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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 20th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. VALDES (Bolivia)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 58: UNITED NATIONS INSTITUTE FOR TRAINING AND RESEARCH: REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (A/31/14, A/31/237) (continued)

1. Mr. ACHACHE (Algeria) said that, although the emphasis placed at the outset of UNITAR's activities on initiation into the practices and problems of the United Nations system had proved most useful, the time had come to narrow down even more the priorities in the field of training. Given the growing importance of development problems, it would seem desirable to devote more sustained attention to training in the economic field, bearing in mind the exigencies of the establishment of the new international economic order. UNITAR had already made laudable efforts in that direction, and it was to be hoped that they would be continued.
2. His delegation welcomed the first steps towards organizing courses and seminars on a regional basis. In accordance with the principle of decentralization, consideration should be given to the possibility of co-operation between UNITAR and the regional training institutes. Accordingly, his delegation would like to see particular attention given in future programmes to economic and technical co-operation among developing countries. Training programmes should be closely related to research programmes; although his delegation welcomed research on, improvement of the United Nations system and on international peace and security, and the colloquium on non-alignment, it considered that the research into economic questions should be in line with the General Assembly decisions on the new international economic order.
3. His delegation had noted with appreciation paragraphs 39, 40 and 41 of the report of the Executive Director (A/31/14), particularly in regard to projects on the problems in the areas identified by the General Assembly at its sixth and seventh special sessions.
4. The establishment of a new international economic order would require structural changes in the world economy and in the policies of States. UNITAR should lead the way by carrying out studies to assist Governments to a better appreciation of the urgency of such changes. In view of the limited funds at its disposal, the Institute should concentrate on a number of priority questions.
5. Another important matter was the need to assign some of the proposed studies to institutes and experts of developing countries, in the interest of obtaining balanced viewpoints.
6. Finally, in order to ensure better dissemination of the results of UNITAR's research, it would be useful to establish machinery for keeping Governments regularly informed.
7. Mr. FLEMING (Argentina) said his delegation noted with satisfaction UNITAR's efforts to promote the establishment of a new economic order and its increasing co-operation with other organs of the United Nations system. In that connexion, the study on the role of international organizations in the contemporary world

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(Mr. Fleming, Argentina)

being prepared by UNESCO was of particular interest. His delegation would welcome more information about the international expert meeting on the subject and hoped that the study would be published in the near future. It was also pleased to note the studies on the dissemination of information and the research into organizations and activities outside the United Nations system and hoped that the study on the protection of the human environment referred to in paragraph 85 of the report would soon be available.

8. He stressed the need for UNITAR to make greater use of experts from developing countries; the fact that the Institute was financed mostly by developed countries should not be a consideration.

9. As other delegations had already pointed out, UNITAR should seek to publicize its activities more and, in that connexion, his delegation noted with interest the list of meetings and panels in annex VI to the report. Member States should be informed of the deliberations and outcome of those meetings.

10. He hoped that more information would be forthcoming about the status of the Project on the Future, which had an important bearing on the promotion of a new international economic order.

11. Finally, he suggested that UNITAR should formulate a detailed training programme for junior diplomats, particularly from the developing countries, so as to give them a thorough understanding of the workings of international bodies and increase their countries' participation and effectiveness in such bodies. The study prepared by UNESCO in co-operation with UNITAR could be a first step in that direction.

12. Mr. SHAH (Pakistan) noted with appreciation the greater emphasis on the establishment of the new international economic order that was apparent in the report of the Executive Director of UNITAR (A/31/14). Underlining the necessity to move forward in the over-all framework of policies and priorities laid down by the General Assembly at its sixth and seventh special sessions, he pointed out that programmes should not only pay heed to the title of the new international economic order but should in fact involve research and training activities that adequately reflected the priorities and orientations established at the special sessions. There was a particular need to establish research programmes in such fields as the restructuring of world industry and the role of the United Nations system in that context, the reform of the international trade system and the reform of the international monetary system.

