



**SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 26th MEETING**

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

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

AGENDA ITEM 82: DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION (continued) (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/1988/102, 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, 714 and 740; A/C.2/43/2, 3, 4 and 7; A/C.2/43/L.5 and L.6; E/1988/50)

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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 and 671)

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Draft resolution on the strengthening of technical co-operation among developing countries in food and agriculture (A/C.2/43/L.16)

1. Mr. CUI Tiankai (China), introducing the draft resolution, announced that Uruguay had become one of the sponsors and that Sierra Leone had also expressed a wish to do so. Emphasizing the importance of food and agriculture to the economic development of the developing countries, he said that there was an urgent need for technical co-operation among developing countries (TCDC) at a time when hunger and malnutrition were widespread.

2. The draft resolution was intended to promote greater international awareness of the need for such co-operation, and the widest possible support. The text was based as far as possible on agreements reflected in previous resolutions. It urged the developing and the developed countries and the United Nations system to fulfil their respective responsibilities, and called for follow-up action on the part of the World Food Council and the Secretary-General. He hoped that it would be adopted by consensus.

3. Mr. FRUCHTBAUM (World Health Organization) said that health was a vital element of sustainable and environmentally sound development and that its protection and promotion should therefore feature among the objectives of such development.

(Mr. Fruchtbaum, WHO)

4. Many of the WHO programmes addressed the issues considered in the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development and would contribute to the implementation of its recommendations. For example, the Organization had assessed the ability of its Member States to control environmental health hazards, and had observed that those least able to meet requirements were the Member States with low levels of industrial development. Problems of air pollution and environmental control could not be solved by national action alone. Accordingly, WHO and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) had been collaborating since 1974 on an air-monitoring project, part of the Global Environmental Monitoring System designed to protect health and preserve natural resources.

5. WHO was strongly committed to the programmes of the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade. While microbial pathogens remained a prime cause of contamination, chemical pollution had become an equally serious threat, and health problems related to polluted water and poor sanitation affected nearly half the population of the developing countries. WHO estimated that improved water supply and sanitation could greatly reduce the incidence of diseases such as cholera and typhoid, and diarrhoeal diseases, which annually caused around 5 million deaths among infants and children.

6. With regard to hazardous wastes, WHO supported the development and implementation of a global convention on the control of transboundary movements of hazardous wastes. Furthermore, in collaboration with UNEP and the World Bank, it was preparing a technical manual on the safe disposal of hazardous wastes with special emphasis on the problems and needs of the developing countries. It had also organized training courses and workshops on the problems of hazardous wastes and the prevention of dumping, to assist developing countries which were hindered by the lack of laboratories and trained technicians.

7. WHO fully supported the initiative to organize a conference on development and the environment, and welcomed Malta's proposal for a strategy to conserve climate as part of the common heritage of mankind.

8. Mr. TSOKODAYI (Zimbabwe) said that Zimbabwe attached the utmost importance to the struggle against hunger, malnutrition and starvation. It fully supported the Cyprus Initiative against Hunger in the World, and hoped that the World Food Council would be successful in achieving its objectives.

9. Food production by peasant farmers had increased in Zimbabwe as a result of incentive schemes. Such farmers were able not only to feed their own families, but also to dispose of their surpluses at reasonable prices. Weather permitting, they were able to compete with the large-scale commercial farmers. Friendly Governments, non-governmental organizations and United Nations specialized agencies had contributed to that success in various ways.

10. Zimbabwe co-ordinated the food security programme of the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC), and had therefore committed considerable resources to the development of regional strategies and plans to combat hunger and starvation. Those efforts were hampered, however, by the

(Mr. Tsokodayi, Zimbabwe)

destabilizing activities of the Pretoria régime. In Angola and Mozambique, bandits sponsored, trained and financed by the apartheid régime, were disrupting food production, and the starvation and malnutrition that ensued were therefore directly attributable to Pretoria's aggressive policies.

11. Inequalities in international economic development were reflected in the unequal distribution of food. Even when it was available in the developed countries, developing countries were not always able to purchase it. Food was thus a North-South problem. The developed countries should transfer technology to the developing countries to enable them to improve their productive infrastructure, increase production capacity and produce sufficient food for their own people. Developing countries, too, should exchange agricultural information and techniques with one another, to their mutual advantage.

