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SECOND COMMITTEE
35th meeting
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New York

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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 35th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. KAABACHI (Tunisia)

later: Mr. HARLAND (New Zealand)

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

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

- (g) ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/C.2/39/L.15)

Draft resolution A/C.2/39/L.15

1. Mr. YANE (Botswana), introducing draft resolution A/C.2/39/L.15 on co-operation between the United Nations and the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC), said that the Conference had been established to fulfil the aspirations expressed in numerous General Assembly resolutions on co-operation among developing countries. Most of the SADCC countries were victims of the drought that had ravaged much of southern Africa; they had consequently been forced to divert resources earmarked for development to famine relief and other related programmes, thereby becoming more dependent on external aid than ever before.

2. The draft resolution sought to further co-operation and contacts between the United Nations and SADCC, particularly as the report of the Secretary-General on the subject (A/39/408) indicated that there had been no significant improvement during the past year. For that reason paragraph 4 of the draft resolution requested the Secretary-General to report on the matter to the General Assembly at its forty-first session. It was hoped that, in the intervening period, the issue would be considered in detail and that other relevant organs and bodies of the United Nations system would have time to determine whether or not they wished to establish contacts with SADCC. He hoped that the Committee would adopt the draft resolution by consensus.

AGENDA ITEM 83: SPECIAL ECONOMIC AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE (continued) (A/39/3 (Parts I and II), A/39/133, 236, 581; A/C.2/39/5)

- (a) OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS DISASTER RELIEF CO-ORDINATOR: REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/39/267 and Corr.1 and Add.1 and 2)
- (b) SPECIAL PROGRAMMES OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE: REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/39/380-386, 388-392, 393 and Add.1, 394, 404, 598)
- (c) IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MEDIUM-TERM AND LONG-TERM RECOVERY AND REHABILITATION PROGRAMME IN THE SUDANO-SAHELIAN REGION: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/39/211 and Add.1)

3. Ms. GOETSCH (Austria) said that the growing number and severity of emergency situations at a time of widespread economic recession made international assistance increasingly crucial. Her Government attached great importance to the further strengthening of the international disaster relief system and therefore supported the proposals in the report of the Secretary-General (A/39/267/Add.1). Particular

(Ms. Goetsch, Austria)

attention should be given, inter alia, to improving the flow of information and the mobilization of resources and to expediting the transport and delivery of relief goods. Naturally, improvement in both those areas depended on the willingness of member countries to co-operate with UNDRO. She drew attention to the role that inter-agency assessment missions could play in providing up-to-date, reliable information.

4. Her delegation was not yet in a position to comment on the advisability of continuing work on the proposed draft convention on expediting the delivery of emergency relief. At the same time it hoped that co-operation between UNDRO and various non-governmental organizations active in disaster relief would continue to develop.

5. Mr. ABBAS (Bahrain) welcomed the efforts being made to strengthen UNDRO's ability to provide emergency relief. Shortage of resources and lack of preparedness limited the delivery of aid. It was necessary to overcome those constraints and to establish early warning systems and coherent relief programmes. Greater attention should be given to specific programmes such as those of Yemen and Lebanon where the needs were pressing.

6. His delegation endorsed the measures adopted to implement the medium-term and long-term recovery and rehabilitation programme in the Sudano-Sahelian region referred to in the report of the Secretary-General (A/39/211 and Add.1).

7. Mr. VAN LIEROP (Vanuatu) said that helping the millions affected by devastating natural disasters and severe economic hardship and helping all mankind along the path of economic development was one of the international community's most important tasks. His delegation therefore supported the special economic assistance programmes and appealed to all donors to respond to the appeals with renewed vigour.

8. He commended the report of the Secretary-General on assistance to Vanuatu (A/39/388), drawing particular attention to paragraphs 16 and 19. The priorities outlined therein had been chosen because they would benefit the greatest number of people, and careful thought had gone into the determination of long-range development needs as could be seen from appendix II. He hoped that delegations would bring the report to the immediate attention of their Governments.

