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ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Report of the Secretary-General

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## I. INTRODUCTION

1. On 9 December 1975, the General Assembly adopted resolution 3442 (XXX) in paragraph 4 of which it urged the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system to provide continuing support to the promotion of economic co-operation among developing countries, in accordance with paragraph 4 of Assembly resolution 3177 (XXVIII) of 17 December 1973 and with its own provisions. In paragraph 6 of resolution 3442 (XXX), the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to ensure the efficient co-ordination of activities within the United Nations system designed to promote economic co-operation among developing countries by, inter alia:

(a) Including in the medium-term plan and programme budget of the United Nations an intersectoral presentation of the totality of actions and activities planned and programmed for implementing the relevant resolutions pertaining to economic co-operation among developing countries;

(b) Taking the necessary steps, in co-operation with the organizations of the United Nations system, to provide the same kind of intersectoral presentation on a system-wide basis.

In paragraph 8 of resolution 3442 (XXX), the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its thirty-first session on the implementation of the provisions of the resolution.

2. The intersectoral presentation of the medium-term plan activities of the United Nations relating to economic co-operation among developing countries, as requested by the General Assembly in paragraph 6 (a) of resolution 3442 (XXX), was submitted to the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (CPC) at its sixteenth session. The Assembly will have before it that document. 1/

3. Steps have also been taken to provide the same kind of intersectoral presentation on a system-wide basis, as requested by the General Assembly in paragraph 6 (b) of resolution 3442 (XXX). The contributions of the organizations concerned have been received by the Secretary-General, and agreement has been reached at the interagency level on the functional headings to be utilized, in the light, inter alia, of the deliberations of CPC on the United Nations presentation referred to in the preceding paragraph. The document is currently under preparation. It will be reviewed by CPC at its seventeenth session and will then be submitted to the General Assembly, through the Economic and Social Council, at its thirty-second session.

4. The present report provides relevant information concerning the current activities being carried out by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat and the regional commissions to promote and support economic co-operation among developing countries. Such information is also made available for a number of organizations of the United Nations system. Information on activities undertaken by other organizations of the United Nations system will be provided in an addendum to the present report.

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1/ See Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Supplement No. 6A (A/31/6/Add.1 and Corr.1-5), part three.

## II. ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN BY THE UNITED NATIONS

### A. Department of Economic and Social Affairs

5. The activities of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to assist developing countries in their efforts towards economic co-operation fall into the following categories:

(a) Actions tending to facilitate and increase the exchange of information, experience and expertise. This is the first degree of economic co-operation and, undoubtedly, a field where the Department can play an important role and has already initiated a certain number of actions:

- (i) In the area of natural resources, energy, ocean economies and techniques (exploration, development and use of energy, mineral and water resources).
- (ii) In the field of human settlements, in connexion with Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, by emphasizing the exchange of construction methods and building materials;
- (iii) In the field of science and technology in general by fostering the exchange of knowledge, research and experience between institutions at the national level in areas such as, inter alia, appropriate technologies, non-conventional sources of energy and computer science;
- (iv) In areas where the exchange of information helps improving the formulation of planning and development policies, not only through direct assistance but also through making available more complete data in general, as well as in specific fields such as population. In this context, the Department has proposed the establishment of an information service unit which would make it possible to collect, analyse and disseminate the materials available in expert studies and reports, presently inaccessible to Member countries, as well as to most of the experts. This initiative will contribute to avoiding costly duplications, and it will provide a useful basis for intensified co-operation among developing countries. The knowledge and experience it will put at the disposal of Member States is often most relevant for the solution of developmental problems in other countries living under similar conditions. Accordingly, this initiative, in co-operation with the regional commissions, will support the promotion of both economic and technical co-operation among developing countries through joint programmes and projects;

(b) Actions aimed at defining the fields where effective co-operation among developing countries is possible. A variety of activities presently undertaken in the Department falls into this category, which refers to a higher degree of co-operation:

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- (i) In the area of finance, where the main objective is to explore and identify opportunities for institutional co-operation among developing countries;
  - (ii) In natural resources, by examining the possibilities of co-operation in the production and utilization of energy, mineral and water resources;
  - (iii) In coastal area development, by assuming joint leadership with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in the elaboration, on an interagency basis, of integrated development schemes in several areas of the world;
- (c) Actions with a view to facilitating and supporting effective co-operation among developing countries. In this sphere, the Department has been and still is active in a number of fields:
- (i) In development planning, by assisting in the formulation and implementation of development plans and particularly of schemes for economic integration at subregional and regional levels, such as in the framework of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and Andean groups of countries;
  - (ii) In natural resources, the Department is increasingly providing assistance in the promotion of co-ordinated exploitation of resources, joint production of hydraulic energy and integrated development schemes for international coastal areas, which also include the exploitation of marine mineral resources;
  - (iii) In financial matters, by elaborating guidelines for the harmonization of fiscal policies, by helping to make appropriate arrangements with respect to international payments, or by providing assistance for the establishment or the reinforcement of capital markets;
  - (iv) In public administration, by assisting the regional research and training centres for development administration.
6. In addition to the various activities related to policy formulation and research, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs has been and will continue to be involved in a wide range of operational activities aimed at enlarging and strengthening co-operation among developing countries. Major examples of activities of this type are the continuing institutional support to the secretariat of the Senegal River Basin Organization and the regional institutes in Asia and the Pacific region, Africa, Latin America and West Asia.
7. The United Nations Development Advisory Teams (UNDAT), which were established under Economic and Social Council resolution 1552 (XLIX) of 30 July 1970 as mobile interdisciplinary teams assigned to groups of developing countries, have helped to foster economic co-operation between the countries they serve and have also contributed to the elaboration of multinational projects.

8. At present, the most important of the United Nations operational activities in relation to economic co-operation among developing countries is the assistance provided to the Government of Guyana under the Action Programme for Economic Co-operation among Non-Aligned and other Developing Countries. This programme, adopted in August 1972 by the Conference of Foreign Ministers of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Georgetown, covers four fields: industry, transport, trade, and a special subject, producers' associations.

9. With regard to activities the Department of Economic and Social Affairs could pursue in the future on the subject, some initiatives are being taken in order to respond fully to the expectations of the developing countries. One of these initiatives is the decision to establish an intradepartmental task force devoted to the preparation of an integrated work programme for the Department as a whole, with respect to economic co-operation among developing countries. This intradepartmental programme will take into consideration the work already undertaken and planned at the level of the regional commission. The Department and the regional commissions are convinced of the need to go even further and to arrive at a joint planning of activities related to this area as early as possible.

10. Another initiative recently taken by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs is a more integrated approach in its research on medium- and long-term projections. This activity will be in line with the basic principles of a new international economic order as well as the specific long-term objectives decided upon by intergovernmental bodies that deal with sectoral problems, and by some recent United Nations world conferences. It is expected that this activity will not only complement the work related to the International Development Strategy for the current and future United Nations development decades, but will also provide the regional and sectoral structures with a general framework which will help them to elaborate in further detail the policies and actions that are required to achieve, in a coherent manner, more rapid development. This is particularly true in the context of development at subregional and regional levels which constitutes a conditio sine qua non for more effective economic co-operation.

#### B. Regional commissions

11. Because of their close contacts with the member Governments and their experience in the formulation and implementation of projects at the subregional and regional level, the regional commissions are in a particularly favourable position to contribute effectively to the promotion of economic co-operation among developing countries. The substance of their more important legislative enactments is the intensification of economic co-operation among developing countries to secure self-reliant development by undertaking studies and research, by providing technical assistance, a forum for negotiations and discussions and a clearing house of information, and by discharging their operational responsibilities for project formulation and implementation.

12. The Economic and Social Council, in resolution 2043 (LXI) of 5 August 1976 on

the strengthening of the regional commissions for regional and interregional co-operation, recognized, without prejudice to the special needs and conditions of each region, that the regional commissions, with their experience in promoting regional and subregional co-operation, were the appropriate institutions within the United Nations to act as centres for the formulation, co-ordination and implementation of programmes for the promotion of interregional co-operation, especially with respect to the programme of economic co-operation among developing countries in their respective regions.

13. Several activities of the regional commissions to promote economic co-operation among developing countries are being implemented jointly with Headquarters, other United Nations organizations and the specialized agencies.

1. Economic Commission for Europe

14. The Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) differs from the other regional commissions in some respects which are relevant to the present report. In the first place, it comprises a larger number of developed countries among its membership; but it must be stressed that several ECE member countries are developing from the economic point of view. Indeed, the problems specific to these countries have been the subject of a number of resolutions and decisions adopted by the Commission in recent years and several projects in the ECE programme of work reflect the increasing attention being devoted to these matters. In the second place, by virtue of the heterogeneity of its composition, ECE has acquired considerable experience in planning and carrying out practical schemes of co-operation between countries at different levels of economic development and having differing economic and social systems. Finally, the rapid economic and technological development of most ECE countries during the 30 years of its existence has been accompanied - and, to some extent, has been promoted - by the extensive use of ECE and its numerous technical bodies for the exchange and diffusion of economic and technological information and expertise.

