



**SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 21st MEETING**

**Chairman:** Mr. NAVAJAS-MOGRO (Bolivia)

later: Mr. FERNANDEZ (Philippines)

later: Mr. OTOBO (Nigeria)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 83: EXTERNAL DEBT CRISIS AND DEVELOPMENT (continued)  
(A/43/235-S/19674, A/43/287-S/19740, A/43/510-S/20001 and A/43/667-S/20212;  
A/43/184, 370, 373, 399, 480, 538, 587, 647, 671, 692 and 709)

1. Mr. BEN SADIR (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that not only had the debt crisis, which had been under consideration for seven years, not yet been resolved, but that it was growing more acute in the developing countries, particularly those of Africa and Latin America. Natural disasters had aggravated the situation in some of those countries, which had been forced to borrow money and had become overwhelmed by the debt-servicing burden.

2. He agreed with the delegations that had described as inadequate the decisions taken at the Toronto summit meeting and by the Paris and Rome Clubs with regard to debt relief for the developing countries, advocating assistance for the debtor countries with regard to the exploitation of their resources and rescheduling of repayment obligations.

3. The debt crisis had worsened as a result of the fall in commodity prices and in the value of the United States dollar, events that had occurred together in 1982. The strategy adopted to bring an end to the crisis was both ineffective and iniquitous; the adjustment policies imposed on the developing countries were resulting in lower living standards. At the same time, there was a substantial net transfer of resources from the indebted developing countries to the developed nations, and the situation was having a disruptive effect on the international economy. The creditor and debtor countries should therefore adopt a co-ordinated approach and work out a new strategy in order to emerge from the crisis. In particular, the negative transfer of resources should be brought to an end, which meant that it was important for the developed countries to open up their markets to the debtor countries.

4. The international community must create a climate guaranteeing international economic security on the basis of a new economic order.

5. Mr. KUFUOR (Ghana) said that the debt-servicing burden constituted a serious obstacle to development in the low- and middle-income countries of Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean. While the strategies adopted had certainly made it possible to avoid a major disruption in the financial system, they had not helped the debtor countries to overcome their difficulties

6. Those countries had, however, made considerable adjustment efforts in order to meet their obligations, often at the price of severe social and political strain. At the same time, they had had to cope with an unfavourable external environment: falling commodity prices, declining or stagnating resource flows and market access impeded by protectionist measures. All countries, but in particular the major industrialized nations, must therefore demonstrate the necessary political will, co-ordinating their economic policies on a democratic basis with a view to creating a more dynamic international environment.

(Mr. Kufuor, Ghana)

7. In that connection, there was reason to welcome the initiatives adopted at the Toronto summit meeting in favour of the heavily indebted low-income countries, in particular those of sub-Saharan Africa. The measures already taken by the donors did not, however, take sufficient account of the multilateral debt, which was becoming increasingly onerous. Around 30 per cent of Ghana's total debt was owed to IMF and other African countries were in a similar position. Since obligations to the Fund were usually short-term and could not be rescheduled, the debtor countries had had to devote more and more of their export earnings to the servicing of their IMF debt, and many were no longer able to meet their commitments. The international community could not keep its eyes closed to that serious problem and should study the various proposals for remedying the situation, such as interest subsidy schemes and refinancing mechanisms.
8. Lastly, the Ghanaian delegation reaffirmed its commitment to the African common position on the continent's debt crisis and hoped that urgent steps would be taken to implement the many interesting proposals contained in the document in question.
9. Mr. SUTRESNA (Indonesia) said that the statement made on behalf of the Group of 77 was a fair reflection of his delegation's views on the subject. He pointed out that the international debt strategy pursued to date had failed because it had been based on an inaccurate assessment of the situation. The debtor countries had undertaken extremely demanding adjustment measures in an unfavourable economic context. Indebtedness, which had assumed staggering proportions, was a formidable obstacle to development, which threatened the very workings of the international financial system.
10. A new, effective and durable strategy was urgently required to break the deadlock. The main points had already been identified as a result of the recent unprecedented burst of intellectual and practical activity.
11. The Indonesian delegation stressed the importance of exchange rate stability within that strategy. It also emphasized the need to resolve the problem within the context of economic growth, the role of debt and debt-servicing reduction, and the importance of new finance flows. Furthermore, the problem called for a political solution based on the shared responsibility of creditor countries, debtor countries, commercial banks and international financial institutions. All such measures should be applied not only to the low-income countries, but also to middle-income countries which had overwhelming debt-servicing obligations.
12. Lastly, in order to ensure the early adoption and implementation of the strategy, the international community should initiate a dialogue with a view to taking concerted action at the highest level.
13. The CHAIRMAN concluded the debate on the debt crisis, referring briefly to the speeches made by the delegations. He hoped that the convergence of views expressed would result in a consensus.

