



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 41st MEETING

Chairman: Mr. JANKOWITSCH (Austria)

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ORGANIZATION OF WORK

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The meeting was called to order at 10.50 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued)
(A/32/3 and Add.1, A/32/254, A/32/96 and Add.1, A/32/208 and Add.1, A/32/268)

1. Mr. FARAH (Assistant Secretary-General for Special Political Questions) said that the report of the Secretary-General on assistance to Mozambique (A/32/96) showed that there was a growing deficit in the public sector and that grants of food and raw materials were urgently required. A balance-of-payments deficit was expected for 1977, together with a further decline in earnings from traffic handled by ports and railways and in receipts from migrant workers as a direct result of the imposition of sanctions against the illegal régime in Southern Rhodesia. Foreign exchange reserves were very low and the shortage was expected to be even more severe in 1978.
2. The assistance so far offered by the international community, amounting to \$102 million, fell short of Mozambique's estimated requirements of \$175 million to \$200 million annually. Table 4 in the report showed that while there had been a most gratifying response from certain countries, many others had not yet responded to the Secretary-General's appeal.
3. In 1976 and 1977, catastrophic floods had caused heavy loss of life and material damage amounting to over \$35 million. An international appeal for assistance had realized \$5.5 million, which had enabled the Government to cope with the immediate problems, but further assistance was required for relief, resettlement and reconstruction, and additional food supplies would be needed in order to avoid shortages in the immediate future.
4. The report also contained information on incidents involving shelling, aerial bombardment and incursions by the forces of the illegal régime in Southern Rhodesia. A marked increase in the number and scale of the attacks had induced the President of Mozambique to request the Security Council to meet to study the situation. The Security Council had adopted resolution 411 (1977) which, inter alia, requested the Secretary-General to organize immediately an effective programme of international financial, technical and material assistance to Mozambique.
5. The report of the mission that had visited Mozambique in July 1977 pursuant to that resolution (A/32/268) described the damage caused by the systematic destruction of vital economic, social and communications facilities and the severe dislocation of the lives of some 50,000 people living in the affected areas. At the time of the mission the Government had not fully assessed the resulting loss to the economy, but it had stated that its requirements in relation to Security Council resolution 411 (1977) were additional to those it had earlier indicated in response to Security Council resolution 386 (1976).
6. The report of the mission set forth a programme of assistance to meet the new requirements and priorities, including projects to overcome the effects of aggression amounting to approximately \$57.8 million, urgent development projects

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(Mr. Farah)

aimed at creating new patterns of trade and production in order to replace income and employment loss as a result of the sanctions applied against Rhodesia, amounting to an estimated \$22.4 million, and projects to promote agricultural development and coal production and exports and to provide transport and telecommunications facilities, amounting to an estimated \$24 million. The total estimated cost of the programme of assistance relative to Security Council resolution 411 (1977) was \$87 million. In addition, the mission considered that, despite the Government's intensive effort to promote agricultural development, substantial, though diminishing, food aid would be needed for some time to come.

7. Information on the situation of the 35,000 Zimbabwean refugees in Mozambique had also been updated in document A/32/268. The living conditions of the refugees in the three organized settlements described in the report of the second review mission (A/32/96) had improved following urgent action by the responsible United Nations agencies. The new report proposed projects amounting to \$8.7 million designed to upgrade medium- and long-term assistance for the refugees. In view of the magnitude of the problem and the need for co-ordination, the Government of Mozambique had established a National Directorate for Refugee Affairs. Nevertheless, meeting the needs of the refugees was primarily the responsibility of the international community.

8. The losses resulting from the armed attacks against Mozambique by the illegal régime in Southern Rhodesia had been inflicted on a country already struggling to cope with grave problems inherited from the colonial period. The Government of Mozambique would welcome multilateral and bilateral assistance. The Secretary-General hoped that the international community would respond generously and promptly to Mozambique's needs in view of its courageous acceptance of its international obligations in applying sanctions against Southern Rhodesia.