15. The accumulated experience of ECE in promoting economic and technical co-operation within its region could - and, it may be argued, should - be drawn on, as appropriate, when analogous projects of co-operation are undertaken in the other regions. Already, there has been a marked increase in recent years in the participation of experts from other regions, often with the sponsorship of the other regional commissions, in ECE technical meetings. Measures have also been taken at the intersecretariat level to ensure much more widespread dissemination of ECE technical documentation to member countries of the other regions. It is to be expected that further action in this direction will be taken as part of the regional commissions' joint contribution to carrying out the programme of action for economic co-operation among developing countries.

16. The following examples illustrate some of the achievements of ECE in promoting economic co-operation. In the sphere of trade, besides drafting arbitration rules accepted by over 20 countries of the region, ECE has done much to foster agreed means of simplifying and harmonizing legal and administrative aspects of international trade by preparing standard conditions and contracts

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of sale: standardized forms of trade procedures (lay-out keys for trade documents and invoices); guidelines for drawing up contracts for the transfer of know-how, for turn-key plants and for industrial co-operation; and has drawn up an inventory of administrative restrictions to trade as a tool for progressively reducing or removing the trade obstacles identified therein. In earlier years (1957-1969), the secretariat operated a voluntary multilateral compensation system to ease international payment problems arising because of lack of transferability of the currencies of member countries. ECE has also actively planned and sponsored transport interconnexions, for example, the Trans-European north-south motorway linking the Baltic, Mediterranean, Adriatic and Black Sea coasts; or the study of a central European river link between the Danube and the Oder, and its possible extension to the Elbe river. Similarly, the Balkan countries, most of which are developing countries from the economic point of view, are co-ordinating their efforts through ECE to link up their electric power systems. So far as these ECE countries are concerned, studies and other activities have been undertaken with a view to identifying and overcoming problems of trade, trade promotion, investment, temporary migration and industrial co-operation which are specific to them.

## 2. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

17. The intensification of economic co-operation among developing countries has been a primary preoccupation of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) over the years in response to a series of legislative enactments. More recently, ESCAP, in its resolutions 140 (XXX) of 5 April 1974 and 154 (XXXI) of 6 March 1975 containing the Colombo Declaration and the New Delhi Declaration respectively, has urged the intensification of regional co-operation in the identified priority areas of food and agriculture, energy, raw materials, technology, external financial resources and integrated rural development to promote increasing self-reliance through growth with social justice. It has also urged the maximum utilization of regional skills, capabilities and expertise in the activities of the Commission.

18. In addition to several activities of ESCAP to promote subregional co-operation on a sectoral and commodity basis, support is also being given by the Commission to institutionalized integration and economic co-operation schemes, such as, for example, those of ASEAN. A number of activities are being undertaken for the development of the South Pacific subregion.

19. Several institutionalized schemes to promote subregional and regional co-operation have been, and continue to be, vigorously implemented. Illustratively, these include, for example, in the priority field of food and agriculture, the operations of the Asian Rice Trade Fund, the Asian Agricultural Requisites Scheme, and the regional network for agricultural machinery. Likewise, in other fields, such schemes include the establishment of the Asian Coconut Community and the Asian Pepper Community, as well as, *inter alia*, the Regional Centre for Technology Transfer, the Asian Trade Expansion Programme, the Asian Clearing Union, the ESCAP Trade Promotion Centre, the multinational expert trade insurance scheme, the Regional Mineral Resources Development Centre, the South-East Asia Research and

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Development Centre, the Asia and the Pacific Centre for Women and Development, the Asian Telecommunications Network and the pooling of shipping resources.

20. The regional training and research institutions including the Asian Development Institute, Asian Statistical Institute, Asian Centre for Development Administration and the Asian Centre for Training and Research in Social Welfare and Development, in addition to their activities, also focus attention on the promotion of subregional and regional co-operation.

21. Further, large-scale schemes such as, for example, the Mekong Project, off-shore prospecting of mineral resources in East Asia and the South Pacific, the Panel on Tropical Cyclones, the Asian Highway and the Trans-Asian Railway Network have also contributed in a large measure to the intensification of economic co-operation among developing countries.

22. In addition to these institutionalized projects, economic co-operation among developing countries is being promoted in all the other activities of the Commission, particularly in the priority areas. Recently, initiatives have been taken to formulate an integrated programme for rural development in close consultation with the agencies. This programme is largely based upon economic co-operation among developing countries.

23. A new though interdependent dimension to economic co-operation among the developing countries of the region has recently been added through the exercise on technical co-operation among developing countries, undertaken in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 3251 (XXIX) of 4 December 1974. The conclusions and recommendations of the UNDP/ESCAP Regional Meeting on Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries, held from 25 February to 2 March 1976, were endorsed and further elaborated upon by the Commission in resolution 162 (XXXII) adopted at its session this year.

### 3. Economic Commission for Latin America

24. The activities of the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA) in the promotion of economic co-operation with and among developing countries in the region cover a variety of fields.

