



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 12th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. NAVAJAS MOGRO (Bolivia)

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AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued) (A/43/3, 8 and Add.1, 122, 214, 235, 273, 325, 336, 341, 360, 367 and Corr.1 and 2, 370, 393, 432, 435, 446, 457, 460, 463, 544, 587, 671, 688, 695, A/C.2/43/4, L.2, L.3, L.4)

1. Mr. CARLOTO (Philippines) said that the results of the second regular session of the Economic and Social Council were encouraging, for they were indicative of a new era of multilateralism in international economic relations. The preparation of a fourth international development strategy was one example. As the objectives set for previous strategies had not been attained, the value of a fourth strategy might be questionable. The difficulty of the problems tackled must not, however, be cause for disheartenment. Targets must be established, if only to have standards against which to measure performance and help developing countries to set their own development targets. Of course, those targets must be attainable and sufficiently long-term.
2. Perhaps too much had been expected from the work of the Special Commission on the In-depth Study of the United Nations Intergovernmental Structures and Functions in the Economic and Social Fields. None the less, the wealth of information gathered could be used in future, for the United Nations system must continually undergo reforms in order to keep up with the needs of the time, particularly those concerning greater integration of the developing countries into the mainstream.
3. For the time being, the Philippines continued to attach great importance to the preponderant role the General Assembly must play in economic and social matters within the United Nations system, particularly through the Economic and Social Council. The Council must be the primary focus of any reform of the overall operation of the system. In that connection, the important provisions of resolution 1988/77 must be scrupulously implemented, particularly those concerning the monitoring of the implementation of the overall strategies, policies and priorities established by the General Assembly in the economic and social fields, and the co-ordination of the activities of the United Nations system. The monitoring of activities required urgent attention. An extensive and complex bureaucracy such as the United Nations too often gave rise to confusion, lack of transparency, and a shortage of information and integrated data. Brilliant and well-meaning initiatives could readily come to naught for that reason. An improved monitoring system would, at the same time, enhance the co-ordinating function performed by the Economic and Social Council. The consideration of co-ordination issues should therefore be integrated in the discussion of relevant substantive items so that the Council could recommend to the General Assembly guidelines and priorities that were both integrated and comprehensive. It was equally important for the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC) and the Joint Consultative Group on Policy to provide support to the Council, as set forth in resolution 1988/77.
4. The adoption by consensus of decision 1988/160 on the net transfer of resources from developing to developed countries was particularly noteworthy. After

(Mr. Carloto, Philippines)

some degree of resistance, the international community had thus come to recognize that the phenomenon was largely responsible for the stagnation and deterioration of developing countries' economies. The Philippine delegation hoped that the decision signalled a genuine change in attitude towards the problems of the developing countries.

5. The Economic and Social Council had likewise considered other important questions, such as regional co-operation, the environment, food and agriculture, transnational corporations, trade and development, human settlements, and new and renewable sources of energy. There was a growing recognition of the intrinsic importance of such issues to sustained growth and development, and consequently, the need for a sincere dialogue among all States in order to foster meaningful co-operation in those fields.

6. Mr. ZACHMAN (German Democratic Republic) said that dialogue and co-operation had been the dominant themes of the 1988 session of the Economic and Social Council. The decisions adopted showed that the overwhelming majority of Member States were more aware of the need for normalization of economic relations as part of the effort to scale down tensions and strengthen international security. They also corroborated the irreplaceable role of the United Nations in the economic and financial fields. An integrated approach and the concerted action of Member States were essential to achieving greater stability and predictability in economic relations.

7. Economic and Social Council resolution 1988/75 was an important step in that direction, as it facilitated the introduction of an early warning system. That should also be the approach taken in the preparation of the Secretary-General's report on principles of international economic security.

8. The social and human dimensions of development were acquiring more and more importance in the activities of the United Nations agencies. In that context, the German Democratic Republic was looking forward to the comprehensive report of the Secretary-General on human resources development, which was to be submitted to the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session. As many organs and organizations of the United Nations dealt with that issue, a common approach must be developed, one which defined policies that would reconcile the interests of all States and be consistent with the mandates of the agencies concerned. To that end, the requisite preparatory work could be done within the framework of ACC and, at the same time, thought could be given to making the human resources issue the subject of another cross-organizational analysis in 1989.