13. His delegation appreciated the intention to organize conferences in 1977 on subjects of greater interest to the developing countries, such as water resources and the development of arid zones. While the conferences on petroleum, natural gas and microbiological sources of energy might have done some useful work, there had been perhaps too much emphasis in the work programmes of the Institute on a single area.

14. His delegation had noted with interest the reference to the Institute's future research plans, which included topics of direct interest to the developing

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(Mr. Shah, Pakistan)

countries. In the context of the role of the developing countries in the United Nations, his delegation recommended that a useful subject of study could well be the role of the third world in the United Nations system, since that was the most important factor in the growing importance of the role of the United Nations in the economic and social spheres.

15. Mr. ADENIJI (Nigeria) noted that, in addition to the task of explaining the complexities of the United Nations and its working to its newer Members and the provision of in-depth studies on issues before the Organization in order to clarify the issues not only for delegates but, through them, for national decision-makers, UNITAR was now engaged in research into areas concerned with the new international economic order. The Project on the Future, if sustained with the initial enthusiasm, could be of great help in the complex series of negotiations for the practical application of the Declaration contained in General Assembly resolution 3201 (S-VI). The publication of a consolidated volume of documents on the new international economic order would constitute a very useful reference work.

16. The pre-eminent position of the United Nations as the main centre of multilateral negotiations had made the need for training courses related to the evolving world order more essential. Accordingly, UNITAR might develop a study course on the United Nations for young foreign service officers that could be implemented in regional centres. The programme should be a legitimate charge on the regular budget of the United Nations. Secondly, the research staff and fellows should be drawn more widely from all sources, since the main area of research in the coming years - the new international economic order - was of particular importance to developing countries. If those who provided the funds continued to tie such funds to the hiring of research staff and consultants from their own countries or to subjects of interest to them, the resultant research might be carried out from only one perspective. UNITAR and its Executive Director should be given a freer hand in determining the subjects and the best sources from which to draw scholars for particular studies. Some subjects, including a number of those mentioned by the Executive Director in his introductory statement, could best be studied elsewhere instead of engaging the meagre resources of the Institute. He hoped that extensive use would be made of researchers from the third world in the case of an area such as the evolving co-operation among developing countries. Similarly, he hoped that UNITAR's contacts with institutions could be more diversified and that the results of its research would be distributed more widely.

17. Turning to the issue of UNITAR's finances, he said that the importance of the Institute's activities should be underlined by the provision of increased resources in accordance with General Assembly resolution 3403 (XXX). Nigeria would honour its promise to continue to provide annual financial grants to the Institute. Meanwhile, consideration should be given to the possibility of financing more of UNITAR's training programmes from the regular budget.

18. Mr. VALLE (Brazil) said that UNITAR's work in the field of training in the past year had been well conceived, and he hoped that the recent seminars would prove most rewarding. The Institute's work in the field of research was also to be

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(Mr. Valle, Brazil)

commended, and he was pleased to note that it had been undertaken within the framework of the establishment of the new international economic order.

19. There were, however, some important aspects of the activities of UNITAR that gave cause for concern, namely, those mentioned in paragraphs 85 and 89 of the Executive Director's report (A/31/14). While his delegation did not question the Institute's desire to make itself useful in the prevention and settlement of disputes, there were some disputes which transcended the boundaries of research undertaken primarily on a technical basis; such matters were frequently considered by States at the political level and could not, therefore, be taken into account by the Institute. Environmental matters fell within that category. His delegation had already expressed its views on the scope of UNITAR's mandate at the time of the adoption of General Assembly resolution 3403 (XXX), including its reservations on the study described in paragraph 89 of the report. His delegation had similar reservations in connexion with the draft study described in paragraph 85.

20. Aside from that, UNITAR, despite financial restraints, had shown the ability to concentrate on urgent and important problems.

21. Mr. MOHAMMED (Bangladesh) said that his Government acknowledged the importance and value of UNITAR's role. At the preceding session, the General Assembly had adopted its resolution 3403 (XXX) inviting the Institute to concentrate its work in the sphere of economic and social training and research so as to include specific projects on the problems in the areas identified by the General Assembly at its sixth and seventh special sessions; he was pleased to note the statement by the Executive Director, in paragraph 4 of his report (A/31/14), that the Institute's programmes had been reoriented, wherever necessary, taking that factor into account. Implementation of the new international economic order placed new obligations not only on the Governments of Member States but also on international civil servants and the United Nations system itself. In the dissemination of information, research and training to equip the institutions and personnel involved in the process, UNITAR could play an effective role. In that connexion, the compilation of documents on the new international economic order would be useful.

