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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 17th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. DE LA TORRE (Argentina)

CONTENTS

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

AGENDA ITEM 80: DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION (continued)

- (d) INDUSTRIALIZATION
- (f) FOOD PROBLEMS
- (g) ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES
- (i) ENVIRONMENT
- (j) HUMAN SETTLEMENTS
- (l) UNITED NATIONS SPECIAL FUND
- (m) NEW AND RENEWABLE SOURCES OF ENERGY
- (o) IMMEDIATE MEASURES IN FAVOUR OF THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES
- (p) DEVELOPMENT OF THE ENERGY RESOURCES OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

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

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

1. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee agreed that the list of speakers on agenda item 141 would be closed on Monday, 22 October at mid-day.

2. It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 80: DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION (continued)
(A/39/3 (Part I); A/39/56, 71, 88, 95, 110, 118, 126, 131 and Corr. 1, 133, 187, 226, 236, 269, 302, 303, 304, 314, 323, 331, 448, 495, 536, 554; A/C.2/39/3 and 4)

(d) INDUSTRIALIZATION (A/39/16, 301, 376; ID/CONF.5/46);

(f) FOOD PROBLEMS (A/39/19, 270)

(g) ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (A/39/154 and Corr. 1, 408)

(i) ENVIRONMENT (A/39/25, 132, 432, 433, 580)

(j) HUMAN SETTLEMENTS (A/39/8, 233, 295, 347, 356, 547; A/C.2/39/7)

(l) UNITED NATIONS SPECIAL FUND

(m) NEW AND RENEWABLE SOURCES OF ENERGY (A/39/44)

(o) IMMEDIATE MEASURES IN FAVOUR OF THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (A/39/398)

(p) DEVELOPMENT OF THE ENERGY RESOURCES OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (continued)
(A/39/420)

3. Mr. TOLBA (Executive Director, United Nations Environment Programme) said that as UNEP had its headquarters in Africa, it was especially sensitive to the damage inflicted by the drought in that continent. In many countries it seemed as though the social, economic and environmental fabric was being torn apart. At such a time it was hard for countries to make long term plans but it was the United Nations' task to help Governments prepare for the next drought. The emergency relief provided by the international community was only a temporary solution. The challenge was to give a future to the people who had suffered direct loss. The crisis could provide an opportunity for finding out the causes turning an approach of react and cure to one of anticipation and prevention.

4. Some significant issues facing the world economy - the structural problems, the accumulating debt, the growing protectionism and high interest rates - had been identified in the general debate. But the fundamental cause of those problems was

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(Mr. Tolba)

that nations had put up with the wrong kind of development, opting for expediency instead of real development and disregarding renewable resources that were the foundation of every economy. Few economic strategies had taken into account the biological dimension of Africa's social and economic crisis and of the world economic depression in general. There could be no recovery worthy of the name unless nations took steps to conserve their croplands, grasslands, forests, water systems and fisheries. The Secretary-General had used the occasion of his World Environment Day message to appeal to Governments to use the agreement that currently existed on the environment to inject a new impetus into sustainable development.

5. UNEP had long recognized that one of the most formidable constraints to effective environmental management was the view that environment was at best a supplement to development, at worst a barrier. There were signs that the sectoral approach was starting to break down but it was only a beginning. The common thread in the decisions adopted by the Governing Council at its twelfth session was the need to devise ways of more effectively introducing the environmental dimension into development planning.

6. UNEP was convinced that environmental degradation had profound implications for political security and it was therefore trying to redefine the concept of political security so as to embrace ecological security. Worldwide there were more than 140 river systems shared by two or more nations. With water resources coming under increasing pressure, pollution or excessive use by one nation could become grounds for conflict. The potential for conflict over the misuse of other natural resources was equally great.

7. World concern over the arms race was also one of UNEP's major concerns. The objective set by the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, which had been held in Stockholm in 1972, would never be achieved so long as the gross squandering of resources and their misallocation to the arms race was tolerated. It was paradoxical that Governments which called for peace were the same ones that were planning to put aside \$20,000 billion by the end of the century for the construction and purchase of arms and that continued to use the world's scarce resources for the construction of weapons of mass extermination and to place the best technical and scientific talents at the service of the forces of destruction. Meanwhile they were extremely reluctant to invest a few billion dollars during the same period to stop the devastating menace of desertification and recurring drought or to provide the safe water or decent sanitation that most developing countries lacked.

8. In 1984, concern about the arms build-up had been matched by worries regarding the potential impact of demographic growth. The International Conference on Population held in Mexico, had estimated that the world's population was likely to stabilize at over 10 billion towards the end of the next century. The mounting pressure on natural resources exerted by increasing human numbers was of concern to the Governing Council. However, simplistic equations between population growth and environmental degradation must be avoided, for the increase in human numbers was

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(Mr. Tolba)

but one factor in the relationship between environment, development, resources and people. UNEP was currently mounting a programme of studies on those interrelationships and the report on the state of the environment of 1985 would contain a detailed examination of the issue of population and the environment.

9. The twelfth session of the Governing Council had been of special significance for it had been the first meeting to be held at the new United Nations Headquarters. The latter had been completed on time, at a cost well below that estimated in the 1980 budget, using local labour, expertise and raw material available in Kenya. UNEP shared the building with HABITAT, the Africa crisis office and with the regional offices of UNESCO, UNICEF, and ICAO. President Daniel arap Moi of Kenya and President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia had attended the inaugural ceremony, as had a special emissary of the President of Colombia, former President Pastrana Borrero, and many high-ranking government officials. During the ceremony, the President of Kenya had announced that his Government was offering another 40 acres, in addition to the original 100 acres on which the new headquarters had been built. The Governing Council was recommending to the General Assembly that it accept the generous offer. The opening of the fourth United Nations centre - the first in the developing world - was very significant as it demonstrated the concrete commitment of the United Nations to a more just and prosperous future for developing nations.