9. Mr. Harland (New Zealand) took the Chair.

10. Mr. INKIRIWANG (Indonesia), commenting on the report of the Secretary-General on UNDRO (A/39/267), said that he looked forward to the forthcoming meeting of the small consultative group which was soon to be established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 38/202. Since inefficient logistical support continued to be a major constraint on relief co-ordination, he supported the Secretary-General's proposals. His delegation was pleased to note that the proposed draft convention on expediting the delivery of emergency relief was nearing completion,

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(Mr. Inkiriwang, Indonesia)

11. Disaster preparedness and prevention through the establishment of early warning systems and public education was also important. Accordingly, his Government had approved a plan to establish a natural disaster institute for that purpose. The international community should certainly contribute to UNDRO's efforts to assist interested countries in that crucial area of pre-disaster planning.
12. Stressing the importance of the special programmes of economic assistance and of the implementation of the medium-term and long-term recovery and rehabilitation programme in the Sudano-Sahelian region, he said that his delegation agreed that a major joint effort was required from the entire international community to help the affected countries. It therefore supported the urgent call for bilateral and multilateral resources to be made available on a continuing basis in order to maintain and strengthen the current level of activities of UNDRO, UNSO and the special programmes of economic assistance.
13. Mr. OGOUMA (Benin) said that the report of the Secretary-General on assistance to Benin (A/39/383) accurately reflected the current state of affairs in that country, and particularly its exceptionally difficult economic situation. Benin, a least developed country, had been receiving economic assistance since 1981 for a number of social and economic projects in accordance with General Assembly resolution 35/88. Definite progress had been made during that time and his Government was extremely grateful for the efforts made to implement the objectives of the special programme of economic assistance.
14. The Beninese economy remained beset by difficulties. After a particularly trying year, the Government had appealed to the international community in January 1984 for assistance in solving the serious economic and social problems caused by drought; food, safe drinking water and cattle fodder had been needed in particular. While there had been no drought in 1984, rainfall had been less than normal, resulting in major food shortages. On the basis of on-site studies conducted by FAO, Benin had been classified as a country dependent on food aid.
15. His Government had continued to implement its national development programme for combating the effects of drought and desertification and rehabilitating and developing agriculture, the primary goal being food self-sufficiency. The national programme required major investments, and the relevant United Nations special programme of economic assistance enabled donors to respond appropriately.
16. The latter programme formed part of the National Development Plan for 1983-1987 and, in 1983, had been the subject of a Round Table which had brought together Benin's economic and social development partners; detailed information on the prospects emerging from that meeting was given in the Secretary-General's report. His Government believed that the special programme must be maintained and was confident that donor countries would duly respond to Benin's critical economic situation and to the appeals of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General.

17. Mrs. MARTINHO (Portugal) said that she fully shared the deep concern expressed by other delegations at the serious problems facing many poor countries which were often the prisoners of a cycle of poverty, instability and underdevelopment. The plight of the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa in particular had justifiably attracted the international community's attention. World economic recovery had clearly been insufficient to help them; specific action and support were necessary to meet their minimum needs and supplement their efforts towards long-term development.

18. Despite its intermediate level of development and serious economic difficulties, Portugal was fully committed to increasing its co-operation for development by actively participating in multilateral economic assistance programmes. National institutions were already promoting and directing co-operation with developing countries by co-ordinating economic, financial, social, technical, cultural and technological assistance. Portugal's efforts, which took the priorities of recipient Governments fully into account, were concentrated mainly in Africa: the ties which bound it to several Portuguese-speaking African countries had been gradually strengthened as reciprocal interests were identified.

19. Portugal was interested in exploring possibilities of trilateral co-operation involving other countries or international institutions whose financing capacity might complement the expertise, experience and technology that Portugal could provide. Such an arrangement would help to overcome one of the major obstacles to full implementation of many projects, namely, a lack of financial resources deriving from Portugal's economic situation. The results achieved thus far had confirmed expectations and had encouraged Portugal to develop that mode of co-operation further. Portugal's accession to the Agreement Establishing the African Development Bank was a further indication of the type of co-operation it wished to pursue.

20. Portugal had also supported regional development schemes and was actively participating in its capacity as an observer in several SADCC projects. Her delegation welcomed the initiatives recently taken in the matter of North-South co-operation by the consultative groups of the World Bank and UNDP. She drew attention in that connection to the recent co-operation agreement between Portugal and UNDP concerning the recruitment and participation of Portuguese technicians in programmes to be executed by United Nations Volunteers in those African countries with which Portugal had special relations of co-operation.

The meeting rose at 4.15 p.m.