12. Mr. CAPRIROLO (Bolivia) welcomed the international community's growing awareness of the dangers of environmental deterioration. It was important, above all, to consider environment in the wider context of development, and in connection with the production process and the relationships that that process involved. Account should be taken, therefore, of the means of production and of the appropriation and consumption of natural resources.

13. The relationships in question were characterized by inequality. Historically, for example, the industrialized countries had devoured their own and other countries' natural resources in pursuit of their own development. Currently, they consumed most of the developing countries' natural resources, bought at very low cost, thus perpetuating the latter's poverty. Furthermore, they were responsible for the bulk of the environmental pollution.

14. All countries were sharing in the cost of maintaining the high standard of living of a few countries. Not only were those few making disproportionate use of natural resources at the expense of the development of the majority, but their excessive use of inappropriate technologies and the resulting pollution were destroying the environment for all. It was vital to prevent further destruction. However, that should not mean greater poverty for the developing countries. Since poverty undoubtedly generated environmental destruction, rational preservation could be achieved only if poverty were eliminated.

15. International co-operation to preserve the environment must be based on the premise that all countries were entitled to development. Vital structural changes were required to remedy underdevelopment, through measures ranging from the transfer of technology to the raising of commodity prices, and to meet the most basic requirements in terms of food, health and education.

16. Environmental conservation in the developing countries was one aspect of the overall situation, closely linked with the achievement of development, which called for a better external economic environment and more financial co-operation without further conditionality. Such changes would, however, have little or no effect if the developed countries continued to produce toxic and radioactive materials, deplete the ozone layer and conduct nuclear tests. In that connection, his

(Mr. Capriolo, Bolivia)

delegation supported the efforts made by UNEP to draw up a global convention on the control of transboundary movements of hazardous wastes, and considered that UNEP should be strengthened.

17. Miss NCHAPI (Lesotho) said that the problems of hunger and malnutrition continued to grow more acute. Food production in many low-income food deficit countries had failed to keep pace with population growth, and the situation was exacerbated by the natural disasters that afflicted the developing countries. Lesotho itself was suffering the long-term effects of exceptionally heavy snowfalls in 1987.

18. The problem of hunger in the developing world had been exacerbated by unfavourable international economic conditions, unstable commodity prices, deteriorating terms of trade, protectionism, slow economic growth and heavy debt-servicing burdens. The report of the World Food Council indicated, however, that many countries were seeking to achieve food security. Lesotho itself planned to build up strategic grain reserves to guarantee adequate supplies in the event of disruptions.

19. Although the developing countries continued to receive support from many quarters for the improvement of food and agricultural production, those efforts were inadequate, and future initiatives must take account of the reasons for that inadequacy. In that connection, her delegation welcomed the Cyprus Initiative against Hunger in the World.

20. The issue of food security was closely linked to that of environment, and she supported the World Food Council's call for sustainable global food security through production systems safeguarding natural resources and protecting the environment. The developing countries would, however, require adequate resources to implement such measures. It was important to bear in mind that central to the whole exercise was the peasant farmer himself, who, while he might understand the long-term implications of soil erosion and land degradation, was faced with the immediate need to feed his family. He should be helped to see environmental protection as a means of improving agricultural productivity and generating income.

21. Her delegation supported the World Food Council recommendation that environmentally sound agricultural management and land-use planning practices taking account of the specific conditions of different countries, should form an integral part of national food strategies, and that environmental concerns should be integrated into economic development policies and programmes.

22. The importance of strengthening regional and South-South co-operation in food and agriculture, together with technical co-operation among developing countries, could not be overemphasized. Such co-operation would undoubtedly reinforce individual and collective self-reliance. The international community should increase financing of TCDC activities in the field of food and agriculture, and support and complement the efforts made by African countries to stimulate agriculture and food production in implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development. The situation called for

(Miss Nchapi, Lesotho)

concerted action, avoiding duplication and improving the effectiveness of the assistance provided. Lastly, she supported the World Food Council in its appeal for timely payment of voluntary contributions to United Nations agencies involved in the food sector, since those agencies did not have adequate resources.

