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ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Report of the Secretary-General

1. The General Assembly, in paragraph 4 of its resolution 31/119 of 16 December 1976, 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". In paragraph 8 of the same resolution, the Assembly requested "the Secretary-General to submit a progress report to the General Assembly, at its thirty-second session, on all measures taken by the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system in support of measures of economic co-operation among developing countries".
2. The Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC), in its report on economic co-operation among developing countries (E/AC.51/86), submitted to the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination at its seventeenth session in June 1977, endeavoured for the first time to identify on a system-wide basis activities relevant to economic co-operation among developing countries and to provide a presentation of such activities, taking into account the main areas of emphasis in the various declarations of the Group of Seventy-seven. The attention of the General Assembly is drawn to that report, which contains a comprehensive account of the measures taken by the United Nations system in support of economic co-operation among developing countries and is therefore directly relevant to the request of the Assembly contained in paragraph 8 of its resolution 31/119.
3. Accordingly, the present report is limited to a brief account of legislative and/or institutional developments which have taken place since the issue of the ACC report. In addition, programme information supplementing that contained in the ACC report has been provided by UNITAR, the ILO, WHO and WMO (see annexes I to IV below). It should be added that a second and more comprehensive report on the work of the system related to economic co-operation among developing countries, including the role of agency programmes concerned with infrastructure as a supporting element of more specialized measures relating to economic co-operation among developing countries, will be prepared by ACC next year in response to the decision of the

Committee for Programme and Co-ordination, 1/ which has selected economic co-operation among developing countries as an area for in-depth review from the point of view of co-ordination and called for such a report.

4. Before dealing with recent developments in individual agencies, it might be recalled that a first interagency meeting on economic co-operation among developing countries was held in July 1977 to formulate recommendations for consideration by ACC on co-ordination arrangements in this area. The recommendations of the meeting will be acted on by ACC at its session at the end of October 1977.

5. In so far as the United Nations is concerned, it should be noted that an intradepartmental task force on economic co-operation among developing countries has been established within the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. This task force contributed, inter alia, to the formulation of the integrated departmental programme on economic co-operation among developing countries, now included in the 1978-1979 programme budget. The same task force will contribute to the work to be undertaken on economic co-operation among developing countries in connexion with preparation of the next medium-term plan, pursuant to paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 31/119.

6. With regard to UNCTAD, the Trade and Development Board, at the first part of its seventeenth session, held from 23 August to 2 September 1977, concluded its consideration and further elaboration of the terms of reference of the Committee on Economic Co-operation among Developing Countries, established in pursuance of Conference resolution 92 (IV). In accordance with the Board's decision, that Committee will, inter alia, within the competence of UNCTAD, promote general and consistent policies as regards support measures; take appropriate action for the implementation of the recommendation of UNCTAD bodies in the field of economic co-operation; consider studies and proposals in the same field; review and facilitate the co-ordination of measures of support, including technical assistance from the United Nations system to the efforts of economic co-operation among developing countries; review and report periodically on the implementation of support measures; and take into account the relevant work of other competent organs of the United Nations.

7. The UNCTAD Committee on Economic Co-operation among Developing Countries had adopted, at its first session, 2/ resolution 1 (I), by which it established a programme of work within UNCTAD on economic co-operation among developing countries. It asked that special priority be given within this programme to:

1/ For the report of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination, see Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-second Session, Supplement No. 38 (A/32/38).

2/ For the report of the Committee on Economic Co-operation among Developing Countries on its first session, see TD/B/C.7/Misc.5. It will be issued in printed form as Official Records of the Trade and Development Board, Seventeenth Session, Supplement No. 2 (TD/B/652-TD/B/C.7/8).