9. Introducing the report on assistance to the Comoros (A/32/208/Add.1), he said that, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 31/42, the Secretary-General had taken the necessary steps to mobilize a programme of assistance. An appeal for assistance had been addressed to all States and a mission had visited the Comoros to consult the Government on the nature and extent of its essential material, financial and economic needs.

10. The report of the mission made it clear that the newly independent country had inherited a complex of extraordinarily difficult problems. The withdrawal of external assistance by France shortly after its achievement of independence had left the Government with no resources to meet the budget of the public service. The Government had had no alternative but to dissolve the service and embark on establishing a structure commensurate with local needs and resources. Less than half the national territory was suitable for cultivation, population growth was high, the islands had no known mineral resources, inshore fisheries were poor and the people lacked the resources, facilities and training for ocean fishing. The educational system inherited from the colonial period was unresponsive to the development needs of the country and there was an acute shortage of professional, skilled and semi-skilled personnel. The general health situation was alarming:

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(Mr. Farah)

the child mortality rate was very high, all kinds of diseases were rife and relatively uncontrolled, and hospital conditions were distressing. The water supply on Grand Comoro was dependent on wells or rainwater storage systems that were inadequate and often constituted a health hazard. The Comoros had virtually no economic infrastructure and faced problems similar to those of land-locked countries because of its distance from foreign markets and its dependence on the ports of neighbouring countries for the shipment of its goods.

11. The Government had tried to meet the financial crisis by cutting back drastically on most activities, running down stocks and delaying payment to creditors. Members of the international community had provided assistance in the form of loans, free food and medical supplies, including a \$10 million concessional loan from the Special Arab Aid Fund for Africa and \$5.3 million from the Kuwait Fund to complete road construction projects begun under the French administration. By mid-1977, however, the budgetary situation had again become critical. The difficulties of the Comorian people had been compounded in 1977 by the return of about 17,000 Comorians from Malagasy and by a volcanic eruption which had destroyed two villages and a major banana plantation and left about 10,000 people homeless and destitute.

12. Faced with a multitude of major social and economic problems, the Government decided to launch a comprehensive economic and social development programme, the first prerequisite for which was major infrastructural development. The mission had reviewed with the Government the main features of the current situation and the project proposals under consideration, with a view to identifying fields for which assistance had not yet been secured. On the basis of that review, the mission had drawn up the programme of urgent development projects described in chapter IV of the report, which would supplement the assistance programmes already being arranged on a multilateral or bilateral basis. All assistance provided would have to be in the form of either grants or highly concessional loans, since it was inconceivable that the Comoros could service any substantial external debt for many years to come. The Secretary-General was most concerned about the economic difficulties of the Comoros and hoped that the international concern expressed at the previous session of the General Assembly would be given practical effect in the form of generous, prompt assistance measures.

13. Mr. ABDALLAH (Comoros) said that his delegation was grateful to the United Nations mission for its admirable review of the situation in his country. His country was faced with severe economic problems as the result of the difficult political circumstances in which it had acceded to independence. It had formerly been administered by France as an overseas territory and been covered by the French planning system. The plans for the Comoros had, however, been poorly documented with regard to both economic analyses and investment. All key sectors of the local administration had been manned by French personnel. The domestic contribution to the operating budget had amounted to only 20 per cent, the remainder being provided

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(Mr. Abdallah, Comoros)

by the French authorities. After independence, however, all French financial, economic and technical assistance had been withdrawn.

14. The record of 135 years of French government in his country was a poor one. The country lacked the infrastructure to enable it to achieve rapid development. The road network was inadequate, port facilities were rudimentary and only a handful of industries existed. Only half the children of school age attended primary school and less than 10 per cent attended secondary school, which resulted in a serious lack of skilled personnel, and only 30 per cent of the population were in paid employment. Health facilities were primitive. In addition to the damage to the economy caused by the withdrawal of French technical and financial assistance, the private sector had transferred all the capital it could to France. Despite all those difficulties, the Comorian people were determined to overcome the serious crisis confronting them, and in the two years since independence the Government had laid the foundations for the solution of certain basic problems by carrying out necessary reforms, particularly in the administration.

