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DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION:
FOOD PROBLEMS

Report of the Second Committee (Part VII)

Rapporteur: Mr. Ahmed Alawi AL-HADDAD (Democratic Yemen)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Second Committee held a substantive debate on item 80 (see A/39/790, para. 2). Action to be taken on sub-item (f) was considered at the 28th, 31st, 54th and 56th meetings, on 30 October, 1 and 30 November and 6 December. An account of the Committee's discussion is contained in the relevant summary records (A/C.2/39/SR.28, 31, 54 and 56).

II. CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSALS

A. Draft resolutions A/C.2/39/L.13 and L.54

2. At the 31st meeting, on 1 November, the representative of Egypt introduced, on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations which are members of the Group of 77, a draft resolution (A/C.2/39/L.13) entitled "Critical situation of food and agriculture in Africa", which read as follows:

"The General Assembly,

"Recalling its resolutions 3201 (S-VI) and 3202 (S-VI) of 1 May 1974, containing the Declaration and the Programme of Action on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order, 3281 (XXIX) of 12 December 1974, containing the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States, and 3362 (S-VII) of 16 September 1975 on development and international economic co-operation,

"Gravely concerned at the dramatic deterioration in African food and agricultural production, as a result of which there has been an alarming increase in the number of people exposed to hunger, malnutrition and even starvation,

"Recognizing the special emphasis placed upon food and agriculture and the undertaking and resolve of Africa to devote its scarce resources on a priority basis to the rehabilitation of food and agricultural production as reflected in and in accordance with the Lagos Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Monrovia Strategy for the Economic Development of Africa, 1/

"Noting the exacerbation of Africa's food and agricultural crisis by the adverse impact of prolonged drought and accelerating desertification,

"Also convinced that the African food and agricultural crisis has been rendered more acute by natural factors such as poor rainfall, widespread brush fires, unusually severe crop infestation, and epidemics of plant and animal diseases,

"Welcoming the adoption by the Thirteenth FAO Regional Conference for Africa, held at Harare in July 1984, of the Harare Declaration of African Ministers for Agriculture and Rural Development on the food crisis in Africa,

"1. Reaffirms its resolution 38/159 of 19 December 1983, as well as all other relevant resolutions on the critical situation of food and agriculture in Africa, and calls for their immediate and effective implementation;

"2. Welcomes the conclusions and recommendations of the World Food Council at its tenth ministerial session, held at Addis Ababa from 11 to 15 June 1984, in particular those relating to the African region; 2/

"3. Notes with appreciation the encouraging response by the international community to the various appeals made for the alleviation of the present critical food supply situation in Africa;

"4. Urges the international community, in view of the continued critical food supply situation in a large number of African countries, to sustain and increase its efforts to provide the additional food aid required on an emergency basis, as well as technical and other forms of assistance needed in that connection;

"5. Urges the international community also to respond generously to the urgent need for agricultural inputs for the rehabilitation of agriculture and animal husbandry;

1/ A/S-11/14, annex.

2/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 19 (A/39/19), part one.

"6. Calls upon the international community to continue to support efforts undertaken by African countries at the national, subregional and regional levels to increase food production through, inter alia, the provision, on a priority and long-term basis, of additional financial and technical assistance to Africa by organizations of the United Nations system, such as the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the United Nations Development Programme and other organizations involved in the financing of agricultural development, and through an increase in lending by the World Bank to the agricultural sector in Africa;

"7. Requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fortieth session, through the Economic and Social Council at its second regular session of 1985, a progress report on the implementation of the present resolution."

3. At its 54th meeting, on 30 November, the Committee had before it a draft resolution (A/C.2/39/L.54) entitled "Critical situation of food and agriculture in Africa", submitted by Mr. Enrique de la Torre, Vice-Chairman of the Committee, on the basis of informal consultations held on draft resolution A/C.2/39/L.13.

4. In response to a question raised by the representative of the United States of America, the representative of the Budget Division made a statement.

5. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.2/39/L.54 (see para. 14, draft resolution I).

6. In the light of the adoption of draft resolution A/C.2/39/L.54, draft resolution A/C.2/39/L.13 was withdrawn by its sponsors.