10. The major item on the Council's agenda had been consideration of the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification which had been adopted in 1977. It had been found that desertification had continued unabated in the intervening period. Each year some 6 million hectares of formerly productive land were being reduced to sand and a further 21 million hectares were being reduced to a condition of zero productivity. It was estimated that the livelihood of 20 per cent of the world's population in more than 100 Member States of the United Nations - one third of them in Africa - was directly threatened by desertification. He had been forced to conclude that the goal of halting desertification by the year 2000 could no longer be considered viable.

11. The problem was especially acute in Africa where, during the recent drought, an estimated 2.5 million hectares of grazing and cropland had been destroyed - it was not yet known how much of the damage was permanent. Available data suggested that it was not climatic change that was causing the deserts to advance; it was man. Most alarming was the appearance of desert-like conditions in sub-humid regions far from the borders of the Sahara and Kalahari Deserts. The degradation of vast areas of once productive land was a process that was accelerated by drought but that was taking place even in years of good rainfall.

12. There could be no doubt that had nations been assisted to take concerted action to deal with the process of pasture and cropland devastation, Africa would have been in a far better position to ride out the current drought. Silted rivers, stunted crops and massive livestock mortalities were nature's way of telling man he had been misusing the ecosystems; the pity of it was that man had the technical know-how and the means to avert tragedy. The danger that must be avoided was that

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(Mr. Tolba)

a spell of good rainfall would divert attention away from that hidden crisis whose side-effects - displacement of rural populations, per capita reductions in food output - were seldom traced to environmental impoverishment.

13. Specific conservation measures were only part of the solution since the loss of farming land could be traced to wider causes such as the world economic slump and Africa's tardiness in the fields of water, energy, industry, transport and communications. UNEP expected that those issues would be thoroughly considered at an African environment conference which was to be convened the following year at the request of African Governments with UNEP assistance and in co-operation with OAU and ECA.

14. Within the framework of the Lagos Plan of Action, the Secretary-General's initiative and the many inter-agency activities it would be possible to work out a blueprint for a co-ordinated response by the United Nations. The proposal made by Japan to the effect that a plan of action should be drawn up was a clear signal that the co-ordinated response within the United Nations should now be translated into concerted and intensified actions in the field. That did not mean that all those efforts would solve the wider crisis or even the environmental dimension of that crisis, but simply that combining environmental considerations with wider social and economic development planning would make a far-reaching contribution to sustained recovery.

15. Naturally, the picture was not entirely negative. Despite the desertification in Africa there were projects that had created pockets of resistance to the marching desert. Invariably they turned out to be small- to medium-scale projects designed to solve local problems, involving the rural population and, in several cases, they were run by non-governmental groups. UNEP was setting aside a small amount from its Fund for such projects; he hoped that that sort of down-to-earth project would receive generous support from bilateral donors and multilateral financing institutions within and outside the United Nations system.

16. The African crisis had also created a new climate of international solidarity. Pledges in food alone from industrialized nations amounted to over \$US 500 million. Naturally, that was far from enough and a number of African countries were not receiving aid commensurate with the disastrous famine faced by their population. In some of the rich countries the public had also responded with exemplary generosity. UNEP had sponsored a film on the drought and famine in Africa; that film had become the starting point for a nationwide relief effort in the United Kingdom that to date had raised over 8 million pounds sterling. The Japan Broadcasting Corporation was expected to use the film during its nationwide "Africa Month" fund-raising drive. Clearly people and Governments did respond when they were shown the real magnitude of the problem.

17. The current review and appraisal of the International Development Strategy provided another platform for using the environment to encourage a longer-term approach. The report submitted by the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination to the Governing Council had revealed that the Strategy's environmental objectives had

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(Mr. Tolba)

not been reached. There was an urgent need to make the Strategy's policy measures more detailed, more operational and more clearly focused. The Governing Council had invited the Committee on the Review and Appraisal of the Implementation of the International Development Strategy to take fully into account the need to stress environmental considerations and to pay far more attention to the need to build up the capacities of the developing countries to assess and manage their environmental constraints and opportunities. Governments were demonstrating greater interest in environmental issues, especially in the developing countries, which were asking UNEP for advice and assistance. UNEP had set up an experimental clearing-house facility to help those countries identify their most serious environmental problems, work out comprehensive programmes and raise counterpart funding for their implementation. However, with so much remaining to be done, he was compelled to draw attention once more to the massive discrepancy in funding. Since 1978 the resources of the Environment Fund had stagnated at around \$US 30 million annually - that was equivalent to a 50 per cent drop in real terms. If that trend continued it would disrupt major programmes, make it impossible to meet requests for assistance from the developing countries and shatter the coherence of the programmes of UNEP's major partners who had co-operated so admirably in designing a system-wide medium-term environment programme, the only of its kind in the United Nations. He hoped that Governments would agree to shoulder the financial responsibilities they had assumed at the latest session of the Governing Council.

18. He hoped that the Environmental Perspective to the Year 2000 and Beyond, which was to be prepared by the Governing Council, would be a major vehicle that would convince the world of the relevance of the environment to Africa's crisis and to the wider issues of social and economic development. The Council would certainly be greatly assisted by the newly-established World Commission on Environment and Development, which was already co-operating fully with the Council's Intergovernmental Committee charged with the preparation of the Perspective.