- (a) The initiation of studies relating to:
 - (i) A global scheme of trade preferences among developing countries;
 - (ii) Co-operation among State trading organizations;
 - (iii) The establishment of multinational marketing enterprises;
- (b) The intensification of ongoing work and activities relating to:
 - (i) The strengthening of subregional, regional and interregional economic co-operation and integration;
 - (ii) The establishment of subregional, regional and interregional export credit and export credit guarantee schemes;
 - (iii) Co-operation in the transfer and development of technology;
 - (iv) The transit and transportation problems of developing land-locked and island countries;
 - (v) Regional and subregional insurance and reinsurance schemes among developing countries;
 - (vi) The promotion and facilitation of capital flows among developing countries;
 - (vii) The establishment of multinational production enterprises, as outlined in the report of the Mexico City Conference on Economic Co-operation among Developing Countries. 3/

8. In the same resolution, the Committee also invited the Secretary-General of UNCTAD to collaborate with the relevant international institutions in support of the intensification of studies on the strengthening and linking up of clearing and payment arrangements among developing countries. The programme of work of UNCTAD on economic co-operation among developing countries was examined and endorsed by the Trade and Development Board at its seventeenth session.

9. Related developments in other United Nations organs and programmes, including UNIDO and the regional commissions, will be covered in greater detail in the report to be submitted to the General Assembly at its current session by the Secretary-General under paragraph 2 of Assembly resolution 31/119.

10. With regard more specifically to technical co-operation among developing countries, it should be noted that the Governing Council of UNDP, at its twenty-fourth session, decided to request all organizations of the United Nations

3/ TD/B/628 and Add.1. For the decision and summary of the proceedings, see also A/C.2/31/7.

development system to establish a co-ordinated programme designed to improve the use of the capacities of developing countries, such as experts, contractors, equipment and fellowship facilities within UNDP-supported projects. 4/ The decision established certain targets in this respect and requested that UNDP and its Special Unit for Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries co-ordinate the development and implementation of such a programme.

11. In recent months, the FAO Council and its Committee on Commodity Problems have also taken a number of decisions relating to economic co-operation among developing countries. The FAO Committee on Commodity Problems, at its fifty-first session, held from 2 to 6 May 1977, agreed that:

"Increased co-operation among developing countries could stimulate the expansion of trade and the economic development of those countries, and the FAO should assist developing countries to this end. In extending such assistance, the Organization would need to translate into concrete action, several concepts of co-operation which had been advanced in various fora, and to involve units responsible for technical as well as for economic matters". 5/

12. The FAO Council, at its seventy-first session, in its discussion of the report of the Committee on Commodity Problems, stated that:

"Several members stressed the importance of implementing the series of Measures for Economic Co-operation among Developing Countries (ECDC) adopted by the Group of 77 (Mexico, September 1976) as an action programme for achieving the objective of collective self-reliance in relation to the establishment of the New International Economic Order. They hoped the Secretariat would actively help the developing countries in their efforts to implement ECDC by providing technical expertise in all the relevant fields of the programme". 6/

13. In its review of the Joint Inspection Unit report on technical co-operation provided by the United Nations system to the regional and subregional integration movements in Asia and the Pacific (E/5959), the FAO Council, inter alia, "supported the view that agriculture should receive its due place in arrangements for regional and subregional co-operation and integration". 7/

14. The Council also adopted resolution 1/71 on technical co-operation among developing countries, 8/ in which it requested the Director-General, inter alia,

4/ Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Sixty-third Session, Supplement No. 3A (E/6013/Rev.1), para. 525.

5/ "Report of the fifty-first session of the Committee on Commodity Problems" (CL 71/6), para. 78.

6/ "Report of the Council of FAO" (CL 71/REP), para. 31.

7/ Ibid., para. 117.

8/ Ibid., para. 164.

(a) to ensure the active and substantial participation of FAO in the preparation for the United Nations Conference on Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries (to be held in Argentina in 1978) in order that due account might be taken of agriculture and food aspects, and (b) to submit to the FAO Conference at its nineteenth session a report regarding FAO participation in the above Conference and the FAO programme of action on technical co-operation among developing countries, including measures taken or contemplated to make appropriate adjustments in policies, procedures and programmes of the organization to accelerate technical co-operation among developing countries in all its aspects. This report will be considered by the FAO Council and the FAO Conference at their forthcoming sessions in November 1977.