22. With regard to specific projects, he said that, in view of the increasing concern about the environment and consequent increasing urgency to settle disputes relating to man's habitat, his delegation fully supported the study on the protection of the human environment referred to in paragraph 85 of the report and hoped that it would soon be available. It also welcomed the news that UNITAR proposed to update its monographs on the various procedural aspects of peaceful settlement of disputes through the United Nations system. It was pleased to note that UNITAR had convened a panel on potentials offered by the United Nations Charter for the peaceful settlement of disputes. The potential of the role of the United Nations in that area had never been fully realized, and it was generally recognized that it must be strengthened. His delegation had proposed to the General Assembly at the current session that the role of the United Nations in that field should be reviewed, and it intended to submit its proposals and views in more detail. It commended the Institute for the initiative it had taken in that field.

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23. Mr. NICOL (Executive Director, United Nations Institute for Training and Research), commenting on observations made in the course of the discussion, welcomed the announcements by a number of delegations of increased financial support for the Institute. He also welcomed the general support expressed for recent developments in the training programme and hoped that UNITAR would be able to take advantage of the financial advice given by members of the Committee and that there would be no obstacle to the Institute's receiving increased support from the United Nations budget, for either special or general purposes.

24. He assured the representative of the USSR and others that UNITAR continued to be very interested in training nationals of developing countries for work at the United Nations and in the service of their national Governments in areas relating to United Nations activities. UNITAR encouraged representatives from developed as well as developing countries to participate in its programmes on international law, for they had much to learn from each other. The Institute maintained close liaison with the Training and Examinations Service of the United Nations Secretariat. It wanted as many countries as possible to be associated with its training programmes, and in that connexion he drew attention to paragraph 20 of his report.

25. Plans for the training seminar for depository librarians in the Caribbean and Latin America referred to by the representative of Chile had been worked out in consultation with the Dag Hammarskjöld Library and the Governments concerned. A one-week seminar would be held in New York, beginning on 6 September 1977.

26. UNITAR would certainly consider providing training and publishing the results of its research in additional United Nations languages. It hoped that the Governments concerned would be willing to provide special-purpose funds to that end, as Mexico did in the case of documents in Spanish, Iraq for documents in Arabic and the USSR for documents in Russian. The high cost of translating its documents was charged to UNITAR's own budget; however, the Institute considered that a worth-while expenditure, because it wished to reach as wide an audience as possible.

27. The Institute's research programmes were designed to meet the differing needs of Member States. Some, mainly the developed countries, were more interested in global sectoral problems dealing with wider issues, while the developing countries were more interested in regional studies. Studies on the problems facing the United Nations system in adjusting to the new international economic order were of interest to all countries. UNITAR was also endeavouring to publish its studies more quickly and to ensure that proper review procedures were followed prior to publication. It sought to be objective in its research and training activities, for that was the best means of maintaining its autonomy.

28. The study under way on the functioning of permanent missions and regional groups at the United Nations was designed to analyse problems and suggest solutions which it was hoped would be particularly helpful to the developing countries. UNITAR's research on the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the

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United Nations system would look into techniques to promote agreement on a wide range of issues involved in establishing the new international economic order. Case studies would be carried out of the decision-making process in the General Assembly, UNCTAD, the Paris Conference on International Economic Co-operation, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

29. In reply to the representative of Kenya, he said that UNITAR was actively considering the formulation of a project on economic co-operation in Eastern Africa covering the entire subregion, not only the East African Community. The Institute would remain in close touch with the representatives of the countries concerned in connexion with the project. It would carefully consider suggestions that it should research in additional areas such as science and technology and the brain drain. However, he emphasized that the Institute must not undertake too heavy a programme, given its limited financial resources.