19. More than 10 years earlier, he had outlined his views on environmentally-sound development and had called it "development without destruction". From now on, UNEP would be developing its policy with emphasis on the theme of "development for a better environment" since the goal of enhancing the quality of the human environment set by the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment could not be achieved without sustained development, and sustained development could be achieved. He hoped that the collective emphasis being placed on the African crisis at the present session would make it possible to achieve the goal within a reasonable period of time.

20. Mr. RAMACHANDRAN (Executive Director, United Nations Centre for Human Settlements) pointed out that the report on the co-ordination of human settlements programmes (A/39/547) dealt primarily with the participation of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS) in the work of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination, an issue which had been the subject of a number of resolutions, the most recent one being resolution 38/167 B, which requested the report now before the Committee.

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(Mr. Ramachandran)

21. At its twenty-fourth session, the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination in considering the item "cross-organizational programme analysis" had pointed out that co-ordination of activities of the United Nations system in the field of human settlements had been inadequate. As he had said in his statement to the Economic and Social Council at its second regular session, UNCHS was making every effort to achieve the greatest level of co-ordination possible. In addition to holding consultations with representatives of concerned agencies, the Centre had embarked on a thematic joint programming exercise in the area of training for human settlements. The success of those efforts would be greatly enhanced by the availability of adequate financial resources and a position of equal partnership in the inter-agency machinery.

22. A total of 73 States, four national liberation movements and a large number of agencies and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations had attended the seventh session of the Commission on Human Settlements held in Libreville, Gabon, from 30 April to 11 May 1984. Many States had been represented at the ministerial level and the practice of reaching decisions by consensus had, on the whole, been respected. The substantive work had focused on three areas: preparations for the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless, a systematic and comprehensive approach to training for human settlements and a systematic and comprehensive approach to information for human settlements.

23. In 1983, preparations had continued with the publication and distribution to Governments and other interested groups of a more detailed action programme for the International Year of Shelter for Human Settlements, a brochure, and project guidelines and national focal points had been designated in over 100 countries; as yet, however, the pledges of voluntary contributions were not sufficient to guarantee a successful programme. By September 1984, they totalled only \$2.25 million, about 50 per cent of the budgeted \$4.3 million.

24. By mid-August, only 29 countries had identified projects in relation to the Year, thus unless there was much greater response by the end of the year, the potential for using the Year to publicize feasible shelter options would be minimal.

25. Turning to Africa, he referred to the comments he had made in the Economic and Social Council at its second regular session, in July, on the urbanization aspects of the crisis and the ideas on how current human settlements strategies in Africa could be utilized to change cities and intermediate towns and local growth points into dynamic and catalytic productive platforms catering to the needs of economic growth.

26. The theme topic of the Commission's eighth session, to be held at Kingston at the invitation of the Government of Jamaica from 29 April to 10 May 1985, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 31/140, would be "Planning and management of human settlements, with emphasis on small and intermediate towns and local growth points".

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(Mr. Ramachandran)

27. Representatives at the Fourth General Conference of UNIDO, held in Vienna from 2 to 18 August 1984, and at the International Conference on Population held in Mexico City from 6 to 13 August, had examined two topics of major interest to UNCHS (Habitat): industrialization and population. The Centre had always sought to promote recognition of the contribution the construction sector could make to the industrialization process. The construction sector in the developing countries, contributed 3 to 6 per cent of the gross domestic product and 50 to 60 per cent of the growth of fixed capital formation, besides providing employment for from 2 to 6 per cent of the labour force; in addition, in many developing countries, a major part of the national five-year plan outlay (one half in the case of India) went into construction. Construction output, moreover, should not be measured simply in terms of the value of the fixed assets but should include the value of the constructed facility throughout its operational life. Thus the use of dams, powerhouses, harbours, railways and roads for industrial development should be recorded in favour of the construction industry; for every output of the manufacturing industries the proportional contribution of the constructed facility should be accounted for. That notion applied equally to shelter construction, especially in urban slums and rural settlements. In low-income settlements, the house operated as a factory shed for the home-based production of tools, processing of agricultural products, repair of equipment and machinery and other income-generating activities which directly or indirectly supported and reinforced the industrialization process. Furthermore, industrial growth in the developing countries should have as its objective the increasing of indigenous output in such a way as to provide equitable benefits to the great masses of rural and urban poor. Traditional and small-scale construction systems, identified with (a) a wide geographic spread of activities in both rural and urban areas, (b) ease of adaptation to indigenous technologies, (c) a high level of dependence on local resources and (d) a multiplicity of construction activities paralleling the main components of the large-scale construction sector, could make a major contribution to the attainment of that objective. The Centre was therefore collaborating closely with UNIDO in promoting the development of the construction and building materials industries in the developing countries, and the first global consultations on the building materials industry, jointly organized by the Centre and UNIDO, would be held in April 1985.

28. It was predicted that if current trends continued, by the year 2000 another billion people would have been added to the world's urban population. That posed a problem of excess supply relative to effective demand. Therefore, supply should be reduced: in other words, population growth should be curtailed through family planning and other measures, while absorptive capacity should be increased, particularly that of human settlements which formed the physical and social context of all human activities. One of the chief measures for increasing society's absorptive capacity was investment in shelter, infrastructure and services which in addition to increasing absorptive capacity also greatly stimulated economic development. At the same time, a comprehensive and systematic population distribution policy should be an integral part of development planning, with the aim of understanding, regulating and harnessing the forces of urbanization, the single most dynamic and consequential phenomenon currently at work in those countries.