23. Mr. PORTUGAL (Peru) said that while the problem of hunger continued to worsen, world food surpluses were at record levels. That situation was immoral and contrary to the spirit of international solidarity. Basic changes were essential because there would be no solution to the various problems facing the developing countries until the international economic situation improved, the burden of debt-servicing was reduced, a continuous and adequate flow of financing from abroad ensured and the net negative transfer of resources reversed.

24. In the area of trade, exports from the developing countries must have better access to the markets of the industrialized countries. That would not be possible until protectionist barriers were removed and the standstill and roll-back commitments agreed to during the Uruguay Round were respected. The solution to the problem of hunger must be, above all, political. His delegation supported the proposal to use the resources which would become available as a result of disarmament to establish a fund to combat poverty and hunger, which would be administered by the United Nations.

25. The international community was becoming increasingly aware of the need to conserve the earth's climate. In that regard, the signing of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer in 1987 had been a step forward in efforts to protect the ozone layer. As a developing country which suffered the effects of the unfavourable international economic situation, Peru believed that there was a clear relationship between natural resources - including climate - and development. That relationship - which covered the physical conditions required for developing countries to use their natural resources to improve the quality of life of their peoples without threat of a general environmental degradation - had not been sufficiently discussed.

26. It was paradoxical that, while the technologically advanced countries of the North were primarily to blame for the deterioration of the earth's climate, the entire international community must take measures to conserve the climate. His delegation hoped that the industrialized countries would assume responsibility not only with respect to the environment but also in other matters, which were vital to the developing countries, such as hunger, malnutrition, external debt and protectionism.

27. Mrs. de WHIST (Ecuador) said that the inconsistent and inefficient agricultural policies of both the developing and the industrialized countries were responsible for the current agricultural and food problems. There were basic contradictions between the industrialized countries' system of subsidizing domestic agricultural production and their international policies and agreements. The food reserves of the industrialized countries had reached record levels. Meanwhile in other regions of the world, particularly in Africa, thousands of people were starving to death because their countries were unable to produce enough basic

(Mrs. de Whist, Ecuador)

foodstuffs or to counteract drought or halt desertification and could not protect their small farmers from the impact of the erratic behaviour of the world market. International assistance to cope with food problems and to encourage agricultural production was being undermined by export subsidies and by the purchase and stockpiling of surpluses, a process commonly known as the "dumping of surpluses". The practice helped keep prices depressed and was of assistance only to those countries which could afford to purchase subsidised cereals in enormous quantities and at low prices.

28. The developing countries had not been able to adapt to the changing requirements of the world energy situation, mainly because they lacked financial resources and technology, while the industrialized countries were in a position to ensure their own energy supplies, by seeking new technologies. Oil was the most important source of energy both in the industrialized countries and elsewhere. The developing countries did not produce oil and had no other alternative sources of energy. Development of energy resources could form the corner-stone of sustained development for all developing countries, in particular the poorest developing countries. The suggestion contained in paragraph 109 of the Secretary-General's report on energy exploration and development trends in developing countries (A/43/476) was commendable. The question of international co-operation to reactivate growth in the energy-deficient developing countries should be included on the agenda of the proposed special session of the General Assembly.

29. Environmental problems and their global repercussions were a cause of concern to the entire international community. For that reason, Ecuador appreciated the initiatives relating to the preservation of the environment and welcomed Malta's proposal for a strategy to conserve climate as part of the common heritage of mankind.

30. The Government and people of Ecuador had taken measures to protect Ecuador's environment. In 1952, the Government had begun its first project for the environmental protection of the Galápagos Islands. Environmental protection and the rational use of resources was not a new subject. What was new was the evidence of the destruction caused by the indiscriminate use of resources by the world industrial complex, whose only concern was to reap enormous profits as quickly as possible. Protection of the environment was the responsibility of all peoples of the world. However, responsibility should be commensurate with the use of resources and the damage caused to the environment. The developing countries were not to blame for most of the deterioration of the environment, nor for the destruction of plant and animal species, water and air pollution and the depletion of the ozone layer. The Government of Ecuador was willing to accept its share of responsibility for the protection of the environment, as it had done in past decades, and would continue to do so in conformity with the requirements of development.

