

United Nations
**GENERAL
ASSEMBLY**

THIRTY-SECOND SESSION
Official Records*



SECOND COMMITTEE
19th meeting
held on
Monday, 17 October 1977
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 19th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. JANKOWITSCH (Austria)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 62: UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME (A/32/3 and Add.1 (Part II), A/32/25, A/32/137, A/32/156, A/32/159, A/32/189, A/32/228, A/32/257, A/32/260)

- (a) REPORT OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL
- (b) REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
- (c) UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON DESERTIFICATION

1. Mr. TOLBA (Executive Director, United Nations Environment Programme), introducing the report of the Governing Council (A/32/25), said that the Council had decided at its fifth session to agree on 21 goals to be met by UNEP by 1982. The goals fell within the framework of the policy decisions concerning the new international economic order and of the forthcoming exercise of formulating the new international development strategy. They were specific and indicative of the projected impact of the Environment Programme as a whole.

2. The Council had been aware of the importance of setting up the goals in such a manner that their implementation could be clearly evaluated. Steps had been taken to draw up work plans showing how the goals might be implemented. To that end, multidisciplinary task forces had been established as part of the process of reorganizing the Bureau of the Programme. That multidisciplinary approach should be reflected at the level of formulation and implementation of specific programmes by the United Nations system as a whole. Accordingly, since the first round of joint programming exercises with each concerned member of the system had been concluded, the emphasis was being shifted to the programming of specific subjects of interest to more than one member of the system. The Environment Co-ordination Board would shortly be considering initiating thematic joint programming on water, arid lands, including desertification, and environment education and training. In each area special emphasis would be given to implementing the recommendations of recent international conferences. The Governing Council had approved the Environment Co-ordination Board's analysis of its purposes and ways of working, including a definition of its functions and proposals to ensure more efficient co-ordination. It had stressed the importance of strengthening regional co-operation in environmental activities and was assisting in establishing environmental co-ordination units within the regional commissions.

3. Bearing in mind that the goals set by the Governing Council were for the year 1982, it was significant that the Council had decided that the first quinquennial review of the state of the environment should be produced for that year. It was also significant that the Executive Director had been authorized to alert the world to possible serious threats to the environment. UNEP's role would include identifying alternative, less harmful courses of action.

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4. The new target for voluntary contributions to the Fund of UNEP had been set at \$150 million for the following four years. The Council attached special significance to a broad base for voluntary contributions. He therefore appealed to Governments which had not contributed to the Fund in the first five years and those which could afford to make a more substantial contribution to do so.

5. The Council had endorsed his suggestion on making a thorough analysis of the status of Fund-supported projects. The analysis had revealed that, while some areas showed progress, others had not advanced beyond the stage of experts' meetings and interim reports. Although a simplistic view of the Fund's catalytic role would have UNEP employ a small amount of resources to attract larger financial support, the analysis had also revealed that in several fields the level of contributions from co-operating agencies had not really matched the value of UNEP's mobilization of the past experience and memory bank of the agency concerned.

6. The pledges and contributions on hand for the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation were clearly inadequate for continued development of the programmes mandated by the General Assembly in resolution 3327 (XXIX). The Governing Council had therefore invited the Assembly to set a target for voluntary contributions to the Foundation for the period 1978-1981, taking into account the Executive Director's proposal of \$50 million, and to consider convening a pledging conference in 1978 if the target was not met. The Assembly would also be considering authorizing the Foundation to borrow money from Governments and financial institutions in order to carry out its mandate of lending seed capital to developing countries.

7. The first meeting of the working group on environmental law, set up pursuant to decision 91 (V) of the Governing Council, had been held in Geneva at the end of August. The Group had decided to study further the subject of liability for pollution and other environmental damage and compensation for such damage, and had selected offshore mining and drilling within the limits of national jurisdiction as a priority subject for the period 1977-1979. The Council had extended the mandate of the Intergovernmental Working Group of Experts on natural resources shared by two or more States. The Working Group had confirmed the consensus reached in January on four principles and guidelines and had reached a consensus on six more principles and guidelines but much remained to be done. He was consulting all Governments for their views on the feasibility and desirability of holding an intergovernmental meeting to discuss the problem of the material remnants of wars, particularly mines, and their effect on the environment.

8. He hoped that the new format of the document on international conventions (A/32/156) was satisfactory to the Committee.

9. The observations made by the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination at its seventeenth session in connexion with its detailed study of environment had been constructive and useful.