**AGENDA ITEM 82: DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION**  
(A/43/235-S/19674, A/43/287-S/19740, A/43/387-S/19918, A/43/425-S/19962 and  
A/43/510-S/20091; A/43/457-E/1968/102, A/43/460-E/1988/104 and A/43/463-E/1988/106;  
A/43/3, 184, 283, 370, 373, 399, 435, 480, 538, 544, 584, 587, 695 and 714;  
A/C.2/43/2-4; A/C.2/43/L.5 and 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/1988/1971, 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 (A/43/193, A/43/671)**

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

14. Mr. TOLBA (Executive Director, United Nations Environment Programme) said that all the warnings of UNEP over the past 10 years had unfortunately come true: ozone depletion, desertification, deforestation, global warming. While it was true that the destruction of the natural resource base was accelerating in an alarming manner, there were indisputable signs that positive action was being planned and taken. The environment had been neglected over a long period but it had currently become a mainstream concern and would remain on the agenda. People were prepared to ensure its protection and to make sacrifices, but were looking to their Governments to come up with appropriate answers.

15. The first item of concern was sustainable development. A broad effort was under way to apply the recommendations contained in the documents entitled "Our Common Future" and "Environmental Perspective to the Year 2000 and Beyond". Much remained to be done but Governments were showing resolve to take pre-emptive measures such as the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. Sustainable development was a main objective of the United Nations system, which was accelerating its efforts to build environmental considerations into programmes and budgets within the framework of the system-wide medium-term environment programme and had adopted a common approach to the issue at the Oslo Conference.

16. It was, however, in the developing countries where the environmental crisis was most acute because, for close to a billion people, it was a matter of survival. Those most concerned had the least to say. It was meaningless to speak of sustainable development while it was not possible for people to lead a decent life. All the good intentions would evaporate unless a higher priority was given

(Mr. Tolba)

to the tasks of tackling the global inequities that led to the exhaustion of natural resources and of providing developing countries with the infrastructure and trained manpower which were currently lacking.

17. It was not so much a question of knowing what should be done as of knowing how to implement what had been decided. In that connection, a group of United Nations agencies (World Bank, UNDP, FAO, UNESCO, UNIDO, UNFPA, WHO, UNEP and three economic commissions) were currently putting into motion, on an experimental basis, a series of activities in three developing countries in order to evolve tested guidelines for planning development which was sustainable. The basic objective, hopefully with donor support, was to develop decision-making capacity in third world countries so that they could take measured decisions about the use of their natural resources and the conditions of development assistance.

18. Dumping of hazardous wastes in third world nations was another issue of concern and outrage. A great many reports were already available on that traffic which was flourishing in the absence of binding regulations and which had been deplored by virtually all Governments in the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. In 1987 the Governing Council of UNEP had adopted guidelines and principles on the issue. UNEP was currently preparing for an international conference of plenipotentiaries to be held in Basel in March 1989 and he believed that Governments would go to Basel with the intent to agree on a convention which, for UNEP, must be nothing less than a watertight agreement suited to immediate and effective implementation.

19. No agreement, no matter how effective, could provide a complete solution. The industrialized countries, where 98 per cent of dangerous wastes originated, virtually all recognized that they had the means to minimize its production and to deal with what was left and were actively working towards that end.

20. It was even more difficult to deal with the third item, climate change. The issue of global warming was one which over the previous year had given rise to the greatest concern among Governments, some of which had sounded strong alarms. Public opinion also was calling for immediate measures.