25. In economic and social development planning, ECLA has co-operated in the preparation of global development plans and strategies in the majority of the Latin American countries which have helped Governments in the design and implementation of economic and social policies. Over the years, more than 6,000 government technicians have been trained in global, sectoral and regional planning.

26. In the area of economic co-operation and integration, ECLA participated actively in the creation of the Latin American Free Trade Association and the Central American Common Market, and is co-operating in the implementation of the aims and objectives of the Andean Group and the Caribbean Common Market. More recently, ECLA created a Caribbean Development and Co-operation Committee

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to promote, inter alia, co-operation and development among the member countries of the area. ECLA is also undertaking the review and appraisal of the process of regional and subregional economic integration with the aim of giving new life to this process.

27. The Commission has carried out case studies aimed at strengthening the bargaining position of host Governments vis-à-vis transnational corporations in the export of primary commodities, notably bauxite, bananas and tin.

28. ECLA's Latin American Centre for Economic and Social Documentation is carrying out a survey to study the economic and social information infrastructure in the Latin American and Caribbean countries which will make it possible to analyse the different national situations in relation to information and thus to formulate policies based on these findings. On the basis of the survey, it will be possible to create contacts among the different information units in the region (that is, at the governmental academic centres and private enterprise levels) and therefore produce a more efficient exchange among themselves.

29. ECLA has been active in various sectoral areas, as follows:

(a) International trade. Negotiations between the Latin American countries regarding multilateral trade are currently being conducted under the auspices of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). ECLA is also studying the implications for Latin America of the present state of the International Monetary and Financial System. The purpose of this study is to permit the countries of the region to adopt appropriate measures for adequate protection from external factors. In general, the work of ECLA in the field of international and economic relations is mainly focused on problems dealing with the programme of action for the establishment of a new international economic order and on assisting in carrying out decisions taken at the fourth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD);

(b) Industry. Studies have been carried out on specific industrial branches (chemical, metal-mechanic, forestry and agricultural-based industries) with a view to identifying their potential and problems. Support is being given to Central American countries in the formulation of sectoral policies with emphasis on areas of specialization and complementarity. Increased co-operation and complementarity among the Latin American countries will be processed through specific projects and through the creation of Latin American multinational enterprises;

(c) Transport. ECLA has assisted in the design and implementation of an integrated system for the movement of goods imported by Bolivia through the Chilean port of Arica. It is also promoting economic co-operation in the field of transport and trade facilitation and is presently completing a study on transport services in the Andean Corridor, Santiago-Caracas, with the aim of identifying bottle-necks, both physical and institutional, that face the movement of goods and people in the Andean subregion;

(d) Natural resources and energy. In close co-operation with the Latin American Energy Organization, ECLA will promote joint action by the countries of the region in multinational activities with the aim of improving their energy policies. It will also collaborate with Central American Governments in the evaluation and optimal exploitation of natural resources with a view to strengthening an integrationist approach to the joint exploitation of the natural resources of the area.

(e) Food and agriculture. ECLA has been co-operating with integration bodies to strengthen their capacity to identify and formulate programmes, projects or activities designed to increase agricultural co-operation among member countries of the different integration schemes on, *inter alia*, transformation of rural structures, creation of technology (including food technology), production of technical inputs and improvement of distribution systems;

(f) Science and technology. Research studies are being carried out on the choice of techniques and appropriate technology in relation to employment and other socio-economic objectives. Case studies at the industrial subsector and enterprise level on transfer and adaptation of technology and on native technological and scientific development, methodology for evaluating investment projects in the field of scientific and technological development are also being carried out. The objective of these studies is to define the criteria of technological development policies useful to channel investments. The sectors being covered in the current phase are the following: the building, still, chemical and petrochemical industries, the relationship between technology and the export of manufactures, and legal and institutional structures for creating technological know how.

#### 4. Economic Commission for Africa

30. Over past years, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) has been engaged in various activities for promoting economic and technical co-operation, ranging from production and trade co-operation policies and strategies and the strengthening of existing and the creation of new sectoral and multipurpose institutions to the identification, formulation and development of multinational projects on subregional and regional bases.

31. In addition to the eight formal and functioning multipurpose economic groupings covering 42 States, there are 18 operational institutions in the agricultural sector, 4 in industry, 26 in transport and communications, 4 in tourism, 15 in education and 9 in natural resources; the creation of the substantial part of these institutions has been initiated by the Commission, while in other cases the Commission has rendered technical support - in the establishment of the Economic Community of the West African States, for example.