10. The Council was seeking a specific decision by the General Assembly on the subject of a permanent headquarters for UNEP. In that connexion, he drew attention

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(Mr. Tolba)

to the report by the Secretary-General on United Nations accommodation in Nairobi (A/C.5/32/19) which contained full details of UNEP's accommodation requirements.

11. The commitment of the United Nations system to achieving a new international economic order and framing the objectives for the new international development strategy was an important context for the environment programme. Environmental problems were not caused by industrialization alone; poverty could also lead to environmental degradation. Economic development was therefore essential to the protection and enhancement of the man-made and natural environment. For much of the world, the question was what kind of development was needed. Clearly, development should not destroy the ozone barrier or bring about destructive climatic change. The concept of outer limits was being studied in greater depth. Some early conclusions were that outer limits were not necessarily static norms and that outer limits might be reached in particular places much sooner than a global study of outer limits might indicate. A case in point was the process of the conversion of marginal land into desert. It was obvious that the basic human needs of the world's population had to be met in order to prevent further environmental degradation and to avert negative cycles in which the capacity to meet those needs was increasingly jeopardized as resources were exhausted. However, meeting basic needs without thought to the environmental consequences might also have disastrous effects.

12. Economic development, the major source of change, had to be harnessed to protect the environment. In advancing the concept of environmentally sound, sustainable development, UNEP was not claiming that there was an environmentally sound way to proceed in all situations. Its concept of environmentally sound technologies ranged from non-polluting technologies, through technologies in which inevitable pollution was minimized, to the development of new technologies or the adaptation of existing ones. The lessons were applicable to both developing countries and developed ones.

13. The 1980s should be seen as a period in which population growth, the persistence of widespread poverty and pressures for rapid economic growth and for the maintenance of highly resource-intensive life-styles would bring increasing pressures on the quality of the human environment in general. The third international development strategy should therefore become a component of all-round constructive co-operation among all countries in evolving patterns of development and life-styles that would ensure the well-being of existing generations and those to come. Universal concern for the protection and improvement of the human environment could provide a unifying perspective to the new international economic order and promote the satisfaction of basic human needs for all.

AGENDA ITEM 60: UNITED NATIONS INSTITUTE FOR TRAINING AND RESEARCH: REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (A/32/14)

14. Mr. NICOL (Executive Director, United Nations Institute for Training and Research), introducing UNITAR's report (A/32/14), pointed out that it covered the period from 1 July 1976-October 1977, and thus covered the summer months during which the Institute conducted many activities in other continents.

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(Mr. Nicol)

15. The Institute's work reflected the recommendations of the sixth and seventh special sessions of the General Assembly. A typical example of that orientation had been the seminar for young diplomats on the new international economic order and multilateral diplomacy in June 1977, details of which appeared in paragraph 30 of the report. Arrangements were being made to hold a second seminar on the same lines. UNITAR was also carrying out a research programme, in collaboration with Mexican scholars, on obstacles - economic, political and technical - to the implementation of the Declaration and Programme of Action, the Establishment of the New International Economic Order and the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States. Another major research scheme, partly funded by the Ford Foundation, dealt with the institutional side of the new international economic order, including a comparative study of decision-making procedures in such economically oriented bodies as the General Assembly, UNCTAD, the Conference on International Economic Co-operation and the Development Assistance Committee of OECD. It was hoped that the resultant monographs would not only analyse the advantages of various procedures and techniques for resolving conflicts on contentious issues but would also discuss the possible future of multilateral economic institutions.

16. UNITAR endeavoured to give a thorough training and research background to diplomats about the main issues that had been debated in recent years in the United Nations. In view of the important role of economic and social affairs, it had sponsored, in conjunction with the Economic Development Institute of the World Bank, a three-week seminar on the technical issues of economic development for members of permanent missions in New York dealing with those subjects. At the request of heads of delegations and ambassadors, seminars were also being held on United Nations personnel practices and financial administration.

17. UNITAR was also concerned with the major issues of the day. It had organized a conference in Austria on natural petroleum and gas, details of which appeared in paragraphs 97 and 98 of the report. The 50 papers submitted by experts from all over the world had been published in book form and the conference had received wide publicity in the press of both developed and developing countries. A follow-up seminar on energy was planned. The conference on alternative strategies for desert development and management, referred to in paragraph 100 of the report, had been organized in collaboration with the state government of California with the assistance of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme and the Office of Technical Co-operation, and the papers had subsequently been made available for the UNEP conference on desertification. The entire exercise was an example of the continuing collaboration between UNITAR and other parts of the United Nations system.