21. Such concern had arisen as a result of a decade of patient scientific work, including a substantial contribution from UNEP. It was now clear that the process of global warming already under way would, if it continued, cause widespread disturbance of ecosystems. There was therefore agreement on the need for urgent action. All United Nations bodies concerned were actively involved in the task. The World Bank, UNDP, FAO and UNESCO were working in close co-operation. Of course, WMO and UNEP were included in that effort and had established an intergovernmental panel of experts in order to identify means of meeting the challenge,

22. All Governments must take the following measures as a matter of urgency: establish goals for improved energy efficiency and supply targeted on a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions; fix targets for reducing deforestation and increasing reforestation over five-year periods; ensure the total elimination of

(Mr. Tolba)

chlorofluorocarbon (CFC) releases by the year 2000; and radically increase human and financial resources for research programmes.

23. No country, however strong, could solve the issue of climatic change on its own. Governments had no alternative but to work together. It should be possible by 1990 to start work on a global accord addressing the various aspects of the issue.

24. It was heartening that so many activities had already been planned to honour the twentieth anniversary of the Stockholm Conference on the Environment in 1992. It might be appropriate to convene a United Nations conference or a special session of the Governing Council of UNEP to mark the occasion. In order to avoid duplication, he hoped that all those planning activities for 1992 would notify UNEP, which would maintain a record of all events and disseminate the information to those concerned.

25. He deplored the paradox that, while the environment had been elevated to a leading international concern, thus increasing UNEP's workload, contributions to UNEP's Programme had shown a considerable drop over the past 10 years. Its staff, already very slim, would in all probability be cut by nearly a fifth.

26. He was acutely aware that there were severe limitations to what even a properly financed UNEP could accomplish; and international agreements were pointless unless they were complemented by action at the national level. Much more must be accomplished in that area if global society was to cross the threshold to a sustainable and equitable global economy. Two barriers had to be overcome. First, nations, when measuring their wealth, must take due account of the quality and stocks of their natural resources and place a true value on them. Second, they must accept that rational and equitable utilisation of the environment and natural resources, whether national or shared, was a cornerstone of peace.

27. He was confident that the nations would take action to overcome those obstacles within the framework of regional co-operation. In certain cases Governments might need to ask the Governing Council of UNEP to play the role of mediator.

28. The peoples of the world had come to realize that protecting the environment was not a question of doing good; it was about creating a new kind of wealth, one that would last and could be handed on to the next generation.

29. Mr. Fernandez (Philippines) took the Chair.

30. Mr. TRANT (Executive Director of the World Food Council), introducing the report of the World Food Council on the work of its fourteenth session (A/43/19), drew attention to the Cyprus Initiative Against Hunger in the World.

31. It was paradoxical that hunger should be growing at a time when there were food surpluses. Accordingly, the secretariat of the World Food Council (WFC) had

(Mr. Trant)

examined ways to utilize surpluses in support of accelerated food-security development in developing countries and had presented a proposal on the subject. While the proposal had met with widespread interest, it had been observed that food surpluses and hunger were separate problems. In order to eliminate hunger, it was necessary to better understand why the efforts of the international community had proved insufficient. It was also necessary to take immediate and more effective action, drawing upon the lessons of the past. The Cyprus Initiative Against Hunger in the World called for a review of current policies and the adoption of pragmatic new initiatives towards meeting the fundamental objective: the elimination of hunger and malnutrition. To that end, the Council had decided to establish an informal ad hoc consultative group. The Member States and various organizations of the United Nations system had been consulted after the fourteenth ministerial session regarding the work to be undertaken by the consultative group. Its role would be extremely important. Its task would be to place the problem of hunger in a broader context. Currently, economic and social objectives were sometimes conflicting and austerity programmes were contributing to the deterioration of living conditions of millions of people. It was therefore imperative to link immediate objectives to medium- and long-term development strategies and to reconcile social and economic priorities. For its part, the international community would have to re-adjust its assistance programmes to the real needs of developing countries and seek improved co-ordination.

