



NOV 29 1984

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 28th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. HARLAND (New Zealand)

CONTENTS

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

(f) FOOD PROBLEMS (continued)

(m) NEW AND RENEWABLE SOURCES OF ENERGY: REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE DEVELOPMENT AND UTILIZATION OF NEW AND RENEWABLE SOURCES OF ENERGY (continued)

(o) IMMEDIATE MEASURES IN FAVOUR OF THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

STATEMENT BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULATION

STATEMENT BY THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

*This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate fascicle for each Committee.

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 80: DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION (continued)
(A/C.2/39/L.8 to L.10)

(f) FOOD PROBLEMS (continued)

(m) NEW AND RENEWABLE SOURCES OF ENERGY: REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE
DEVELOPMENT AND UTILIZATION OF NEW AND RENEWABLE SOURCES OF ENERGY (continued)

(o) IMMEDIATE MEASURES IN FAVOUR OF THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: REPORT OF THE
SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)

Draft resolutions A/C.2/39/L.8 to L.10

1. Mr. SAAD (Egypt), introducing the three draft resolutions on behalf of the Member States of the United Nations which were members of the Group of 77, recalled in connection with draft resolution A/C.2/39/L.10 that the objective of eradicating hunger and malnutrition from the world, which had been formulated at the World Food Conference in 1974 and reiterated in the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade, was still far from being achieved and was indeed unlikely to be achieved before the end of the decade. The food situation of the developing countries had become critical as a result of natural phenomena such as drought and natural disasters and also of such adverse circumstances as recession. It was difficult for those countries to gain access for their agricultural exports to the markets of the developed countries because the latter restricted imports and applied export subsidy programmes. The food and agricultural aid granted to the developing countries was insufficient to enable them to achieve their objectives. It was proving difficult to replenish the financial resources of such agencies as the International Fund for Agricultural Development and the International Development Association. Bilateral aid was also on the decline. The countries members of the Group of 77 had worked to draft a concise, pragmatic resolution which should be acceptable to Member States.

2. Draft resolution A/C.2/39/L.8 concerned an issue which had always been dear to the Group of 77. Much remained to be done to follow up the Nairobi Programme of action. He believed that it should be possible to adopt the draft resolution by consensus.

3. Draft resolution A/C.2/39/L.9 reflected the concern of the Group of 77 at the critical problems which continued to confront the developing countries because the immediate measures called for in General Assembly resolution 38/200 had yet to be taken and the situation had deteriorated, particularly in Africa.

4. The General Assembly had adopted by consensus the three draft resolutions on the same questions submitted to it at its thirty-eighth session; he hoped that the same would hold true of the current session.

/...

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (A/39/3 [parts I and II], 97, 118, 128, 133, 161, 223, 265 and Add.1, 269, 271, 272, 289, 290, 295, 312 and Corr.1 and Add.1 and 2, 303, 326, 331, 347, 356, 452, 474 and Corr.1, 477, 554, 559, 581, 590; A/C.2/39/2, 6 and 7; A/C.2/39/L.2; E/1984/9/Add.2, E/1984/71)

STATEMENT BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULATION

5. Mr. SALAS (Secretary-General of the International Conference on Population) said that the Conference had been one of the shortest, most economical and best attended of recent United Nations conferences. Its Recommendations for the Further Implementation of the World Population Plan of Action and the Mexico Declaration provided definitive guidelines for population policies and programmes to be undertaken by Governments and the international community in the coming decade.

6. The results achieved at the Conference had been the outcome of over two and a half years of preparation by Governments and the United Nations. He wished to stress, in particular, the input and the participation of the developing countries in that connection. The Preparatory Committee had met at Headquarters from 23 to 27 January 1984 and again from 12 to 16 March 1984. Preparatory activities had also been undertaken at the national level: more than 50 Governments had established national preparatory committees in order to delineate national positions on the topics to be brought up at the Conference. Non-governmental organizations, womens' groups, parliamentarians, representatives of the media and members of the academic community had also given their views on those issues at a number of other meetings. Preparations had culminated in the formulation of recommendations and suggestions for the further implementation of specific aspects of the World Population Plan of Action.

7. One hundred and forty-seven delegations (including Namibia) and representatives of all United Nations agencies and organizations concerned with population had attended the Conference. One hundred and fifty-four non-governmental organizations had also attended, and the representatives of 16 of them had been given an opportunity to speak in plenary meetings. More than 800 media representatives had been accredited to the Conference which had, as a result, enjoyed extensive media coverage. The Conference had had to be extended by one day in order to enable it to complete its work, a possibility which the Economic and Social Council had foreseen at its first and second regular sessions in 1983. Documentation, while meeting participants' needs, had been kept to a minimum. A saving of approximately \$100,000 had also been made in relation to the estimated budget. No separate secretariat had been established for the Conference: the Population Division of the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs had been responsible for the substantive preparations for the Conference and the preparatory meetings and the Conference itself had been serviced by existing units and organizations in the United Nations system. The Government of Mexico had provided all the necessary facilities.

8. The Conference had been able to achieve a consensus on virtually all the recommendations and had adopted by acclamation the Mexico City Declaration on Population and Development, which synthesized all the major recommendations. There had been intense debate on two issues, concerning original recommendation 5 and original recommendation 34 respectively. With regard to recommendation 5, the

/...

