



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 23rd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. NAVAJAS-MOGRO (Bolivia)

later: Mr. OTOBO (Nigeria)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 82: DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION (continued)

(c) FOOD PROBLEMS

(d) NEW AND RENEWABLE SOURCES OF ENERGY

(e) DEVELOPMENT OF THE ENERGY RESOURCES OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

(g) LONG-TERM STRATEGY FOR SUSTAINABLE AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND DEVELOPMENT

AGENDA ITEM 143: RESPONSIBILITY OF STATES FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND PREVENTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION AS A RESULT OF THE ACCUMULATION OF TOXIC AND RADIOACTIVE WASTES, AND STRENGTHENING OF INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION FOR THE PURPOSE OF RESOLVING THE PROBLEM (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 148: CONSERVATION OF CLIMATE AS PART OF THE COMMON HERITAGE OF MANKIND (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 82: DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION
(continued) (A/43/3, A/43/184, A/43/235-S/19674, A/43/283, A/43/287-S/19740,
A/43/370, 373, A/43/387-S/19918, A/43/399, A/43/425-S/19962, A/43/435,
A/43/457-E/1988/102, A/43/460-E/1988/104, A/43/463-E/1988/106, A/43/480,
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A/C.2/43/4, A/C.2/43/L.5, L.6; E/1988/50)

(c) FOOD PROBLEMS (A/43/19)

(d) NEW AND RENEWABLE SOURCES OF ENERGY (A/43/36)

(e) DEVELOPMENT OF THE ENERGY RESOURCES OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (A/43/476 and
Corr.1)

(g) LONG-TERM STRATEGY FOR SUSTAINABLE AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND DEVELOPMENT
(A/43/353-E/1988/71, A/43/462)

AGENDA ITEM 143: RESPONSIBILITY OF STATES FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT
AND PREVENTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION AS A RESULT OF THE ACCUMULATION OF TOXIC
AND RADIOACTIVE WASTES, AND STRENGTHENING OF INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION FOR THE
PURPOSE OF RESOLVING THE PROBLEM (continued) (A/43/193, 671)

AGENDA ITEM 148: CONSERVATION OF CLIMATE AS PART OF THE COMMON HERITAGE OF MANKIND
(A/43/241) (continued)

1. Mr. ELGHOUAYEL (Tunisia), speaking on behalf of the States members of the
Group of 77, said that the problem of energy was important for development and
economic growth; while the energy markets were showing signs of eased tensions, the
deterioration of ecosystems owing to the use of fossil fuels, which had led to the
greenhouse effect, was a cause of great concern. The Nairobi Programme of Action
for the Development and Utilization of New and Renewable Sources of Energy
continued to be the appropriate framework for thought and action; it was by nature
a long-term endeavour which should not be affected by short-term fluctuations in
energy markets. The United Nations system had a crucial role to play in full
implementation of the Programme; an active intergovernmental role was required.
The Group of 77 endorsed the establishment of a high-level expert group which would
assist the Committee on the development and utilization of new and renewable
sources of energy. A sensible use of renewable sources would contribute
appreciably to social progress, economic development and population stability;
sound co-ordination of activities in that area was essential.

2. The numerous resolutions on the environment adopted by the General Assembly
and the Economic and Social Council, pursuant to the Environmental Perspective to
the Year 2000 and Beyond prepared by the United Nations Environment Programme
(UNEP) and the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development,
testified to the importance of the commitment undertaken by the developing

(Mr. Elghouayel, Tunisia)

countries which called for effective, coherent and integrated action suited to the complexity and urgency of the problem. The industrialized countries certainly accepted the idea of a co-ordinated approach, but they should do more, because they were also the chief users of raw materials and the chief polluters. An integrated programme was inconceivable without their active support. As the developing countries were the first to be affected by deterioration of the environment, they were sensitive to current alarming trends. Given their lack of resources, they regretted that the developed countries were not reacting to the situation as they should; their co-operation left much to be desired. New instruments and new, more integrated international action was needed. The proposal to hold a conference on the environment in 1992 deserved consideration; the conference would have to be well prepared, and the responsibilities of States would have to be defined in terms of the effects of their industrial activities and energy use on the environment. The conference would make sense only if the problems of development and environment were dealt with as a whole. The issue raised by the emergence of a new set of conditions relating to the environment should also be tackled. The United Nations would have an important role to play in preparing preliminary studies for such a conference. The approach should be based on the criteria of balance and equity, the delimitation of responsibilities and obligations deriving therefrom, an analysis of the developed countries' past and current policies vis-à-vis the developing countries, and the latter countries' need for know-how and financial resources. The conference would be a supplement to the proposed special session of the General Assembly for reactivating development.