32. The Ministers had found that hunger and malnutrition were still on the increase; the situation was appalling. In particular, the living conditions of the poorest people continued to deteriorate. Nevertheless, they had found that many countries were showing more concern for the well-being of their low-income people. In that context, they had reiterated the Beijing call for an improvement in the human condition, and specifically, for an international effort to improve the food situation of low-income groups during the period of economic adjustment. The need to channel more resources to the developing countries in order to ensure equitable economic development - a prerequisite for the alleviation of hunger and poverty - had been reaffirmed. In addition, they had noted with satisfaction the progress made with regard to disarmament and peace-keeping.

33. The Council would continue to work closely with the United Nations organizations which were executing programmes designed to help solve food problems. In general, the Council considered that environmental degradation was jeopardizing food security. Since it was possible to increase agricultural productivity without depleting the soil, it had been recommended that environmentally sound agricultural management practices should form a part of national food strategies and, more generally, that environmental concerns should be integrated in economic development policies and programmes. That should be taken into account when resources were being allocated, and particular attention should be given to relief and rehabilitation measures which combined environmental protection and income support for the affected people in low-income food-deficit countries.

(Mr. Trant)

34. The Council had noted with interest the proposals presented by the Executive Director of UNEP for future co-operation between UNEP and WFC. They concerned: (a) the convening of regional meetings of ministers of agriculture and the environment; (b) case studies of successful operations which low-income food-deficit countries could adapt and replicate; and (c) joint action by FAO, WFC and IFAD to assist certain low-income food-deficit countries in co-ordinating their agricultural development policies with their natural resources and environmental policies.

35. The Council had emphasized that all countries could benefit from liberalized international trade in agricultural and tropical products; such liberalization would be of particular benefit to the efforts of the developing countries to achieve food security. It had noted with regret that no progress had been made in 1987 in the multilateral trade negotiations towards correcting agricultural trade imbalances and the domestic reforms which that entailed, and had expressed the hope that the December mid-term review would impart a decisive momentum to efforts in that area. The negotiations must provide for special and differential treatment for all the developing countries and should take into consideration their food-security objectives. All countries had an interest in the creation of a free, open, stable and equitable trading system.

36. The ministers had reaffirmed the importance of improved policy co-ordination and convergence among international agencies in the area of food security. In order to respond adequately to requests for assistance, the United Nations and its agencies must be assured of adequate and reliable financing. An appeal had therefore been made to all Member States for the timely payment of their contributions. For its part, the WFC secretariat would continue its close collaboration with the other organizations concerned in order to use resources more effectively and enhance their overall impact.

37. The Ministers had noted with satisfaction the follow-up activities of WFC, particularly in support of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990. The progress achieved in the promotion of training programmes in support of African food policy efforts had been deemed very encouraging. UNDP had been asked to adopt without delay the umbrella project for the promotion of regional and South-South co-operation in the food and agricultural sector, which had been prepared jointly by UNDP and WFC. The Ministers had reaffirmed the Beijing call for a strengthening of regional and South-South co-operation in food and agriculture, especially technical co-operation among developing countries in the context of tripartite arrangements. The developed countries had been urged to provide appropriate financial and technical support to that form of co-operation. At the same time, the agencies of the United Nations system and other international financing institutions had been urged to give it appropriate priority in their programmes of work. The President of WFC had been invited to emphasize to the General Assembly at its forty-third session the importance of South-South co-operation.

38. He hoped that the Committee would strongly support the consensus achieved at Cyprus by an appropriate resolution.



(Mr. Trant)

39. He then presented, on behalf of the Secretary-General, an oral report on the liberalization of international agricultural trade which had been requested in Economic and Social Council resolution 1987/90. After recapitulating the trends in the international market for agricultural products, which were described in detail in the Secretary-General's report (E/1988/70), he said that in general the developing countries' share of world agricultural exports had tended to decline, even for products in which they were traditionally the main exporters (meat, cereals, dairy products, certain vegetable oils, cotton and sugar). That situation was of great concern since the economies of the developing countries were largely dependent on agricultural exports: for the majority of developing countries the share of agricultural products in total merchandise exports ranged between 50 and 100 per cent. At the same time world agricultural exports had been growing. That paradox was explained by the fact that the developed countries had increased their agricultural production and exports, often thanks to subsidies. Imports had also been restricted by a series of measures. In particular, tariffs had been imposed which escalated according to the degree of processing, and there had also been non-tariff measures which weighed more heavily on imported products in processed form. The expansion of agricultural trade between the developing countries themselves was certainly a positive trend. However, the markets of those countries were still too small to absorb the much-needed increase in exports.