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31. Mr. RAICHEV (Bulgaria) said that growing awareness of the threat of ecological disaster had resulted in such documents as the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development (Brundtland report), the guidelines contained in the "Environmental Perspective to the Year 2000 and Beyond" and the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer. Bulgaria firmly supported a greater role of the United Nations, and of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in particular, in co-ordinating the efforts of the international community to adopt concrete measures in that area. Such measures were vital for preserving the natural environment and ensuring the normal social and economic development of all States. Bulgaria therefore fully supported the initiative of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and Czechoslovakia.

32. The elaboration and adoption of a system of mutually binding principles and norms for regulating co-operation among States in the field of ecology and the setting of concrete priorities in that field should be given due consideration. In that respect, Bulgaria supported the idea of holding a second international conference on issues related to environment and development in 1992.

33. As a Balkan and European State, Bulgaria was taking an active part in joint efforts to preserve the natural environment at a regional and subregional level. In 1988 Bulgaria had hosted a number of meetings related to preservation of the environment and it would shortly host another in connection with implementation of the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution. It attached great importance to the initiative to adopt, within the framework of Balkan co-operation, a treaty on ecological protection of that part of the world.

34. Bulgaria supported the efforts of WFC in its search for efficient means to eliminate hunger and malnutrition. The Cyprus Initiative, adopted by the Council at its fourteenth session, was of great importance in that respect. Bulgaria supported the decision to establish an informal ad hoc consultative group to assist the President of the Council in identifying priorities and specific proposals for immediate action at the national, regional and international levels. In outlining priorities, the consultative group should consider the influence of such important problems as the worsening external debt situation, monetary and financial instability, imbalances in world trade, the influence of protectionism and the negative transfer of resources from the developing countries and the impact of such problems on the food situation in developing countries.

35. Mr. PAXTON (New Zealand) said that, from the evidence presented at the current session of the General Assembly and through the work of UNEP, the World Meteorological Organization and the other parts of the United Nations system, it was painfully clear that the international community had a long and difficult path ahead of it as it strove to achieve sustainable development. For its part, New Zealand had undertaken a major review of its policies and programmes which related to sustainable development. For example, a thorough review of New Zealand resource management laws was currently under way.



(Mr. Payton, New Zealand)

36. New Zealand had just completed a progress report on the issues raised by the World Commission on Environment and Development. The report, which contained a candid evaluation of current shortcomings, would be made available to the appropriate United Nations authorities as a token of New Zealand's commitment to that aspect of United Nations work. A thorough assessment of all aspects of the subject of hazardous substances had revealed that New Zealand needed better legislation, a better administrative framework, better information, better training, better procedures and better management systems. As a result, in March 1988, New Zealand had approved the following principles as a basis for a policy on the management of hazardous wastes: production of hazardous wastes should be reduced, avoided or eliminated by the use, within practicable limits, of waste-reduction techniques; the use of practicable resource recovery and re-use techniques should be maximised; responsibility for making satisfactory provision for hazardous wastes should rest with the polluter; and due consideration should be given to the need for public participation and to Maori cultural values.

37. New Zealand had ratified the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. At the national level, the Government had held discussions with the country's aerosol industry, which had subsequently announced that it would completely phase out chlorofluorocarbon propellants by the end of 1989, a measure which exceeded the requirements of the Montreal Protocol. That step reflected the type of partnership that should exist between government, private sector and individuals in any society if sustainable development was to be achieved.

38. Few issues would have such a profound effect on the possibility of sustainable development as the issue of climate change. New Zealand firmly supported efforts to foster a greater understanding of the changes already taking place in the global climate, whose consequences were likely to be particularly devastating for small island developing countries. In March 1988, the New Zealand Ministry of the Environment had held a seminar which had brought together representatives of the Government, the scientific and academic communities and industry in order to heighten public awareness of climate change and draw up a national climate change programme. Three working groups had been established under that programme to collect scientific data relating to climate change, interpret the data, assess the impact of climate change on biological and physical systems and social conditions and values, and develop a national policy setting out New Zealand's response to the effects of such changes. Thus the programme clearly demonstrated New Zealand's serious commitment to the global issue of climate change.

39. The promotion of sustainable development required the existence of an efficient and respected international forum that could facilitate the co-ordination and exchange of information about national programmes. He agreed with the World Commission on Environment and Development that UNEP must be prepared to play such a role. While some delegations advocated the establishment of new mechanisms or expert groups, his delegation preferred to work with existing arrangements, improving them if necessary by a reordering of priorities.