3. With regard to food problems, there was a marked deterioration attributable not only to the hardships of structural adjustment but also to several natural disasters (e.g., cyclones, plagues of locusts and drought). The picture was even gloomier for the 23 famine-stricken countries, and the long-term prospects were far from encouraging. Despite the commitments made under the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development, the situation was not improving. There had been no reversal of the trends in international agricultural trade; moreover, the problem of the subsidies paid by developed countries to their agricultural sectors had not been solved. The purchasing power of the developing countries' farm exports continued to decline. The last hope was the mid-term review of the results of the Uruguay Round, to be held at Montreal in December 1988; quite obviously a concerted effort would have to be made by the developed countries on that occasion.

4. Mr. KATAWALA (Mozambique) said that the economic and social situation of the developing countries was more precarious than ever. The problems remained the same: poverty, external debt, deteriorating terms of trade, protectionism, inadequate transfer of technology and decreasing official development assistance. However, the seriousness and unpredictable nature of the situation were increasing. The very concept of development and economic co-operation masked a widening gap between the developed and the developing countries. While Mozambique strongly supported the idea of a new international development strategy, it earnestly urged that the strategy should not be confined to words, and that there should be tangible results for at least the majority of countries. A new political

(Mr. Katawala, Mozambique)

will was called for; once objectives had been declared, it was important that all countries should strive to achieve them. In the preparation of the new strategy, the unfulfilled objectives of the previous strategy should be taken into account. Specific action aimed at reactivating development and combating poverty should also be proposed.

5. With regard to the reverse transfer of technology, it should be noted that 15 years after Mozambique's independence, the damaging effects of brain drain were still being felt, although the illiteracy rate had been greatly reduced; after June 1975, an overwhelming majority of foreign skilled personnel had left the country for Portugal, South Africa and Rhodesia.

6. His country was one of those hardest hit by food shortages and particularly high infant mortality resulting from malnutrition. The food shortages were caused in part by the destabilization policy which South Africa pursued against neighbouring States, and in part by natural disasters such as drought and pests. For those reasons, his delegation endorsed the Cyprus Initiative against Hunger in the World and welcomed the proposals of the World Food Council.

7. With regard to renewable sources of energy, Africa's abundant resources of water, wind and solar power should be developed, especially since the consumption of non-renewable sources such as coal, gas and fuelwood upset the ecological balance and led to environmental disasters such as deserts and land erosion.

8. Mr. ZAPOTOCKY (Czechoslovakia) said that the current session of the General Assembly offered an opportunity to reaffirm the need for urgent action to prevent a global environmental catastrophe, and outlined the recent initiatives, indicative of the international community's increasing awareness of existing problems, such as the World Conference on the Changing Atmosphere held at Toronto, the adoption by UNEP of a system-wide medium-term environment programme and a medium-term plan for the period 1990-1995, and recent declarations by the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Group of 77 and the States parties to the Warsaw Treaty.

9. Similar considerations had prompted his delegation to submit a text on international ecological security in 1987, jointly with the Ukrainian delegation. It intended to submit an amended version at the current session. The proposal advocated the adoption of guidelines and principles of conduct and the strengthening of international co-operation in order to create material conditions conducive to greater environmental stability and security and would link a global approach with regional and sectoral measures.

10. There was a direct link between ecological security and development. Unless the problem of mass poverty was alleviated, environmental protection would be difficult to ensure. The World Commission on Environment and Development had concluded that the traditional concept of security must be expanded to include the growing impact of environmental stress. His delegation interpreted that conclusion as an appeal to the international community to eliminate the harmful effects of certain production activities, including peaceful activities.

(Mr. Zapotocky, Czechoslovakia)

11. Certain aspects of international ecological security had already been addressed in international forums. Czechoslovakia had noted with keen interest the conclusions of the ad hoc group of experts set up by UNEP in February 1988 to examine the new ramifications of the concept of security, and attached great importance to the studies in environmental security project (FP/8101-88-01/PP 2821), co-sponsored by UNEP and the International Peace Research Institute at Oslo.

12. At the second regular session of the Economic and Social Council, a document had been circulated expressing the views of the socialist countries on the concept of international ecological security and co-operation in the field of the environment (E/1988/105). The document stressed the following measures: increased perception of environmental problems as political and global issues; application of specific measures for preserving and improving of the environment, as part of national domestic and foreign policy; adoption of anticipatory and preventive policies, in accordance with paragraph 3, subparagraph (f), of General Assembly resolution 42/186; systematic compliance with international agreements through the adoption of effective measures at the national level; codification of national legislation on the environment; adoption of guidelines for international co-operation and the conduct of States, perhaps based on the draft principles set forth in the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development (for example, at a United Nations world conference on environment which might be held in 1992); a requirement for Governments to report annually on their environmental protection activities and to give prompt notification of environmental accidents; enhancement of the role of the United Nations, particularly of UNEP, and implementation of the recommendations of the World Commission on strengthening the Earthwatch programme, the Global Environmental Monitoring System and the Global Resource Information Data Base, and establishment of a Global Risks Assessment Programme; intensification of international co-operation, including transfers of technology.