32. Taking into account the needs of the land-locked countries and the fact that out of the 47 independent African States, 26 are estimated to have a population of 5 million or less, the overriding necessity for integrating national markets through transport and communications has led the Commission to undertake extensive

work in the establishment of Trans-African, Trans-East African and Trans-Saharan roads, ports and railway associations in eastern, northern, west and central Africa, and, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), in the initiation and formulation of a programme for a regional telecommunications network.

33. In the field of monetary co-operation, ECA has assisted African countries in the establishment of the West African Clearing-House and the Association of African Central Banks. In trade promotion and purchasing, the work of ECA with African countries has enabled the creation of the Association of African Trade Promotion Organizations located at Tangiers, Morocco, in addition to active support of the all-African Trade Fair organized by the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

34. The Commission's activities for promotion of co-operation in agriculture have included assistance to the West Africa Rice Development Association in a scheme for self-sufficiency in rice, help to the countries of the Customs and Economic Union of Central Africa (UDEAC) in the establishment of a meat production and trade community, and assistance to seed multiplication schemes in the Sahel countries. Work has also been completed on the establishment of a Mineral Resources Development Centre at Dodoma, United Republic of Tanzania, and a Regional Centre for Services in Mapping and Surveying in Kenya.

35. In collaboration with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), UNCTAD and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), ECA is continuing with efforts towards the establishment of a regional centre for the transfer, adaptation and development of technology which, inter alia, is expected to assist member countries in the creation and support of national machineries.

36. The Commission has created, in collaboration with United Nations Headquarters and UNDP, subregional operational institutions to cover countries with some common development needs. In a multidisciplinary fashion, these institutions work under the direction of representatives of the Governments in identifying, formulating and promoting multinational projects and national projects with multinational components for implementation among two or more countries.

37. Besides bringing together representatives of intergovernmental economic groupings to facilitate exchange of experience, the Commission disseminates information directed to promote technical and economic co-operation among African countries, including directories of African experts and African intergovernmental organizations.

##### 5. Economic Commission for Western Asia

38. The following are, briefly, some of the achievements and related ongoing activities of the Economic Commission for Western Asia (ECWA) aimed at promoting economic co-operation among developing countries in some of the fields specified

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under the Programme of Action (TD/195/Add.1) adopted at the Third Ministerial Meeting of the Group of Seventy-seven, which was held at Manila from 6 January to 7 February 1976. The order of presentation is based on the scale of priorities established in the work of the Commission, which reflects development needs in member countries:

(a) Food and agriculture. ECWA has assisted in the completion of projects on incentives for accelerating cereal and livestock production, integrated rural development in selected agricultural projects in Jordan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen and the organization of training programmes in agricultural planning;

(b) Industrial development. In this field concrete activities and achievements include the study and identification of priority areas aimed at developing selected branches of the food-processing industry in the countries of the region, the development of the fertilizer industry as part of an over-all development plan for industry in the Arab world and the development of industrial manpower in the Arab world through joint training programmes;

(c) Natural resources. In this field, ECWA has the following ongoing activities:

(i) Development of basic energy statistics, development of a strategy for action on alternative uses of oil and determination of medium-term and long-term supply of and demand for energy in the region;

(ii) Promotion of co-operation in the development of mineral resources and collection of information and study of the possibilities of establishing a regional mineral resources development institute;

(iii) Assessment of existing water supplies and future demand (by the year 2000) in the countries of the region and preparation for the regional Water Conference in preparation for the United Nations Water Conference, to be held in Argentina from 7 to 18 March 1977;

(d) Trade and development. Foreign trade and payments statistics in the region, liberalization of non-tariff barriers and inter-Arab transit trade are being developed;

(e) Transport and communications. A survey of the transport situation in the region is being carried out and the needs for developing an integrated transport system are being assessed.

## 6. Interregional co-operation

39. There is considerable scope for intensification of co-operation between the regional commissions in economic co-operation among developing countries, not only through exchange of information and experience, but also in joint planning and programming. Initiatives to promote interregional co-operation continue to be taken by the regional commissions and have been further strengthened in

pursuance of General Assembly resolution 3362 (S-VII) of 16 September 1975. The subject of interregional co-operation has also been discussed at meetings of the executive secretaries. Currently, there are several examples of interregional co-operation to promote economic co-operation among developing countries as, for example, between ECA and ECWA in the creation of a documentation centre and a joint ECE/ECLA research programme - with some support from the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat - concerning international trade between Latin America and Europe. The regional commissions are also actively participating in the implementation of the Action Programme for Economic Co-operation among Non-Aligned and other Developing Countries (see para. 8 above). These efforts will require considerable intensification in the coming years.

### C. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

40. Since its inception in 1964 UNCTAD has been dealing with problems regarding economic co-operation among developing countries and, in 1968, a special programme on trade expansion and economic integration was established within the UNCTAD secretariat. This programme became one of its substantive divisions in 1970. Economic co-operation among developing countries constitutes, therefore, an area where UNCTAD not only plays a crucial role but also has a unique position within the United Nations system, since it is the only organization where an important division is exclusively devoted to these matters.