(Mr. Payton, New Zealand)

40. Turning to agenda item 82 (c), he observed that the fact that some developed countries maintained huge food surpluses at great expense while millions went hungry was a cruel paradox. The Committee must reach a consensus on a resolution on food and agricultural problems that would address the causes of that paradox. The report of the World Food Council would greatly facilitate the debate on that subject.

41. The rapidly approaching mid-term review of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations afforded a rare opportunity for the Contracting Parties to GATT to make a significant change in the world economy by agreeing to roll back damaging protectionist barriers. New Zealand was a member of the Cairns Group which sought to use the multilateral negotiation process to find solutions to the problems of international trade in agricultural products. His delegation had been heartened by the growing acceptance of the Group's proposals by some countries which had initially opposed freer agricultural trade. The forthcoming review offered a chance to right the current imbalances in global agricultural trade which harmed everyone. In fact, a recent study had concluded that agricultural liberalization in the developed countries would bring direct economic gain to developing countries in excess of \$25 billion, making the repayment of external debt a possibility.

42. Mr. DE LA TORRE (Argentina), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said he wished to comment on the statistics cited by the observer for the European Economic Community at the 25th meeting, at which that speaker had denied that the Community's share of the international meat market had been 45 per cent in 1986. In fact, that figure was correct, as was indicated by the fact that the Community's share had been 43.7 per cent in 1984 and 42 per cent in 1985. Of course, those figures would be different if trade among EEC countries was excluded, a critical point, since it had been the closing off of the European market that had caused Argentina's share of the world meat market to fall from 25 to 8 per cent in only five years during the 1970s, while the EEC share during the same period had risen from 21.2 per cent to 38 per cent. The source of those data, which applied to all 12 countries members of EEC, was the United States Department of Agriculture. The figures could be consulted in the September 1987 edition of the publication of the Institute for International Economics.

43. As for wheat, it was abundantly clear that the observer for EEC had deliberately omitted any mention of trade between countries belonging to the Community. If those sales during the 1985-1986 growing season were discounted, EEC production would appear to represent only 16 per cent of the world market; however, if those transactions were included, the Community's share of the world wheat market would be 28.9 per cent for the same period.

44. Lastly, the claim that EEC was the leading importer of feed grain definitely included trade between EEC member countries; otherwise the Community's share of world grain imports during 1985-1986 would have been only 5.5 million metric tons, instead of 18.3 million metric tons. Thus the figures which he himself had cited at the 23rd meeting had not been erroneous, but offered proof of the stark, undeniable reality of agricultural trade.

**AGENDA ITEM 86: SPECIAL ECONOMIC AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE**

(A/43/457-E/1988/102 and A/43/463-E/1988/106; A/43/3, 399, 402, 480, 587, 692, 709, 713, 723 and 731)

- (a) OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS DISASTER RELIEF CO-ORDINATOR (A/43/375-E/1988/73 and Corr.1)
- (b) SPECIAL PROGRAMMES OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE (A/43/449 and Add.1, 483, 514, 703 and 727)

45. Mr. ESSAABI (United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator), introducing the Secretary-General's report on the work of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator (A/43/375), said that the series of major disasters that had occurred in 1988 had had serious effects for economic development in Asia, Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America, and had demonstrated the importance of disaster mitigation. While natural disasters presented a challenge to all nations, their effects were much more devastating for developing countries.

46. A successful counter-disaster campaign had three main elements: an international strategy, international solidarity and efficient and co-ordinated action when a disaster occurred. With regard to the first, the General Assembly had taken an important step forward when it had adopted resolution 42/169, designating the 1990s as the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction. That resolution reflected the growing world-wide awareness of the benefits to be obtained from concerted international action in the area of disaster mitigation. For while programmes to provide short-term disaster relief were common, hazard mitigation was seldom practised; it was thus in that area that the Decade could be most effective.

47. Although co-operation between countries was not always easy to arrange, it was one of the best means of fostering awareness of disaster mitigation and promoting the development of projects in that area. UNDRO had helped establish two regional centres for mitigation - one in Bangkok for the Asian region and another in Antigua for the Caribbean - and was setting up a third, in Fiji, for the Pacific States. Much attention had been paid to regional activities in Africa, where UNDRO worked closely with the Economic Commission for Africa, OAU and other African organisations. UNDRO had also just concluded the second international training seminar on earthquake risk-preparedness and mitigation at Dushanbe, USSR. He urged that regional organizations throughout the world should become involved in the Decade so that both the general public and professionals might become more aware of the benefits of hazard mitigation.