15. With regard to WHO, its concern for the promotion of self-reliance in health through co-operation for health development was reiterated by the Executive Board in its resolution EB60.R4, which stressed the importance for WHO to establish adequate methods and arrangements to facilitate co-operation among developing countries and requested the Director-General to promote the implementation of technical co-operation among developing countries in the activities and programmes of WHO.

ANNEX I

United Nations Institute for Training and Research

1. Activities of UNITAR directly relevant to economic co-operation among developing countries include the preparation of a number of studies which relate to the establishment and strengthening of institutions and mechanisms to promote this co-operation. Two studies, both of which are complete in draft form and will be published later this year, are of particular relevance. One deals with the history and potential of various forms of economic co-operation in the West African subregion. The other describes and analyses the activities of development banks in the Arab region. Another study, which is still being prepared, discusses the role of the League of Arab States in promoting greater co-operation among its members.

2. In 1978, it is the intention of UNITAR to begin studies which in different ways will deal with mechanisms and institutions to promote economic co-operation among developing countries in the Asian, Latin American and Arab regions.

ANNEX II

International Labour Organisation

Activities to promote the systematic exchange of knowledge,
experience, expertise and skills among developing countries

1. Paragraph 26 of the ACC report (E/AC.51/86) refers to the plans of the ILO to contribute, in co-operation with UNIDO, to a network for the dissemination of technological information to developing countries focused on small-scale and rural industries and to the preparation of documentation on technological choice in the manufacturing and construction industries. In that context, provision has now been made for the setting up of a working group on appropriate technologies, as called for by the World Employment Conference, and an ILO policy statement on technologies for basic needs is forthcoming.

Exploration of complementarities between and common interests
of the developing countries

2. Paragraphs 50 to 53 of the ACC report outline the activities being undertaken by the ILO in the fields of science, technology, training, education and human resources in support of co-operation among developing countries. It should be added that a number of important measures under the aegis of the ILO in the follow-up of the World Employment Conference, held from 4 to 17 June 1976, are currently being agreed upon and pursued by the non-aligned countries. It will be recalled that the Fifth Conference of the Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Colombo from 16 to 19 August 1976, adopted an action programme, a/ which called for a series of measures relevant to the implementation of the Declaration of Principles and Programme of Action adopted by the World Employment Conference. b/ These measures, which relate to employment, education and training, manpower movements and appropriate technology, stress the need for the exchange of information, organization of joint projects and programmes and co-operation with national and international agencies. Within the framework of these measures, representatives of the non-aligned countries and other developing countries participating in the sixty-third session of the International Labour Conference decided to convene a meeting on employment and human resources development, which will be held in Tunis in April 1978. The objectives of this meeting will be to move ahead on proposals for technical co-operation among developing countries and to report on preparations for the proposed discussion on employment and basic needs at the ILO Conference in 1979. Meanwhile, the ILO is collecting new ideas and suggestions as regards fields in which TCDC-type projects could be suitably located.

a/ A/31/197, annex III.

b/ International Labour Organisation, GB. 201/3/2, appendix I.

3. In so far as training programmes are concerned, it is increasingly being realized that the transfer of technology and the introduction of appropriate technology in developing countries call for an adaptation of such programmes to the new situations thus arising. In particular, more emphasis must be placed on the training of technicians and on the adaptation of training curricula to the technology used in the developing countries. One of the reasons for structuring curricula on the basis of the Modules of Employable Skills (MES) c/ concept is to meet these needs. This can be further enhanced through the exchange of information and experiences which developing countries are now making. Regional training institutions, such as the ILO-sponsored Information Research Centre for Vocational Training for the Americas (CINTERFOR), mentioned in paragraph 50 of the ACC report, and similar institutions in Africa and Asia, the establishment of which is now being negotiated, will no doubt play an important role in enhancing the exchange of information and expertise between developing countries.

