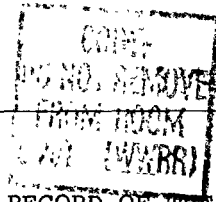




SECOND COMMITTEE
31st meeting
held on
Monday, 7 November 1983
at 10.30 a.m.
New York



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 31st MEETING

Chairman: Mr. DIETZE (German Democratic Republic)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.55 a.m.

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

1. The CHAIRMAN made a concluding statement on agenda item 12 and said, first, that all delegations had expressed regret that the Commission on Transnational Corporations, after almost six years of intensive work, had not been able to finalize the draft code of conduct for transnational corporations. Although many differences remained concerning the substance of the code and the role of transnational corporations, a great desire for flexibility had been discerned in the Committee's deliberations, and he was therefore sure that the necessary arrangements would be made to continue and accelerate the formulation of the code within the mandate of the Commission on Transnational Corporations.

2. Other important questions considered by the Committee under item 12 had been the energy development of developing countries; the need for increased assistance to the Palestine people; the important role of the public sector in promoting and protecting the economic interests of developing countries; the economic problems faced by African countries, the need to speed up the implementation of various measures approved by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council and to increase support for the Transport and Communications Decade in Africa; the revitalization of the Economic and Social Council; and consumer protection. He hoped that the discussions on those questions would be reflected in the draft resolutions to be submitted to the Committee.

AGENDA ITEM 78: DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION (continued)

(g) ENVIRONMENT

Draft resolution A/C.2/38/L.18 entitled "Development and international economic co-operation: Environment"

3. The CHAIRMAN announced that Senegal and Yugoslavia had become sponsors of the draft resolution.

4. Mrs. ERIKSSON (Sweden), introducing draft resolution A/C.2/38/L.18, announced that Argentina had become a sponsor. She also pointed out that in line 6 of operative paragraph 5, the words "relevant intergovernmental forums, in particular in the governing bodies" should be replaced by the words "the relevant governing bodies". At the end of line 7 of the English text of the same paragraph, the word "and" should be deleted.

5. The draft resolution closely followed the major decisions of the Governing Council of UNEP. It reflected some of the decisions taken by the Council at its eleventh session with a view to making its work more rational. It also welcomed the adoption of the programme budget for the first biennium of the system-wide medium-term environment programme, referred to the need to expand the mandate of the Consultative Group for Desertification Control and stressed the importance of strengthening UNEP's role in dealing with serious environmental problems in the

(Mrs. Eriksson, Sweden)

developing countries. The sponsors hoped that the Committee would adopt the resolution by consensus.

AGENDA ITEM 80: TRAINING AND RESEARCH

- (a) UNITED NATIONS INSTITUTE FOR TRAINING AND RESEARCH (A/38/14)
- (b) UNITED NATIONS UNIVERSITY: REPORT OF THE COUNCIL OF THE UNITED NATIONS UNIVERSITY (A/38/31)
- (c) UNIFIED APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENT ANALYSIS AND PLANNING: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/38/62)

6. Mr. SOEDJATMOKO (Rector of the United Nations University) said that in 1982-1983 the University had begun the implementation of the Medium-Term Perspective which had been adopted by the Council in December 1981 and had initiated some 50 projects in nine programme areas linked with the five themes of the Perspective. Most of the projects continued and expanded the work begun by the University in previous years, thus reflecting the policy of continuity and change which had guided the University over the past three years. The 50 projects focused on three main aspects: peace and conflict resolution; development in a changing world; and science and technology for human welfare.

7. One of the main problems of the contemporary world was that people were aware that they were living in an era of global transformation, but were not yet able to understand the nature of transformation, and no satisfactory responses had been found. Thus much of the work of the University was designed to achieve greater understanding of the process of change and to suggest options which could form a new framework for policy recommendations.

8. Another important aspect of the University's work concerned institutional development. The fundamental concept of the University was one of global networks of collaborating institutions and scholars working together to solve the pressing problems of human survival. However, in certain problem areas the University needed to establish its own institutions in order to pursue most effectively the multi-disciplinary, multi-dimensional and globally conceived research necessary to match the complexity and persistence of those problems. In 1982 considerable progress had been made towards establishing the first three research and training centres of the University: the World Institute for Development Economic Research, the Institute for Natural Resources, and the International Institute for Biotechnology. The response of certain Member States which had offered to fund those institutions was very encouraging.

9. A third aspect which should be stressed in the work of the University in 1982 and 1983 concerned collaborative activities with other organizations. Since the University was and would remain a relatively small institution, it depended to a great extent on the participation of the international scientific and academic community. Fortunately, the University had succeeded in attracting the interest of

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(Mr. Soedjatmoko)

organizations, universities and scholars and had received numerous offers of collaboration. Thus, it was no longer in any danger of being regarded as a marginal institution. Collaboration with organizations in the United Nations system was also essential; such activities had increased during the period under consideration and new links were being forged at both the planning and the operational levels. In addition, the definition of the respective roles of the collaborating organizations had been better articulated in response to the constructive observations made in the Committee and in other forums on the avoidance of overlap and duplication.