B. Draft resolutions A/C.2/39/L.10 and L.118

7. At the 28th meeting, on 30 October, the representative of Egypt introduced, on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations which are members of the Group of 77, a draft resolution (A/C.2/39/L.10) entitled "Food and agricultural problems", which read as follows:

"The General Assembly,

"Recalling the Declaration and the Programme of Action on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order, contained in its resolutions 3201 (S-VI) and 3202 (S-VI) of 1 May 1974, the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States, contained in its resolution 3281 (XXIX) of 12 December 1974, its resolution 3362 (S-VII) of 16 September 1975 on development and international economic co-operation, and the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade, contained in the annex to its resolution 35/56 of 5 December 1980,

"Stressing the imperative need to keep food and agriculture issues at the centre of global attention,

"Having considered the grave and alarming situation of food and agriculture in developing countries, especially the critical and deteriorating situation in Africa, further exacerbated by prolonged drought and accelerating desertification, and the persistent problem of food shortages in food-deficit developing countries, particularly the least developed countries,

"Reaffirming that food and agriculture problems in developing countries should be considered in a comprehensive manner in their different dimensions, as well as in their immediate short-term and long-term perspectives,

"Reaffirming the Universal Declaration on the Eradication of Hunger and Malnutrition, adopted ten years ago by the World Food Conference, 3/ and the Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, 4/

"1. Reaffirms its resolutions 38/158 on food problems and 38/159 on the critical situation of food and agriculture in Africa, both of 19 December 1983, as well as all other relevant resolutions in the field of food and agriculture, and calls for their immediate and effective implementation;

"2. Welcomes the conclusions and recommendations of the World Food Council at its tenth ministerial session; 5/

"3. Welcomes the ninth annual report of the Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes; 6/

"4. Urges, on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the World Food Conference, the international community to intensify concerted efforts for the fulfilment of its commitment to eliminate hunger and malnutrition as soon as possible, and definitely by the end of the present century;

"5. Reaffirms that the right to food is a universal human right and that food should not be used as an instrument of political pressure;

3/ Report of the World Food Conference, Rome, 5-16 November 1974 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.75.II.A.3), chap. I.

4/ See Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Report of the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, Rome, 12-20 July 1979 (WCARRD/RPEP), part one.

5/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 19 (A/39/19), part one.

6/ WFP/CFA: 17/19; transmitted to the Economic and Social Council as document E/1984/117.

"6. Reaffirms that urgent action should be taken to increase food production, which is one of the most important elements in meeting the food needs of the developing countries, and that national food strategies, plans and programmes should play a central role in the process of establishing priorities, in co-ordinating national and international funding and in the application of technology, in order to promote food production and increase the national self-reliance of the developing countries;

"7. Calls upon the international community to accord greater support towards realization of the enlarged and integrated concept of world food security;

"8. Calls upon the international community to support the efforts of agricultural-deficit developing countries in their plans and programmes to attain self-sufficiency in food and agricultural production;

"9. Stresses that significant advances in food and agricultural research and technology and their application in developing countries need to be sustained, improved and made more widespread to encompass all of those countries; in this context, the needs of the African countries and the least developed countries should be given special attention;

"10. Emphasizes the need for reversing the declining trend in aid commitments to food and agriculture and calls upon the international community, particularly the developed countries, to increase the flow of resources to adequate levels, through all channels, in support of programmes and policies for increasing food production and raising nutritional standards in the developing countries, particularly in Africa and the least developed countries, keeping in view the proposal made at the tenth session of the World Food Council for increased assistance for food and agriculture, for the five years beginning with 1986, of about \$US 1 billion annually above currently agreed commitments, to be channelled through existing agencies and programmes; 7/

"11. Urges all developed countries to fulfil their pledges under the first replenishment of the International Fund for Agricultural Development and to announce the level of their contributions for the second replenishment on a priority basis, to enable the Fund to continue its effective contribution at an adequate level;

"12. Further urges the developed countries to provide supplementary financing for the seventh replenishment of the International Development Association in order to cover the shortfall and enable the Association to increase its assistance to developing countries, particularly in the development of food and agriculture;

"13. Calls upon developed countries to ensure achievement of the agreed target for regular resources of the World Food Programme of \$US 1.35 billion for the biennium 1985-1986;

"14. Emphasizes the need for effective implementation of the 1980 Food Aid Convention, which has been extended until 30 June 1986;

"15. Requests an appropriate review as soon as possible, aimed at liberalization of the conditions for use of the food-financing facility of the International Monetary Fund by developing countries;

"16. Considers that improvement of the conditions of agricultural groups particularly affected by the small size of holdings or other constraints is critical for ameliorating their conditions;

"17. Emphasizes the role of farm women as part of the rural family, calls for more policy attention to the role of women in relation to food systems, and stresses the need to involve women in the formulation and implementation of national food strategies, plans and programmes;