40. In his oral report in 1987 the Secretary-General had pointed to the emergence of an agreement in principle on the nature of international agricultural trade problems and on the general direction of the action required. Unfortunately, the achievements had fallen far short of the high hopes raised after the adoption of the Punta del Este Declaration. The challenge had been, and was still, to reduce the divergences that remained in a number of areas and progressively to eliminate measures which were inconsistent with expressions of intent on the liberalization of trade.

41. In the past year important progress had been made in multilateral trade negotiations outside the GATT framework. The signing at Belgrade of the Agreement on the Global System of Trade Preferences had paved the way for a liberalization of trade between the developing countries and, thereby, for an expansion of trade between them. In the context of the Uruguay Round, a number of proposals had been submitted on agricultural and tropical products which were aimed not only at improving commercial practices but also at reforming domestic agricultural policies. Efforts had also been made to narrow divergences within the negotiating process of GATT, at various meetings of trading partners and in such forums as the World Food Council, FAO, UNCTAD, the International Wheat Council and OECD.

42. Despite those efforts, serious obstacles still stood in the way of achieving a freer and more equitable trading system. In the agricultural sector, the Contracting Parties remained divided on the relative priorities to be afforded short-term measures and long-term reforms; on the definition of an aggregate measure of producer support; on the extent of "decoupling", a term used for the provision of assistance unrelated to production or to investment and marketing decision; and on the substance of special and differential treatment for the developing countries. At its last ministerial session, the World Food Council had

(Mr. Trant)

again observed that it was imperative to extend special and differential treatment in view of the close links which existed between food security and international agricultural trade. Such measures should take into account the unfavourable repercussions which the liberalization of trade might have in the short term for the food imports of the developing countries. In the tropical products sector, there were still divergences on product coverage, on any linkage which might be established between those products and the other sectors within the Uruguay Round, and on the question of reciprocal questions from the developing countries.

43. In his previous oral report, the Secretary-General had observed that OECD countries had committed themselves to a set of principles for domestic reform and multilateral trade negotiations, including the standstill and rollback. Progress in that area had been disappointing. The OECD ministers themselves had acknowledged that tensions on agricultural markets remained very serious, notably due to the persistence and, in some cases, intensification of all forms of support, including export subsidies and import restrictions.

44. In conclusion, it was possible to say that some progress had been achieved in the multilateral trade negotiations: the Agreement on the Global System of Trade Preferences had been concluded, and within GATT proposals on agricultural and tropical products had been submitted promptly. But the actual negotiations had yet to begin. The international community must turn to good account the mid-term review which would be taking place at Montreal in December in order to manifest its determination to create a more open, equitable and stable trading system. It was time to translate noble intentions into actions.

45. Mr. Navajas-Mogro (Bolivia) resumed the Chair.

46. Mr. OULD ABDALLAH (Special Co-ordinator for New and Renewable Sources of Energy) pointed out that the energy crisis of the 1970s had generally diminished in intensity and that it was now the impact of the utilization of energy on the environment which was becoming a cause of concern. At the time of the adoption of the Nairobi Programme of Action (1981) the world energy market had been extremely tense, and that explained the great interest which had then been shown in developing and utilizing renewable sources of energy. Now supply of oil was greater than demand, and prices were low. However, in view of the risk of a new rise in oil prices, caused paradoxically by their excessive decline, and in view of the harmful consequences of utilizing fossil energy sources, the continuous degradation of ecosystems, the greenhouse effect and its climatic consequences, and the fact that nuclear energy could not replace fossil sources of energy with complete safety, renewable sources of energy, which were clean and not dangerous, were rightly the subject of renewed interest. All real costs should be accounted for in order to compare as accurately as possible the various existing sources of energy (fossil, nuclear and renewable) so as to choose the best energy policy which, in the foreseeable future, would doubtless be based on a combination of all three. The proposal to convene a group of experts to study the consequences of energy utilization for the environment deserved the Committee's attention.