(Mr. Salas)

Conference had accepted a new text which had been inserted between the introductory paragraphs and the recommendations proper. It had not been possible to achieve a consensus on original recommendation 34 (now recommendation 36), but the document containing all the recommendations had been adopted by consensus.

9. The Recommendations and the Mexico Declaration reaffirmed the validity of three basic principles which were set forth in the World Population Plan of Action: the integrated nature of population and development issues, national sovereignty in policy and programme formulation and individual choice regarding the number of children. The Conference had highlighted the following broad principles: population growth, high mortality and morbidity rates, and problems of migration continued to cause grave concern and required immediate action; countries with high mortality rates should aim for a life expectancy at birth of 60 years and an infant mortality rate of 50 per 1,000 live births by the year 2000; Governments should make universally available information, education and the means to assist couples and individuals in achieving their desired number of children, consistent with human rights and without coercion on the one hand or deprivation on the other; abortion was not to be promoted as a method of family planning and natural family planning was to be included among all medically approved and appropriate methods; special attention should be given to maternal and child health services within a system of primary health care, and to the problems faced by adolescents; women should have full access to education, training and employment in order to achieve personal fulfilment in both their family and socio-economic roles; and integrated rural and urban development strategies should be an essential part of population policies.

10. In addition, the Conference had asked that the rights of migrants should be protected; paying special attention to the elderly and youth, it had invited Governments to give appropriate consideration to changes in family and household structures and their implications for development planning. It had also recommended that activities involving the collection, compilation, analysis and publication of data and the utilization of research conclusions in the policy and planning process should be strengthened. Lastly, it had urged Governments to attach high priority to the attainment of self-reliance in the management of population programmes and had recognized the importance of non-governmental organizations in the pursuit of innovative solutions to the population problem, as well as the importance of the United Nations system.

11. In order to implement the recommendations concerning the execution of the World Population Plan of Action, there was a clear need for operational programmes and increased resources for population activities. During the Conference, several Governments had announced that they would increase their allocations for such activities. Subsequently, the Government of the United States had announced a similar decision. It was to be hoped that other donor countries would follow that example at the next pledging conference.

12. Two follow-up meetings had already taken place: a global meeting of parliamentarians in Mexico City on 15 and 16 August 1984 and a media seminar in Drammen (Norway). Other follow-up activities were being planned at the national, regional and international levels. The implications of the recommendations of the

/...

(Mr. Salas)

Conference for the respective programmes of the organizations and bodies of the United Nations system were being studied. Reports on that question would be submitted in due course to the appropriate legislative bodies. To sustain the momentum generated by the Conference a concerted effort by Governments to implement the recommendations of the Conference, in accordance with their needs, was required, as well as a redoubled effort by the international community to ensure that the recommendations were followed up.

13. Mr. SEVAN (Secretary of the Committee) recalled that, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/148, the Secretary-General had prepared a report on the results of the International Conference on Population (A/39/559). That report (see Council resolution 1981/87) was to have been submitted to the General Assembly at its thirty-ninth session through the Council. As the Council had decided no longer to hold resumed sessions during the Assembly, the document could not be considered by the Council before its regular session in May 1985, but that should not prevent the General Assembly from expressing its views forthwith on the current occasion regarding the conclusions of the Conference or from taking any measures that it deemed appropriate.

14. Mr. KIBRIA (Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific) said that he did not intend to give a detailed analysis of the economic performance of the region since the Commission published a comprehensive annual report on that subject (for the most recent report, see Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 1983 - United Nations publications, Sales No. E.84.II.F.1). He would, however, highlight some major characteristics of the economies of Asia and the Pacific, thereby illustrating the diversity of national experience as well as the strengths and weaknesses of countries of the region, in coping with the adverse external environment.

15. The reasons for the remarkable economic resilience of the region during the early 1980s (growth rates in many cases ranged from 4 to 6 per cent) were multiple and complex and were due to the fact that many of the policies adopted had been initiated well before the onset of the recession.

16. In the first place, countries had actively mobilized their own resources, inter alia through vigorous reforms of the financial sector and the progressive rise of tax-GDP ratios. Austerity programmes had ensured survival from the two oil-price shocks and improvements in agriculture and the services sector were enabling a hitherto rather neglected potential for growth to be developed. The improved agricultural performance everywhere, but especially in China and in India, had contributed much to the notable improvement in their balance of payments, either through reductions in cereal imports or increased exports of commercial crops. The balance of payments had also benefited from remittances sent home by expatriate workers in the Middle East.

17. Aware of the paucity of its energy resources, the region had devoted its efforts to conservation, energy-saving technology and developing new sources of energy.

/...

(Mr. Kibria)

18. Far from turning inward, the region had opened up to the outside world. Recently-industrialized countries like Hong Kong, the Republic of Korea and Singapore had enlarged their share of export markets, while other countries were diversifying production and trading with other developing countries.

19. All those resource mobilization efforts during the 1970s had enabled countries to avoid large-scale indebtedness and, when the recession came, too severe a downturn in economic activity.

20. Those policies, together with undeniable sacrifices, had also contributed to significant progress in social development. Although in the poorest countries the literacy rate was of the order of 30 per cent, in many instances it had reached 80 to 90 per cent. In 1980, at least 80 per cent of children were enrolled in school. In several of the least advanced countries the infant mortality rate remained extremely high (between 140 and 180), but elsewhere it had in some cases, fallen below 40. However there should be no illusions; Asia and the Pacific remained a prey to hunger and poverty. Nine hundred million people in the region were living below the poverty line. The efforts of the countries concerned must therefore be supported by a more favourable external climate.