"18. Urges the international community to respond immediately and adequately to the initiative of the Secretary-General in favour of the African countries threatened by severe food shortages by continuing and increasing emergency food and technical assistance to those countries, as well as by augmenting all forms of assistance towards rehabilitation of their food and agricultural sectors;

"19. Expresses the urgent need for developed countries to refrain from imposing any new tariff or non-tariff barriers to the import of agricultural and agro-based products from developing countries and progressively to improve the access of such products to their markets and avoid the disruption of emerging trade opportunities and existing trade; developed countries shall refrain from the use of export subsidies and similar measures which hamper the agricultural trade of developing countries;

"20. Stresses, inter alia, that in order to attain an overall solution of food and agriculture problems, efforts should be made to resolve the serious financial problems in general, and liquidity problems in particular, confronting the developing countries, which are caused to a large degree by the impact of the increases in interest rates;

"21. Also stresses the need for strengthening subregional, regional and interregional co-operation for the promotion of food security and the development of agriculture in developing countries and, in this context, calls upon the relevant entities of the United Nations system to accord priority support to economic and technical co-operation among developing countries in food and agriculture;

"22. Welcomes the report of the FAO World Conference on Fisheries Management and Development, 8/ invites all countries and concerned international organizations to implement the decisions contained therein, and requests the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations to evolve effective measures for monitoring the progress of follow-up action on the decisions of that Conference;

"23. Commends the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations for its comprehensive and systematic review of the progress in agrarian reform and rural development in the context of the implementation of the Programme of Action as adopted by the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development and looks forward to a similar review in four years' time."

8. At the 56th meeting, on 6 December, the Committee had before it a draft resolution (A/C.2/39/L.118) entitled "Food and agricultural problems", submitted by Mr. Enrique de la Torre, Vice-Chairman of the Committee, on the basis of informal consultations held on draft resolution A/C.2/39/L.10.

9. At the same meeting, the representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics orally proposed to amend draft resolution A/C.2/39/L.118 by inserting "disarmament" after the words "peace and security", in operative paragraph 5.

10. After statements by the representatives of France and the United States of America, as well as by the Vice-Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Enrique de la Torre, the representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics stated that he would not insist on action by the Committee on his proposed oral amendment.

11. The Committee then adopted draft resolution A/C.2/39/L.118 (see para. 14, draft resolution II).

12. In the light of the adoption of draft resolution A/C.2/39/L.118, draft resolution A/C.2/39/L.10 was withdrawn by its sponsors.

13. Statements were made by the representatives of the United States of America, Canada, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and Ireland (on behalf of the States members of the European Community). The observer for the European Community also made a statement.

8/ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Report of the FAO World Conference on Fisheries Management and Development, Rome, 27 June-6 July 1984 (Rome, 1984); transmitted to the members of the General Assembly by a note of the Secretariat (A/C.2/39/6).

III. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SECOND COMMITTEE

14. The Second Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolutions:

DRAFT RESOLUTION I

Critical situation of food and agriculture in Africa

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 3201 (S-VI) and 3202 (S-VI) of 1 May 1974, containing the Declaration and the Programme of Action on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order, 3281 (XXIX) of 12 December 1974, containing the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States, and 3362 (S-VII) of 16 September 1975 on development and international economic co-operation,

Gravely concerned at the dramatic deterioration in African food and agricultural production, as a result of which there has been an alarming increase in the number of people exposed to hunger, malnutrition and even starvation,

Recognizing the special emphasis placed upon food and agriculture and the undertaking and resolve of Africa to devote its scarce resources on a priority basis to the rehabilitation of food and agricultural production as reflected in and in accordance with the Lagos Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Monrovia Strategy for the Economic Development of Africa, 9/

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General on the critical situation of food and agriculture in Africa, 10/

Noting the exacerbation of Africa's food and agricultural crisis by the adverse impact of prolonged drought and accelerating desertification and moreover, that the African countries have been hit by adverse external forces, including falling trade earnings resulting from the global economic recession, the worsening terms of trade and the debt crisis,

Convinced that the African food and agricultural crisis has a long genesis and has been rendered more acute by natural factors, such as poor rainfall, widespread bush fires, unusually severe crop infestation, and epidemics of plant and animal diseases,

Welcoming the adoption by the Thirteenth FAO Regional Conference for Africa, held at Harare in July 1984, of the Harare Declaration of African Ministers for Agriculture and Rural Development on the food crisis in Africa,

9/ A/S-11/14, annex I.

10/ A/39/270-E/1984/97.