9. The negotiations on the code of conduct on transnational corporations had been under way for 11 years. The code had an important role to play in democratizing and stabilizing international economic relations, and its adoption was overdue. Those provisions on which there was a large measure of agreement must not be jeopardized. A reconvened special session of the Commission on Transnational Corporations should be held to complete work on the code.

(Mr. Zachman, German Democratic Republic)

10. Co-ordination was one of the primary tasks of the Economic and Social Council, under Articles 63 and 64 of the Charter. Considering the ever-closer relationship between political, economic and social problems, it was crucial to define clearly the aims of co-ordination and select carefully the fields in which it could be practised. Co-ordination should not be reduced to the avoidance of duplication or the settlement of disputes. That gave rise to substantive and organizational implications for the work of the Economic and Social Council and the various bodies concerned with co-ordination. In that connection his delegation supported resolutions 1988/64 and 1988/77 adopted by the Council at its second regular session.

11. In-depth examination of the programme budget continued to be a decisive instrument for co-ordination, as had become evident during consideration of the note by the Secretary-General introducing the medium-term plan beginning in 1992 (A/43/329). His delegation appreciated the co-ordination activities of ACC and agreed, in general, with the conclusions contained in the report on its work in 1987 (E/1988/42). He trusted, however, that ACC would include in its future work new topics which it had been mandated to consider by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. Such new issues included economic security, confidence-building in economic relations, the relationship between disarmament and development, the prevention of coercive economic measures, efforts to alleviate the external debt of the developing countries and steps to prevent the net outflow of resources from those countries to the developed countries.

12. His delegation attached great importance to strengthening the role of the Economic and Social Council as the principal organ for international economic and social co-operation under the Charter of the United Nations. In that connection, the revitalization of the Council and the adoption of resolution 1988/77 were particularly welcome. Resolution 1988/77 might be helpful in efforts to streamline the work of the Council. In particular, his delegation reaffirmed the importance accorded by all States to the continuation of the Council's work. What mattered now was to translate its provisions into reality. His delegation would continue to work to that end.

13. Mrs. PERKOVIC (Yugoslavia) said that her delegation associated itself with the statement by the Chairman of the Group of 77, which had encompassed all the major issues included in the agenda for the second regular session of the Economic and Social Council. The general discussion of international economic and social policy, including regional and sectoral developments, had been very useful. Certain differences had appeared in the assessment of the international economic situation, but there had been a considerable degree of agreement on the problems of developing countries and on the need to resolve them, in particular, by undertaking multilateral action designed to overcome structural imbalances in the world economy. Such a debate should now lead to joint conclusions. For that to happen it was necessary to make a sustained effort and not be discouraged by past failures.

(Mrs. Perkovic, Yugoslavia)

14. The adoption of resolution 1988/77, which should facilitate the revitalization of the Economic and Social Council and thus improve its functioning, was a major success. However, the agreements reached would be of value only if they were implemented.

15. Measures to strengthen the co-ordinating role of the Council and to rationalize its activities were of particular significance. In that connection, her delegation looked forward to the report of the Secretary-General on the feasibility and comparative costs of holding, with the present in-session arrangements, one consolidated or two regular sessions of the Council. In her view the number of participants at the second regular session had been insufficient. It would be useful if the report could deal with the organizational issues which influenced participation at Council sessions.

16. In a more general context, the reorganization of the Economic and Social Council should enable the United Nations to play a more active role in dealing with world economic problems and in responding to the expectations of the international community. The current favourable political climate should facilitate such an endeavour.

17. The adoption by consensus of decision 1988/160 on the net transfer of resources from developing to developed countries was another major achievement of the second regular session. The problem should be considered as a crucial obstacle to development since it depleted investment in developing countries and made a lasting impact on their growth and development. The report of the Secretary-General (E/1988/64) provided an extensive account of the question.

18. Other resolutions and decisions, of particular importance included those relating to the environment, to the fourth international development strategy, to national entrepreneurship in economic development and to the early identification of world economic developments.

19. Yugoslavia accorded great importance to the convening of a special session of the General Assembly devoted to the reactivation of economic growth and development in developing countries, as proposed by the Group of 77. The unforeseeable consequences of the economic marginalization of the developing countries, the increasingly evident relationship between development, peace and stability, and the recent improvement in the international political climate confirmed the necessity for such an initiative, which would accord with the interests of all countries, developing and developed.