18. As part of UNITAR's work on the "brain drain", the multinational comprehensive study on why students remained abroad or returned home was being published in 1977 by the Pergamon Press under the title of "The Brain Drain: Emigration and Return". That was one of the nine book-length manuscripts, in addition to shorter monographs and articles, which had been produced during the year by the Institute's Research Department. That Department was concentrating more and more on the future of *international organizations and their increased effectiveness*, and a scheme had been inaugurated whereby all research carried out at the Institute was used in seminars.

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(Mr. Nicol)

19. There were two categories of seminars: training sessions and meetings bringing together experts, senior diplomats and Secretariat members to discuss points of major interest to the Organization. There had been 33 training programmes ranging in duration from two days to five months, which had been attended by 700 participants from 135 Member States - a 46 per cent increase on the previous year. The vast majority of participants came from Asia, Africa and Latin America, but the Institute had been gratified to note the presence of more representatives from developed countries: interaction between developed and developing countries was an important ingredient and mixed groups from different regions were organized into a single unit in simulation exercises in order to familiarize participants with each other's point of view. With regard to international law, a United Nations-UNITAR refresher course in Bangladesh (A/32/14, para. 35) had been well attended by lawyers from the region, and an increasing number of fellowship courses were being held at the Hague Academy of International Law; future joint courses were being planned.

20. He wished to make special mention of the colloquium on "Women and decision-making in the United Nations", held at the invitation of the Austrian Government and attended by senior officials of the Secretariat and 14 other organizations of the United Nations system. Statistics collected by the Institute showed that there had been little progress since UNITAR had reviewed the matter in 1972: indeed, unless the percentage of women in the professional and higher categories in the United Nations system as a whole increased more rapidly than during the previous five years, it would take over 100 years for them to achieve equality, in spite of the Assembly's call for an equitable balance between men and women at the higher levels by the end of 1980. The colloquium had agreed on the need for more women in policy-making organs as a means of helping world development. It had adopted a number of recommendations on practical measures, which it had sent to the appropriate bodies and had urged that an attempt should be made to reach the target of a 30 per cent representation of women in the professional and higher categories in the United Nations system by the end of 1980. However, much depended upon Member States putting forward women as candidates for international staff posts as well as for national policy-making bodies.

21. With regard to the meetings of directors of United Nations training, planning and research institutes (A/32/14, paras. 127-132), he hoped that the Assembly would accede to the request to extend participation to cover Institutes founded since the annual meetings had been inaugurated - in particular, the number of institutes in Asia had risen during the previous three years. With regard to the United Nations University, he was happy to report that there had been more co-operation during the previous year: the Vice-Rector of the University had attended the conference on "Africa and the problématique of the Future" and the meeting of the UNITAR Governing Board. There was also active co-operation with the University on a project in Geneva.

22. Turning to the funding of UNITAR activities, he said that more financial assistance was urgently required. The Institute had not received an endowment, as

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(Mr. Nicol)

had been hoped, on its establishment and was dependent on annual contributions from Member States and special-purpose grants. Only one third of the membership of the United Nations made contributions, although there were some new contributors, including Sierra Leone, and other States had made increased contributions, particularly the United States. Similarly, the Institute had received several generous grants over the year from the Swedish Authority for International Development. However, UNITAR's position compared poorly with that of the ILO Training Institute which had a comparable budget of \$2.5 million. Thirty per cent of that Institute's budget was contributed by the ILO itself which also provided grants for work done at its request. In addition, 5 to 10 per cent of its income came from an endowment fund. It would not be a difficult matter for the United Nations to cover the comparatively small UNITAR budget - a course of action which would relieve the staff of fund-raising work and ensure the progress of an organization which was essential to the United Nations. When, a few weeks previously, he had opened the customary seminar for new delegates to the General Assembly, attended on that occasion by over 150 participants, he had been conscious of the privilege of contributing to the work of the United Nations.

23. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the deadline for the submission of proposals under agenda item 60 should be Friday, 21 October.

24. It was so decided.

25. Mr. ALGARD (Norway) welcomed the concentration of UNITAR's research and studies on problems connected with the establishment of a new international economic order. The research programme should be action-oriented, coherent and multidisciplinary; its consolidation in the three main areas outlined on page 10 of document A/32/14 would provide a valuable input for the preparation of a new development strategy. The training programmes, seminars and programmes relating to ad hoc conferences contributed to greater efficiency in United Nations working procedures.

26. Government financing by means of special-purpose grants or funds might endanger the cohesion of the research programme. For that reason the General Assembly should evaluate the existing system of financing and consider having at least part of UNITAR's activities financed from the regular budget.