48. International solidarity, the second important element of a counter-disaster campaign, was as important in pre-disaster preparations and in the long-term post-disaster rehabilitation phase as it was in the emergency period just after a disaster occurred. In that connection, UNDRO greatly appreciated the generous contributions of donors without which the Office's national and regional projects could not be implemented. Efforts by developing countries in particular to

(Mr. Essaafi)

overcome disaster-related problems could only be helped if more national officials were trained in one or more aspects of disaster mitigation, preparedness and emergency management, and such training implied the availability of funds.

49. The third element of a counter-disaster campaign was the prompt and co-ordinated response of both the Government concerned and the international community. The disaster-stricken country must be able to receive appropriate assistance; the co-ordination of efforts by all the agencies providing relief was therefore particularly important. There were, in fact, some areas where such co-operation needed to be enhanced; for example, some Governments, perhaps inadvertently, still did not provide UNDRO with complete information on bilateral contributions.

50. The almost unparalleled series of disasters during the past year placed a heavier burden than ever on disaster-prone countries, donors and the United Nations system. Paradoxically, the financial crisis which had caused the United Nations to embark upon a 15 per cent reduction in staff had also affected UNDRO, yet despite a reduction in the size of its team, UNDRO had registered important achievements. Given diminishing resources, however, attention should be focused on four important areas where the capacity of the Office should be maintained. First, UNDRO must be able to respond immediately whenever assistance was required. Secondly, UNDRO, working in close co-operation with UNDP, must give priority to supporting Governments' own efforts to improve their national preparedness organizations and to design and implement hazard mitigation projects. Thirdly, UNDRO's information function was central to its role of co-ordinator; while the Office was able to generate information and disseminate it instantly, it did not have sufficient staff to collect all relevant data and to process them in the system. Finally, Member States had repeatedly stated that the Office should be lean and effective, a premise which he accepted. However, without an increase in its resources, the Office could not be expected to fulfil all its obligations to Member States. The figures contained in the Secretary-General's report spoke for themselves. Member States must be willing significantly to increase the level of their voluntary contributions.

51. Annex V of the report provided details of UNDRO activities during the 1986-1987 biennium. It was important to note that a conscious effort had been made to learn from previous emergency operations. Two meetings of the heads of national emergency relief services had been held since July 1986, and a third was scheduled for early 1989. The second meeting had also been attended by heads of the emergency services of the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system as well as of humanitarian non-governmental organizations. The conclusions of those meetings were contained in the report.

52. UNDRO had developed a post-operation evaluation procedure, which had already demonstrated its worth in the identification of problem areas. The Office had also launched a new information network for international disaster management, called UNDRONET, which provided disaster managers throughout the world with direct computer access to each other. That was by far the most important development to take place in the field of disaster information.

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53. Mr. BAKER (Office of the Director-General for Development and International Co-operation), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (A/43/723) said that, under the terms of General Assembly resolution 42/169, the Secretary-General was to provide the Assembly with a framework for the Decade at its forty-fourth session, while presenting an interim report at the forty-third session. That report, which placed particular emphasis on defining the catalytic and facilitating role envisaged for the United Nations in the Decade, was currently before the Committee.

54. It began with an illustrative description of the problems posed by natural disasters and of activities that might be undertaken in the context of the Decade to deal with them. A more detailed description of activities would be presented to the Assembly at its forty-fourth session.

55. The report discussed the preparatory measures taken for the Decade to date. As noted in paragraph 22, the Secretary-General had established a steering committee to assist him, composed of representatives of all relevant organizations of the United Nations system under the chairmanship of the Director-General for Development and International Co-operation and the vice-chairmanship of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator. In addition, an international ad hoc group of experts, 25 eminent scientists and experts who had also been appointed to assist the Secretary-General, had met twice and was scheduled to meet again in early 1989, after which it would report to the General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council. The minutes of the group's first meeting had been made available to the Committee for informational purposes.

