic improvement in the international climate and situation, and also because the emerging European security system, the expansion of economic co-operation and the curbing of the armaments race could not fail to make available resources which would promote the well-being not only of the peoples of Europe, but of all nations, including those of the developing world.
9. He thought it necessary to mention major political events, such as the emergence of a political settlement of

the Viet-Nam war and the Security Council recommendation in favour of the admission to the United Nations of the two German States (resolution 335 (1973), which, together with the Helsinki Conference, had marked the years 1972 and 1973, because trends in the world economic situation in those two years had been very positively affected by such political events. Thus economic growth had increased in the developed capitalist countries; in the majority of the developing countries, it had not fallen below the world average, and the member countries of CMEA had achieved the growth rates envisaged in their national medium-term plans. In the Middle-East, however, until the withdrawal of Israeli forces from all occupied Arab territories and the full and complete implementation of Security Council resolution 242 (1967), the countries suffering directly from the consequences of the Israeli aggression would not be able to devote a larger share of their resources to their economic and social development.

10. Of course, economic tensions still existed. Half of the developing countries had failed to reach the 5 per cent growth rate set as an average target for the 1960s, so that the gap between the developed capitalist countries and the developing countries had become still wider. The developing countries should undeniably proceed even more firmly on the path towards economic and social reforms, the strengthening of their national sovereignty and the adoption of comprehensive national planning. The figures for the developing countries contained in the *World Economic Survey, 1972 (E/5310)* demonstrated the correctness of the position which the socialist countries had adopted in their joint statement concerning the Second United Nations Development Decade¹ and had defined in greater detail in the draft declaration on the promotion of the development of equitable co-operation in economic, trade, scientific and technological matters, which they had submitted to the General Assembly at its twenty-seventh session.²

11. Persistent inflation, which had caused considerable disturbances in the large industrialized countries in 1972, was one of the main causes of such economic tensions in the world. Hungary, was particularly concerned by that phenomenon because it was an export-oriented country.

12. Fortunately, the international division of labour seemed to be taking shape and Hungary was doing everything in its power to promote it. Long-term trade agreements, such as those that had been concluded between countries of Eastern and Western Europe, would serve as a basis for the development in the region and throughout the world.

13. It was in that spirit, moreover, that, together with the German Democratic Republic, Hungary had on 5 July 1963 submitted to the Helsinki Conference a draft joint statement on economic, trade, scientific, technological and environmental co-operation.

14. Hungary wished to promote economic co-operation, both within the framework of CMEA and in its relations with other countries and, to that end, it was striving to remove existing obstacles and secure the adoption of the principle of most-favoured-nation treatment. In addition, Hungary was preparing for the forthcoming multilateral trade negotiations, in which it would support the developing countries in pressing for the implementation of a generalized system of preferences. It considered that, as a result of those negotiations, the developing countries should benefit from a substantial increase in the growth rate of their foreign exchange earnings.

15. In the second year of the current five-year plan, all the socialist countries had achieved a favourable balance sheet, which was undoubtedly partly due to the acceleration of the process of integration within CMEA. The main objectives of the Hungarian medium-term plan were to accelerate the rate of scientific and technological development, increase productivity and ensure balanced economic development. It was undoubtedly thanks to the application of such principles that Hungary had succeeded in overcoming the difficulties it had been facing and had achieved results in 1972 which were even more favourable than the planned objectives. Problems would certainly continue to arise, but economic regulators and the centralization of decisions would make it possible to solve them.

16. Hungary had always been of the opinion that the Economic and Social Council had an essential role to play in solving international problems and that Governments should help it by providing it with the necessary political means and by rationalizing its methods of work. That was why the Hungarian People's Republic had ratified the amendment to the Charter providing for the enlargement of the Council's membership, and hoped that that amendment would soon enter into force.

17. His delegation attached special importance to certain agenda items and, in particular, to the item concerning the role of the so-called multinational corporations, which touched upon very basic issues of international economic and social co-operation. In addition, the Brazilian delegation had proposed that the Council should consider the concept of collective economic security,³ some aspects of which had been touched upon at the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, and his delegation was of the opinion that the main obstacles to the functioning of the international economic system should certainly be studied.