21. International trade was an important vehicle for growth and for access to new technologies that could accelerate development; but several factors were jeopardizing its effects. The countries of the region were concerned about the deterioration of the generalized system of preferences as a result of the inclusion of safeguard clauses, the application of the graduation principle leading to the withdrawal of preferential tariff concessions, the imposition of quota limits on certain products and arbitrary limits on developing countries' exports. The range of trade export barriers was proliferating, in spite of the recent recovery. Access to the markets of developed countries was an important precondition for continued dynamism not only in ESCAP countries but also in world trade.

22. The economic recovery had not been very successful in reviving the prices of primary commodities. The price of tea, coffee and tin had risen slightly in 1983, but the improvement had been short-lived; sugar prices had reached their lowest level in 13 years. World-wide, the average decline in costs between 1980 and 1982 had been approximately 30 per cent. The bulk of the income of the countries of Asia and the Pacific came from exporting primary commodities, so it was especially regrettable that the Agreement setting up the Common Fund had not yet been ratified by the requisite number of countries.

23. The slowing down of trade had been accompanied by a decline in external assistance. The flow of capital from the private sector, historically concentrated in a few countries, had decelerated and official development aid (ODA), on which the low-income countries were particularly dependent, was growing very slowly. Moreover, the region's share of ODA allocations had fallen to 25 per cent (as opposed to nearly 50 per cent 10 years previously) and the seven least developed countries, which had already suffered an 11-per-cent cutback in external assistance between 1980 and 1982, had also had to face a decline in grants and an increase in tied aid. Lastly, although the ESCAP countries were in a better position than other countries with regard to their total indebtedness, they nevertheless had a

/...

(Mr. Kibria)

heavy burden to bear because they were more reliant on private capital and victims of the hardening of loan terms.

24. The plight of the least developed and island States was particularly serious. While there had been some acceleration in their growth rates in 1983 and 1984, the gap between what had been achieved and what was required remained very large. There was limited scope for domestic resource mobilization efforts. The stabilization of primary commodity prices was therefore particularly important, as was the establishment of compensatory finance mechanisms. The adoption of the Substantial New Programme of Action had raised great hopes which had been dashed, since the level of foreign-aid disbursements to that group of countries in the ESCAP region was currently much lower than that to other regions. He therefore urged the international community to demonstrate the political will which the situation required.

25. The developing countries of Asia and the Pacific had shown that they were determined, against all odds, to improve their standard of living. Many of them had proved that it was not unrealistic to expect major improvements in a single generation. Japan's per capita income, for example, had increased sevenfold from 1952 to 1982, while in China and Thailand it had increased threefold over the same period. While those figures did not have an absolute value, they did at least indicate that progress, however agonizing it might be, was not necessarily a slow process and that growth was not necessarily linked to a particular social system or to an abundant endowment of natural resources.

26. At the fortieth session of ESCAP, held at Tokyo from 17 to 27 April 1984, the developing member countries had been in virtual unison in condemning the current negative trends, but they had not confined themselves thereto and had taken constructive action in two areas of vital importance. By resolution 235 (XL), entitled "Tokyo Programme on Technology for Development in Asia and the Pacific", they had adopted the ESCAP Plan of Action on Technology for Development, whose main goals were greater technological self-reliance and competitiveness and preventing the gap between developed and developing countries in advanced technology from widening. By resolution 236 (LX), entitled "Proclamation of the Transport and Communications Decade for Asia and the Pacific (1985-1994)", they had taken up a tremendous challenge: to create the infrastructure required for achieving their development objectives and priorities, not only by improving the means of transport and communications, but also by integrating them into an effective multimodal network. That herculean effort deserved the full support of the international community.

27. ESCAP continued its activities in many other areas - agriculture, industry, maritime transport, energy and statistics, among others. It had just inaugurated in Vanuatu its Pacific Operations Centre and would soon be stepping up its assistance activities in that subregion. In view of its limited resources, it was very grateful for the extrabudgetary support it had received and hoped soon to assume fully the role entrusted by the General Assembly to the regional commissions, namely, to be centres for economic and social development and the team leaders within the United Nations system for the regions they served.

/...

28. Mr. MONTAÑO (Mexico), like the Secretary-General of the Conference on Population, welcomed the highly constructive results of the Conference. The consensus obtained there had now to be translated into policies and programmes closely linking population and developmental problems, at the national and regional levels, while taking into account the particular characteristics of each country and respecting its sovereignty.

29. The significant achievements of the Conference had been the fruit of exemplary co-operation at the international level. The Conference had been carefully prepared from the time of the adoption of Council resolution 1981/87 which had convened it; there had been a series of activities which had included the identification of priority questions, preparation of the necessary documentation, and two meetings of the Preparatory Committee, in 1984, which had established a framework for negotiation based on prior agreement.

30. International co-operation had also been exemplary in the quality of the work done by UNFPA and the Population Division which, by maintaining close and constant contact with delegations, had created a climate of confidence. That arrangement had been all the more valuable since, not having an ad hoc secretariat, the Conference had relied on the support of existing institutions.