13. Czechoslovakia supported the proposals submitted at the current session whose purpose was to utilize existing mechanisms in developing international environmental co-operation, and especially the proposal to strengthen UNEP by transforming its Governing Council into a United Nations environmental council. It also unreservedly supported the convening of a United Nations world conference on environment in 1992, and of a regional ministerial conference in 1990, in co-operation with the Economic Commission for Europe. It hoped that its initiative on environmental security would be regarded as a useful contribution to the international dialogue that had started on that subject at the previous session. Its aim was not to obstruct the other proposals that had already been put forward, and it was ready to give careful consideration to all practical ideas.

14. In conclusion, his delegation informed the Committee that its Government had adopted a new strategy of environmental protection to the year 2000. The entire process of planning the national economy was permeated with efforts to harmonize ecological needs and economic development needs. The funds allocated to that sector would have to be considerably increased in order to halt deterioration

(Mr. Zapotocky, Czechoslovakia)

of the environment and progressively to improve its quality, and the Government was intending to take a number of measures concerning industrial production, investments in cleaning facilities, new technologies and development of monitoring; efforts would also be made to develop agriculture and forestry and to make the public more aware of environmental problems. Czechoslovakia would do its utmost, both nationally and internationally, to assume its share of responsibility for protection of the environment.

15. Mr. RODRIGUEZ LABRINA (Uruguay) said that the Cyprus Initiative against Hunger in the world was a historic event, since it aimed at eliminating the scourges of hunger, malnutrition and deterioration in the quality of life, which afflicted millions of people. The recent realization by the international community of the injustice of the situation was an extremely fragile basis for exercising a will to maintain international peace and security. The major Powers must understand that peace meant not just the absence of war, but also the establishment of a juster international economic system in which everyone would be able to exercise the rights set forth in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

16. There was every reason to be pleased that the Ministers meeting at Nicosia for the fourteenth session of the World Food Council had requested, in the context of the Cyprus Initiative, that a critical assessment should be made of past errors and that new initiatives should be taken for co-operation in the fight against hunger. It was incumbent on the Second Committee to follow up that initiative, since agriculture and food were political matters of major importance. The protectionist measures and subsidies for agricultural exports maintained by the developed countries served only to worsen the situation and to widen the gap between North and South. The international economic order established at the end of the Second World War had not taken into account the importance of trade in agricultural products, which had been deliberately excluded from the rules of free trade. The prosperity of the developed countries had unfortunately not spread to the developing countries and it was universally recognized that the current system was not working in that it satisfied neither the countries that spent tens of billions of dollars on subsidizing inefficient farming which in the last analysis represented a net transfer of resources from consumers and taxpayers to farmers, nor those who, like Uruguay, were unable, despite their efforts, to benefit from fair competition within an equitable trading system and were unfairly excluded from third markets. Such was the enormous harm inflicted by protectionism and subsidies for agricultural exports on the developing countries: far from contributing to the elimination of hunger, they exacerbated the difficulties of countries whose economies depended principally on agriculture, stock-raising and fishing. For that reason, Uruguay supported practical measures for dealing with food emergencies, possibly under regional treaties for assistance in such emergencies. Uruguay also supported the idea of triangular transactions for aiding developing countries which, like itself, had food surpluses, and for channelling such surpluses into countries with food shortages.

17. The problem of the environment had to be analysed in the more general context of economic and social development, the approach taken in the report of the World

(Mr. Rodriguez Labruna, Uruguay)

Commission on Environment and Development. The concept of "sustainable" development seemed extremely imprecise and vague, and he wondered whether it was any different from the concept of "economic and social development". The relationship between the issue of the environment and the issue of external debt, was a matter of ethics. The need to honour debt obligations meant cutting off resources that might have been used to meet social needs, and often meant depleting ecosystems, for example through the cultivation of marginal lands. Donor countries must provide the developing countries with further resources to assist them in analysing, preventing and solving environmental problems in accordance with their national development plans, priorities and objectives. Developing countries could not accept that such aid should be linked to further "conditionality" regarding the state of the environment. Lastly, UNEP's activities should be strengthened, and support should be given to initiatives such as the proposal of Malta that climate should be regarded as part of the common heritage of mankind, an initiative to which Uruguay attached great importance, and which must also be reinstated in the context of the economic and social development of the developing countries. What use would a healthy environment be, if most of mankind continued to die of hunger and be unable to satisfy its basic needs?

18. Mr. DE LA TORRE (Argentina) said that the important problems arising in the field of international trade in agricultural products threatened not only global food security, but also the very future of the multilateral trade system.