10. Lastly, he expressed appreciation for the consistent and generous support of the Government, academic community and people of Japan which had enabled the University to develop confidently and had made possible the construction of a permanent headquarters building at Tokyo.

11. Mr. DOO KINGUE (Executive Director, UNITAR) said that, when he had taken office as Executive Director at the beginning of the current year, he had been faced by the task of revitalizing an institution which was declining slowly and had a substantial financial deficit. In the circumstances he had embarked on four main activities. The first activity was to rethink the programme of the Institute in order to make it more attractive to Member States and more responsive to their concerns. Two advisory panels - an advisory panel on training and one on research - composed of eminent specialists selected from all over the world had been established and would collaborate in the preparation of the programme for the coming years. The second activity consisted of developing more structured co-operation with other organizations, both inside and outside the United Nations system, in their respective fields of competence with a view to lightening the burden of research and training which the Institute could not undertake itself. The third activity was to improve the management of the Institute, including the Board of Trustees which, at his suggestion, had decided to hold two regular sessions in April, instead of in September, so that it could adopt a programme drawn up in the light of the budget available and thus eliminate the risk of budgetary shortfalls.

12. The fourth activity was to improve the financial situation of the Institute and that task could only be accomplished with the active help of Member States. Contributions to UNITAR had been sporadic and inadequate and were often delayed. When UNITAR had been set up, it had been estimated that it would need an average annual budget of \$2 million; it was not until 1981, 16 years later, that that figure had been reached. Contributions for 1983 would be below that figure and approximately at the same level as in 1977 (\$1.6 million). At present less than one third of the Member States were contributing to the General Fund and only half had made a contribution to UNITAR at any time.

13. He hoped that approaches to Member States would produce results and that a substantial number of pledges would be announced at the forthcoming Pledging Conference for Development Activities. Results had been obtained following the offer made to countries which could contribute more to UNITAR than they might be

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(Mr. Doo Kingue, UNITAR)

able to have one of their nationals on the Board of Trustees, it had however proved necessary to address a solemn and pathetic appeal to Governments which did not contribute to UNITAR to start doing so, to those which already contributed that they should not relax their efforts, and to those which had the means to increase their support.

14. With regard to the deficit, three factors had to be borne in mind. The first concerned the practice followed hitherto, namely, that of adopting the budget without knowing how much would really be available. For example, in the budget for 1983, expenditures had been underestimated by \$300,000 and income over-estimated by \$600,000. The deficit of \$900,000 had given rise to some grumbling by certain delegations but it had to be borne in mind that, notwithstanding the inflation of recent years, the cost of the programme in 1983 (\$2.7 million) was of the same order as that of the 1980 programme and that, when the General Assembly in 1980 had made an initial grant to UNITAR to help it to balance its budget, the deficit was of the order of \$500,000 while the contributions made by Member States to the Institute had been \$400,000 higher than during the current year.

15. Everything possible had been done to limit expenditures under the General Fund. The present staffing table contained the same number of posts as before (three in the Division of Training and two in the Division of Research) so that the Institute could continue to operate and it had not been possible to proceed with needed repairs in the building in which the Institute worked.

16. If UNITAR was to continue its activities in a responsible manner, a General Budget of at least \$3 millions in 1984 was needed; that would mean an increase of 15 per cent over the 1980 budget and would represent a substantial reduction in the budget in real terms over the four-year period.

17. The General Assembly, in its resolution 37/142, had requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on the possibilities of funding the Institute in order to establish its financing on a more predictable, assured and continuous basis. His personal opinion was that, before condemning the system of financing UNITAR by voluntary contributions, it seemed desirable to give the system another chance in view of the current policy of revitalizing UNITAR. A financing system based on grants from the United Nations regular budget would undermine UNITAR's independence, while a mixed system would mean that certain Member States would pay twice. Nevertheless, if it was decided to continue the voluntary contribution system, it should be accompanied by a reserve fund enabling the Institute to be self-financing in case of difficulties. Other ways of financing might be considered which would require in-depth consultations with Member States. For those reasons, he considered that it would be premature to require the Secretary-General to submit an immediate recommendation on such a delicate problem and that UNITAR's results for 1984 should be awaited. In the meantime he appealed to Member States to contribute generously so that UNITAR could leave behind it the difficult period through which it had passed.

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18. Mrs. GOETHSCH (Austria) said that in his statement, the Executive Director of UNITAR had focused on management and financing. Her delegation had taken note with interest of the reduction of staff levels to a bare minimum and of the ongoing process of improving management as well as of the efforts to achieve closer co-operation with other organizations. It shared the concern of the Executive Director at the relatively small number of contributors and hoped that the forthcoming Pledging Conference would bring about a substantial improvement in UNITAR's budgetary outlook.

19. Her Government had collaborated closely with UNITAR in the organization in Vienna of annual seminars for young diplomats and was ready to study, together with UNITAR, ways in which such seminars or similar training projects could be continued; her delegation's interest also extended into the field of research, particularly on international economic co-operation and human rights.