20. Mr. CAHILL (United States of America) said that the locust problem in Africa was once again making headlines. At the forty-first session of the General Assembly the United States had introduced a draft resolution urging donors to assist Africa in combating that calamity. The United States Government, through the Agency for International Development, had been involved in the control of locust and grasshopper infestations since 1951. Following the severe drought of the early 1980s in the Sahel, the return of normal or above-normal rainfall had seen the emergence of grasshopper and locust infestations throughout much of Africa.

(Mr. Cahill, United States)

21. In 1988 the international community had launched the largest insect control campaign ever undertaken in Africa. The United States Government had provided assistance to 18 African countries and to the Yomen Arab Republic in the form of aircraft, pesticides, communications equipment and technical assistance; the aid had totalled \$37 million over the past three years. Efforts had also been made to assist the countries affected to develop their own crop protection services. Such services were now capable of mounting their own aerial/ground survey and spraying operations. Local farmers, using traditional methods of locust control, had made outstanding efforts. The United States would continue to ensure that the assistance provided was used to maximum effectiveness and that environmental safeguards were put in place.

22. He congratulated the Commission on Human Settlements and the Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) for producing a Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000. He endorsed the Strategy and the measures designed to facilitate action by the private and informal sectors and to encourage the mobilization of resources for shelter. The Global Strategy was perhaps the most tangible product of the five years of activity that had culminated in the celebration of the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless in 1987. The experience gained over the previous 25 years by the United States of America, which had provided over two billion dollars' worth of assistance for shelter, urban service provision and urban development projects to some 50 countries, showed that the shelter problem could be solved if governments pursued the right policies. The work of Habitat, the numerous national contributions to its programme and the dialogue which took place at sessions of the Commission on Human Settlements were important components of the world-wide effort to solve the shelter problem. In 1988, the United States would, for the fourth time, make a voluntary contribution to Habitat and the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation.

23. Much had been said about the reform of the Economic and Social Council, and sustained efforts had been made in that direction. Between January and May 1988, the Special Commission of the Council responsible for that question had laboured hard and the reform had progressed; it was real and should not be belittled. Improvements could only be made step by step. Sudden, sweeping changes were difficult to bring about. The second regular session of the Economic and Social Council had been constructive, resulting in the adoption by consensus of resolution 1988/77. The United States Government had, however, expressed reservations, which it maintained, on two parts of that resolution. Finally, it was vital to keep up the momentum of reform. Pending the response which would be provided in July 1989 to several recommendations, specific action could be taken on specific subjects, such as the streamlining of several subsidiary bodies of the Council.

24. Mr. PAULINICH (Peru) said that the adoption of resolution 1988/77 had been a decisive step towards strengthening the Council's role as a co-ordinating body on economic and social matters. In that connection, the decision to revert to the practice of asking the specialized agencies for reports on measures they had taken to give effect to the recommendations of the General Assembly and the Council was

(Mr. Paulinich, Peru)

gratifying. However, that was not enough. If the Council was to play effectively its role as the main United Nations body responsible for considering truly important economic and social questions and making recommendations thereon, it would be necessary to deal with substantive questions, such as the composition of the Council and of its subsidiary bodies, and the agenda and organization of Council sessions.

25. He welcomed the adoption by consensus of decision 1988/160, which showed that the reality of the net transfer of resources from the developing to the developed countries was now recognized. However, that observation yielded no tangible result, since the volume of resources thus transferred had been increasing for the last six years and transfers were also being made now to multilateral financial institutions. In the case of Latin America, the net transfer of resources between 1982 and 1987, had come to \$146 billion, or about 3 per cent of the region's GNP. It illustrated most eloquently the crisis in international economic co-operation, since it resulted in a paradoxical situation in which the underdeveloped South was financing the prosperity of the North. As long as the problem remained unresolved, the developing countries could not devote domestic saving to growth, nor meet the social needs of their population, and that would only perpetuate the vicious circle which led to political instability in the precarious Latin American democracies.