41. In accordance with decision 121 (XIV) of 13 September 1974 and resolution 128 (S-VI) of 21 March 1975 of the Trade and Development Board, an expert group on economic co-operation among developing countries met at Geneva from 27 October to 4 November 1975. For this meeting, the UNCTAD secretariat had prepared a set of studies embracing various aspects of economic co-operation among developing countries (import co-operation, monetary co-operation, financial co-operation, a system of trade preferences and joint ventures) in which progress made was described and solutions were proposed to the problems encountered in these areas. On the basis of the proposals and recommendations of the expert group, and in compliance with Board resolution 128 (S-VI), the Secretary-General of UNCTAD prepared a report (TD/192) which was subsequently considered at the Third Ministerial Meeting of the Group of Seventy-seven, held at Manila from 6 January to 7 February 1976, and by the Conference at its fourth session, held at Nairobi from 5 to 31 May 1976. Many of these proposals were incorporated in resolution 1 on economic co-operation among developing countries (see TD/195, annex I) adopted by the Group of Seventy-seven at Manila. The resolution spells out a programme which translates into practical action the concept of collective self-reliance and the determination of the developing countries to reinforce their unity and capacity for joint action.

42. The particular responsibility assigned to UNCTAD in activities related to economic co-operation among developing countries is underlined in General Assembly resolutions 3362 (S-VII) of 16 September 1975 and 3442 (XXX) of 9 December 1975 and reiterated in Conference resolution 92 (IV) of 30 May 1976 on measures of support by developed countries and international organizations for the programme.

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of economic co-operation among developing countries and resolution 90 (IV) of 30 May 1976 on institutional issues. According to the latter resolution, the Trade and Development Board is requested to establish an open-ended committee on economic co-operation among developing countries whose functions would be to consider, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 3362 (S-VII), section VI, paragraph 1, measures to provide, as and when requested, support and assistance to developing countries in strengthening and enlarging their mutual co-operation at the subregional, regional and interregional levels. The Committee on Economic Co-operation was established by the Board at its sixteenth session.

43. On the other hand, the Group of Seventy-seven, at its Third Ministerial Meeting, held at Manila, took the decision which was confirmed at the Conference's fourth session to convene at Mexico City, in September 1976, a meeting at the highest possible level and with the participation of all developing countries and the international organizations which carry out important work relating to subregional, regional and interregional co-operation among developing countries. The Mexico City Conference on Economic Co-operation among Developing Countries was held from 13 to 22 September 1976 and its report (TD/B/628) circulated as an official document at the Board's sixteenth session. UNCTAD assisted in the preparation and organization of the Conference as well as of the two preparatory meetings held by the group of governmental experts of the Group of Seventy-seven which preceded the Mexico City meeting.

#### 1. International trade

44. The integrated programme for commodities formulated by UNCTAD provides a framework for modes of collaboration which could develop new markets within the developing countries for both primary and processed products. UNCTAD has actively participated in the preparatory work leading to the formulation by the developing countries of their common position at the Third Ministerial Meeting of the Group of Seventy-seven (Manila, 26 January to 7 February 1976). The Conference, at its fourth session, adopted resolution 93 (IV) of 30 May 1976 on an Integrated Programme for Commodities where the objectives, components of such a programme and the required international measures towards the negotiations of a common fund were spelled out.

45. UNCTAD has also been participating in the preparatory work done by the non-aligned countries for the establishment of a Council of Producers' Associations and in some of the activities undertaken by these countries within the framework of the Action Programme for Economic Co-operation among Non-Aligned and other Developing Countries (see para. 8 above).

46. In the field of trade expansion and regional integration among developing countries, UNCTAD has continued to provide, through studies, expert group meetings and technical assistance, support to a large number of groupings and also to some individual developing countries wishing to join existing integration schemes.

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## 2. Finance

47. Activities in this field are oriented towards the establishment of an organized system of financial co-operation among developing countries. Studies are being prepared on this subject to provide basic guidelines for such a system. UNCTAD has also supported the establishment of inventories of multinational projects in several regions or subregions.

## 3. Insurance

48. A number of practical initiatives have taken place in this field. Re-insurance corporations, co-insurance schemes and training centres on a multinational basis have been established or are under consideration in Africa and Asia as well as in the Caribbean. UNCTAD's support has been provided to some of these projects.

## 4. Transport and communications

49. Research work has been carried out by UNCTAD in order to identify the problems of developing countries in the field of shipping and ports and to determine the actions which they need to take - both individually and collectively. A broad programme of technical assistance enables the results of this research activity to be put into practice. Also, assistance is being provided by way of training - either through permanent institutions or by way of periodic training courses.