20. She had noted with satisfaction the activities of the United Nations University, particularly the close links which it had established with other organizations so that the University could assume a catalytic role in the academic world; that aim had priority over training activities notwithstanding the importance of the latter. She welcomed the substantial progress which had been made by the University during the previous academic year in that connection and its awareness of the need for constant evaluation of its co-operative ties, for which purpose two external evaluation units had been set up.

21. It was still rather early to evaluate objectively the Medium-Term Perspective, 1982-1987. The report of the University Council (A/38/31) contained encouraging information, particularly in relation to the University's growing involvement in sectors such as energy, food and resource management. It would also be interesting to learn what future activities the University would undertake in matters of human and social development as, notwithstanding the vagueness of the subjects, the actual publications under that chapter of the report all seemed to serve a definite and useful purpose. Her delegation also welcomed the adoption of statutes and the progress of the headquarters building in Tokyo as signs of the University's future-oriented outlook and good co-operation with the host Government.

22. Miss ASSAHLI (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that her delegation attached great importance to UNITAR's training and research activities and supported the approach adopted by the new Executive Director towards increasing efficiency and improving administration. Her country had signed agreements with UNITAR for the provision of advisory assistance to the Institute of International Relations in Tripoli and assistance in establishing an Institute of Translation and Interpretation. She hoped that that co-operation would be strengthened in the future.

23. Among the Institute's activities, the United Nations policy and efficiency studies could provide a new impetus and generate new ideas for strengthening the Organization's activities. The very timely studies on development and disarmament were also important and would help to promote the establishment of the new international economic order and international peace and security. Her country supported the revitalizing of research on that subject and the studies should be

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(Miss Assahli, Libyan
Arab Jamahiriya)

disseminated as widely as possible. In the present climate of international tension, which was a threat to millions of people, the creation of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research was a positive step towards exploring new ways of enabling all countries to contribute to disarmament efforts, thus benefiting economic development, especially in the developing countries. Libya also supported the training programmes and seminars which would increase participants' knowledge of issues of international concern and provide opportunities for the participation of all countries, especially the developing countries.

24. Her country approved of the approach described by the Rector towards the activities of the United Nations University, particularly in respect of co-operation with institutes in all countries and of the studies on issues of concern to the international community as a whole.

25. Miss COURSON (France) said that her delegation welcomed the new ideas put forward by the new Executive Director of UNITAR concerning the establishment of advisory panels on training and research respectively, which should help to promote the Institute's activities. In view of the Institute's limited resources, its activities should concentrate on matters which directly concerned the United Nations and would serve the interests of the international community. The regional approach adopted for defining development strategies was particularly interesting in view of the world economic situation. However, the Institute should concentrate primarily on the "training of trainers" and on management which was so essential in most developing countries. In that aspect it should co-operate closely with UNDP. France also supported the Executive Director's policy of further strengthening and structuring co-operation with other organizations, including those of the United Nations system, and welcomed the co-operation between UNITAR and various French institutions, in particular the International Institute for Public Administration.

26. With regard to the Institute's deficit of \$900,000, France was fully aware that UNITAR, like all organizations financed by voluntary contributions, was suffering from the shortage of funds caused by the general austerity. The Government of France had contributed 250,000 francs in 1983 and would increase its contribution by 20 per cent in 1984. Her delegation continued to believe that the Institute's activities should be financed from extra-budgetary resources and was opposed to any proposal for them to be financed from the regular budget of the United Nations, which, as the Executive Director himself had said, would undermine the Institute's independence. Her delegation had every confidence in the Executive Director and was prepared to co-operate with him and with all interested Member States in considering measures for establishing UNITAR's financing on a more predictable, assured and continuous basis. In any case, consultations must be held in the next few days to consider the short-term problem.

27. The United Nations University was to be commended on its progress in strengthening and co-ordinating its activities with those of the United Nations system and other international organizations. In 1984 France would contribute 800,000 francs for financing the University, an increase of 40 per cent over the preceding year, and was confident that the University would continue to strengthen its ties with the world academic community.

28. Mr. MIHALJEVIC (Yugoslavia) said that his delegation supported the useful and important work carried out by UNITAR and the efforts of its new Executive Director to revitalize the Institute.

29. Mr. TURJANSKY (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that his country attached great importance to the unified approach to development analysis and planning, since planning was a prerequisite to making the best use of economic growth for raising the living standards of most of the population. It was regrettable that, as indicated in the Secretary-General's report (A/38/62), it had not been possible to prepare the report requested by the General Assembly in view of the paucity of replies to questionnaires.

30. The Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic applied an integrated approach in its planning of social and economic development. The main task was to ensure rapid and continuous development and to improve production methods through experience and technological advances. Through the implementation of the 1976-1980 five-year plan national income had increased by some 22 per cent, of which four-fifths had gone to the consumption sector. The 1981-1985 five-year plan provided for an increase in public well-being through steady economic development and accelerated scientific and technological progress. His country's reply summed up its experience in that field, which his delegation was ready to share with interested countries.

31. Mr. SEVAN (Secretary of the Committee) said that delegations would henceforth be provided with weekly up-to-date information on the situation concerning the draft proposals submitted to the Committee.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.