(Mr. Ould A'dallah)

47. At its recent meeting, the Committee on the Development and Utilization of New and Renewable Sources of Energy had selected three themes for its session in 1990, namely the contribution of new and renewable sources of energy to integrated rural development, direct solar-to-electrical energy conversion, and the utilization of agricultural residues and urban wastes for energy production. The development of techniques for utilizing renewable sources of energy was progressing steadily; meetings centred on specific sources of energy (solar, wind and thermal, as well as biogas) were being held all over the world, while the products themselves were becoming increasingly miniaturized and their cost was continuing to fall; and associations of producers and exporters were very active. Such forms of energy were well suited to utilization in rural areas, which, in the developing countries, generally had rather modest economic and political power; they had also not benefited from the fall in oil prices and local energy was in short supply. Renewable sources of energy were very effective at production sites, and in rural areas would be a source of social progress, economic development and stability for the population. Bilateral co-operation was very active in the field; the United Nations, thanks to the United Nations Trust Fund for New and Renewable Sources of Energy, had been able to finance specific activities concerned with the utilization of solar energy for pumping drinking water, irrigating small family plots, and installing medical refrigerators. In that connection, he wished to thank the Government of Italy for its financial support.

48. Technological progress in the field of superconductivity should open the way to broader regional and international co-operation in the long-distance transportation of energy, in particular, hydroelectric power. Whereas nuclear disasters or disasters attributed to acid rain or related to the destruction of tropical forests had direct and known consequences, the long-term effects were not measurable. The greenhouse effect, which now seemed irreversible, could lead to incalculable climatic, economic, social and even geopolitical disruptions. Since conventional and nuclear energy played a vital role, and since it was not possible to change ways of life and means of production and transportation overnight, it was time to begin to consider the multifaceted interrelationship between energy, economic development and the environment.

49. Mr. CONSTANTINOU (Chief of the Energy and Resources Branch, Department of International Economic and Social Affairs), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on energy exploration and development trends in developing countries (A/43/476), summed up the energy situation. Lower oil prices had been followed by sizeable cut-backs in oil exploration throughout the world and the discovery of new deposits and growth in production had slowed down considerably, but in such areas as North America, the North Sea, Mexico, the Soviet Union and several non-OPEC oil-exporting developing countries, production was continuing at full capacity, which speeded up the rate of depletion of their proved reserves. On the other hand, new discoveries had remarkably increased the proved oil reserves in the area of the Persian Gulf. That very marked geographic imbalance of proved reserves had led to apprehension about future prices and the security of supplies, particularly in the absence of co-operation and agreement between producers and consumers. Since 1986, oil demand had increased by about 2 per cent a year in the developed market economy countries and by 3 per cent a year in the developing

(Mr. Constantinou)

world. Future growth in oil consumption would be influenced by a number of very diverse factors, but annual growth would probably not be less than 1 to 1.5 million barrels a day. Dependence on the oil reserves of the Middle East would probably increase in the years to come. While the developed countries had very large oil stocks and were developing their indigenous energy resources, the oil-importing developing countries were highly dependent since they could not afford to stockpile oil supplies. They were already deep in debt and experienced difficulties in developing their own oil exploration, at a time when bilateral and multilateral financial and technical assistance tended to de-emphasize that crucial sector.

50. He reviewed trends in the production of natural gas, hydroelectricity and coal. Looking to the future, he estimated that by the year 2000 the increase in world energy supplies would be mostly due to production in the developing countries, in particular the countries members of OPEC. With growing population, urbanisation and, he hoped, resumption of economic growth, demand for oil would increase to at least 4 per cent a year in the developing countries. In order to meet that demand, exploration would have to be accelerated in order to avoid even greater dependence on imports. Could that be done within the current and foreseeable framework of the oil industry? That question had been dealt with by a group of experts meeting in Paris in September 1988 at a session organized by the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs in co-operation with the French Petroleum Institute. The group of experts had recommended, inter alia, expanded bilateral assistance programmes which were expected to result in savings, in the sector of oil exploration.

51. The energy crisis of the 1970s had been followed by a period of abundant and even surplus energy supplies in the 1980s. With the resumption of economic growth, such surpluses could turn once again into shortages, given the long lead times required for energy exploration and development projects. That situation seemed to justify increased international co-operation in order to ensure stability in energy investments as well as in production and consumption patterns. Similarly, the need for special measures to assist energy-deficient developing countries in their energy exploration and development efforts remained important.