56. In July 1988, the Director-General had addressed a communication to all Member States suggesting that they might wish to establish national committees in connection with the Decade. The importance attached to the committees derived from the very nature of the Decade which, if it was to be successful, must be supported at the local, national, regional and international levels. The national committees should be involved not only in the preparations for the Decade but in the Decade itself.

57. The report also outlined the contacts that had been made with non-governmental organizations. In that connection, he drew attention to paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolution 42/169, regarding the provision of resources for the Decade. After thanking the Governments and organizations which had made contributions for that purpose, he cautioned that it was still possible that extrabudgetary resources would be required.

58. The activities of many organizations were relevant to the Decade. Clearly, preparations for the Decade should make full use of the competence and expertise of those organizations, and the Director-General's Office was making every effort to do so. It was equally important that those organizations should participate in the Decade itself. However, until a final agreement on a framework for the Decade had been determined, it would be difficult to elaborate the role of the United Nations system further. Presumably that role would be taken up in the report to be submitted to the Assembly at its next session.

(Mr. Baker)

59. Introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the progress made in the implementation of General Assembly decision 42/433, he recalled that in that decision the General Assembly had requested the Secretary-General to proceed with the implementation of the conclusions and recommendations contained in his report on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 41/201. It had also requested the Economic and Social Council to consider the matter at its second regular session of 1988, and had decided to consider the matter at its forty-third session, together with a progress report of the Secretary-General on implementation of the decision. The first section of the progress report dealt with recommendations pertaining to UNDRO, and in particular to the joint UNDRO/UNDP Task Force. With respect to operations at field level, the experience of the past year had merely reinforced the need for disaster response teams at the country level, with full participation of all organizations of the United Nations system.

60. The Secretary-General had entrusted the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation with continuing responsibility for ensuring that he was kept fully informed about potential and existing disasters.

61. Mr. LA MUNIERE (Director of the Special Emergency Programme of the Department for Special Political Questions, Regional Co-operation, Decolonization and Trusteeship), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on assistance to Mozambique (A/43/514), said that the information contained therein had been updated by the United Nations Resident Co-ordinator in Maputo with details of the urgent need to cover shortfalls in the food supply, the financing of internal transport, the provision of protection for emergency convoys and rehabilitation projects.

62. The priority issue was to improve the distribution of food in order to guarantee the delivery of existing stocks. Approximately \$US 35 million was still needed for vehicles, coastal transport and secondary port improvement. As for the shortfall in cereals, which amounted to 263,000 tons, Canada had pledged 8 million Canadian dollars, and the World Food Programme was ready to provide 40,000 tons once the distribution and logistics problems had been solved.

63. The most serious obstacle in financing internal transport was the lack of local currency at provincial level for the hiring of vehicles, port charges, rail fees and other transport costs. Donors were agreeable to the use of "counterpart funds" generated by the sale through commercial networks of the food aid to urban areas, but the Government still had to make clear the scope of its funding. Donors should note that internal transport costs amounted to \$US 85 per ton.

64. Donors had shown that they were aware of the need to protect vehicles and provide military support for convoys and some had already responded positively. However, it was important to continue to stress the importance of that concern, since speedy delivery of pledged support was critical.

(Mr. La Muniere)

65. Key rehabilitation projects within the 1988-1989 appeal had not yet received adequate support. The small-scale agricultural support projects for the acquisition of machinery and the development of simple irrigation systems for displaced people still needed \$US 9 million; the health sector still needed \$US 8,510,000; and the education sector, which had received additional support in the past month, still required \$US 1,397,000.

66. The Secretary-General very much hoped that the international community would maintain and increase its support and assistance to Mozambique in response to the priority needs identified by the Government and reflected in the annex to the Secretary-General's report. An analysis and review of the situation was being prepared, and a strategy for following up the 1988 donors' meeting would be made available by the end of 1988.

67. Mr. LOUP (Director of the Least Developed Countries Support and Co-ordination Unit, United Nations Development Programme), introducing the summary reports of the Secretary-General on individual countries contained in document A/43/483, said that the reports on Benin, the Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Yemen, Djibouti, Ecuador, El Salvador, the Gambia, Madagascar, Nicaragua and Vanuatu provided information on the special programmes of economic assistance being implemented for each country.

68. The purpose of those programmes was to help them to deal with special circumstances which had a serious negative impact on their development efforts. Some were designed to support national reconstruction efforts following natural or man-made disasters, while others were intended to help them to overcome obstacles to national development posed by weak infrastructures.