30. An advisory committee would be meeting in January to reshape UNITAR's long-term research plans, and the suggestions of the General Assembly would be of paramount importance in the formulation of those plans. The Institute would also follow up suggestions which had been made regarding collaboration with national institutes.

31. With regard to the studies on the future, the reports on two UNITAR-sponsored conferences held recently, one on petroleum and natural gas resources and another on microbiological energy resources, would be published shortly. A copy of the two-volume compendium entitled A New International Economic Order: Selected Documents 1945-1975 was available to each delegation. The compendium included important decisions of the non-aligned countries and the Group of 77.

32. In conclusion, he said that the suggestions made during the discussion would be reflected in UNITAR's future work. Further questions would be answered by letter.

AGENDA ITEM 60: UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME (A/10225, A/31/3, A/31/25, A/31/156 and Add.1 and 2, A/31/210, A/31/211) (continued)

33. Mr. LOHANI (Nepal) said that his delegation had noted with satisfaction the progress made by the Environment Co-ordination Board in establishing close co-operation with various parts of the United Nations system in the execution of the environment programme. In view of the close relationship between development and environment, development should proceed in such a way that it did not disturb the ecological balance or reduce environmental quality. No one could be oblivious to the universal problems of environmental pollution, which, if not checked by concerted action at the local, national, regional and global levels, might endanger human health and happiness.

34. His delegation urged all donor countries to respond to the appeal of the Governing Council of UNEP for generous contributions to the Environment Fund. The efforts of the Executive Director to achieve a balance in the Fund's programme were commendable.

35. The condition of human settlements was a prime determinant of the quality of life. However, the problems of human settlements could not be viewed in isolation

(Mr. Lohani, Nepal)

from the process of over-all development. While it was important to develop settlement strategies that aimed at improving the quality of life, basic needs such as food, shelter, clean water, employment, health, education and social security demanded top priority. The problem of massive migration from rural to urban areas in most developing countries was assuming serious proportions. His own country had experienced large-scale migration to the plains, and forests had been encroached upon, resulting in soil erosion. Efforts to cope with the problem of growing deforestation had been inadequate, and the problem of human settlements in Nepal was closely bound up with those of reforestation, soil conservation, rural settlement and urban development. Drinking-water was another basic need of which the vast majority of people in the less developed countries were deprived.

36. Human settlement policies must be related to the provision of shelter, infrastructure and services for those who needed them most. The least developed among the developing countries looked to the international community for grants-in-aid and to the financial lending institutions for low-interest loans. In recent years his country had laid special emphasis on the maximum use of local building materials and available manpower in order to check the drain on its hard-earned foreign exchange. It had also accorded high priority to integrated rural development. His delegation noted with appreciation the suggestion in the report of Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (A/CONF.70/15) that a systems approach to the planning of land, water, power, sanitation and public health requirements should govern the planning of rural development centres.

37. The report of the Secretary-General on criteria governing multilateral financing of housing and human settlements (A/10225) made it categorically clear that greater investment by national and international agencies could make a substantial contribution to over-all economic and social development by generating increased employment, production and income. It was imperative that voluntary contributions should be made to permit the early establishment of the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation, which would provide seed capital and extend the necessary technical and financial assistance to enable countries requiring improved habitat and human settlement conditions to mobilize their domestic resources more effectively in that area.

38. His delegation was pleased to note that the Centre for Water Resources Management would begin operations in early 1977, and hoped that the United Nations Water Conference would elaborate concrete proposals and programmes of action to deal with that vital resource, water.

39. The existing UNEP institutional arrangements, such as the Governing Council, the Fund and the Environment Co-ordination Board, should remain intact. That was not to suggest that there was no room for operational improvement. UNEP should continue to play a co-ordinating role and provide guidance and leadership in regard to the preservation of the human environment. Lastly, his delegation would favour any proposal to strengthen the capacity of UNEP at the regional level.