31. The Conference had adopted by consensus 88 recommendations relating to implementation of the World Population Plan of Action (Bucharest, 1974). After reviewing the changes that had taken place in the world since then, it had updated the action required for further implementation of the Plan. The Conference had reaffirmed the full validity of the Plan in its Declaration on population and development, and had declared that the primary aim of social, economic and human development, of which population objectives and policies were an integral part, was to improve the level and quality of life of peoples and to enable them to fulfil their common destiny in a peaceful and secure environment.

32. The Conference had reawakened great interest in a wide range of phenomena. It was becoming increasingly clear that there were complex relationships between population problems and problems in various other sectors: natural resources, environment, migration, the status of women and of other disadvantaged social groups, human rights, etc. The link between population and development had never been more precisely established, and never had it been made clearer that population policies in the broad sense of the term, far from being just a means of controlling population growth, had brought a wide range of socio-economic forces into play.

33. The tremendous task ahead could not be accomplished with the modest resources currently available. As the participants had highlighted in the Mexico City Declaration: "adequate and substantial international support and assistance will greatly facilitate the efforts of Governments". It was in that spirit that the Conference had urgently requested further strengthening of UNFPA (see recommendation 83), in order to ensure more effective delivery of its assistance. Mexico was convinced that the international community was well aware that more than good intentions and rhetoric was required.

34. He recalled how useful UNFPA's activities had been in Mexico which had taken pains to ensure that the resources received were used to implement policies

/...

(Mr. Montafio, Mexico)

consistent with its national objectives. In that connection greater powers had recently been vested, as part of the economic decentralization effort, in the councils of State concerned with population matters.

35. The twin phenomena of population and development necessarily led to a study of internal and international migrations and of the phenomenon of population growth and distribution in the world. The Mexico City Conference had highlighted the need for exchanging views and experiences. Mexico was ready to participate in that effort of international co-operation.

36. Mr. LEE (Canada) said that his country believed the role of the Economic and Social Council could be revitalized by focusing its work on a few priority issues and carrying out procedural reforms in both the Council and the Second Committee. The review of the critical economic situation in Africa, to which the Council had devoted long discussions at its most recent session, would prove useful to the General Assembly during the current session, even though it had not been possible for the Council to reach a consensus in July on either a programme of action or the draft declaration on Africa, a document which Canada had been ready to support. That was certainly one of the substantive issues that should be given priority and approached in a pragmatic spirit.

37. Consideration of the results of the International Conference on Population was another priority issue for the Committee. The 88 recommendations and the Mexico Declaration on Population and Development, adopted by consensus, had placed population issues within the broader context of social and economic development. The importance of three factors in that text had been recognized: the participation of women in development, the importance of a healthy population and the relationship between the needs of growing populations and the capacity of the environment to provide the resources to satisfy them. Changes in population structure could not help but pose new challenges in all three areas, and the Mexico Conference had begun to identify issues of concern.

38. Canada supported recommendation 83 of the Conference, which invited the Secretary-General to examine ways of strengthening delivery of assistance by the United Nations Fund for Population Activities. It was Canada's understanding that the examination would focus on strengthening the resources of the Fund within its existing mandate so that it could deliver assistance to populations in areas of critical need, such as Africa. Any expert group which the Secretary-General might establish should operate as an independent and therefore impartial body. Canada stood ready to work with the Secretary-General in that task.

39. It was regrettable that agreement had not been reached at the Council's summer session on a code of conduct on transnational corporations. It would be wise, in view of the current difficulties to pause to reflect and to suspend negotiations on the code in order to allow for the reassessment of positions on the outstanding issues. An informal group of experts could be set up to attempt to resolve differences in areas such as the treatment of transnational corporations, definitions and jurisdiction, and to make recommendations to the Commission on Transnational Corporations, which would then transmit them to the Economic and Social Council, concerning the timing and nature of further negotiations. By

/...

(Mr. Lee, Canada)

setting voluntary guidelines, such a code could stimulate international investment by aiding the Governments and corporations concerned in reaching equitable and mutually beneficial agreements.

40. In accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 1984/164, the General Assembly had before it the report of the recent World Conference on Fisheries Management and Development. Since improved fisheries management could have a beneficial effect on food and agriculture production, he urged delegations to support the report.

41. As for procedural questions relating to the rationalization of the work of the Economic and Social Council, important progress had been made in the direction of "biennialization". The idea had been adopted in principle in General Assembly decision 38/429, which provided that the Assembly would consider at its thirty-ninth session a proposed biennial programme of work for the Second Committee, in which the Economic and Social Council would identify questions for substantive consideration by the Assembly in alternate years, taking into account the biennial programme of work of the Council. At the Council's second regular session of 1984, specific proposals had been made in resolution 1984/182 and had been acceptable to most interested countries. Canada supported those initiatives, including the decisions regarding the programmes of work and reporting schedules of subsidiary bodies. Such procedural reforms were needed because the Committee had not been able to deal with important issues in depth owing to its overcrowded agenda. A biennial organization of work would enable the Committee to focus on such questions. If some questions required annual consideration, the agenda could always be altered as needed.

42. Mr. MAJALI (Jordan) recalled that during the general debate the representative of Egypt had spoken on behalf of the Group of 77 and had outlined clearly the position of the developing countries with respect to their own economic difficulties and the problems of the world economic system as a whole. The representative of Egypt had on that occasion reaffirmed the will of the developing countries to establish constructive and fair economic co-operation and a genuine dialogue with the developed countries, in order to circumscribe the effects of a crisis which had already caused so much harm to developing countries that some of them had even recorded negative growth rates.