## 5. Science and technology

50. The role of and the activities undertaken by UNCTAD in promoting economic co-operation among developing countries in the field of technology have been considerably expanded in the period under review. The strengthening of the technological capacity of developing countries through collective efforts was also one of the major issues for consideration and decision at the Third Ministerial Meeting of the Group of Seventy-seven, held at Manila, as well as at the Conference's fourth session, at Nairobi. Conference resolution 87 (IV) of 30 May 1976 on strengthening the technological capacity of developing countries marks a major step forward in outlining a comprehensive programme of action in this field and in establishing within the UNCTAD secretariat the necessary international basis, in the form of an Advisory Service on Transfer of Technology. This programme includes actions to be undertaken by developing countries at the subregional, regional and interregional levels through the elaboration of preferential arrangements among developing countries, the establishment of centres for transfer and development of technology and the setting up of centres in specific and critical sectors.

51. The UNCTAD secretariat has prepared several studies on the above-mentioned issues (see among others TD/B/C.6/9/Add.3 and TD/190/Supp.1) and an informal group of experts on the establishment of centres for the transfer and development of technology met at Geneva in December 1975.

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D. United Nations Development Programme

1. International trade

52. Expansion of trade among African countries has been a prominent feature of UNDP co-operation with subregional groupings. This activity is being supplemented by a region-wide project for the promotion of intra-African trade. Assistance is also provided or envisaged for the establishment of clearing-house unions, aimed at facilitating payments between African States.

53. In Latin America, UNDP has provided assistance to the Board of Cartagena Agreement in studying a common external tariff system. Another project is intended to assist the Governments of Central America in those aspects of the restructuring of the Central America Common Market which relate to the future creation of a custom union.

54. In Asia, assistance is being provided to the liberalization of intraregional trade, which has already resulted in the signing of the Bangkok Agreement by participating Governments.

2. Industrial co-operation and development

55. In the African region, UNDP assists Governments in industrial planning and in industrial development, notably through institutional support to the African and the East African Development Banks and through the activities of the Forest Industries Group.

56. In the European, Mediterranean and Middle East regions, an important project is under study for regional development of the fertilizer industry, stressing the needs of poor farmers of the region.

57. In Latin America, two projects in industrial rationalization and programming are directed to the joint development of industrial resources of the Andean subregion.

3. Finance

58. Assistance has been accorded for the establishment of financial institutions in the African region, including subregional clearing-house unions. UNDP has played a pivotal role in the Asian Clearing Union which has resulted in the introduction of monetary measures to facilitate currency payments between the countries of the region. UNDP is co-operating with the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development on a programme for identification and preparation of intercountry feasibility studies and investment projects in the Arab world.



#### 4. Transport and communications

59. The development of integrated transport and communications systems in the African region has been stimulated by UNDP through the funding of region-wide studies, notably on the establishment of the Pan African Telecommunications Network. Substantial resources have been allocated to the support of multinational training institutions in this sector.

60. In Asia and the Pacific region, assistance has been provided to two major infrastructure activities, the Asian Highway and the Trans-Asian Railway. UNDP experts took part in feasibility studies of the Asian Telecommunication Network.

61. In the European, Mediterranean and Middle East regions, UNDP is involved in the building of a road across the Sahara and in the training of personnel in the fields of maritime transport and civil aviation. Support has also been given to the Higher Arab Postal Institute and pre-feasibility studies are being made on a regional network for telecommunications in the Middle East.

62. UNDP assists the Governments of Central America in the formulation and implementation of a joint transport policy and in the improvement of shipping and ports, activities which are directed to the joint development of maritime services.

#### 5. Natural resources

63. In Africa, UNDP is involved in the study of water resources, particularly in the Sahelian zone. Support is accorded to training and the use of modern technology to help the Governments of the region increase their control over their natural resources.

64. In Asia, as well as in the South Pacific, prospecting for deposits of natural resources is being pursued through UNDP assistance.

#### 6. Food and agriculture

65. Assistance is given to subregional groupings of African States and intergovernmental organizations for the purpose of increasing food production through various programmes (inter alia, irrigated agriculture, rice research, livestock development and forestry).

66. In Asia, under UNDP assistance, countries exchange experience in small farmers' development. The improvement of field food crops is pursued by a project aimed at strengthening and linking national research programmes of countries in the Near and Middle East and in North Africa.

67. In Latin America, the Board of the Cartagena Agreement is assisted in agricultural programming.

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7. Science and technology

68. In the African region, assistance has concentrated on training and on the establishment of documentation centres. Preliminary activities have been conducted on the establishment of a research institute for the Sahelian zone. The creation of regional networks for the diffusion of scientific and technical information is planned for the next period.