15. The policy of the Government was to promote self-reliance under a three-phase plan. In the first phase of building up the newly independent State, administrative structures adapted to national requirements had been established and the Government had striven to make world opinion aware of France's attitude to the Comorian territory of Mayotte. The second phase had been devoted to awakening the masses and democratizing institutions in order to overcome the effects of colonialism and the social and economic backwardness inherited from the administering Power. Among other things, the measures introduced to change the traditional feudal structure of society had enabled Comorian women to play their proper role in the development of their country. The unwieldy and inefficient public administration had been reformed and decentralized in order to bring it into line with the requirements and resources of the new State. However, budgetary assistance was still required in order to enable the Government to carry on the normal administration of the State and implement an investment programme which would ensure rapid and sustained growth. During the third phase, which had started in July 1977, an emergency plan aimed at meeting the basic needs of the population within three years would be implemented. The Government had also drawn up a comprehensive five-year development plan aimed at reducing external dependence, improving nutritional levels and increasing exports. Provided sufficient assistance was forthcoming, those reforms would provide a sound basis for sustained development and a more just distribution of income.

16. His country had established diplomatic relations with many countries, and the international community had responded promptly to its appeals for assistance. On a bilateral basis, many countries had provided assistance to alleviate the enormous difficulties caused by the break with France, and multilateral assistance had come from a large number of organizations both within the United Nations system and outside it.

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(Mr. Abdallah, Comoros)

17. The economic difficulties of the Comoros had been compounded by two unforeseeable events: the return of 16,000 Comorians from Madagascar following the sad events of September 1976 and the volcanic eruption of 6 April 1977. After those events the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Islamic Conference and certain European countries, such as Sweden and the Netherlands, had come to the assistance of the Comorian people in a demonstration of international solidarity.

18. His country's situation was critical. The budgetary and administrative problems were so great that international financial assistance was required in order to consolidate its independence and implement a development programme to meet its urgent needs. Overpopulation, and the limited amount of arable land, compounded by archaic farming methods, were seriously aggravating poverty among the peasants. The emergency economic programme drawn up in collaboration with the United Nations mission could not be carried out without external assistance. The Government had already created the conditions for involving the entire population in that effort, and he was confident that, given the commitment of the people and the necessary international support, his country would soon advance towards economic and social development.

19. Mr. LOBO (Mozambique) thanked the countries that had responded to the Secretary-General's appeal and commended the work of the mission sent by the United Nations to review the situation in Mozambique. The people of Mozambique, believing that their independence could never be complete so long as others still suffered under foreign domination, had decided to mobilize their efforts in support of the just fight being waged by the people of Zimbabwe. The illegal Smith régime had thereafter resorted to a new strategy, including the violation of Mozambique's borders. It had massacred defenceless populations, both Rhodesian and Mozambican, had damaged parts of Mozambique's transport and communications network and had destroyed hospitals and bridges, as was confirmed in document A/32/268. Since the Security Council meeting on Zimbabwe in June 1977, the illegal régime had attacked the provinces of Manica, Tete and Gaza over 100 times; the most recent attack had taken place at the very time when the United Nations representative, and the United Kingdom representative, were holding talks with Ian Smith.

20. The application of sanctions against Rhodesia and constant aggression by the illegal régime had created serious problems for the Mozambican economy, which had been left by the former colonial Administration in a position of economic dependence on South Africa and Rhodesia. The difficulties had been compounded by floods within the country in 1977.

21. Despite the international community's gratifying response, the assistance received so far was far from sufficient to meet Mozambique's needs. His Government attached great significance to Security Council resolution 411 (1977), which called on Member States to give material assistance to enable Mozambique to strengthen its defence capability. While the people of Mozambique had organized themselves into farming co-operatives and communal villages in an effort to promote agricultural production, its inherited economic structure, together

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(Mr. Lobo, Mozambique)

with the aggression perpetrated against it by the illegal régime and the natural disasters that had occurred, prevented it from achieving its just aspirations. Immediate financing was required for projects relating to the resettlement of part of the population and the reconstruction of a transport and communications network; those projects were designed to repair the damage caused by the aggression. In addition, the Government had drawn up projects relating to agriculture, health assistance, transport and communications. His Government was convinced that the problems of southern Africa could be solved only by unseating the minority colonial régimes in the region, and it reiterated its total and unconditional support for the national liberation movements. It was convinced that the United Nations would give it all the support that it deserved.