43. His delegation, like all those which had already spoken on the question, was deeply concerned at the deterioration of the economic situation in Africa. The aggravation of crises and the proliferation of natural disasters on the continent required special emergency efforts to save entire populations. It should be noted in that connection that, at the fourth Islamic Summit Conference held at Casablanca in January 1984, the Organization of the Islamic Conference had decided to strengthen the activities of its Committee of Islamic Solidarity with the Peoples of the Sahel, including the programme of regular food aid and the emergency assistance projects to the countries of the Sahel. His delegation also welcomed the reports of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the programme for the Transport and Communications Decade in Africa and on the special measures for the social and economic development of Africa in the 1980s, as well as the report of the Economic and Social Council on the Economic Commission for Africa. It hoped

/...

(Mr. Majali, Jordan)

that the relevant views and comments expressed in the Committee would be translated into concrete and immediate measures aimed at promoting the rapid development of African countries, especially those among them that were least developed and most vulnerable to natural disasters. Particular mention should be made of the problem of transport and communications in the countries stricken by drought, a problem which impeded not only the rapid development of those countries but also the efforts of United Nations agencies which sought to deliver emergency relief to the populations concerned. It was inconceivable that the era of the conquest of space should also be an era of drought and famine.

44. With regard to the world population situation, the figures cited in the report of the Secretary-General showed a marked change in the indicators of developing countries. He recalled that his country had hosted a regional preparatory meeting for the International Conference on Population, held at Mexico City, and had taken an active part in the Conference. Jordan had also set up an institute specialized in population studies to follow and direct development in that sector as it related to the overall economic development of the country. Aware that "man was the most precious resource" and that no development plan could be successful without improvements in the conditions of the population, Jordan over the last ten years had registered growth rates that were among the highest in the developing countries. In that connection, he drew attention to the population changes which had occurred in the Arab territories occupied by Israel and had been condemned by the international community. Israel had seized about 54 per cent of the area of the West Bank and Arab population levels had declined in some cases because of the expansion of Israeli settlements. In 1983, 160,000 settlers had already been installed in those lands and by the end of the 1980s they were expected to number 230,000. Such a policy resulted in the steady erosion of the Arab presence in those territories, the final objective being to empty them completely of their rightful inhabitants. As an Israeli journalist had said, the Israeli strategy in the 1980s must be to drive the inhabitants of the occupied territories east of the Jordan River in the near future, in order to separate the Arab people on the east of the river from the Jewish people on the west.

45. Besides the population question, there was the problem of water, which was at the heart of the Israeli-Arab conflict. Since 1967 the Israeli authorities had been exploiting the underground and surface waters in the occupied territories in order to supply the settlements, obliging the Arabs to use water in limited quantities and only under certain conditions. Those same authorities prohibited the drilling of new wells or the deepening of existing wells and had passed laws in support of that policy. Such practices, which had enabled Israel to monopolize the water resources of the occupied territories, were described in the Secretary-General's report (A/39/326). Jordan thanked the United Nations agencies and the countries which had furnished assistance to the Palestinian people in order to alleviate the ever-growing hardships to which they were subjected under the occupation. Efforts made by Arab and other countries to improve the economic situation of the Palestinian people were unfortunately jeopardized by the repressive practices of Israel and by its economic policy, which tended to void international assistance of any humanitarian content. Even though Jordan had limited resources and must use a large part of those resources to deal with Israeli aggression, a necessity that explained the delays in the implementation of

/...

(Mr. Majali, Jordan)

development plans by the countries of the region, it was resolved to continue to provide aid to the populations of the occupied territories in order to enable them to combat plans for their expulsion from the lands that were rightfully theirs.

46. Mr. MANNIX (Ireland), speaking on behalf of the States members of the European Economic Community, stressed the importance of the report of the Secretary-General on the Transport and Communications Decade in Africa (A/39/272). The report indicated that some of the major objectives of the programme had been partially realized and that the firm base that had been established should make it possible to solve Africa's major transport and communications problems. It was encouraging to note that 75 per cent of the financial resources mobilized had been provided by the African countries themselves. At the fifth Technical Consultative Meeting, the European Development Fund had indicated that it would consider financing port training projects under the second Lomé Convention. The Fund had also indicated that some road projects could qualify for assistance under regional funds.

47. With regard to the second phase, he noted with satisfaction that the Secretary-General's report broadly reflected the views expressed at the Paris Round Table in June 1983. The projects of the second phase no longer concerned transport systems, as in the first phase, but regional development planning, infrastructure, the maintenance of existing facilities, training and technical assistance.

48. The European Economic Community had long been concerned with the welfare of the Palestinian people, as was demonstrated by its participation in the Meeting on Economic and Social Assistance to the Palestinian People held at Geneva in July 1984. Since 1972, the Community provided aid through the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East had amounted to approximately \$143 million. In July 1984, the Community had concluded a fifth convention with the Agency covering the period 1984-1986. The Community had also provided food and emergency relief for Palestinians living in the occupied territories, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic. Since 1982, the Community had channelled additional food aid valued at over \$3.5 million through UNRWA to Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. It had also channelled food aid through the International Committee of the Red Cross and the World Food Programme to Palestinians living in the occupied territories and in the Syrian Arab Republic. It had joined with non-governmental organizations in financing projects for the benefit of Palestinians living in the occupied territories and Lebanon. It had granted 50 scholarships to Palestinians living in the occupied territories and had assisted small-scale rural development projects in the West Bank. The Community's individual member States had also provided considerable assistance.