69. Of the 11 countries covered by the report, 7 had been classified by the General Assembly as least developed countries. Several were implementing a round-table process as a follow-up mechanism of the Substantial New Programme of Action, and increasingly they had integrated the special programme of economic assistance into that round-table process in mobilizing and co-ordinating donor support.

70. The reports were based on information and data provided by the Governments concerned through the resident representative of the United Nations Development Programme, and on related data available at UNDP headquarters.

71. The Secretary-General hoped that all delegations would give consideration to the problems of each of the 11 countries and would respond generously.

72. Mr. ASTAFIEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the Office of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation was not co-ordinating the activities of the United Nations system in the field of natural disasters and other emergency situations - as requested in General Assembly decision 42/433 - in a sufficiently active manner and, in particular, it was not keeping States Members properly informed about the way it was carrying out its new duties.

(Mr. Astafiev, USSR)

73. Preparing for natural disasters and industrial accidents cost society less than overcoming their consequences. Noting that about two thirds of UNDRO's funds were spent on emergency operations, he said that resources should be distributed more equitably between emergency and technical assistance and preparatory and preventive measures. His delegation wished to draw attention to the need to make more widely available the latest international experience in seeking to minimize losses from natural disasters. UNDRO was not making full use of all the possibilities in that regard, and its efforts with respect to training national officials of developing countries were clearly inadequate; it was well known that the effectiveness of technical assistance depended in large measure on the existence of highly qualified specialists.

74. Special economic assistance should be given at the request of the Governments concerned and should not be used as a pretext for interfering in the internal affairs of sovereign States.

75. In the current year the Soviet Union had, according to figures for September, already granted 10.4 million roubles of assistance to those in developing countries suffering as a result of natural disasters. Some 7.1 million roubles had been granted to Viet Nam, 1.5 million roubles to India, 310,000 roubles to Ethiopia and 250,000 roubles to the Sudan. The extent of its assistance to Afghanistan was well known.

76. As for co-operation between the Soviet Union and UNDRO, he said that a second seminar had been held at Dushanbe on earthquake prediction and mitigation. The United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator had recently visited the Soviet Union, and it was hoped that the discussions he had had in Moscow would give a new, practical impetus to opening up new areas of co-operation, and, of course, there would be further opportunities as a result of the decision by the General Assembly to designate the 1990s as an international decade for natural disaster reduction.

77. In the past year the Secretary-General had done outstanding work in implementing General Assembly resolution 42/169. A representative international group of experts had been set up, and the Soviet Union was taking an active part in its work. Co-ordination between the various organs and organizations of the United Nations system was improving, and there was reason to believe that basic guidelines might have been prepared, and a specific programme drawn up by the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

78. Mr. KATAWALA (Mozambique) said that while UNDRO played, and must continue to play, a vital role in disaster relief assistance, it had been able to respond positively to only half of the 32 requests from disaster-affected countries in the 1986-1987 biennium, with an average of as little as \$US 22,000 per disaster. It would be better if that sum were simply donated directly to the Government of the affected country rather than planning a United Nations relief programme which would consume most if not all of that amount.



(Mr. Katawala, Mozambique)

79. He regretted that in annex VI of document A/43/375 the undeclared war of aggression waged by the apartheid régime of South Africa had been referred to as "civil strife", and asked that the expression should be corrected.

80. The cumulative effects of natural disasters and the undeclared war of aggression against Mozambique had caused the economy to deteriorate sharply. He therefore appealed for continued solidarity with his people and asked that Mozambique be included in the list of least developed countries.

81. There had been much discussion of the fact that an increasing number of developing countries were requesting special economic assistance, and it had been suggested that their number should be reduced. Much as those countries would like to stop requesting assistance, their economic situation dictated that they should continue to do so. Disasters and emergencies, added to the permanent economic crisis, made it almost impossible for them to overcome their economic difficulties without the political will and help of the international community in general and of the developed countries in particular.

82. Another important issue on the agenda was that of special assistance to the front-line States, as embodied in General Assembly resolution 42/201, and the efforts made in that regard by donors and by the United Nations, as indicated in document A/43/449, testified to the political will of the international community to help the front-line States and other bordering States in their efforts to resist economic pressure.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.