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(Mr. Ramachandran)

29. In conclusion, he drew the Committee's attention to the recommendations of the Commission on Human Settlements calling for action by the General Assembly at the current session: resolution 7/1, on the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless and resolution 7/2 on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories (A/39/8, annex I, part A).

30. Mr. MWANZIA (Kenya) said that as far as the objective of the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade of eliminating hunger and malnutrition was concerned, the world population had increased by nearly one billion since 1974 and, although ample food was produced globally millions of people continued to suffer from hunger and malnutrition.

31. In the Sudano-Sahelian region of Africa, the problem had the following causes: (a) the growth of population, which had increased from 210 million in 1960 to 393 million at the end of 1983, while at the same time, in 1983 and early 1984 particularly, food production had decreased; (b) the encroachment of the Sahara desert on adjacent areas and the lowering of the water table, which had reduced the area of cultivable land; (c) the persistent drought; (d) the world economic crisis, reflected in a decline in overseas development assistance, fluctuating commodity prices and high interest rates, all of which had caused a reduction of investment in the agricultural sector; (e) inability on the part of most African countries to generate enough foreign exchange for food imports.

32. In April 1981, the Heads of State and Government of the African countries had adopted the Lagos Plan of Action aimed at achieving self-sufficiency in food for the continent, and enormous efforts had been made in that direction in the last few years. At the subregional level, technical experts had met to work out the modalities for the co-operation established in the Protocol on Agricultural Co-operation of the Treaty establishing the Preferential Trade Area for Eastern and Southern African States. At the national level, the majority of the Kenyan people worked in agriculture and the export of agricultural products provided foreign exchange. With sufficient rainfall, the Government would be able to carry out the food and agricultural programmes outlined in the national food policy, the aim of which was to achieve food self-sufficiency and production for export. The policy was being widely implemented throughout the country, in particular at the district level which was the focus of development in Kenya. In addition, thanks to the assistance received, the Government was continuing to develop agricultural institutes for training agricultural experts from Kenya and other developing countries.

33. Nevertheless, the following were still needed: (a) development finance, basically grants and soft loans; (b) training and manpower development; (c) research to develop drought-resistant crops; (d) funds and expertise to combat desertification; (e) transfer of technology in the vital areas of water development, fertilizer and pesticide production, manufacture of agricultural machinery and irrigation; (f) reduction of non-tariff and other barriers against agricultural and manufactured products of developing countries; (g) technical assistance to promote co-operation among developing countries in the field of agriculture, and (h) food aid, either as grants or at concessional prices.

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(Mr. Mwanzia, Kenya)

34. Turning to industrialization, he urged the international community to continue to support the Industrial Development Decade for Africa and said that the developing countries had been disappointed that the Fourth General Conference of UNIDO had been unable to reach consensus on the fundamental issues of the financing and restructuring of industry. The General Assembly had before it the Conference's resolutions on those matters, and he hoped it would be possible to reach agreement on them.

35. His Government believed that, to be meaningful, industrialization must be based on local resources and must aim at achieving import substitution, as well as promoting exports and creating employment, particularly in rural areas. It was thus making every effort to decentralize industry and to make the district the focus of all development activities. Nevertheless, like other developing countries, Kenya needed external resources to realize its industrialization goals.

36. Regarding the environment and human settlements, he stressed the importance attached by the African countries to those items and urged the Committee to endorse the decisions adopted by the UNEP Governing Council at its twelfth session. His delegation also fully supported the General Assembly's decision to set up a special commission to look into the world environmental perspective to the year 2000 and beyond, as well as the proclamation of the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless.

37. He reiterated the Kenyan Government's commitment to economic and technical co-operation among developing countries as a contributing factor in the establishment of a new international economic order and the promotion of North-South co-operation. The United Nations should continue to make technical assistance available to developing countries in that sphere. In that connection, his delegation expressed its satisfaction at the technical assistance provided by the United Nations through ECA.

38. Finally, he stressed that developing countries were now ready to develop specific projects at the subregional, regional and interregional levels, as envisaged in the Caracas Programme of Action. He trusted that the establishment of those projects would receive the necessary assistance and support from Member States and the United Nations system.

39. Mr. GAJENTAAN (Netherlands), referring to the call by the Group of 77 for a renewal of interest in development issues, said that he agreed with the Canadian delegation that it would be useful to hold a high-level debate on development issues, and expressed his interest in the description provided by the State Secretary of Belgium of the activities of the Third World Survival Fund.

40. Referring to the new Netherlands development co-operation policy, he said that during the past year new policy documents had been issued on multilateral assistance, the Netherlands bilateral co-operation programme and the relationship between development co-operation and employment. Those policy reviews had taken place within the context of the reaffirmation of the Netherlands Government's

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(Mr. Gajentaan, Netherlands)

commitment to continue to make available 1.5 per cent of its net national income for development assistance. As in past years, Netherlands co-operation policy would focus on the promotion of self-reliance in developing countries and the eradication of poverty. At the same time, however, more attention would be paid to a number of new directions, namely, a quest for lasting results, the bringing together of projects and their geographical limitation, the creation of employment opportunities, the promotion of women, the need to take account of environmental problems and the question of the social integration of development policies.