19. One of the most serious errors made after the Second World War had been not to accord the same treatment to agricultural products as that reserved for industrial products when GATT was established. That regrettable oversight, resulting from the policies implemented during the depression of the 1930s, had had such a profound impact that it deserved to be analysed in further detail. The agricultural policies of the developed countries, which had initially stemmed from a desire to maintain a minimum agricultural production for food security reasons and to assist the population in rural areas, had resulted, in several cases, in an exceptional development of agricultural production, so that those countries which had initially imported large quantities of agricultural products had become major exporters. Consequently, developing countries had lost not only their traditional markets in the developed countries but also markets in the developing world. Argentina was among the countries which had thus been ousted unfairly. Whereas in 1970 it had been the leading exporter of meat, with only 25 per cent of the world market, its share had fallen to only 4.5 per cent in 1986. During the same period, owing to subsidies granted to producers, the share of the world market controlled by the European Economic Community had risen from 21 per cent to 45 per cent. That situation recurred with regard to wheat. The overall share of developing countries in world agricultural trade had fallen from 42 per cent in 1955 to 32 per cent in 1985 whereas, during that period, the developed countries' share had increased from under 50 per cent to nearly 65 per cent. That radical change in the trade structure was accounted for by production subsidies, which, in the leading industrialized countries, had reached the huge amount of \$250 billion from 1984 to 1986. Moreover, the subsidy policy encouraged the use, in Europe, of unfertile lands where germicides and pesticides accumulated.

(Mr. de la Torre, Argentina)

20. Internationally, the agricultural support programmes implemented by most of the developed countries had resulted in a fall in the prices of the products concerned and of their by-products on world markets, a decline in the standard of living of the populations in traditional producer countries and the emergence of serious trade tensions. As a result, the survival of the multilateral trade system depended above all on the outcome of the upcoming mid-term review of the Uruguay multilateral trade negotiations organized by GATT in Montreal. The risk of seeing disorder and trade wars undermine the very foundation of international economic relations was such that successful negotiations in other fields would depend on the results obtained in agriculture. A group of producer countries (the Cairns Group) had therefore submitted a set of measures concerning a structural and thorough reform of agricultural trade and short-term measures for producers who did not receive export subsidies. That proposal should be the starting-point of the Montreal negotiations. It was time to learn from the past and to incorporate agricultural trade into the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, with a view to avoiding a division of the world into blocs ravaged by trade wars and ensuring the victory of multilateralism and reason over bilateral confrontation.

21. Mr. LABERGE (Canada) said that Canada had been both satisfied and concerned to note, from the very beginning of the current session, the increasing importance given by numerous delegations to global environmental issues. It was satisfied, because Governments better understood the importance of the stakes involved and the need for concerted action. It was concerned, because each statement confirmed its fears that if nothing was done, the problem could become unresolvable.

22. The Prime Minister of Canada had recently reaffirmed the great importance which his country attached to concerted international action to resolve environmental problems and to the notion of sustainable development, as set forth in the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development and in General Assembly resolutions 42/186 and 42/187. It was essential steadfastly to follow up the implementation of long-term strategies for sustainable and environmentally sound development nationally and internationally. Canada was currently adopting measures to take into account environmental considerations at all stages of economic planning. Round-table discussions were forthcoming with the participation of representatives of the Government, industry, the academic world and non-governmental organizations, who would be responsible for proposing changes. A few significant initiatives could already be seen in Canadian industry, *inter alia*, in the oil and gas sector, the publication of environmental guidelines in the annual reports of all companies. While that was perhaps a modest contribution, it indicated the direction in which the international community could orient its efforts in order to change traditional behaviour.

23. In 1988 the work of the Second Committee on the question of the environment would be especially important, as it would determine the long-term effects of the recommendations of the World Commission on Environment and Development. Several countries had expressed the wish that environmental questions should be discussed each year in a logical, coherent and systematic way. Canada was prepared to join in any consensus for establishing a working group which would endeavour to rationalize the Second Committee's work related to the environment.

(Mr. Laberge, Canada)

24. Another important problem for the members of the Second Committee was the lack of information on the activities being carried out internationally with a view to studying various sectoral aspects of environmental change. Attention had to date been focused mainly on climatic changes, depletion of the ozone layer, acid rain, transfrontier movements of hazardous wastes and toxic chemicals and their long-term storage and the greenhouse effect. Specific instruments were being developed regionally or globally, and initiatives were increasing (conventions, conferences, seminars, etc.). In the circumstances, it was very difficult to have a comprehensive overview of what was occurring. That problem therefore needed to be addressed.

25. In the developing countries, where poverty exacerbated environmental problems, resources clearly played an important role. Development assistance agencies must therefore help those countries to achieve sustainable development. The assistance provided by Canada was based on that principle. All countries must make adjustments, particularly the developed countries. The achievement of sustainable development implied sharing responsibilities, taking into account the capabilities of each country.