22. Mr. ADJOYI (Togo) introduced draft resolutions A/C.2/32/L.24 and L.25 concerning, respectively, assistance to the Comoros and to Mozambique, on behalf of the African Group and the sponsors. Referring to draft resolution A/C.2/32/L.24, he said that the Seychelles - which had been omitted inadvertently - Bangladesh, Kuwait, Trinidad and Tobago, Yugoslavia and Viet Nam should be added to the list of sponsors. The international community had a duty to provide adequate assistance to the Comoros to enable it to improve the conditions of life of its people. Accordingly, the draft resolution requested the international community to intensify its assistance to the Comoros and requested the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to mobilize the necessary resources and to keep the situation under review.

23. Turning to draft resolution A/C.2/32/L.25, he announced that Bangladesh, Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Guyana, Jamaica, Jordan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Nepal, Nicaragua, Philippines, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Seychelles, Syrian Arab Republic, Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela should be added to the list of sponsors. In the fifth preambular paragraph "Reaffirming" should be replaced by "Endorsing". Although many States and international organizations had responded to the appeals of the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, the assistance they had provided fell far short of what was needed. The resolution endorsed the recommendations of the mission sent to Mozambique (A/32/268), appealed to all States to provide urgent assistance and requested the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to mobilize the necessary resources. Since there was a clear cause-and-effect relationship between the disastrous economic situation of Mozambique and its determination to apply the sanctions imposed by the Security Council against the illegal Rhodesian régime, the international community was duty bound to assist Mozambique. His delegation expressed the hope that draft resolutions A/C.2/32/L.24 and L.25 would be approved by consensus.

24. Mr. HACHANI (Tunisia) thanked the Assistant Secretary-General for Special Political Questions for his introduction and his account of the problems encountered by the countries under consideration. The Tunisian Government would continue to help them as far as it was able.

25. Introducing the draft resolution on assistance to Djibouti (A/C.2/32/L.14/Rev.1)

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(Mr. Hachani, Tunisia)

he said that Gabon, Kenya, Lesotho, Sudan, Turkey, Uganda, Venezuela and Yemen were to be added to the list of sponsors. The draft resolution therefore had the support of countries from most regions. It was identical, so far as objectives and form were concerned, with earlier resolutions relating to recently independent countries. Djibouti wanted to reconstruct its economy and promote development; that task was very difficult not only because of the shortage of natural resources, the inadequate infrastructure and the small number of qualified personnel, but also because of the recent drought. Accordingly, Djibouti's own efforts needed to be supplemented by assistance from the international community.

26. His delegation trusted that the international community would respond favourably and promptly to the appeal for help for the newly independent country. It hoped that the draft resolution would be approved unanimously.

27. Mr. ADAM (Seychelles) said that Seychelles should be classified as one of the least developed countries, in spite of the fact that its relatively high per capita GDP of \$520 in 1976 seemed to place it in the middle range of developing countries. The Republic of Seychelles consisted of a widely scattered and isolated group of small islands, almost wholly dependent on supplies from outside, transported at considerable cost. Over 85 per cent of the rapidly increasing population lived on the principal island, most of which was mountainous and boulder-strewn forest, and 40 per cent were under 15 years of age. There was a severe shortage of flat and easily cultivable land and, although Seychelles was receiving assistance from various donors, including the European Economic Community, to expand agriculture, there was a limit to the possibilities offered by more intensive cultivation and terracing in view of the numerous steep hills and the poverty of the soil. Seychelles had a population density of 5,000 per square kilometre of arable land as compared with, for example, a density of 796 in Mauritius.

28. In the immediate post-war period, Seychelles had balanced its budget through the plantation cultivation of cash crops and remittances from Seychellois serving in the British army. Subsequently - in 1958 - it had become a British grant-aided Territory, with increased assistance devoted to infrastructure, natural resources and social services. Work had begun on a new international airport in 1968 and from 1972 onwards there had been very rapid development of the tourist industry. However, that period of high capital inflow was coming to an end, and in the absence of subsistence agriculture, there was little to fall back on in a recession, while the age composition of the population meant that jobs would have to be found every year for increasing numbers of young people, particularly as the possibility of emigration had been considerably reduced. There was also a severe housing shortage.