27. He announced that, subject to Parliamentary approval, his country's contribution to UNITAR for 1978 would amount to 400,000 Norwegian kroner, an increase of 50,000 kroner over its 1977 contribution.

28. Mr. QUENTIN (Italy) said that UNITAR's unique training courses were of enormous practical benefits to diplomats.

29. In his delegation's view, all United Nations research activities should increasingly be delegated to the Institute. In particular, UNITAR's research in the field of energy should be continued and expanded with a view to providing

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(Mr. Quentin, Italy)

definitive, objective conclusions regarding the level of existing natural resources to the international community.

30. UNITAR was also the most appropriate body for providing delegations with information concerning the United Nations. It would be useful for delegations to be kept informed through an ad hoc yearly publication on the mandate, scope and composition of the various intergovernmental and expert organs of the United Nations, with specific reference to arrangements within groups for agreed rotation schemes.

31. In conclusion, he said that, given its limited resources, UNITAR should concentrate on a limited number of specific essential activities connected with major themes of global interest, such as the Project on the Future.

32. Mr. JODAHL (Sweden) welcomed the fact that UNITAR was focusing its attention on the issues and problems related to the establishment of a new international economic order; he trusted that that tendency would be continued and strengthened. The training programme, particularly the courses for members of permanent missions, the seminars on United Nations conferences and the training of diplomats and legal advisers from developing countries, were an important contribution in that respect. Training programmes organized by special request should be limited to participants from developing countries and be connected with the work of the United Nations system.

33. The research programme should be directed increasingly towards the problems relating to the establishment of the new international economic order, and the paramount criterion for the selection of new projects should be their relevance to that issue.

34. In view of the limited resources available to it, the Institute should further concentrate its activities and increase the interrelationship between research projects. In particular, his delegation questioned the validity of new projects in the area of peace and security, since the resources of the United Nations Secretariat in the fields of disarmament had been strengthened.

35. As the Executive Director had pointed out in his report, the Institute was the only United Nations organization with a mandate to conduct high-level research related to the functioning of the United Nations system. As far as was possible within the framework of the new international economic order, UNITAR's research activities should be linked to the political work of the United Nations in such a way as to encourage the formulation of specific proposals to improve the functioning of the United Nations and its specialized agencies.

36. He noted with satisfaction that despite limited resources, the Project on the Future was *gaining momentum*. Most studies on the future were centred on the problems of industrial society, while the UNITAR project was, rightly, directed to breaking down global future studies to a regional level, giving priority to the neglected problems of the third world. Valuable work had also been done on energy,

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(Mr. Jodahl, Sweden)

environment, global models and regional planning. The seminar on regional planning held in Dakar, for which his country had made a special contribution, had been extremely useful. The Swedish authorities were giving favourable consideration to a request for further funds for a follow-up to that seminar.

37. His delegation also supported efforts to increase the dissemination of the work of UNITAR to the international community.

38. Given the valuable contribution it made to the United Nations system, contributions to the Institute's regular programme should be increased. Furthermore, those activities which constituted services to the United Nations system should be financed from the United Nations regular budget. He announced that his country would raise its contribution for the fiscal year 1977/78 by 25 per cent to 500,000 Swedish crowns.

39. Mr. WONG (Singapore) commended UNITAR on its success in carrying out, despite severe budgetary limitations, a full programme of seminars, training courses and research activities on a broad range of issues that were especially pertinent to the United Nations. Its assistance was invaluable for the promotion of a new international economic order and the training of junior professionals. In research, UNITAR concentrated on three main areas, namely, international organization, peace and security, and development and international economics. Important conferences and seminars had been organized on subjects such as energy and alternative strategies for desert development and management.

40. The fact that UNITAR's achievements were not more widely recognized was probably due to inadequate publicity and to the fact that it was largely financed by voluntary contributions. Furthermore, the time and effort that the staff devoted to raising funds could be better used in pursuit of the stated goals of the Institute. The United Nations should share in the expenses of programmes such as the junior professional trainee programme and the studies on the new international economic order, which were of great interest to the entire United Nations system. He urged the Institute to endeavour to give wider publicity to its activities and, in addition to its long-term research work, to undertake short-term studies on topical issues with a view to providing timely supportive information of direct relevance to ongoing discussions and negotiations on such issues as the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations, the implementation of the Development Strategy for the Second Development Decade and the establishment of the new international economic order. However, the high expectations placed in UNITAR must be reflected in an awareness of the need for the United Nations to provide financial support for its work.

The meeting rose at 4.50 p.m.