26. UNEP had an important role to play in monitoring the progress made throughout the United Nations system in implementing sustainable development. However, that was not enough. Governments must also assume their responsibilities. The convening of a United Nations conference on sustainable development in 1992 would make it possible to take stock of what had occurred since the Stockholm Conference on the Environment (1972), to assess current environmental risks and to draw up a programme of work setting regional priorities for the Governments and the United Nations agencies. His delegation would subsequently return to that question.

27. The risks of a possible global warming emphasized the need to reduce carbon dioxide emissions through an improved use of existing sources of energy and the development of new and renewable sources of energy. The development of advanced biomass conservation technologies should, in particular, be carried out. Canada had recently launched an initiative (Energy Efficiency and Diversity) designed to promote the development of new sources of energy, reduce oil dependence and encourage environmentally sound production and use of energy. Its development assistance policy focused on those very objectives.

28. The Executive Director of the World Food Council had emphasized the correlation between the problem of hunger and agricultural trade. Trade liberalization could help to alleviate the problem of hunger by promoting economic development and growth. Moreover, the donors and the international agencies which provided food aid and technical assistance had often found themselves embroiled in administrative tangles and political problems which impeded their action. The Cyprus Initiative against Hunger in the World, which proposed specific measures, was a serious attempt to address those grave problems. Canada supported that initiative and, particularly, the spirit behind it, namely, recognition that it was no longer enough to talk about global starvation; immediate measures must be taken to resolve that problem. The World Food Council had rightly emphasized the importance of comprehensive research to determine the needs of the populations

(Mr. Laberge, Canada)

victimized by hunger. His delegation pointed out that considerable work had already been done in that field and that it was necessary to proceed to the next stage, i.e., to identify specific measures.

29. The World Food Council had also considered how to combine national programmes with international co-operation in the struggle against hunger, for example, by encouraging efficient production and distribution, family planning and better co-ordination of assistance programmes. The liberalization of trade in agricultural products was also an effective means for reducing food shortages and Canada hoped that the upcoming Montreal mid-term review of the Uruguay Round would facilitate progress in that field.

30. Mrs. LUO Xu (China) said that there were a number of problems relating to food questions at the current time, particularly the imbalance of development and the constraints on the distribution and circulation of foodstuffs. The contradictory phenomenon whereby some developed countries enjoyed food surpluses while a number of developing countries suffered serious food shortages, continued to exist. The drastic decline in food production consequent upon the serious drought in North America would have a negative impact on the international food trade, thus adding to the chronic problems of developing countries.

31. Her delegation had noted the commendable efforts made by the FAO, WFC and other agencies. She wished to draw particular attention to the Cyprus Initiative against Hunger in the World, which merited the active support of the international community, and to the appeal made by WFC on the strengthening of TCDC in food and agriculture. In view of the importance which it attached to that recommendation, her delegation, together with others, would submit a draft resolution on the issue.

32. During the past few years the protection of the environment had become an increasingly prominent question in the debate on development and international economic co-operation. In particular, the international community was attaching greater importance to the relationship between environment and development, and the proposition of sustained development had received wide support.

33. Environmental pollution and deterioration continued on a vast scale, and the situation had even deteriorated in a number of cases. With economic stagnation and extreme poverty, many developing countries lacked the necessary resources to support effective measures needed for the protection of the environment. Some had been obliged to resort to excessive exploitation of natural resources to sustain mere subsistence. In addition, illegal traffic in toxic and dangerous materials directed towards developing countries and the dumping of nuclear wastes in those countries were increasingly endangering the natural environment and the health of the people.

34. The issue must be addressed appropriately by the international community. Her delegation supported the convening of an international conference to design effective measures in that field, including the conclusion of an international convention. It also hoped that progress towards a satisfactory solution would be achieved during the current session.

(Mrs. Luo Xu, China)

35. Events had shown that it was very difficult to manage properly the relationship between the environment and development. The deterioration of the environment in developing countries could not be contained unless poverty and economic backwardness were eliminated. Therein lay the importance of sustained development. In that context, the developed countries and international agencies should, while providing greater financial and technical assistance, create external conditions favourable to the recovery of economic activity in the developing countries.

36. The climate was the most basic environmental element upon which human existence depended. The atmosphere of the planet knew no frontiers. Urbanization, industrialization and the modernization of transportation had led to changes in the world climate, producing the greenhouse effect. Failure to take immediate effective measures for the conservation of the climate as part of the common heritage of mankind would have extremely severe and even irreparable consequences. That was a responsibility which States could not shirk.

37. Her delegation considered that the United Nations had a decisive role to play in the protection of the world climate. It should first enhance its monitoring so as to attain a better understanding of the ongoing changes in the atmosphere and their possible consequences. Agencies such as WHO and UNEP had already undertaken activities in that connection. Programmes such as the World Climate Programme of WMO should receive greater support. Her delegation believed that the United Nations should also play a lead role in searching for major measures to be recommended to Governments, in defining important principles that they should abide by and in strengthening co-ordination between the different specialized agencies.