1. Reaffirms its resolution 38/159 of 19 December 1983, as well as all other relevant resolutions on the critical situation of food and agriculture in Africa, and calls for their immediate and effective implementation;
2. Welcomes the conclusions and recommendations of the World Food Council at its tenth ministerial session, held at Addis Ababa from 11 to 15 June 1984, in particular those relating to the African region; 11/
3. Notes with appreciation the encouraging response by the international community to the various appeals made for the alleviation of the present critical food supply situation in Africa;
4. Welcomes the unanimous adoption by the Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes on 8 November 1984 of a resolution on the food crisis in Africa, and calls for its full and prompt implementation;
5. Urges the international community, in view of the continued critical food supply situation in a large number of African countries, to sustain and increase its efforts to provide the additional food aid required on an emergency basis, as well as technical and other forms of assistance needed in that connection;
6. Urges the international community also to respond generously to the urgent need for agricultural inputs for the rehabilitation of agriculture and animal husbandry;
7. Calls upon the international community to continue to support efforts undertaken by African countries at the national, subregional and regional levels to increase food production through, inter alia, the provision, on a priority and long-term basis, of additional financial and technical assistance to Africa by organizations of the United Nations system, such as the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the United Nations Development Programme and other organizations involved in the financing of agricultural development, and through an increase in lending by the World Bank to the agricultural sector in Africa;
8. Takes note of the efforts already undertaken by African countries in the field of food and the formulation of agricultural policies, and encourages them to pursue and strengthen these efforts, especially in the definition and implementation of national food strategies, plans and programmes;
9. Requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fortieth session, through the Economic and Social Council at its second regular session of 1985, a progress report on the implementation of the present resolution, with particular emphasis on the role and activities of the United Nations system in assisting the African countries towards the solution of their food and agricultural problems.

11/ See Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 19 (A/39/19), part one.

DRAFT RESOLUTION II

Food and agricultural problems

The General Assembly,

Recalling the Declaration and the Programme of Action on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order, contained in its resolutions 3201 (S-VI) and 3202 (S-VI) of 1 May 1974, the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States, contained in its resolution 3281 (XXIX) of 12 December 1974, its resolution 3362 (S-VII) of 16 September 1975 on development and international economic co-operation, and the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade, contained in the annex to its resolution 35/56 of 5 December 1980,

Stressing the imperative need to keep food and agriculture issues at the centre of global attention,

Having considered the grave situation of food and agriculture in many developing countries, especially the critical and deteriorating situation in Africa, further exacerbated by prolonged drought and accelerating desertification, and the persistent problem of food shortages in food-deficit developing countries, particularly the least developed countries,

Recognizing that, although the overall aggregate world food supply situation has steadily improved over the past decade, the numbers of hungry and malnourished are increasing and the risks of food insecurity are now greater for many developing countries, and that the situation thus demands additional efforts,

Reaffirming that food and agriculture problems in developing countries should be considered in a comprehensive manner in their different dimensions, as well as in their immediate short-term and long-term perspectives,

Reaffirming the Universal Declaration on the Eradication of Hunger and Malnutrition, adopted ten years ago by the World Food Conference, 12/ and the Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, 13/

12/ Report of the World Food Conference, Rome, 5-16 November 1974 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.75.II.A.3), chap. I.

13/ See Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Report of the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, Rome, 12-20 July 1979 (WCARRD/REP), part one.

1. Reaffirms its resolutions 38/158 of 19 December 1983 on food problems and 38/159 of 19 December 1983 on the critical situation of food and agriculture in Africa, as well as all other relevant resolutions concerning food and agriculture, and calls for their immediate and effective implementation;
2. Welcomes the conclusions and recommendations of the World Food Council at its tenth ministerial session; 14/
3. Welcomes the ninth annual report of the Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes; 15/
4. Urges, on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the World Food Conference, the international community to rededicate itself to the objective of that Conference and intensify concerted efforts for the fulfilment of its commitment to eliminate hunger and malnutrition as soon as possible, and definitely by the end of the present century, and in this regard, calls upon Governments and international organizations to give particular attention to the measures agreed to by the World Food Council at its tenth ministerial session as the major tasks for achieving the objectives of that Conference;
5. Reaffirms that the maintenance of peace and security and the strengthening of international co-operation in food and agriculture are important for improved economic conditions and enhanced food security;
6. Reaffirms that the right to food is a universal human right which should be guaranteed to all people, and, in that context, believes in the general principle that food should not be used as an instrument of political pressure;
7. Reaffirms that urgent action should be taken to increase food production, which is one of the most important elements in meeting the food needs of the developing countries, and that, in this regard, sustained efforts at the national, regional and international levels should be pursued and that the national food strategies, plans and programmes of developing countries should play a central role in the process of establishing priorities, in co-ordinating national and international funding and in the application of technology, in order to promote food production and increase the national self-reliance of the developing countries;
8. Calls upon the international community to support the efforts of the developing countries facing constraints in the development of their food and agricultural production to enable them to achieve self-reliance;

14/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 19 (A/39/19), part one.