52. Mr. RAJAKOSKI (Finland), speaking on behalf of the five Nordic countries, said that the global degradation of the environment and natural resources was accelerating and posed a serious threat to economic and social development. Global warming was expected to increase, and energy consumption displayed a parallel trend. Many countries continued to dump waste in the oceans. Desertification and the degradation of tropical forests were continuing.

53. While the measures which had been taken by the international community were obviously inadequate, there were nevertheless encouraging signs of a change in attitude. Since the presentation of the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development (A/42/427) at the forty-second session, there had been a new awareness, both nationally and internationally, of the need to implement new policies to ensure sustainable development. One of the most outstanding achievements resulting from that awareness had been the adoption of the Montreal Protocol relating to substances which deplete the ozone layer.

(Mr. Rajakoski, Finland)

54. Progress had also been made on the conceptual level. Much wider than the classical concept of protection of the environment, the concept of sustainable and environmentally sound development implied a profound and radical change in economic and social planning. That concept had become a permanent element in contemporary thinking and was the central issue in the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, which gave special emphasis to the problems of the developing countries, where 85 per cent of the world's population lived. Many of those problems originated outside the developing countries. It must be borne in mind that a large part of pollution was generated by the industrialized countries, which also consumed a major portion of the world's energy. That imbalance should therefore be corrected. At the same time, economic growth should be maintained or increased in order to facilitate sustainable and environmentally sound development, since the immediate additional costs involved in developing or applying low- and non-waste technology must be financed.

55. The Nordic countries had established national commissions to study ways of implementing the recommendations of the report of the World Commission. At the invitation of the Prime Minister of Norway, the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the executive heads of 22 United Nations organizations had met with members of the World Commission in Oslo in July 1988. The participants in that meeting had identified such priority issues as the development of human resources and the integration of population policies; protection of the atmosphere and the global climate as well as ocean and water resources; new ways of halting desertification and deforestation; measures to prevent the dissemination of dangerous wastes and to eliminate such wastes; strengthening of technical co-operation; measures to control soil erosion and the extinction of certain species; and, above all, maintenance of economic growth, social justice and a more equitable distribution of income and resources within and among countries as a means of alleviating poverty.

56. As the UNEP Governing Council had emphasized in a decision adopted in March 1988, sustainable and environmentally sound development should be one of the main objectives of a new international development strategy. The first concrete step towards the integration of that concept in the activities of the United Nations specialized agencies had been the adoption of the system-wide medium-term environment programme for the period 1990-1995. In that context, the follow-up to the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development would be evaluated further at a conference to be organized by Norway in 1990 in collaboration with the Economic Commission for Europe. In addition, a United Nations conference on environment and sustainable development was scheduled to be held in 1992. The General Assembly should therefore take appropriate decisions to prepare for that conference during the current session. Several regional conferences would also be held in the near future.

57. The Nordic countries wished to emphasize the urgent need to control transboundary movements of hazardous wastes and strongly supported the work done by UNEP to draft a global convention to that end. That instrument should deal with all issues relating to the control of such movements and should define the issues

(Mr. Rajakoski, Finland)

to be developed further through co-operation between the parties. It could be supplemented by additional protocols as well as codes of conduct. The Nordic countries were prepared to participate in the negotiations for the elaboration of such a convention and to work for its speedy ratification and implementation.

58. Changes in the global climate and the depletion of the ozone layer were also quite worrisome because they were causing a global warming and a rise in the sea-level attributable to a higher concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. The causes and effects of those phenomena should be assessed further and possible strategies to prevent atmospheric warming should be more actively considered. It was also of the utmost importance that the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and the Montreal Protocol thereto should be ratified as soon as possible by as many countries as possible. Furthermore, discussions on a convention for the conservation of climate should be initiated in order to provide a framework for the various strategies agreed upon to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases.

59. General Assembly resolutions 42/186 and 42/187 had laid the basis for follow-up to the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development and to the Environmental Perspective to the Year 2000 and Beyond. It was important that Governments, through the governing bodies of the specialized agencies, should contribute to and support that follow-up process.