26. He hailed the important initiative taken by the Group of 77 in recommending the convening of a special session of the General Assembly on the reactivation of economic growth and development in developing countries; it would on no account be intended as a substitute for the debate on the international development strategy for the fourth development Decade, or for the eighth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development; its aim would be to establish a set of priorities and guidelines in various related areas directly linked to the issue of economic growth and development. The United Nations was the ideal diplomatic and political forum for considering issues of great importance for the international community, such as the urgent need to satisfy the needs of the vast majority of the world population. He therefore hoped that the new initiative would meet with the response it deserved.

27. Mr. SHIHABI (Saudi Arabia) recalling that he had spoken at the forty-second session about how the living standards of Palestinians in the occupied territories had declined compared with those of the Israelis, the exploitation of Arab cultivable lands, the decline in crop yields, the terrorist means by which the occupying authorities achieved their ends, and more generally the deterioration of the situation in Palestine, said that in the past year the Israeli authorities had continued along that course, using all possible forms of aggression against the Palestinians and engaging in numerous acts of violence and terror.

28. The measures taken by the occupying Israeli authorities with respect to Palestinian natural resources were contrary to several international instruments, especially article 17 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 and General Assembly resolutions 1803 (XVII) and 32/161. The Israeli policy of

(Mr. Shihabi, Saudi Arabia)

diverting water belonging to the Palestinians was a significant part of the Israeli colonization plan for the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Israeli consumption of water at the expense of the Arabs was increasing each year by 15 to 20 million cubic metres on average. By 1990 it would amount to some 400 million cubic metres. What, then, would be left for the Palestinian people of the waters that had belonged to their ancestors?

29. The report of the Secretary-General on assistance to the Palestinian people (A/43/367) indicated some progress in the implementation of the economic and social assistance programme for the Palestinian people in the occupied Arab territories. It described in detail the response of international organizations to some of the needs of the Palestinian people, noting, however, that the needs were still very great and that additional funding was urgently needed, and stated that as more resources became available, the Secretary-General would continue to implement and develop further the programme pursuant to General Assembly resolution 42/166.

30. However, aid to the Palestinian people in the occupied territories still consisted of welfare projects, and was aimed at fulfilling immediate needs. What was needed was to contribute to the development of genuinely Palestinian institutions to enable the Palestinian people to exercise their rights and their absolute national sovereignty over the natural resources of their lands. The survey prepared by UNCTAD in conjunction with ESCWA on the new economic changes in the occupied Arab territories (TD/B/1183) reviewed the constraints which had been placed on the Palestinian economy impeding its growth. The Palestinian productive sectors were being neglected or re-oriented towards meeting Israeli production and consumption needs.

31. Since December 1987, the Palestinian people had been rebelling against oppression, occupation, tyranny and the usurpation of its rights. That revolution was the response of the Palestinian people to Zionist aggression and was aimed at preserving the dignity of the Palestinian nation. He wondered how long the hypocrisy and immorality of favouring Israel at the expense of the Arabs would last. The massive uprising of the Palestinian people should surely open the eyes of those who refused to see the truth. Those who backed Israel would go down in history as bearing responsibility for the acts committed by that State in Palestine. In conclusion, he urged all States to help the Palestinian people to develop its economy and free itself from the economic, political and military occupation to which it was subjected.

32. Dame Nita BARROW (Barbados) welcomed the results of the second regular session of the Economic and Social Council, which had been characterized by a commitment to make progress on several key issues. A particular source of satisfaction was the agreement on a package of measures aimed at revitalizing the Council's functioning. While it was accustomed to recommending measures on the political, social and economic questions facing humanity, the Council's own restructuring and improvement of the mechanisms by which it considered those questions had often proved tortuous. Nevertheless, it was an indispensable task, given the contrast between progress on the political front and stagnation in the economic and social

(Dame Nita Barrow, Barbados)

areas. While welcoming the improved relations between the super-Powers and the moves towards peace in several conflict areas, she remained convinced that world peace would take firm root only when the economic substrate had been strengthened. It was essential not to fall into the trap of thinking that the United Nations was solely a place for political dialogue while the real work in the economic and social fields was taking place elsewhere. To do so would be contrary to the Charter, so carefully crafted by the founding fathers.

33. Given those considerations, she wholeheartedly supported the proposal of the Group of 77 relative to the convening of a special session of the General Assembly on the reactivation of economic growth and development in developing countries, for which there must be careful preparation.