38. Programmes and activities related to new and renewable sources of energy should receive adequate attention. The decline in world petroleum prices had slowed the development of new sources of energy but that was a temporary phenomenon. In the long run, with the expansion of the world economy, demand for the various forms of energy would inevitably increase.

39. The Committee on New and Renewable Sources of Energy had played a useful role in facilitating the exchange of experience between Member States, in keeping States abreast of the latest developments, in assisting them in formulating new energy policies and, particularly, in mobilizing world public opinion and financial resources. Her delegation therefore supported the Committee's continued existence. Certain of its activities could be improved. Meetings of the Committee should be carefully prepared. It should improve co-ordination between agencies concerned with new sources of energy, expedite the process of establishing a network of international focal points and encourage joint ventures on new sources of energy in developing countries.

40. Mr. Otokob (Nigeria) took the Chair.

41. Mr. ANDREEN (Sweden), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, expressed concern at the substantial imbalance in food production and consumption between developing and industrialized countries. Although a number of developing countries had made great progress towards self-sufficiency, food insecurity and malnutrition were becoming increasingly rampant in many others, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. Food security might also be endangered by the impact of changed agricultural methods on the environment.

42. During the past 10 years many disasters, both man-made and natural, had swollen the flow of refugees so that the need for food aid and other forms of emergency relief had increased significantly. United Nations agencies such as WFP, UNHCR and UNICEF, were, however, doing an efficient job in the circumstances. So far as concerned food aid in particular, the Nordic countries urged other donors to channel such aid increasingly through WFP in order to reduce the risk of distorting markets affected by such aid.

43. Climatic changes, desertification and other forms of environmental degradation constituted a threat to food production not only in many developing countries but also in developed countries. The report of the World Commission on Environment and Development (Brundtland report) suggested a number of ways to cope with the problems of food security and agricultural production. The Nordic countries considered that the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development, 1986-1990, should also provide a framework for the improvement of agricultural policies in developing countries and for the transfer of resources from the developed to the developing countries. In their own bilateral aid programmes, the Nordic countries had always stressed the agricultural sector as the basis for economic development in developing countries. If the sub-Saharan African countries were successful in improving the management of their natural resources and in raising the level of agricultural production, surpluses would eventually emerge. The prospect for exporting those surpluses would depend very much on the agricultural policies pursued by the industrialized world. The Nordic countries accordingly hoped that the current multilateral trade negotiations would result in a reduction of the measures taken by industrialized countries to support their own producers.

44. Many organizations in the United Nations system dealt with issues related to agriculture and fruit production. However, the co-ordination between their activities needed to be improved and a consideration of that question by the Economic and Social Council and the United Nations would be welcome.

45. With regard to the problem of energy, the prevailing very low energy prices and the increase in demand should not obscure the fact that those resources were not unlimited. As indicated in the Brundtland report, the strategies for reducing the over-consumption of traditional fuels (which were the ones most needed for growth in the developing countries) must be twofold: first, the industrialized countries, which were the principal consumers of fossil fuels, must make energy use more efficient and increase the use of new and renewable energy sources and, secondly, the international community must transfer substantial technological and financial resources to the developing countries. Unfortunately the Nairobi Programme of Action had not been as successful in that regard as anticipated.

(Mr. Andreen, Sweden)

46. There was some confusion regarding the sharing of activities and financial responsibilities among the different institutions of the United Nations system in the field of energy. Consequently, one of the objectives of the research and evaluation project on the United Nations launched by the Nordic countries was to analyse how the various issues were divided among the various United Nations agencies. That analysis would be followed by other studies on what could be done to promote implementation of the recommendations made by the Brundtland report within the United Nations system.

47. Mr. SANGA (United Republic of Tanzania) said that although agriculture was the main component of the Tanzanian economy since it employed more than 90 per cent of the active population and was responsible for approximately 75 per cent of export earnings and 50 per cent of the GNP, the goal of food self-sufficiency, which was of the highest priority, had not been attained. That situation was not unique to his country. The report of the World Food Council (WFC) indicated a decrease in world food production and predicted, in the long term, an increase in hunger and malnutrition in developing countries, where economic growth would not keep pace with demographic growth.

48. His country was striving to overcome those problems through appropriate economic and social policies. Those efforts had begun to bear fruit, but they were not enough to counteract outmoded agricultural techniques, reduce excessive harvest and post-harvest losses, and combat crop diseases and natural disasters. The situation was further exacerbated by the poor quality of the rural transportation network and by inadequate storage facilities. In that connection, his country reiterated its appeal, made during the twenty-fourth FAO Conference, for the international community to increase substantially the amount as well as the quality of its technical assistance and to review the policy reforms and adjustments advocated by the Conference for the developing countries.