49. Despite the considerable progress which had been made at the reconvened special session of the Commission on Transnational Corporations, it had been impossible to reach agreement on outstanding issues concerning the draft code of conduct. It was essential that an agreement on definitions and the scope of application, as tentatively worked out at the June meeting, should be reached as soon as possible in order to arrive at a balanced code of conduct that would benefit all the parties concerned.

(Mr. Mannix, Ireland)

50. Several United Nations agencies and other international and regional organizations as well as national authorities had made considerable progress in the area of consumer protection. The experience acquired by the Community in that area could be of use in the elaboration of United Nations draft guidelines.

51. The States members of the European Economic Community had joined in a consensus on General Assembly resolution 38/149, which had requested the Secretary-General to prepare a report on the exchange of information on banned hazardous chemicals and unsafe pharmaceutical products. Without underestimating the complexity of the problems related to the completion of the consolidated list, the Community was prepared to work with all concerned to arrive at a general agreement on that subject, particularly with regard to the final format of the list and the use to which it would be put. The Community had already adopted a series of directives aimed at harmonizing the legislation of member States with established standards for a wide range of potentially harmful chemical products. Other directives dealt with the protection of workers from exposure to certain chemicals. Notification procedures applicable to new substances marketed in countries belonging to the Community or imported by them which fell within the category of "dangerous substances" were also in force in several countries outside the Community. The Community had set up a data-bank project for those involved in environmental management and research.

52. His delegation would return to questions relating to the organization and co-ordination of the work of the United Nations at the Secretariat and intergovernmental levels under the appropriate agenda items.

53. Mr. Kaabachi (Tunisia) took the Chair.

54. Mr. HILLEL (Israel) said that, as in previous years, the report of the Secretary-General on permanent sovereignty over national resources in the territories administered by Israel was the final product of an annual propaganda campaign against Israel. "Objective sources" from Arab capitals and information provided by Palestinian terrorist organizations were used to give credibility and respectability to the questionable findings of the report. Even the Israeli press was used, by means of selected quotations, to distort the truth.

55. Because the many positive aspects of Israel's policy had not been taken into account, his delegation had submitted document A/C.2/39/7 entitled "Administration of Water Resources in the Areas of Judea, Samaria and the Gaza District: Comments on the Reports of the United Nations Secretary-General". The Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations had on numerous occasions in the past outlined his country's position with regard to resolutions on "permanent sovereignty over national resources" in the territories administered by Israel and had stated that the Government of Israel could not associate itself with the action called for by the General Assembly in those resolutions, including resolution 38/144, since they were motivated by blatant political hostility towards Israel. In the case of the last-mentioned resolution, judgement had been passed even before the experts appointed by the United Nations had visited the territories administered by Israel. Propaganda techniques, no matter how sophisticated, could not obliterate the facts. Israel had nothing to hide. The survey teams

/...

(Mr. Hillel, Israel)

commissioned by WHO, ILO, UNESCO, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, international jurists, human rights organizations and churches were accorded complete freedom of action. Each year, more than one million tourists, including 300,000 Arab tourists, visited Israel, and the fact that the authors of the various reports utilized Israeli sources clearly demonstrated that Israel was an open, democratic society in which the most delicate issues were publicly debated. It also showed that everyone had access to the mass media and that there was neither censorship nor manipulation. More than anything else, however, it showed that the Government and people of Israel embraced the standards of the free world and were determined to correct human errors that might result from the conflict situation in the Middle East.

56. As for the so-called exploitation by Israel of the water resources of the occupied territories, he wished to indicate the principles followed by Israel in developing and administering the water resources in the territories under its administration. It was well known that in arid and semi-arid regions there was never sufficient water to irrigate lands. Thus it was primarily water supply, rather than the availability of land, which determined the extent to which land was cultivated. Consequently, the responsible authorities had the duty to plan the use of water resources, taking into consideration two paramount considerations: water rights and the need to ensure a lasting and safe supply.

57. The concept of water rights applied to States as well as to individuals. In the first case, all States bordering on a natural water resource had the right to share equally in the use of its waters. In the second case, a farmer who had regularly used a specific water resource had the right to continue to do so. Exercise of that right was subject, however, to another highly important consideration, namely, long-term safe yield. It was necessary, therefore, to avoid excessive utilization of water resources, which must be used as efficiently as possible and shared equitably among all the inhabitants of the region, keeping in mind the welfare of future generations. When Judea and Samaria had been under Jordanian administration, the Arab farmers had been able to pump as much water as they wanted because the Jordanian State had neither adequate legislation nor efficient administration. Water had been scarce, and sometimes contaminated, giving rise to epidemics of cholera and typhus. It had been necessary, therefore, from 1967 onwards, to reinforce municipal water systems and organize a water supply for villages. In installing water meters on water sources and regulating the output of sources, Israel had merely been implementing Jordanian legislation in force. In 1977, in order to protect water sources, the Israeli authorities had begun to issue licences for the drawing of water to well owners in Judea and Samaria, setting a ceiling 10 per cent higher than the quantity actually pumped during the previous year. Currently, Arab farmers and communities in Judea and Samaria were served by 325 wells, whereas Jewish communities were served by 30. It had been necessary, as the Jordanian authorities had already started to do, to put an end to over-exploitation of wells in certain regions in order to prevent penetration of brackish water. Most of the 30 wells bored since 1967 for Jewish communities had been sunk to depths never reached before. Those wells were not connected to any existing water sources and had not, therefore, adversely affected the water supply available to the Arab inhabitants. In the first 10 years of Israeli administration, the area under irrigation in Judea and Samaria had been

/...