40. Mr. KITCHEN (United States of America) said that his country had long

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(Mr. Kitchen, United States)

placed high priority on the solution of environmental problems. His delegation noted with considerable satisfaction the report of the Governing Council of UNEP on the work of its fourth session (A/31/25) and approved the recommendations contained in it. UNEP should concentrate increasingly on a few programmes - a view which had been expressed by many countries at the fourth session of the Governing Council, when the need for maintaining a balance among programmes with a global, regional and national thrust had also been endorsed. He was pleased that UNEP was assuming a greater catalytic and co-ordinating role and was promoting joint programming and environmental activities with other organizations both within and outside the United Nations system.

41. The preparations for the forthcoming United Nations Conference on Desertification were proceeding well; they should be carefully co-ordinated with those for the United Nations Water Conference, which was also to be held in 1977.

42. His delegation looked forward to consideration of the question of shared natural resources at the fifth session of the Governing Council, which would have before it the report of the intergovernmental working group studying the question.

43. The Governing Council had discussed institutional arrangements as they related to international environmental co-operation. He was certain that delegations which had followed the work done since then at Vancouver and Mexico City were more fully aware of the importance placed on institutional arrangements and on proposals originating elsewhere which would have an impact on the work of UNEP. His delegation supported the views of the Governing Council on restructuring as reflected in Council decision 78 B (IV).

44. With regard to the Environment Fund, he was pleased to inform the Committee that the United States had now paid over \$7.5 million as its contribution for 1976 and would contribute \$10 million in 1977, a substantial increase over the amount projected at the fourth session of the Governing Council. While that contribution and those of other countries would permit increases in programme activities, the Council had decided that the Executive Director should be guided by the anticipated cash flows of voluntary contributions and take due account of available resources and of the currency composition of those resources in order to avoid a deficit situation. The review of UNEP's first five years which the Governing Council would undertake at its fifth session should be a constructive but critical review of the experience gained, in order to ensure that future programme planning was based on a sound and realistic assessment of programme performance and anticipated resources.

45. His country took very seriously and fully supported the activities of the United Nations system to improve the global environment. The experience already gained in the first few years of UNEP's operation provided a solid basis for effective performance in the future. His country particularly looked forward to the further development of Earthwatch, UNEP's efforts in regard to marine pollution, the conservation of genetic resources and environmental education and training, and those aspects of UNEP's programme concerned with environmental health in particular. He hoped that the next five years would see UNEP play a greater catalytic and co-ordinating role.

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46. Mr. CORREA (Chile) said that difficulties in the execution of UNEP programme activities were no doubt due to the fact that many of its members were slow in fulfilling their obligations. Nevertheless, it was gratifying to note that the target of \$100 million for contributions to the Fund had almost been reached.

47. UNEP had made great progress in formulating basic approaches to such matters as the relation between environment and development, and in respect to environmentally sound technologies. In such ways, UNEP could use its funds for specific practical projects, concentrating on topics of maximum significance for the preservation of the environment.

48. In his introductory statement at the preceding meeting, the Executive Director of UNEP had expressed a most interesting idea, namely, that there should be a relationship between economic and social development on the one hand and natural resources, including human resources, on the other, so as to permit long-term development based on a structure which would not affect, destroy or change the environment.

49. The results obtained by UNEP would eventually show whether its organization and procedures were the best, though some insight could be gained at the present stage by reviewing what had been achieved so far. The Executive Director had taken the view that the institutional arrangements were satisfactory, although the programme might have its limitations.

50. His Government was particularly anxious that the forthcoming United Nations Conference on Desertification should be a success. One fourth of the area of Chile was desert, and for some years past two Chilean universities, with international assistance, had been conducting research on how to counter the spread of dunes and deserts and reclaim the affected lands. Much was hoped for from the study UNDP and UNEP were making of the desert in northern Chile, which was one of a number of comparative studies of desert conditions in twinned regions: northern Chile and southern Tunisia, the Niger and India, and Pakistan and southern Iraq. The work already done by the countries concerned and by the international agencies would be of great assistance to the Conference on Desertification.

51. Chile had voted for General Assembly resolution 3435 (XXX) requesting the Secretary-General and the Governing Council of UNEP to undertake a study of the problem of the material remnants of wars, particularly mines, and their effect on the environment and on development. As the relevant reports were not yet ready, his Government agreed that consideration of them should be postponed until the thirty-second session.