41. One of the most significant changes in the new Netherlands co-operation policy was the decision to place greater emphasis on the need to guarantee that structural changes were made in the living conditions of the population of recipient countries, namely, improvements of a durable nature. That, in turn, required that greater attention should be paid to the viability of projects and programmes, their capacity to generate income, the development of production capacity and the creation of employment. Secondly, the new policy placed greater emphasis on bringing together projects and programmes and using a multi-year approach with a view to developing co-operation in a limited number of countries and regions. Thus existing instruments would be streamlined and a number of new ones would be developed, and all of them would be co-ordinated within two main programmes: for rural development and industrial development.

42. Rural development policy would be focused mainly on improving agriculture, increasing food security and improving living conditions in the rural sector. The industrial development policy, which, it was expected, would be implemented in collaboration with private enterprises and trade unions in the Netherlands, would aim at the creation of employment by emphasizing local industry. In that connection he referred to the results of the Fourth Conference of UNIDO and expressed the Netherlands delegation's hope that they would be reflected in voluntary contributions to UNIDO for its technical assistance programme.

43. The policy of the Netherlands was characterized by geographical delimitation of aid. In the interests of effectiveness it was necessary to abandon the geographically unlimited approach of many programmes carried out to date under Netherlands development co-operation policy, programmes which had been particularly responsible for the fragmentation of aid.

44. Moreover, both bilateral and regional co-operation would be based on the principle of continuity. Thus, in the bilateral area, it had been decided to opt for a policy of systematic co-operation with the least developed developing countries, with which the Netherlands had traditionally maintained co-operation relations and which had been selected on the basis of three criteria, namely, the level of poverty, the individual Government's socio-economic policy and its record on human rights.

45. Regional programmes related to specific problems the solution of which called for a "supranational" approach. Two such programmes related to Africa, namely, the programme for the Sahel and that for southern Africa. A temporary aid programme had also been established to tackle the problem of refugees in Central America.

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(Mr. Gajentaan, Netherlands)

46. The foregoing would allow endeavours to be concentrated and facilitate more careful planning in a number of development sectors on the basis of multi-year agreements which would be drawn up in accordance with the needs of each country and the assistance potential of the Netherlands.

47. With regard to employment he recalled that, notwithstanding the alarming rise in unemployment in many industrialized countries in recent years, the international economic crisis had had a still greater effect on the employment situation in developing countries, to the extent that more than half the population in such countries were unable to satisfy their basic needs. Consequently, one of the main objectives of Netherlands development co-operation policy would be the promotion of employment. The policy would also focus on the need to make optimum use of the capacities of the Netherlands economy and society, so that developing countries would benefit while a contribution would be made to employment in the Netherlands, although that latter objective would be subordinated to the primary aim of eliminating poverty in the developing countries. That meant that, whenever a conflict arose between the interests of the Netherlands economy and those of the third world, the latter would prevail.

48. Turning to the environmental consequences of development projects, he stressed the importance given to such considerations in Netherlands development assistance policy, both at the bilateral and the multilateral level, and said that more attention would be given to the preservation of the environment and to measures aimed at restoring the ecological balance. In that regard, his delegation shared the view of the Executive Director of UNEP that long-term survival could be guaranteed through sustainable development alone. The outcome of continued despoiling of the environment would be to sacrifice future generations, which would inevitably affect both developing and developed countries.

49. For the Government of the Netherlands, development was essentially a process of social change, requiring the active participation of all social groups, which was why it attributed great importance to social integration in its development policy. Accordingly, the Netherlands Government felt that the private sector had an increasingly important role to play in development co-operation.

50. Lastly, he reiterated his delegation's support for the proposal made by the Canadian delegation and invited other delegations to make their views known on the matter.

51. Mr. LOPEZ (Ecuador) said that the economic crisis had hindered both the development of third world countries and the development of genuine international co-operation. At the moment political problems had superseded technical problems, and world peace was threatened by the stagnation, indeed the deterioration, in the living standards of peoples.

(Mr. Lopez, Ecuador)

52. Given the importance of the industrialization process to the development of the third world countries, his delegation reiterated its support for the aims and objectives of the Lima Plan of Action. It was necessary to make structural changes in the world economy on the basis of mutual benefit, to strengthen international co-operation and to proceed to industrial redeployment to promote the transfer of appropriate technologies meeting the needs of various countries. Further, information in that sphere should be exchanged through existing multilateral agencies. Each country should decide which industrial sectors should be given the highest priority. Ecuador wished to promote agro-industry and food products, the hydrocarbon industry, the textile industry, the fishing industry, handicrafts and small-scale industry. The UNIDO programme of work for 1985-1986 should be centred on the priorities established by Governments. In that connection, Ecuador was concerned by the adoption of policies relating to industrial development co-operation and assistance programmes which were based on a grading of developing countries.

53. With regard to food and agricultural development, it was necessary to identify measures for promoting food security and self-sufficiency and proper international trade in the commodities and raw materials of developing countries. In addition, any international strategy in that field must take into account the inadequate food supply, encourage production and improve the conditions of people in rural areas. Action should be aimed at maintaining the flow of financial and technical resources and at the adoption of trade policy measures that took account of the interests of countries which, like Ecuador, were food importers, based their foreign trade on the export of agricultural products - encountering problems of access to international markets where protectionist practices and price instability reigned - and needed a positive balance of trade in order to cope with the enormous burden of their external debt. It was not a matter of seeking emergency solutions for deficit countries, but of promoting the food and agricultural production of all developing countries. His own Government was carrying out, in conditions of complete freedom, integrated rural development programmes covering the fields of health, housing and education, and agricultural programmes specifically targeted to the deprived. It had also accorded great importance to the new agrarian reform, which was not merely a matter of distributing land but also sought to create suitable conditions for farmers to become more efficient and to provide them with the necessary financial resources to make a contribution to the socio-economic development of the country.