49. While appreciative of the food aid provided for millions of hungry people in many developing countries, his country considered those measures to be inadequate. It was necessary to implement the Universal Declaration on the Eradication of Hunger and Malnutrition, adopted by the WFC in 1974, to reach the goal of the elimination of hunger and malnutrition by the end of the century. It had to be recognized that the policies implemented thus far in that area had had only limited success and, in consequence, new approaches, strategies and tactics had to be found. His delegation therefore welcomed the Initiative against Hunger in the World, introduced by Cyprus at the fourteenth session of the WFC, and urged all delegations to join those which had already given their full support to that initiative.

50. To deal with the economic problems of the developing countries, including the food problems, the developing countries and the Bretton Woods Institutions had advocated the implementation of programmes of economic reform and adjustment, based on the idea that poverty could be eliminated and economic growth easily triggered by the removal of distortions at the national level created by food subsidies, high public sector expenditures, over-valued currencies, etc. Those reform and

(Mr. Sanga, United Republic of Tanzania)

adjustment programmes had resulted in, at best, a minimal improvement and had often had a negative impact, at least judging by the development of the situation in Africa since the introduction of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development. The reason for that minimal impact was that those distortions existed not only in developing countries but also in developed countries, in the form of producer subsidies and trade barriers. To that must be added trade and financial practices which were glaringly unjust to developing countries and the crushing weight of the external debt. Thus, it was clear that the proposed adjustment programmes, far from being a panacea, could cause considerable damages unless their immediate consequences were mitigated. In order to make those programmes effective, the Bretton Woods Institutions should encourage the industrialized countries to adopt such programmes too so as to support and supplement the efforts of the developing countries. His delegation hoped that the international community would play its role and that it would be possible to eliminate hunger and malnutrition by the end of the century.

51. Mr. SALAZAR (Guatemala) recalled that the 1980s had been particularly disastrous for the developing countries, which had had to cope simultaneously with population growth, an international economic environment inhospitable to exports to developed countries and difficulties of access to new capital. The world was now witnessing the emergence of even more serious environmental problems, caused by the inefficient use of energy resources.

52. His country, like other developing countries, could not both ensure its development and protect the environment without ample support from the international community. The main problem was deforestation, which had serious consequences for the climate and for agricultural production. Since deforestation was caused by people seeking to fulfil their basic needs, the problem should be dealt with by bringing electricity to rural regions and providing more employment in the secondary and tertiary sectors. To that end, his country wholeheartedly supported the realization of all the energy projects and the projects intended to stimulate the economic revitalization of Central America contained in the Special Plan for Co-operation for the region. It likewise strongly supported all the efforts which would be necessary to achieve sustained and environmentally sound development.

53. Mr. FADZIL (Malaysia) said that the Malta Initiative, relating to the conservation of climate as part of the common heritage of mankind, was particularly welcome because there was a growing awareness of the continuous degradation of the environment, its effect on the planet and the urgent need to find lasting solutions to that highly complex problem.

54. In his country it was also human endeavour that had created ecological problems: national development efforts had often been carried out at the expense of the environment. The problem was to determine appropriate measures conducive to balanced development, measures which would reconcile the development of the infrastructure and the need to preserve the environment. On the basis of that approach, his country, aware that its economy depended to a large extent on sound

(Mr. Fadail, Malaysia)

management of its rich natural resources, had for many years adopted policies taking into account the environmental effects of development, in particular, policies concerning forestry management and conservation, long before the international community became concerned about the deforestation of tropical rain forests. His Government, in its desire to adapt its policies to environmental developments, kept informed of the views of other organizations, including non-governmental organizations, which had been regularly monitoring the state of the environment in the country, had heightened awareness of environmental problems and whose role had even been recognized internationally.

55. Much remained to be done to understand the relationship between development, environment, climate and the highly complex ecosystem. Numerous interrelated issues had to be addressed, including the excessive use of fossil fuel and its impact on the atmosphere, the thinning of the ozone layer, the effects of acid rain on the environment, desertification and the growing traffic of toxic and dangerous products and waste and their dumping in developing countries. Those transnational problems had to be resolved through concerted international action. The Declaration of the twelfth annual meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Group of 77 (A/43/671) indicated the measures to be taken, in particular in paragraph 20, which stated that the only way to achieve lasting protection of the environment was to reactivate the development process by creating a supportive external economic environment and that measures undertaken at the international level should take full account of the inequities which characterized the various methods of production and consumption. Paragraph 20 further requested that concrete measures should be adopted to put an end to the dumping of toxic products in developing countries. The Second Committee should take the Declaration into consideration in its work.

56. The international community should also give due recognition to existing capabilities within the United Nations system. With regard to the needs in the areas of research, data collection and exchange of information, he urged the strengthening of the United Nations Environment Programme, the World Meteorological Organization and other United Nations agencies which could contribute to the important human task of protecting the environment.