34. It must be borne in mind during the present session that the development issue was one of great complexity, a complexity which reflected earth's diversity. Economic growth and development could not be looked at in the context of a limited number of the problems confronting the world today. Rather it involved a complex of issues which touched upon the future of developed and developing countries alike. Thus it would be necessary to generate the political will necessary to ensure the success of the special session. To formulate ambiguously worded but essentially meaningless conclusions would be pointless. The positive and concrete progress on the political front demanded equally decisive action on the economic and social fronts.

35. Her country was heartened by the adoption by consensus of Council resolution 1988/74 on national entrepreneurship in economic development. That action suggested a renewed commitment to serious dialogue and efforts to reach decisions which reflected conditions as they were in reality. It reflected a willingness not to view economic development issues through the lenses of political ideology. The adoption of Council resolution 1988/51 came at an opportune time, following the floods in Bangladesh and Sudan and the damage caused by the hurricane which had devastated Jamaica and parts of Mexico. Once again, the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator had proved its worth. The capacity of that agency to respond quickly in the case of natural disasters should be strengthened further.

36. Her delegation was also pleased at the adoption by the Council of a resolution on the economic aspects of women in development (resolution 1988/49). That issue had been relatively neglected thus far, and she hoped that in the preparation of the section of the World Economic Survey devoted to that issue the widest possible consultations would be undertaken in order to dispel certain misconceptions. Finally, the issue of the traffic in toxic and dangerous products and wastes was of particular concern to Barbados, and her delegation reiterated its request for a report containing the information requested in Council resolution 1988/70 to be submitted to the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session.

37. Mr. ABOU HADID (Syrian Arab Republic) said that, in the Palestinian and other occupied Arab territories, the Israeli authorities continued to violate the provisions of international law, the United Nations Charter, the Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. Those authorities were creating settlements where they were installing settlers in order to modify the demographic composition and the cultural and social identity of the population of those territories, in violation of General Assembly resolutions. Thus it was not surprising that the Palestinian people had been engaged, for the past 11 months, in an uprising to recover its rights and to struggle against occupation and dependence.

38. The Israeli occupying authorities had published many military directives modifying the laws and the property system applicable in the occupied Arab territories in order to justify the confiscation and illegal occupation of the land. Thus, in 1979, they had promulgated a law permitting Israelis to buy land in those territories. Furthermore, they had confiscated 15 hectares of land in the Golan Heights in order to make it into a military zone which was later converted into a settlement.

39. According to an article published in the Israeli press on 28 October 1986, the Israeli police had arrested a Syrian citizen in the Golan Heights because he had seized 7 dunums of land on which he had built a water reservoir. On 22 May 1987, the Israeli Land Administration had closed off a vast area in the Golan Heights to prevent anyone from settling there. That operation had been carried out in a clandestine fashion to avoid any resistance on the part of the population.

40. With respect to water resources, Arab citizens were prohibited from digging new wells and from pumping water without the express authorization of the Israeli military authorities - such permission was obviously refused. Those measures and regulations were intended to reduce the irrigation possibilities available to Arabs in order to force them to leave their villages. Whereas water had been in plentiful supply in the region prior to the 1967 war, in 1986, a dangerous decrease in the level of drinking water had been noted in four villages in the Golan Heights, since the water had been diverted for use by distant Israeli settlements.

41. Those practices had harmed agriculture and industry, and tens of thousands of workers were unemployed in those sectors. In addition, the Israeli authorities were imposing an ever-increasing tax burden on the Arabs living in the Golan Heights in order to weaken them economically and politically. Those authorities were doing everything they could to oppose the adoption of economic policies which might aid the inhabitants of the occupied territories. Thus, they were preventing the Arabs from investing, blocking the granting of credit and opposing the creation of agricultural enterprises, controlling prices and access to markets. General Assembly resolution 38/144 seemed to have been forgotten and the Secretariat confined itself to submitting reports dealing only with Israeli financial practices. It was to be hoped that, in the future, more sustained attention would be given to economic practices and that a comprehensive report on the subject would be submitted.

(Mr. Abou Haqid, Syrian Arab Republic)

42. Finally, as the cultural and social situation in the occupied territories was also deteriorating the international community must act resolutely to compel the occupying authorities to respect the relevant international instruments.

The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.