54. The problem of preserving the environment, whose deterioration had reached alarming proportions throughout the world, also figured in the planning of Ecuador's economic and social development programmes. Since many environmental problems transcended national boundaries, his country supported combined efforts in that area which did not diminish the sovereignty of States. Legislation on the protection of the environment and of renewable natural resources was currently being considered which would lay down the basic principles for the management of the environment and natural resources. In order to overcome excessive dependence on hydrocarbons as a source of energy, it was necessary to strengthen implementation of the Nairobi Programme of Action through regional and international co-operation.

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(Mr. Lopez, Ecuador)

55. In conclusion, he said that the United Nations was the proper forum for the industrialized countries to show their willingness to contribute to the solution of world economic problems. His own country had participated actively in the quest for viable solutions and would do everything possible to ensure that negotiations achieved positive results and took account of the conclusions of meetings such as those held at Cartagena and Mar del Plata.

56. Mr. DAMA (Burkina Faso) said that the seriousness of the world economic situation did not allow the developing countries to sit back and wait for the putative positive repercussions of recovery in the developed countries to reach them. The crisis was particularly alarming in African countries, 30 of which, including his own, were currently suffering the effects of a relentless drought which had claimed millions of victims. That situation could have been anticipated since drought in the continent, and especially in the Sahel, had not let up and there was no way to determine how frequently new droughts would occur. Thus, the chronic food deficit was getting worse and the gap was widening between production, which was growing at a rate of 1.3 per cent a year, and the population, whose growth was 3 per cent a year. To give an idea of the seriousness of the situation, it was enough to mention that the food deficit in Africa in 1984 would be 3 million tons of cereals, i.e., twice that in 1973. The international community must adopt measures to control the crisis and to help affected populations to become aware of the problem.

57. His own country had begun to pursue a form of development based on the harnessing of the creative genius of the people and their desire to improve their living conditions. The popular masses had been mobilized and their awareness aroused by the committees for the defence of the revolution, which were continually planting trees and building dispensaries, schools, wells and roads. Examples of such activities were the dams at Sourou and Zamzé. The establishment of a revolutionary solidarity fund had made it possible to provide relief to the inhabitants of the affected areas. Women, who made up 52 per cent of the population, and the revolutionary army, which was contributing by raising livestock, building and working in schools and dispensaries, maintaining roads and transporting agricultural products in regions affected by the drought, were taking part in the economic development campaign. The young, who made up the bulk of the active population, and the entire people, in general, were also taking part, encouraged by the National Council of the Revolution and the Revolutionary Government.

58. Agrarian reform would increase the cultivable area and create fair conditions in rural areas. In addition, modern techniques and methods of cultivation suited to the needs in each case would be introduced. It was appropriate to mention the assistance given by the Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel and the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office, which, in addition to carrying out many road construction projects and providing technical assistance, had drawn up the Plan of Action to combat drought and desertification in the Sudano-Sahelian area. UNDP and UNEP were contributing to the implementation of the Plan of Action with invaluable resources which served to finance projects and evaluation missions.

(Mr. Dama, Burkina Faso)

59. After visiting the affected countries, the Secretary-General had taken initiatives which the international community should support. African countries needed international help to back up the efforts being made at national, subregional and regional levels. As the Head of State of Burkina Faso had told the General Assembly, it was a matter of promoting assistance which would help them to do without assistance.

60. Another cause for concern was the decline in resources made available to United Nations assistance organizations, especially UNDP. An erosion of multilateral assistance in favour of tied bilateral assistance was taking place, and some countries did not hesitate to use economic aid as a means of political pressure. Burkina Faso refused to accept that kind of aid. The international community had to act to reverse the trend. In addition, to eliminate hunger and achieve international peace, it was necessary to devote part of the enormous resources which were being allocated to the arms race to development and to harness science and technology for development.

61. Mr. De La Torre (Argentina) took the Chair.

62. Mr. GIBSON (New Zealand) said that 10 years after the World Food Council had declared the eradication of hunger to be the common objective of all countries, and even though enough food was being produced to feed the world's growing population, hunger persisted in many countries. Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia, where a population growth of 900 million was projected for the end of the century, were the regions most affected, not to mention Latin America. Efforts had to be made at both national and international levels to secure food supplies, above all by increasing food production and purchasing power in developing countries. For that purpose it was necessary to give technical assistance to the agricultural sector. New Zealand, as a country where agriculture was the mainstay of the economy, was sensitive to the problems that developing countries faced in that field and assigned a central role to agriculture in its technical assistance programme for development. Another important aspect was the incentive to produce, for which, as the World Food Council at its meeting in Addis Ababa had pointed out, it was necessary to determine pricing policies on both the national and the international level. In many cases, countries were denied the opportunity of a fair price for their products by protectionist policies and that discouraged them from producing to their full potential. Since the Second World War, it had been accepted that, as some countries produced particular products better than others, at least in the industrial field, it made sense to have an international division of labour. That same principle needed to be applied in agricultural trade. It made little sense for less efficient producers to institute expensive mechanisms and barriers to stimulate local production when food could be produced more efficiently and cheaply elsewhere. It was necessary to liberalize trade in agricultural products, stimulate production, generate economic development and tackle the problem of hunger in the world.