57. Mr. JOSSE (Nepal) said that his delegation was profoundly concerned by the increase over the past 10 years in the number of children suffering from malnutrition, a situation that was all the more untenable since it was occurring amidst food surpluses. While concessional food transfers from food-surplus countries could be a palliative, a long-term solution to the problem of hunger could best be found by tackling its root causes. Nepal thus fully supported the Cyprus Initiative, welcomed the examination of the link between food security and the environment, endorsed moves for greater co-ordination of international agency policies in relation to food security and supported the recommendation that the Governing Council of UNDP should adopt without delay the umbrella project for the

(Mr. Josse, Nepal)

promotion of regional and South-South co-operation in the food and agricultural sector, prepared jointly by UNDP and the World Food Council.

58. The Nepalese Government had launched a development plan to fulfil the basic needs of the people by the year 2000 in which food strategy occupied a pre-eminent position. Food grain production had been accorded top priority, and a target had been established of doubling current production by the turn of the century, principally through the partnership of the co-operative and private sectors in the delivery of agricultural inputs. The international community had contributed to those efforts and Nepal urged continuation of such co-operation in the establishment of an international centre for hill and high-altitude agriculture in Asia and in the implementation of a master plan for the forestry sector, prepared in accordance with FAO guidelines.

59. With regard to new and renewable sources of energy, the Nairobi Programme of Action should be fully implemented, especially at a time when depressed oil prices had led to reduced funding and when countries that were still largely dependent on wood and other traditional fuels had experienced little relief. The Committee on the Development and Utilization of New and Renewable Sources of Energy should actively support research into the use of low-cost, low-maintenance and environmentally-sound mini-hydro power generation units.

60. The report of the Secretary-General entitled "Energy exploration and development trends in developing countries" (A/43/476) was extremely disturbing. While the energy crises of the 1970s had been followed by abundance and even surplus capacity, energy-deficient developing countries had not been able to make the necessary adjustments owing to their lack of financial and technological resources. Lower oil prices had resulted in an investment slump and a reduction in the number of prospective investors. It was thus important to devise special measures to assist energy-deficient developing countries in their exploration and development efforts. His delegation joined with other delegations in recommending the formulation, with the co-operation of the Governments concerned, of a comprehensive programme of action for such countries, through a country-by-country survey of energy projections and plans to the year 2000.

61. It was gratifying to note that the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development had begun to have an impact on development policies and programmes. In that connection his delegation drew attention to the establishment at Kathmandu of the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development, specifically mandated to preserve the fragile ecosystem of the Himalayas. Nepal's proposal concerning co-operation with neighbouring countries in joint ventures to exploit water resources for the benefit of the region was still valid and his Government trusted that the next regional summit would provide an opportunity to translate it into reality. Lastly, his delegation expected the international donor community to offer encouragement and assistance in the formulation and implementation of long-term policies to promote environment-friendly development.

62. Mr. NOGUEIRA-BATISTA (Brazil) said that the inequity of the international economic system constituted a formidable barrier to resolving environmental problems. It was thus imperative to alter that situation and to reverse the flow of resources in favour of the developing countries. It was necessary for multilateral financial institutions to support developing countries' programmes of environmental protection, by providing them with additional resources and by making available new types of facilities, instead of imposing new conditions on the already inadequate allocation of funds.

63. Irreparable damage was caused by the squandering of resources and disorderly consumption in developed countries and by distressing levels of poverty in developing countries. The concept of sustainable development, endorsed by both the Environmental Perspective to the Year 2000 and Beyond and the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, was applicable to both groups of countries. Growth and development in all countries should be rational and balanced.

64. Since some countries, unable to dispose of the enormous quantity of hazardous wastes generated by their industries, were tempted to transfer those wastes to the territories of developing countries, the elaboration of a global convention on the control of transboundary movements of hazardous wastes assumed particular importance. Brazil had repeatedly criticized such practices, and welcomed the adoption by the Organization of African Unity of a resolution firmly condemning the transfer of toxic or radioactive wastes to the territories of its Member States. Furthermore, Brazil had declared that the South Atlantic marine environment should remain free from pollution, while expressing a willingness to study and adopt measures to prevent and control the dumping of hazardous, toxic and nuclear wastes in the marine areas of the region, including the high seas.

65. At the national level, the Brazilian Government had made determined efforts to counter threats to the environment. The new Brazilian constitution devoted an entire chapter to the environment, making the Government responsible for protecting the environment and the community responsible for preserving it for future generations. The Administration also had an obligation to preserve the integrity of Brazil's genetic resources, to foster ecological education at all levels and to promote public awareness of environmental protection.

66. Further, convinced that the development of the Amazon region must combine the just aspirations for the progress and welfare of the peoples of the region with the preservation of the natural heritage, in 1978 Brazil and seven other South American countries had signed a treaty of co-operation, and, pursuant to that treaty, had taken several initiatives in such areas as forest management, botany and the use of appropriate technology, some of them with the support of development agencies, including UNDP.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.