60. Mr. BRUCE (Observer, World Meteorological Organization) said that the data sets which the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) had collected in its 160 member States had provided evidence of a warming of the global climate.

61. In addition, the work done under programmes to measure the concentration of greenhouse gases had revealed an alarming increase in carbon dioxide, methane, chlorofluorocarbons and nitrous oxide in the atmosphere. Researchers agreed that the rapid increase in the concentration of greenhouse gases would cause the mean world temperature to rise by 1.5° C to 4.5° C by the middle of the next century.

62. In 1979, the first World Climate Conference had adopted the World Climate Programme, which had four components (data collection, applications, research, climate impact studies and recommendations for action); WMO, UNESCO, the International Council of Scientific Unions and UNEP were all involved in the Programme's implementation.

63. Overall responsibility for co-ordination of the Programme lay with WMO; to that end, it conducted annual reviews through its Executive Council and held periodic meetings of the heads of the agencies concerned. The UNEP Governing Council also worked to ensure close co-ordination of efforts. It was important that all countries should increase their contributions to the Programme, as all four of its components were underfunded.

64. WMO considered that its responsibility was to work with its member countries to provide a scientific assessment of the state of the atmosphere and the climate.

(Mr. Bruce, WMO)

As it was impossible to remain passive in the face of environmental degradation, WMO associated itself with countries such as Malta and agencies such as UNEP which were calling for urgent international action to remedy that situation. WMO pledged to continue its active involvement in scientific efforts relating to the climate and climatic change.

65. Mr. Otobo (Nigeria) took the Chair.

66. Ms. SAAD (Egypt) welcomed the efforts made within the United Nations to protect the environment and reaffirmed the interest of her Government, which had signed the most recent international environmental protection instruments, in that area. Of course the problem was a complex one with political, economic, social and humanitarian ramifications; nevertheless, it was important to ensure above all that the efforts made in that area on behalf of future generations would not lower the current generation's standard of living. Environmental problems, regardless of whether they had an international dimension, like the elimination of toxic and radioactive wastes or the pollution of marine resources, directly affected the situation of developing countries. The international community must therefore provide financial and technical assistance to solve those problems and acknowledge them as priority issues.

67. In its resolution 42/187, the General Assembly had stressed the essential role of the United Nations Environment Programme, within its mandate, in catalysing the sustainable development efforts of the United Nations system, and her delegation agreed with the General Assembly that that role should be strengthened and that the resources of the Environment Fund should be substantially enlarged so that it could function effectively. Also, the Governing Council should go back to meeting on an annual basis.

68. Her delegation also endorsed the provisions of General Assembly resolution 42/187 concerning the shared responsibility of all countries, both developing and developed, at the international level. The Nile posed specific problems for Egypt. According to forecasts, the industrial wastes dumped into that river would reach 9.7 billion cubic metres a year by the year 2000. To correct that situation, the Egyptian Government was taking very costly measures. Projects which had been formulated dealt primarily with reforestation, fish-breeding and treatment of the waters of the Nile. Egypt had also promulgated environmental protection legislation and had established a body to monitor environmental protection. However, funds were lacking for the implementation of waste-treatment projects. In that connection, Economic and Social Council resolution 1988/69, on international co-operation in the field of the environment, should be recalled.

69. At the regional level, Egypt welcomed the adoption by the OAU Council of Ministers in May 1988 of resolution 1153 (XLVIII), on co-operation between the Economic Commission for Africa, IAEA and UNEP, as well as the establishment of a body to monitor the disposal of toxic, radioactive and hazardous substances and wastes. Her delegation endorsed the decision by the United Nations to establish a natural resource centre in Africa and believed that the centre should co-operate

(Ms. Saad, Egypt)

with OAU. It also supported the OAU/UNDP project to form an environment and development club in Africa.

70. At the international level, the United Nations was the most appropriate forum for solving environmental problems effectively. Her delegation supported the Secretary-General's proposal to develop an international environmental law that would serve the interests of all peoples; however, UNDP must establish a compendium of all resolutions adopted on that subject so that the situation could be assessed and countries better equipped to achieve the objectives they set.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.