(Mr. Hillel, Israel)

expanded by 160 per cent, the yield had increased twelvefold and income from agriculture had more than doubled in real terms.

58. In granting drilling permits, the Israeli authorities gave preference to water for domestic use. The Jordanian State had taken no significant measures to ensure a regular supply of water for domestic use. Most of the inhabitants had drawn their water from nearby springs or from rain water cisterns. Piped water had been available only in the larger towns, but its supply had been irregular and controlled; no sanitary measures had been taken to guarantee the quality of the water. Domestic water consumption in Judea and Samaria, which had been 5 cubic metres per person per year in 1956, was currently more than 20 cubic metres.

59. Obviously, water knew no political boundaries. It was therefore no more logical to speak of "Arab water" than of English water or Jewish water. Water was a universal resource which must be tapped for the benefit of all the inhabitants of the area, in accordance with accepted norms for its regulation.

60. Since the water resources of the region between the Mediterranean and the Jordan River had been almost fully exploited, and since there was a growing need of water for domestic, agricultural and industrial uses, the only hope of improving the situation was to find new sources. Israel had done much to that end, but expansion of those activities depended largely on co-operation with its neighbours, particularly in the matter of purification and utilization of used water, desalination of saline water, increased efficiency in water consumption and cloud-seeding. Only with co-operation between the States concerned would it be possible to meet the needs of the region, and for such co-operation there must be peace.

61. Mr. ZAPOTOCKY (Czechoslovakia) said that during the general debate the great majority of speakers had been very concerned by the state of international political, economic and social relations. In the context of efforts to eliminate the negative factors in such relations, the need to set up effective mechanisms to control the activities of transnational corporations was becoming increasingly apparent. The activities of those corporations were developing on the basis of an increasingly pronounced transfer of resources from the poorest countries to the most powerful States and, for that purpose, had considerable financial and material means to draw on.

62. His delegation understood that the developing countries wanted to use part of those resources for their own development. But the transnational corporations were motivated by completely different considerations; as they wanted to maximize profits, they took no account of the long-term needs of the developing countries. The result was growing neo-colonialist exploitation. Therefore, work on the final drafting of the code of conduct on transnational corporations must be completed rapidly on the basis of the package proposal, which took account of the interests of all States.

63. The experience gained by the developing countries since their accession to political independence highlighted the decisive role of the State in implementing the necessary socio-economic reforms. With the considerable means of action

(Mr. Zapotocky, Czechoslovakia)

available to it, it could mobilize resources at the national level and ensure their rational management for the good of the greatest number, within the framework of long-term development programmes.

64. The representatives of certain developed capitalist States claimed that the public sector, and particularly public enterprises, contributed nothing to the progress of the developing countries. On the other hand, they extolled the merits of capitalist enterprises. That attitude was explained by their desire to defend the interests of Western monopolies. They knew very well that a solid public sector would not let them exploit the national wealth of the developing countries as they intended to do. That was why any attempt to turn those countries away from the public sector must be resisted. In that connection, United Nations bodies responsible for economic questions, particularly the Economic and Social Council and the regional economic commissions, were expected to play an important role in strengthening the public sector. Czechoslovakia was prepared to support any action to that end.

65. In order to ensure their progress in all sectors of economic activity, the developing countries must have qualified personnel. The brain drain towards developed capitalist States impeded their efforts in that field. According to UNCTAD data, 400,000 persons had been affected by that phenomenon during the period 1961-1972. Moreover, according to United Nations estimates, the emigration of experts to the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom had cost developing countries \$US 42 billion in the period 1961-1977. It was interesting to note that the "development aid" furnished by those three countries during that period had amounted to \$US 46 billion. The brain drain must be stemmed. In that context, the provisions of resolution 37/228 on the role of qualified national personnel in the social and economic development of developing countries assumed increasing importance. The Secretariat had not submitted the report requested of it in that resolution and should take steps to do so as soon as possible.

66. In any review of the factors impeding the socio-economic progress of certain countries or regions, the machinations of Israel in the Arab territories it illegally occupied could not be overlooked. Its criminal policy with regard to the populations of those territories and the exploitation of their natural resources constituted a serious impediment to cultural, social and economic progress and a threat to peace in the region. The socialist States demanded that Israeli troops be withdrawn from the occupied territories and that the Arab populations be granted their lawful rights. In that connection, the convening of a special international conference on the Middle East, with the participation of all interested parties - including the PLO, the only legitimate representative of the Arab people of Palestine - could lead to a peaceful and just settlement of the question.

67. In view of the complexity of the problems currently facing mankind, it was essential to strengthen the authority of the Economic and Social Council and its co-ordinating role and, in general, the activities of all United Nations bodies responsible for economic questions. That could be done without interfering with existing structures. If they rationalized their activities, those bodies could perform the tasks entrusted to them. In that connection, they should not lose

(Mr. Zapotocky, Czechoslovakia)

sight of the main objectives to be attained, particularly in the matter of the restructuring of international economic relations.