52. The Executive Director of UNEP had stated, on the question of duplication between the work of UNEP and that of other United Nations agencies, that many of the programme activities had grown in significance to such an extent as to justify their status as intrinsic parts of the environment programme, so that the question of duplication no longer arose. He did not dispute that view but felt that, when a particular activity achieved such importance in the environmental field, it should where possible be removed from the competence of the body which had initiated its study. That would make it possible to achieve a more streamlined organization

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(Mr. Correa, Chile)

for the new programme, which at a given time might even have a higher priority for the international community than other activities of the parent organization, while ensuring that the latter was not disrupted by internecine contests to the detriment of its handling of other matters.

53. Those considerations applied equally to the organization proposed for habitat. His Government fully supported the principle, set forth in resolutions adopted by the Vancouver Conference, that the main aim of any programme of international co-operation should be to complement and reinforce national action, and that human settlement policies could not be based on supranational guidelines but must be tailored to local, regional and national conditions and to the needs of the community involved. In accordance with that principle, he agreed that it was desirable that an organ of the Programme on Habitat and Human Settlements should discuss the establishment of a secretariat and regional centres in existing United Nations offices. It was essential that the Second Committee should submit to the General Assembly draft resolutions incorporating the proposals emanating from the Vancouver Conference, so that the hoped-for results of the Conference might be achieved.

54. At the Latin American regional meeting on human settlements, held in Mexico in September, the representative of Chile had supported a resolution which the meeting recommended for adoption by the United Nations. The resolution proposed the establishment of an intergovernmental organ for human settlements, with functional links to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, regard being had to proposals for restructuring of the United Nations system. What was proposed was not the establishment of a new international organization, but a restructuring using the human and financial resources of existing organizations. Another recommendation was that the new habitat centre should be headed by an Under-Secretary-General reporting direct to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, without prejudice to the institutional affiliation of the intergovernmental body. In order to achieve effective, flexible and decentralized organization, it was necessary to increase the human and material resources at present devoted by the United Nations to human settlements activities and to channel them through the new habitat centre, while at the same time ensuring that a proportion of the total resources was allocated to human settlements programmes carried out by the regional economic commissions. His Government would co-operate fully in the implementation of the agreements reached at the Vancouver Conference.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

55. Mr. BRUCE (Canada) recalled that, in plenary meetings of the General Assembly and during the general debate in the Second Committee, a number of delegations had referred to the need to prepare a strategy for the third United Nations Development Decade and had mentioned in that connexion a report by Professor Leontief and a study by Professor Tinbergen. He understood that it might be some time before the final reports were available to the Committee, and he therefore proposed that the Committee should invite Professor Leontief, the members of the working group and Professor Tinbergen to meet them in an informal session. By the time that such a

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(Mr. Bruce, Canada)

meeting could be organized, delegations would have been able to read the summary of the Leontief report which had been circulated and could ask questions of the participants. The holding of an informal meeting with interpretation services would overcome any procedural difficulties which a formal meeting might present.

56. Mr. FLEMING (Argentina) said that, since Governments had not participated in the work on which the reports were based, such an informal meeting would be helpful. Members of the working group, including representatives of United Nations specialized agencies and other bodies, should also be invited.

57. Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan) pointed out that Professor Leontief's full report was available only to certain delegations, which did not include those of the developing countries; as far as he knew, Professor Tinbergen's study was not available to any delegations. Before the Committee decided how it would take up the matter of the reports, the texts must be available to all members, who must have time to study them in detail. The Canadian representative's proposal therefore seemed premature.

58. Mr. AMIRDZHANOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) agreed that consideration by the Committee would be premature; nor did the rules of procedure provide for the participation of private individuals in the Committee's work. As for circulation of the documents in question, it was necessary to ascertain that they fell within the responsibilities of the Secretary-General or had been requested by the Government of a Member State.

59. The CHAIRMAN said that he would hold consultations regarding the possibility of a meeting of the Committee which, as he understood it, would be informal and without records.

The meeting rose at 4.55 p.m.