15/ WFP/CFA: 17/19, transmitted to the Economic and Social Council as document E/1984/117.

9. Stresses that measures taken by developed countries to reduce future food and agricultural production should not adversely affect the food problems faced by developing countries;

10. Calls upon the international community to accord greater support towards realization of the enlarged and integrated concept of world food security, focusing on the adequacy of food supplies and production, stability of food supplies and markets, and security of access to supplies, as defined by the Committee on World Food Security of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations at its eighth session;

11. Stresses that significant advances in food and agricultural research and technology and their application in developing countries need to be sustained, improved and made more widespread to encompass all of those countries; in this context, the needs of the African countries and the least developed countries should be given special attention;

12. Emphasizes the need to reverse any declining trends in aid commitments to food and agriculture and calls upon the international community, particularly the developed countries, to increase the flow of resources to adequate levels, through all channels, in support of programmes and policies for increasing food and agricultural production and raising nutritional standards in the developing countries, particularly in Africa and the least developed countries, keeping in view the proposal of the Executive Director of the World Food Council made at the tenth session of the Council for increases of at least \$5 billion in external resources over five years, starting in 1986, in roughly equal proportions for both capital and programme assistance, to be channelled through existing agencies and programmes; 16/

13. Stresses the need for the successful completion of the first replenishment of the International Fund for Agricultural Development, and urges all countries concerned, bearing in mind the particular contribution of the developed countries, to reach agreement on a priority basis for the second replenishment, in order to enable the Fund to continue its effective contribution at an adequate level;

14. Further urges developed countries to provide supplementary financing for the seventh replenishment of the International Development Association in order to cover the shortfall and enable the Association to increase its assistance to developing countries, particularly in the development of food and agriculture;

15. Further stresses the need to ensure achievement of the agreed target for regular resources of the World Food Programme of \$1.35 billion for the biennium 1985-1986;

16/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 19 (A/39/19), part one, para. 57.

16. Emphasizes the need for effective implementation of the 1980 Food Aid Convention, which has been extended until 30 June 1986;

17. Expresses deep concern that the food-financing facility of the International Monetary Fund has been used only on limited occasions since its establishment and, in this regard, looks forward to the upcoming review of the facility by the Fund;

18. Considers that improvement of the conditions of farmer groups particularly affected by the small size of holdings or other constraints is critical;

19. Emphasizes the role of women as part of the rural family, calls for more policy attention to the role of women in relation to food systems, and stresses the need to involve women in the formulation, implementation and follow-up of national food strategies, plans and projects;

20. Urges the international community to respond immediately, adequately and in a concerted manner to the initiative of the Secretary-General and the appeal of the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in favour of the African countries threatened by severe food shortages by continuing and increasing emergency food and technical assistance to those countries, as well as by augmenting all forms of assistance towards rehabilitation of their food and agricultural sectors;

21. Notes that the proliferation of import restrictions and increasing export subsidization are seen to have contributed to international market instability and to growing resource allocation distortions in developed and developing countries, that all countries should demonstrate the requisite political will by refraining from creating tariff obstacles to agricultural imports, especially those from developing countries, and that exporting countries should endeavour to limit export subsidies and analogous practices which might hinder trade, especially that of developing countries;

22. Stresses, inter alia, that in order to attain an overall solution of food and agricultural problems, efforts should be made to resolve the serious financial problems in general, and liquidity problems in particular, confronting the developing countries, which are caused to a large degree by the impact of the increases in interest rates;

23. Reaffirms the commitment to sustained and increased development assistance in the food sector, with a strengthened role for multilateral co-operation and improved international assistance co-ordination;

24. Stresses the need for strengthening subregional, regional and interregional co-operation for the promotion of food security and the development of agriculture in developing countries and, in this context, calls upon the relevant entities of the United Nations system to accord priority support to economic and technical co-operation among developing countries in food and agriculture;

25. Welcomes the comprehensive and systematic review of the progress in agrarian reform and rural development carried out by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in the context of the implementation of the Programme of Action as adopted by the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development and looks forward to a similar review in four years.