29. Furthermore, the small size and openness of the economy made it particularly vulnerable to fluctuations in the world economy; the launching or ending of even one major project had considerable impact. Similarly, small territories found the *cost of providing* housing and public and social services a disproportionately heavy burden. It was estimated that in 1977, government consumption expenditure would increase by 48 per cent in real terms as compared with 1974 - a figure that did not

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(Mr. Adam, Seychelles)

include recurrent items such as road maintenance which were financed through capital aid. Tourism did not yet balance the ordinary budget and Seychelles was wholly dependent on external aid for public investment and almost wholly so for private investment in the hotel and allied industries.

30. It was generally recognized that GNP was an unreliable indicator on which to base international comparisons, owing to the difficulty of quantifying subsistence production in rural areas. For example, rice was a staple food in Seychelles but all of its rice had to be imported from Australia at a price, including shipping costs, several times greater than the value attributed to it in calculating the GNP of countries where it was grown in the subsistence sector. Furthermore, the proportion of GDP which went to highly-paid expatriates in the public and private sectors was also significant in such a small community.

31. In brief, Seychelles was small, remote and highly vulnerable economically, without any financial reserves whatsoever. His delegation intended to submit a resolution proposing that it should be classified as a least developed country, and he hoped that the Committee would support it.

32. Mr. NGUYEN HONG PHUC (Viet Nam) said that the Republic of Mozambique had been one of Viet Nam's best friends in the common struggle against colonialism, neo-colonialism, apartheid and all forms of racism, which were the instruments of imperialism. His country wished to demonstrate its appreciation of all the peace-loving democratic forces, particularly Mozambique, that had contributed to the victory of Viet Nam's just cause; furthermore, it was his country's duty unreservedly to support movements of national liberation and economic emancipation, which were a major factor in the struggle to consolidate peace and world security and an important element in the establishment of a new international economic order.

33. His country endorsed all United Nations resolutions condemning acts of aggression by the illegal régime of Southern Rhodesia against Mozambique and calling on the international community to assist that country. The assistance so far rendered was gratifying, but his delegation was deeply concerned with the current situation in Mozambique, which Viet Nam understood very well from its own experience. Even \$102 million in international assistance was not sufficient in view of the great sacrifices which Mozambique had incurred by its noble decision to close its frontiers with Southern Rhodesia and as a result of the influx of Zimbabwean refugees and of natural disasters. United Nations sanctions would not be fully effective unless the international community gave that increased assistance which Mozambique had every right to expect. Since the issue was part of the general struggle for justice and peace, which was the pre-eminent objective of all developing countries, his delegation was one of the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.2/32/L.25, as it was of the similar draft resolutions A/C.2/32/L.14/Rev.1, L.21, L.24 and L.29.

34. Mr. NGAOSYVATHIN (Lao People's Democratic Republic) said that his delegation had become one of the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.2/32/L.25 in order to demonstrate its solidarity with the people and Government of Mozambique, which had

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(Mr. Ngaosyvathin, Lao People's
Democratic Republic)

accepted vast sacrifices in order to uphold the decision of the international community to apply sanctions against the illegal régime of Southern Rhodesia and thereby contribute to the elimination of the last vestiges of colonialism and imperialism and to the liberation of all peoples. In spite of the physical distance which separated the two countries, the Lao people were very close to those of Mozambique in the struggle they were still waging against the common enemy of imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism, which was still striving to undermine and disrupt countries which had rejected all forms of domination and interference and had consciously chosen the road of independence, democracy and social progress. The situation prevailing in Mozambique was the result of continued acts of aggression committed by the illegal régime of Southern Rhodesia that the entire world had condemned. Accordingly, the international community should redouble its efforts to assist the people and Government of Mozambique in their struggle to achieve the objectives of the Charter of the United Nations.