69. In Latin America, a new mechanism to contribute to scientific-technical development was proposed in a detailed technical study: the multinational technology enterprise.

8. Integrated development planning

70. The major thrusts in this field are to help African Governments plan the integrated development of their shared natural resources and to train African personnel in development planning techniques. A multisectoral regional planning project for the Caribbean community is assisting the members of the community in formulating national development plans.

E. United Nations Environment Programme

1. International trade

71. Two case studies are being conducted by UNCTAD, with the support of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), on trade barriers and restrictions resulting from environmental policies. Such studies will be of assistance to developing countries in formulating jointly their own policies towards the impact of environmental measures on trade.

2. Natural resources

72. A very large part of the UNEP programme is concerned with the proper use of natural resources. Most of the activities fall within the priority area of terrestrial ecosystems, their management and control. They are related to arid lands and grazing lands, tropical woodlands and forest, other ecosystems, sites and samples, endangered species and wild-life, water and genetic resources. In all of these areas there are activities under way which involve, or will lead to, some form of collaboration between developing countries. Notable amongst these are: the preparations for the United Nations Conference on Desertification, responsibility for which has been entrusted to UNEP; the development of a world-wide network of parks and reserves; the incorporation of environmental elements into the management of lake and river basins; the preparations for the United Nations Water Conference; the co-operation in the field of the environment concerning natural resources shared by two or more States. With the assistance of government experts, UNEP is elaborating draft principles to guide the conduct of States in the harmonious exploitation of shared natural resources.

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3. Other areas of the environment programme

73. Several other areas within the environment programme are of direct relevance to collaboration between developing countries. These are:

(a) Human settlements technology. A project with ECLA will result in a regional programme for human settlements technology in Latin America; similar activities are under discussion with ECA and ECWA. Through this series of regional seminars, it is intended to focus on concentrated, consortium-type research to be implemented at the regional level, on action-oriented projects and programmes for each region to test new concepts in human settlements technology and on information exchange. Such a regional approach is bound to involve and stimulate co-operation between developing countries;

(b) Human health: pest management systems. With appropriate international and national bodies, UNEP is helping to formulate environmentally-sound methods of controlling schistosomiasis, malaria and cotton pests, all problems facing developing countries. A world plan of action for each is being elaborated, involving research and pilot projects. Their implementation will necessitate co-operation between developing nations;

(c) Environment and development. UNEP has fostered - and will continue to do so - an understanding of the interrelationship between environment and development, a matter of special concern to developing countries. One way in which this will be done is through a series of regional seminars at which the particular dimension of each region in turn will be brought out and assistance will be given to developing countries to elaborate alternative patterns of development and to promote collective self-reliance in an environmentally-sound context;

(d) Oceans. A major programme is under way related to the conservation of the marine environment of the Mediterranean. An action plan, which includes proposals for integrated planning, research and monitoring, legal aspects and institutional arrangements, has been adopted for the region. The implementation of the action plan will inevitably require a good deal of collaboration between the developing countries of the region;

(e) Energy. UNEP is encouraging the establishment of a series of centres in developing countries to show how local supplies of renewable energy sources can be harnessed in an integrated facility to meet the basic needs of small rural communities. Though initially this is conceived of as a demonstration exercise, in due course the results should enable developing countries to collaborate with each other in the developing methods of energy supply more suited to their needs;

(f) Earthwatch. The Global Environmental Monitoring System (GEMS) is conceived of as a co-ordinated effort on the part of the world community to gather data of significance to the rational management of the environment. Many of the projects specifically supported by the Fund of UNEP aim at helping developing

countries to set up monitoring systems in accordance with the priorities set up by the Governing Council. Likewise the International Referral System (IRS) for sources of environmental information cannot be brought fully into operation without the participation of the developing countries. When fully operational, IRS will certainly benefit developing countries, partly through the exchange of information which may sometimes lead to technical co-operation;

(g) Training. As a matter of policy, UNEP has assisted developing countries to attend, inter alia, conferences and seminars related to the environment. In this way, contacts are fostered between experts from different developing countries, thus providing a basis for closer technical and economic co-operation;

(h) Environmental education. With UNESCO, UNEP is currently helping to plan an international programme in environmental education by which networks of institutions will be established to promote environmental education in each region. This programme will be so designed as to enable regional groupings of countries, in particular developing countries, to come together at both the design and education stage;

(i) Environmental law. UNEP gives assistance to developing countries in acceding to international legislation designed to protect the environment. This area represents a considerable stimulus to co-operation between developing countries. UNEP attaches great importance to harmonizing environmental legislation between groups of developing countries, for example through seminars and expert missions.

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