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63. Mr. OYOUE (Gabon) said he thought that only solidarity could open the way to reconciliation of the international community's interests. In view of the political and economic interdependence of the contemporary world, international agencies played a fundamental role in the promotion of development and international economic co-operation. That interdependence, described in detail in General Assembly resolution 3201 (S-VI), made the initiation of the North-South dialogue imperative. In that connection, he reaffirmed his country's support for the launching of the global negotiations required for the recovery of the world economy. The complexity of current economic problems required the adoption of a global approach to development.

64. With regard to the transfer of resources to finance the development of third world countries, Gabon believed that the flow of funds to the developing countries must be substantially increased and that those resources must be predictable, regular and effective so that development programmes could be adequately implemented. His delegation also believed that official development assistance should take the specific characteristics of individual third world countries into account. That approach would help to increase the role of the United Nations specialized agencies and other international institutions which must intensify the flow of financial resources to the developing countries, particularly to Africa, where the economic and social situation was critical, as the Secretary-General and the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Group of 77 had stated in their report and declaration (E/1984/68 and A/39/536) respectively. His delegation therefore endorsed the statements made by the Chairman of the Group of 77 and the Chairman of the Group of Non-Aligned Countries.

65. Having listened with great interest to the various statements, his delegation wished to express its support for the proposals made by the group of experts from the non-aligned countries, who had suggested guidelines for a reform of the international monetary and financial system.

66. He reiterated his delegation's commitment to the United Nations system, which constituted a basic instrument for negotiation and co-operation.

67. The importance of co-operation among developing countries should also be stressed; in that context, Gabon had in recent years developed its trade with the countries of Latin America, Asia and Africa. In particular, thanks to the efforts of President El Hadj Omar Bongo, Gabon had initiated efforts aimed at strengthening regional co-operation on the African continent. In that connection, 18 October 1983 had become a memorable date with the establishment of the Economic Community of Central African States.

68. The holding in 1984 of the Fourth General Conference of UNIDO and the International Conference on Population clearly proved that the United Nations system continued to be the appropriate framework for co-ordinated efforts involving the countries of the North and the South. Nevertheless, the failure of the Fourth General Conference of UNIDO clearly reflected a lack of will on the part of the

(Mr. Oyoue, Gabon)

rich countries to arrive at agreed solutions with the countries of the third world, particularly in such fundamental areas as the terms of loans and industrialization. As for the International Conference on Population, his delegation had taken note of its conclusions, particularly those which recommended the formulation of a world population policy. Nevertheless, since different countries had different characteristics, each country must determine its own policy in that area; it would be unrealistic to draw up a world demographic policy to be imposed on all States.

69. Mr. SHAH (Pakistan), speaking on agenda item 80 (d), said that industrialization was being discussed in the wake of the failure of a General Conference of UNIDO and at a time when the erosion of the spirit of multilateralism had severely affected the work of that body. Likewise, the negotiations on the conversion of UNIDO into a specialized agency were proceeding in an unsatisfactory manner. The statement of the Executive Director of UNIDO had been balanced because it had not been cynical about the lack of progress in the implementation of the objectives of that organization, and because it had avoided the temptation, under pressure, to paint a hopeful picture.

70. The Fourth General Conference of UNIDO had achieved more through its preparatory work than through intergovernmental negotiations. Unfortunately, the Conference had taken place in a negative atmosphere, a fact which had been reflected in even the smallest details. Another disturbing aspect of the Conference was the fact that the interlocutors from the North not only rejected the target of a 25 per cent share of world industrial output for the developing countries by the year 2000, stipulated in the Lima Plan of Action, but seemed to impede the efforts of the developing countries to reach that target. In fact, better results had been achieved at the eighteenth session of the Industrial Development Board.

71. Nevertheless, his delegation was pleased to note the efforts undertaken by UNIDO in the context of the Industrial Development Decade for Africa. He fully supported those measures and the African countries' demand for adequate resources to implement the Decade programme.

72. He regretted the fact that the restructuring of world industrial production and the redeployment of industry from developed to developing countries had not been carried out, since it would be in the long-term economic interests of the developed countries as well as of the world economy. In addition, the resources allocated to the Industrial and Technological Information Bank must be increased and the developing countries must be provided with appropriate technology that would enable them to strengthen their indigenous technological capabilities. The establishment of a permanent system of consultations constituted a positive measure with regard to the industrialization of the developing countries; however, the goal of collecting \$50 million annually for the United Nations Industrial Development Fund had not been achieved.

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(Mr. Shah, Pakistan)

73. Paragraph 1 of the report of the Secretary-General on the conversion of UNIDO into a specialized agency (A/39/376) stated that the policy and the structure of the new UNIDO would have to be determined by its competent organs after they had been established. However, while the budget was subject to zero growth, the developed countries were insisting on an expansion of the secretariat; consequently, the General Assembly should establish a working group in which the secretariat would also participate in order to clarify the matter.

74. With regard to the questions discussed in the report of the World Food Council on the work of its tenth session (A/39/19) and the report of the Secretary-General on the situation of food and agriculture in Africa (A/39/270), it was a matter of concern that the annual target of \$8.3 billion (with a concessional component of \$6.5 billion), which was to be increased to \$12.5 billion by 1990, had not been reached. The current transfer level showed a shortfall of 40 per cent in total aid and 45 per cent in the concessional component.