68. The results achieved by United Nations bodies and agencies responsible for economic and social questions would be much better if all countries demonstrated a genuine will for co-operation. In that connection, the attitude of certain Western countries, which was dictated solely by a concern for their own political and economic interests, was disturbing.

69. It was interesting to note that those same States refrained from criticizing the activities of the International Monetary Fund or the World Bank, two anti-democratic agencies which did not meet the needs of the majority of their member States. The international monetary and financial crisis was proof of that. The 1982 report of the World Bank showed that that institution had not paid due attention to the problem of the indebtedness and balance of payments of the developing countries or to the social aspects of their situation. The "assistance" provided by the Fund and the Bank had cost them dear. All that confirmed the need to reinforce the role of the United Nations, and particularly of the Economic and Social Council, in the matter of international economic co-operation.

70. On the subject of the efficiency of United Nations agencies, reservations must be expressed concerning the activities of the Secretariat, which was, after all, an essential body. The reports submitted were not always of the best quality. For instance, the documents on the implementation of the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States (A/39/332) and confidence-building in international economic relations (A/39/312) provided a superficial and simplistic analysis.

71. Miss COURSON (France) said that her statement would focus on population problems since the Irish delegation had dealt with a number of topics under item 12 on behalf of the European Economic Community. On balance, the results of the International Conference on Population could be considered positive. It was now recognized, although it had not been recognized in Bucharest, that population problems could not be dealt with in isolation, and that they were one aspect of development. That meant that population policies should be integrated in overall policies aimed at improving living conditions.

72. The Conference had underlined the need for long-term population stabilization, based on a balance between the number of inhabitants and the available resources. It had stressed the important role, which was even essential for many countries, of family planning, which must, however, be linked to global action in the areas of hygiene, education and training. The decisive role of women had been highlighted. France wished to reiterate in that regard that each country should be able freely to choose its population policies, just as couples and individuals should be able to decide the number of children they wished to have and the spacing of their births.

73. The importance of international co-operation in the area of population had been underlined. France was ready to extend assistance to any country that needed it. The French School of Demography, whose age and reputation were well known, had much to offer. Within the framework of international co-operation, UNFPA

/...

(Miss Courson, France)

played an acknowledged role which had been underlined by the Conference in its recommendation 83, to the effect that the Secretary-General should examine ways of increasing the effectiveness of the operational activities of the Fund (E/CONF.76/19). In her delegation's opinion, in developing those activities, account should be taken of the multisectoral and interdisciplinary nature of population problems. That meant that a balance should be struck between field activities and research, training and analysis of basic data. The importance of the work done by regional and interregional research and training centres in population matters should be stressed.

74. It was clear that the development of UNFPA activities should be paralleled by a strengthening of the various United Nations agencies dealing with population matters. The study requested of the Secretary-General in recommendation 83 should therefore not consist merely in presenting a picture of the "manner" in which the United Nations currently dealt with population problems. It should be undertaken with the object of avoiding duplication of work and "non-work". It might be worth considering for example whether, by making better use of the competence of United Nations bodies, it might be possible to avoid engaging outside experts to carry out some operational activities.

75. Mr. GAJENTAAN (Netherlands), continuing his statement to population questions, said that the Mexico Conference had been a success, notwithstanding efforts by certain delegations to politicize the discussions by introducing extraneous issues; the General Assembly should therefore endorse its results.

76. The importance of the Conference was reflected in the extent to which it contributed to two main objectives: the reaffirmation of the World Population Plan of Action agreed upon at Bucharest, and the strengthening of the approach to population policy within the context of broader socio-economic policies.

77. The recognition of the need to formulate development programmes and strategies on the basis of an integrated approach, taking into account the interrelationships between population, resources, environment and development, was of fundamental importance.

78. The links which had been established in Mexico between the right to family planning and other human rights was important. It had been recognized, in particular, that couples and individuals should be able to freely decide the number of children they wished to have and the spacing of their births.

79. The need to improve the status of women had been unanimously recognized, both as a goal in itself and to ensure the success of population policies. The recommendations of the Conference on providing better access to birth control, as well as to education, training and employment on an equal basis with men, were of vital importance.

80. The Mexico Conference had recommended a strengthening of international co-operation by means of the World Population Plan of Action. In its recommendation 83, it requested the Secretary-General to carry out a study on the possibilities of strengthening UNFPA with a view to increasing the effectiveness of

/...

(Mr. Gajentaan, Netherlands)

assistance provided in that area. The Netherlands delegation considered that recommendation most timely. Ten years after the Bucharest Conference, it would be useful to examine the effectiveness of United Nations activities in matters such as demographic research, the formulation of population policies, the provision of financial support at the country level and through international organizations, and technical assistance. In addition, it would be necessary to examine the manner in which policy guidelines were laid down and the way in which reports were submitted to intergovernmental bodies such as the Economic and Social Council, the Population Commission, the Governing Council of UNDP and the competent bodies of the World Health Organization and UNESCO. Recommendations to improve the effectiveness of assistance by strengthening the activities of the United Nations system within existing mandates would play a key role in the study. In addition, the Secretary-General could, in undertaking the study, avail himself of a group of experts with extensive knowledge of the United Nations, its specialized agencies and relevant non-governmental organizations, which, when required, could draw on outside expertise.

81. The Netherlands delegation hoped that the deliberations of the Committee would facilitate implementation of recommendation 83. It was ready to co-operate with the Secretary-General and hoped that he would state his views on the question at the conclusion of the debate on the item.

The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.