35. Mr. KJELDGAARD (Denmark), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, said that the latest report on the situation in Mozambique by a visiting United Nations mission (A/32/268) made it clear that Mozambique had been seriously affected by its implementation of the Security Council resolution calling for sanctions against the illegal régime in Southern Rhodesia. In the view of the Nordic countries, Mozambique's action had been an important contribution towards isolating that régime. The Nordic countries had long held that it was the responsibility of the world community as a whole to eliminate the vestiges of colonialism and minority régimes practising racial discrimination. They had therefore welcomed the Security Council's appeal for assistance to Mozambique in 1976, to which they had responded by pledging some \$13 million, and they were prepared to continue that co-operation.

36. On Mozambique's accession to independence, the Governments of the Nordic countries had established bilateral assistance programmes which had subsequently been expanded substantially and had been supplemented by sizable contributions to multilateral assistance programmes. In 1977, for example, they had entered into an agreement with the Government of Mozambique about assistance to a major agricultural project; over a period of three years, they proposed to provide \$50 million in order to improve Mozambique's planning capacity, train technicians in the agricultural sector, improve animal husbandry and develop the forest industry. In line with that policy, the Nordic countries wished to become sponsors of draft resolution A/C.2/15/L.25.

37. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to take a decision on the draft resolution on assistance to Djibouti (A/C.2/32/L.14/Rev.1).

38. Mr. KOCH (Federal Republic of Germany) said that his delegation had difficulty with the use of the word "favourable" in paragraph 3 of the draft resolution. The Committee for Development Planning had criteria by which it considered the inclusion of countries on the list of the least developed countries. It was his delegation's understanding that the wording of paragraph 3 did not prejudge the decision of that Committee.

39. Mr. van BUUREN (Netherlands) said his delegation also had doubts about the inclusion in draft resolutions intended for adoption by the General Assembly of wording which seemed to be at variance with the independent role of the Committee for Development Planning and which that Committee might have to disregard.

40. The CHAIRMAN said that if he heard no objections, he would take it that the Committee approved the draft resolution on assistance to Djibouti (A/C.2/32/L.14/Rev.1) without a vote.

41. It was so decided.

42. Mr. BOUH (Djibouti) said that the presence of his delegation at the United Nations crowned a long struggle against reaction throughout which his country had enjoyed the support of the international community. He expressed his appreciation of that support, which had proved decisive in Djibouti's just struggle for independence, and his gratitude to the international community for once more showing its solidarity by offering assistance with Djibouti's vast reconstruction problems.

43. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to take a decision on the draft resolution on assistance to the Comoros (A/C.2/32/L.24).

44. Mr. BAUCHARD (France) said that his country was aware of the economic and financial difficulties of the Comoros and recognized the need to assist it. Accordingly, it agreed with the terms of the draft resolution. However, in reply to some of the statements made by the Minister for External Relations of the Comoros, he wished to state that France had been and remained prepared to give practical technical and financial support to that country. In the joint declaration issued in June 1973 by the Government of France and the President of the Government Council of the Comoro Archipelago, the scope of such co-operation had been clearly defined. The proclamation of independence had made it necessary to conclude an agreement on the subject - a step which the Government of the Comoros had delayed taking. In November 1975 the Government of the Comoros had nationalized all French public and private property and on 1 December of that year, it had written a letter to the representative of the French Government setting 15 December as the date for the departure of all French civil servants employed in the islands. Anxious to maintain the public services, the French representative had offered to arrange for the most essential officials to remain without concluding a formal agreement. That offer had been rejected immediately. France had given help to the Comoros, either bilaterally or through the European Economic Community, whenever it had been requested to do so. It rested with the Government of the Comoros to take the necessary steps to secure increased assistance, and his delegation reaffirmed France's willingness to establish active and fruitful co-operation within an appropriate framework.

45. The CHAIRMAN said that if he heard no objections, he would take it that the Committee approved the draft resolution on assistance to the Comoros (A/C.2/32/L.24) without a vote.

46. It was so decided.

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ORGANIZATION OF WORK

47. The CHAIRMAN said that it had become apparent from consultations that it would be desirable to postpone the deadline for proposals on agenda items 12 and 72 until 18 November 1977.

48. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.