4. As regards specific developments in other areas, it should be mentioned that the Inter-American Centre for Labour Administration (CIAT) in Lima, to which reference is made in paragraph 50 of the ACC report (E/AC.51/86), has recently participated in the drafting of bilateral agreements between two Governments in Latin America concerning the implementation of a plan aimed at the improvement of labour administration services and institutions. The Centre has also taken part in the design of projects to be carried out in two other countries with its participation in providing technical support for the execution of the work programme set out in the agreements.

5. A new centre to be called the Inter-African Centre for Research and Documentation on Vocational Training (CIARDFOR), modelled on the Information Research Centre for Vocational Training for the Americas (CINTERFOR), is also being considered to serve the French-speaking countries of Africa and, when the project is endorsed by the countries proposed to participate, the ILO will assist in its establishment. The Centre will constitute a new and concrete example of the application of the concept of technical co-operation among developing countries.

Technical co-operation among developing countries

6. As the ACC report notes, technical co-operation among developing countries, which involves the sharing of capacities and skills between two or more developing countries and includes the provision of development project inputs, such as experts, consultant services, training facilities, equipment and supplies by developing countries to one another, is increasingly becoming a formalized and forceful concept and the means by which individual and collective self-reliance can be built. The pooling of resources and efforts in this manner to solve development problems common to developing countries makes technical co-operation among developing countries an integral part of economic co-operation among developing countries and therefore activities aimed at promoting technical co-operation among developing

c/ See ILO, Introduction of a Vocational Training System using Modules of Employable Skills (VTC/G/2).

countries are complementary to those of economic co-operation among developing countries within the broader framework of co-operation to promote social and economic development among developing countries. While technical co-operation among developing countries has not yet been discussed as an individual item by the Governing Body of the ILO, it has been considered as a subitem within the broad question of technical co-operation. The main decision has been that technical co-operation among developing countries should be encouraged and supported. Accordingly, ILO technical co-operation activities are being designed and implemented to increase further and strengthen the capabilities and capacities of the constituents of the ILO through the development and strengthening of the institutions and arrangements dealing with technical co-operation at national, subregional and regional levels.

ANNEX III

World Health Organization

I. Activities to promote systematic exchange of knowledge, experience, expertise and skills among developing countries

1. The contribution of the World Health Organization to the development of economic co-operation among developing countries has to be viewed within the organization's over-all concern for the promotion of economic and social development.
2. Activities related to the exchange of information and knowledge within the competence of WHO cover a wide range of its programmes.
3. The Information Systems Programme covers the two broad aspects of the organization's programme, namely technical co-operation and information transfer. The Thirtieth World Health Assembly, in resolution WHA30.46, emphasized the importance of adequate systems and services for the generation, collection and dissemination of statistical and other relevant information on health and socio-economic matters, as the basis of better planned and effective health services, and requested the Director-General to collaborate with member States in the development of national health information systems and services.
4. One of the objectives of the WHO programme on appropriate technology for health is to strengthen activities in the collection, analysis and dissemination of information among member States on the health experience, methodologies and technologies available.
5. The dissemination of information and exchange of experience concerning appropriate technology is also an important aspect of the activities of WHO in the field of environmental health, and more particularly in its programme for an adequate and safe water supply and hygienic means of waste disposal. Low-cost technology with the maximum utilization of local manpower and material reduces investment and maintenance costs, thus permitting a greater number of people to be served.
6. Increased attention is also given to the growing use of chemicals in public health, industry, agriculture and food production, as well as to rapid environmental pollution resulting from growing industrialization and new technologies. The Thirtieth World Health Assembly, in resolution WHA30.47, requested the Director-General to examine the possible options for international co-operation, with a view, inter alia, to exchange of information on new chemical hazards to public health, and to providing rapid and effective response in emergencies, and developing arrangements for mutual assistance between member States.

