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DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION

Economic co-operation among developing countries

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present report has been prepared by the secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, in consultation with the organizations and units concerned, in response to paragraph 9 of General Assembly resolution 33/195 of 29 January 1979, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to it at its thirty-fourth session a comprehensive report on the implementation of that resolution.

2. In paragraph 2 of the resolution, the General Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to ensure, through the existing machinery, effective co-ordination and implementation of activities within the United Nations system in support of measures of economic co-operation among developing countries. The Assembly further requested him to continue to include in the medium-term plan of the United Nations an intersectoral presentation of the activities envisaged to implement the relevant resolutions of the United Nations on economic co-operation among developing countries and to promote the same kind of intersectoral presentation on a system-wide basis. The Assembly also urged the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system, in accordance with their established procedures and practices, to support measures of economic co-operation among developing countries, including, as and when requested, the continued provision of the necessary secretariat support services and other suitable arrangements to facilitate the holding of meetings by the developing countries in pursuance of the objectives of economic co-operation among developing countries. The Assembly requested the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development to continue consultations with a view to submitting recommendations to the Trade and Development Board concerning the organizing and convening during 1979 of meetings, as appropriate, of governmental experts of developing countries and representatives of intergovernmental economic co-operation groupings of developing countries in order to promote the objectives of subregional, regional and interregional economic co-operation among developing countries. The Assembly also urged the developing countries to provide appropriate support, as and when requested by the developing countries, for the implementation of measures of economic co-operation among developing countries.

3. An analysis of measures adopted within the United Nations system in support of economic co-operation among developing countries has been provided in two previous reports:

(a) In the report covering the biennium 1978-1979 submitted to the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (CPC) at its eighteenth session by the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC) (see E/AC.51/90/Add.1 (Parts I and II));

(b) In the report on economic co-operation among developing countries submitted by the Secretary-General to the Assembly at its thirty-third session (see A/33/367), prepared in response to Assembly resolution 32/180 of 19 December 1977 and which also brought up to date the ACC report. Therefore, the present report will only review relevant developments which have taken place

since the issue of the two previous reports. In view of this, the three reports should therefore be read together.

4. The main body of the present report covers major developments in the field of economic co-operation among developing countries, as well as intersecretariat co-ordination arrangements within the United Nations system in this area, and in particular action taken in response to the request contained in paragraph 2 of General Assembly resolution 33/195 referred to above. Activities by organizations in support of such co-operation are reviewed in the annex, which will be issued as an addendum to the present report. Action taken in connexion with paragraph 7 of the resolution is also considered in the annex under the section devoted to the activities of UNCTAD in the field of economic co-operation among developing countries.

II. MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS IN THE FIELD OF ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

5. Since the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 33/195, three major developments have taken place in the field of economic co-operation among developing countries. First, the adoption by the Fourth Ministerial Meeting of the Group of 77, held in Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania, from 6 to 16 February 1979, of the Arusha Programme for Collective Self-Reliance and Framework for Negotiations (TD/236). In adopting the Programme, the Group of 77 decided on the implementation of a First Short Medium-Term Action Plan for Global Priorities on Economic Co-operation among Developing Countries calling for specific action in a number of priority areas (see TD/236, chap. II). The adoption of this Action Plan represents a recognition by the Group of 77 that, subsequent to the decisions adopted at the Third Ministerial Meeting of the Group of 77, the Fifth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries held at Colombo from 16 to 19 August 1976 (see A/31/197), and the Conference on Economic Co-operation among Developing Countries, held at Mexico City from 13 to 22 September 1976 (see TD/B/628 and Add.1), considerable progress had been made in elaborating further the details of the programme on economic co-operation among developing countries, and that the technical information already available justified the adoption of detailed operational guidelines and objectives for its implementation. The Action Plan may therefore be considered as a first stage of the process of implementation of the programme of economic co-operation among developing countries adopted by the Group of 77, whose consolidated position on this subject is found in the report of the Mexico City Conference (A/C.2/31/7 and Add.1).