18. Mr. PETERSON (Administrator, United Nations Development Programme) said the reports before the Council indicated that the modest targets it had been agreed to set for the Second Development Decade had not been achieved by the developing countries in 1972; that applied to their annual growth rate, their *per capita* income, their agricultural production and the growth of their exports. Their population growth had continued to outstrip employment possibilities, the capacity of their educational systems and, in some countries, the production of goods and services, while the most recent figures showed that, in

¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-fifth Session, Annexes, agenda item 42, document A/8074.*

² *Ibid., Twenty-seventh Session, Annexes, agenda item 12, document A/8963, para. 38.*

³ See E/L.1531.

1971, the flow of capital from the wealthier to the developing countries had amounted to only half the amount envisaged. Contributions to UNDP had increased by only 8 per cent, although a minimum objective of 9.6 per cent had been set by the Governing Council.

19. UNDP was, however, trying to take advantage of all opportunities, and the pre-investment activities it had financed had attracted \$3,145 million in follow-up investment, mainly in the sectors of public health, fisheries, power production, transport, and water supply and sewage systems. Country programming was now operational in 82 countries, which would receive more than \$920 million from UNDP to carry out the programme by 1976. Although still far from perfect, the country programming system was, nevertheless, sufficiently flexible and had helped to introduce a new discipline in technical co-operation with Governments, specialized agencies and bilateral programmes. The UNDP Administration had given high priority to the recruitment of the most qualified staff for the programming service and had made a special effort to recruit staff in the developing countries.

20. Although there were reasons for cautious optimism, UNDP had to face serious problems. In 1972, it had adopted a system of full funding, but, because of inflation and the international monetary crisis, larger amounts had been necessary in order to finance less assistance. Formalities for the approval of projects had been simplified, but the proliferation of special funds was a serious subject of concern at a time when attempts were being made to rationalized administrative operations and reduce overhead costs.

21. In future, UNDP would continue the type of work which had hitherto yielded good results. It would do so in a wide variety of fields, such as the provision of expert services, the exploration of new mineral deposits, the improvement of primary education and the development of geothermal resources, to name just a few.

22. UNDP also had an essential role to play in combating natural disasters. The present Sahelian drought was a case in which emergency relief must be combined with long-term activities. In addition to the \$3.3 million already provided by UNDP for urgent tasks (relief activities, provision of animal feed and vaccine, well-drilling in co-operation with UNICEF), another \$5 million would be necessary to rebuild the economies of the areas stricken by drought. UNDP's possibilities were, unfortunately, limited by its previous

commitments. All those activities had, of course, been co-ordinated with those of the Governments and agencies involved, particularly FAO. Moreover, since 1968, UNDP had provided funds for scientific research on ways of fighting river blindness in several river valleys of Africa, including that of the Volta.

23. UNDP wished to increase support for inter-country, interregional and global projects because, in that area more than in others, the United Nations had demonstrated that it could unite countries, organizations and individuals in the achievement of common objectives, such as research on new varieties of cereals, insect control, the organization of a Latin American educational television network, the production and marketing of natural fibres which had to compete with synthetics, and co-operation with non-governmental organizations.

24. All those activities were carried out as part of the gigantic fight against poverty in all its dimensions. In order to help the poorest countries, which had *per capita* incomes of less than \$100 annually, the Governing Council had decided that those countries would receive at least 25 per cent of UNDP's total funds in the coming year. Assistance to poor regions, such as northern Brazil, was only beginning, and institutions, such as the National Institute of Soils in Iran and the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine and Animal Husbandry in Mexico, had been established or strengthened, in order to help low-income population groups. In addition, UNDP had participated in four surveys on unemployment organized by the ILO. It was now clear that the attack on poverty required a stabilization of the international monetary situation, an expansion of international trade and investments and a viable international economic system based on accelerated development and a more equitable distribution of income.

25. The success of assistance operations depended on the extent to which recipient countries, regardless of their economic or political systems, were able and willing to carry them out with perseverance and by making the necessary sacrifices. It was also necessary for the industrialized countries to make a total commitment to the struggle against poverty without becoming discouraged by the difficulties, and for the international organizations to make a constant effort at self-improvement so that they could help countries to achieve their objectives.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.