II. Exploration of complementarities between and common interests of the developing countries

7. WHO has initiated a series of programme activities designed to promote co-operative action among member States. In its programme on appropriate technology for health, WHO emphasizes that appropriate health technology and methodology should be evolved and shared by the developing countries themselves.
8. The Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases has two interdependent objectives, namely, the promotion of self-reliance in biomedical research in tropical countries, and the development of improved tools to control disease. The Thirtieth World Health Assembly, in resolution WHA30.42, requested the Director-General to identify and develop national research and training institutions and facilities in support of this programme.
9. The Expanded Programme on Immunization, which involves direct action at the country level in formulating plans for vaccination programmes, including the procurement of vaccines, will seek to reduce the dependency of the developing world on developed countries to meet their vaccine needs. The Thirtieth World Health Assembly, in its resolution WHA30.54, draws attention to the importance of the policies of the programme with respect to promoting regional and national self-reliance for vaccine production, and urges the Director-General to implement these policies as quickly as possible.
10. The prophylactic, diagnostic and therapeutic substances programme of WHO is directly concerned with technical and economic co-operation among developing countries. The programme involves the development of national and regional capacities for drug production, evaluation, control and management.
11. The WHO Special Programme of Research, Development and Research Training in Human Reproduction aims, inter alia, at generating new knowledge and technology, disseminating information and strengthening research capabilities, particularly in developing countries.

ANNEX IV

World Meteorological Organization

Activities to promote the systematic exchange of knowledge,
experience, expertise and skills among developing countries

1. For more than a century, WMO and its predecessor, the International Meteorological Organization (IMO), have been instrumental in promoting the exchange of meteorological information, experience and skills among its members, including not only developing countries, but all countries regardless of their degree of development. The organization has served as an effective mechanism for ensuring international collaboration and encouraging the development of the science of meteorology and its practical applications. Information and skills exchanged among the meteorological services of the world are of inestimable value in economic and social development not only in the expansion of agricultural productivity, development of water resource potential and improvement of air transportation, but also in providing advanced warnings of violent storms so that protective measures can be employed and loss of both life and property can be minimized.

2. In recent years, WMO has given special emphasis to the implementation of the World Weather Watch plan, which consists of an integrated world-wide observing and forecasting system in which both the developing and the developed countries participate for the mutual benefit of all. The economic benefits are difficult to assess, but are undoubtedly very substantial.

Exploration of complementarities between common interests
of the developing countries

3. Through its participation in UNDP, and special programmes funded by members, WMO assists developing countries in implementing intercountry projects which have as their basic purpose the collection of information for the development of water resources potential, the increase of agricultural productivity and the reduction of the deleterious effects of tropical storms.

4. An example of economic co-operation among developing countries is the WMO programme for strengthening the agrometeorological and hydrological services in the drought-stricken countries of the Sahel and the establishment of a regional centre for training and applications of agrometeorology and hydrology. The programme consists of seven co-ordinated national projects for the development of agrometeorological and hydrological station networks and the strengthening of services for data processing, as well as the dissemination of agrometeorological information to the farming community. The co-operation of the individual countries concerned, in terms of both technical and financial support, is essential in order that optimum use can be made of meteorological and hydrological information for the planning and development of agricultural production.

5. A hydrometeorological survey of the catchments of Lakes Victoria, Kioga and Mobutu Sese Seko involves the co-operation of seven other African countries. The analysis of data on the catchments of the lakes provides the basis for the study of the water balance of the Upper Nile. This will enable the countries involved to plan irrigation schemes, swamp reclamation and other development projects, and to initiate intergovernmental co-operation in the storage, regulation and use of the waters of the Nile.

6. Under an intercountry project and individual projects in six countries of the Central American Isthmus, meteorological and hydrological observing station networks have been expanded and modernized, national data-processing centres have been established, counterpart institutions have been strengthened and data for planning water conservation and use, especially hydroelectric power generation, and agricultural development, are being published. This co-operative effort enables each of the participating countries to benefit from the infrastructure development in other countries of the region.

7. Another example of intercountry co-operation is the WMO/ESCAP Typhoon Committee of the South-East Asia and Pacific region. Through the exchange of information, experience and technical skills and the improvement of observing networks and telecommunication facilities, the member countries are co-operating in a joint endeavour designed to develop an effective typhoon flood warning system and improve disaster prevention techniques and community preparedness. The economic benefit from this co-operative programme is evident.