6. Secondly, the Sixth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Havana from 3 to 9 September 1979, adopted a resolution on policy guidelines on the reinforcement of collective self-reliance between developing countries (see A/34/542, sect. VI, resolution No. 7). The Conference noted with satisfaction the decisions taken by the Group of 77 in Arusha as a valuable contribution to the promotion of economic co-operation among developing countries, adopted a number of measures in order to accelerate the implementation of the Action Programme for Economic Co-operation approved at their Fifth Conference.

Such measures include action in a wide range of areas of economic co-operation provided for in the Action Programme, including the implementation by the end of 1980 of a number of major projects for which considerable work has already been achieved.

7. Thirdly, at its fifth session, held at Manila from 7 May to 3 June 1979, UNCTAD adopted resolution 127 (V) on economic co-operation among developing countries. This resolution contains a number of provisions which respond to initiatives taken by the developing countries in the fields of competence of UNCTAD pursuant to the economic co-operation goals laid down at the Mexico City Conference and in the Arusha Short Medium-Term Action Plan for Global Priorities on Economic Co-operation among Developing Countries. Conference resolution 127 (V) also urges the developed countries and the international organizations to provide appropriate support and assistance to the process and activities of economic co-operation among developing countries in a number of fields, bearing in mind the Arusha Action Plan and in fulfilment of the relevant resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and UNCTAD.

III. INTERSECRETARIAT CO-ORDINATION ARRANGEMENTS WITHIN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM IN THE FIELD OF ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

8. In paragraph 2 of General Assembly resolution 33/195, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to ensure, through the existing machinery, effective co-ordination and implementation of activities within the United Nations system in support of measures of economic co-operation among developing countries by, inter alia:

(a) A more effective evaluation of the relevance of the various activities being undertaken by organizations within the system to the achievement of the objectives of economic co-operation among developing countries;

(b) Adaptation, as appropriate, of the organizational arrangements within the United Nations system to the requirements of promoting economic co-operation among developing countries.

9. The report submitted by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly at its thirty-third session, referred to in paragraph 3 above, made reference to the decisions adopted by ACC in 1977 regarding interagency arrangements in support of economic co-operation among developing countries, and to the functions to be carried out in this connexion at the intersecretariat level. The report also outlined the decisions adopted by ACC at its session in October 1978 on the restructuring of the subsidiary machinery and according to which specific reference to activities of economic and technical co-operation among developing countries

will be contained in the terms of reference of the component of the Committee on Substantive Questions dealing with operational matters. 1/

10. At its first regular session in April 1979, the Committee on Substantive Questions (Operational Activities) agreed that economic and technical co-operation among developing countries were important areas of concern which the Committee would continue to consider. It agreed that a meeting which would consider both of these questions under a single item, entitled "Co-operation among developing countries", would take place at a date to be determined by consultations with the concerned parties. The following provisional agenda for the meeting was adopted:

1. Implementation of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action on Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries, with special emphasis on the role of the United Nations development system (report to be prepared by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP))
2. Implementation of decisions of the fifth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and other discussions concerning economic co-operation among developing countries, with special emphasis on the role of the United Nations development system (report to be prepared by UNCTAD)
3. Operational activities of combined economic and technical co-operation among developing countries (report to be prepared by UNDP and UNCTAD in co-operation with other organizations, as necessary) 2/

11. The Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (Operational Activities) agreed at the same meeting that, since some of the questions to be dealt with have implications for organizations other than UNDP and UNCTAD, all organizations of the system would be requested to prepare documentation on the various items on the agenda which were of interest to them.

1/ It may be recalled that, at its session in October 1978, ACC decided that substantive functions hitherto performed by different sub-committees and interagency groups had been assumed by a new Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions, organized in two distinct components dealing, respectively, with programme and related matters and operational matters.

2/ See the "Report of the Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (Operational Activities) on its first regular session (ACC/1979/34), 25-30 April 1979".