75. Falling commodity prices and increasing trade restrictions were adversely affecting the development prospects of the developing countries. Moreover, the major grain-producing countries that were spending billions of dollars on export subsidies could better utilize those resources to assist developing countries to increase their food and agricultural production. Pakistan had succeeded in becoming self-sufficient in wheat and sugar and, besides, produced small surpluses of those commodities for export. The allocation of 159 million rupees to the agricultural sector in its annual development programme for 1983/84 had resulted in record outputs of wheat, rice, sugar cane, cotton and maize, but those achievements were being jeopardized by a decline in net aid inflows.

76. With regard to the food crisis in Africa, the United Nations should set up programmes to help the countries of the region to end their dependence on foreign aid, and to provide technical and financial support for the African nations' own efforts to achieve that goal. However, emergency food supplies were also urgently needed. In general, the delegation of Pakistan supported the conclusions and recommendations of the World Food Council at its tenth ministerial session.

77. The world crisis had increased the significance of economic and technical co-operation among developing countries as a means of strengthening collective self-reliance, reducing their vulnerability and increasing their capacity to contribute to global economic prosperity. The multi-dimensional and multi-disciplinary nature of that co-operation meant that it fell within the purview of the United Nations system. At the nineteenth series of Joint Meetings of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination and the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination, held at Geneva earlier that year, the mandate of the United Nations system had been discussed, the effectiveness of co-ordination in that field had been evaluated and measures aimed at increasing the United Nations contribution to economic and technical co-operation among developing countries had been adopted. Besides promoting efficient use of human, financial and technological resources, such co-operation at the subregional, regional, and interregional levels improved the position of the developing countries in negotiations with the

(Mr. Shah, Pakistan)

developed countries. That could contribute greatly to North-South negotiations and the restructuring of the international economic order. The stalemate in the North-South dialogue had made the adoption of immediate measures to assist the developing countries, such as those called for in General Assembly resolutions 37/252 and 38/200, even more urgent.

78. In 1983, Pakistan organized the first international seminar on the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless, and intended to contribute 500,000 rupees towards the financing of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS) and was also willing to sponsor a demonstration project on human settlements prepared by the Philippines in response to resolution 4/41 adopted by the United Nations Commission on Human Settlements at Manila in May 1981. Pakistan's sixth five-year plan (1983-1988) called for the development of half a million plots for low-income groups and the construction of a water supply system and sewer for millions of others. Provision of shelter for all remained an objective of economic planning in Pakistan, which looked forward to greater co-operation with UNCHS.

79. Mr. SARRE (Senegal) said that his delegation had noted with great interest the detailed report on desertification which had been circulated by the Executive Director of UNEP. Conclusions 1, 3, and 5 on page 7 of that report seemed to suggest that desertification would worsen by the year 2000. He therefore requested the Executive Director to explain to him how the conclusions in question could be reconciled.

80. Mr. TOLBA (Executive Director, United Nations Environment Programme), replying to the question of the representative of Senegal, said that, in his view, the conclusions in question were not in any way contradictory. In his statement he had confined himself to facts, namely, that in 1977 the General Assembly had adopted a Plan of Action to Combat Desertification by the year 2000, but that the review carried out at the end of the seven-year period specified in the Plan had made it clear that no steps had been taken that were commensurate with what needed to be done. Thus, the deadline set had ceased to be realistic.

81. It was a fact that, every year, between 20 and 21 million hectares of arable land was reduced to zero or negative net economic productivity, and it was also true that the number of people living in rural areas affected by desertification had risen from 57 million in 1977 to 135 million in 1984. Consequently, what the representative of Senegal had said was correct. If financing remained at its current level, by the year 2000 the international community would have suffered a setback with regard to desertification.

82. Four years ago, the General Assembly had decided that, in order to halt desertification, the international community would have to allocate \$2.4 billion to efforts to combat that phenomenon over a 20-year period. However, only \$600 million was currently available, which left an annual shortfall of \$1.8 billion. The amount of \$2.4 billion would make it possible to avoid the loss of between 20 and 21 million hectares of arable land a year, which was equivalent

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(Mr. Tolba)

to an annual loss of \$26 billion in food-producing capacity. In short, in spite of the fact that only \$2.4 billion was needed to avoid the loss of \$26 billion, no one was listening and no one was taking any action.

83. Mr. FAREED (Pakistan) said that, in spite of the fact that Mr. Tolba had repeatedly and in various forums emphasized the seriousness of the problem of desertification, the countries affected, one of which was his own, were not doing their share in seeking a solution. In the latest report of the UNEP Governing Council (UNEP/GC.12/19 and Corr.1), it had been made clear that Governments did not assign due priority to controlling desertification. With regard to international action in that field, he fully supported the views expressed by Mr. Tolba in his reply to the representative of Senegal. The activities of UNEP should be directed towards providing the kind of assistance that would make it possible for the affected countries to become aware of the problem and to make it a top priority in their national plans and strategies.

84. Mr. TOLBA (Executive Director, United Nations Environment Programme) agreed with the representative of Pakistan and expressed his disappointment at the fact that, in the course of the last seven years, UNEP and other international bodies had devoted their scarce resources to combating desertification without meeting the necessary response from the countries that were directly affected. Those countries must realize that the natural resources on which their development depended were being destroyed and that they should therefore give high priority to combating desertification. Moreover, there was no co-ordination in national plans and projects. It often happened that UNEP received a written request that it support a specific national project to combat desertification but when it submitted the project to a donor country, the latter had knowledge of very different plans by the Government of the recipient country. UNEP could not work in such circumstances, and its image could be damaged in the eyes of the developed countries that were being asked to provide assistance. He urged the members of the Committee to bring that problem to the attention of the relevant authorities in their own countries.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.