

for the monetary authorities of each country. In connexion with subparagraph (b) of that paragraph, he expressed the view that it would be advisable not to refer to the gradual reduction of the role of gold.

#### *Organization of work*

18. Mr. HEMANS (United Kingdom), supported by Mr. ARVESEN (Norway), Mr. SANDERS (United States of America) and Mr. CAVAGLIERI (Italy), proposed that the draft resolutions under consideration, and all other texts relating to agenda item 12, should be referred to an informal consultation group for final drafting, with a view to achieving a consensus. His proposal was aimed at overcoming the difficulties which sometimes arose in considering such draft resolutions. His delegation agreed with the basic text of draft resolution A/C.2/L.1355 and attached importance to the role of the public sector in the national economy.

19. Mr. HACHANI (Tunisia) said that he had been considering submitting an amendment to draft resolution A/C.2/L.1355. However, in view of the United Kingdom delegation's proposal, he would make his own proposal in the informal consultations, in which he wished to participate.

*The meeting was suspended at 3.50 p.m. and resumed at 4.05 p.m.*

20. Mr. AL-EBRAHIM (Kuwait) said that he could agree to the United Kingdom proposal, provided that a definite date was set for further consideration of all the draft resolutions relating to item 12.

21. Mr. MURIN (Czechoslovakia) requested the representative of the United Kingdom to clarify his reasons for requesting that consideration of the draft resolutions in question should be postponed.

22. Mr. UDOVENKO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) concurred with that request. The draft resolutions had been under consideration for a month and, while he appreciated the desirability of adopting them by consensus, he believed that there had already been enough consultations about them.

23. Mr. HEMANS (United Kingdom) said that the system of consultations and negotiations had achieved excellent results at past sessions and should be adopted as semi-official practice. He agreed with the delegation of Kuwait that a definite date should be set for final consideration of the draft resolutions.

24. The CHAIRMAN suggested that consideration of the draft resolutions relating to item 12 should be deferred until Tuesday, 19 November. If there was no objection, he would take it that the Committee agreed to that suggestion.

*It was so decided.*

25. The CHAIRMAN announced that Gabon had become a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.2/L.1373, that Bangladesh, Gabon, the Ivory Coast, Mali, Nepal and Paraguay had become sponsors of draft resolution A/C.2/L.1374, and that Greece had become a sponsor of draft resolutions A/C.2/L.1375 and A/C.2/L.1376.

*The meeting rose at 4.35 p.m.*

## 1632nd meeting

Monday, 18 November 1974, at 10.40 a.m.

*Chairman:* Mr. Jihad KARAM (Iraq).

A/C.2/SR.1632

#### *Tribute to the memory of*

*H.E. Mr. Erskine Hamilton Childers, President of Ireland*

1. The CHAIRMAN, speaking on behalf of the members of the Committee, expressed the heartfelt condolences of the Committee to the Government and people of Ireland on the occasion of the death of their President.

*On the proposal of the Chairman, the members of the Committee observed a minute of silence.*

2. Mr. O'RIORDAN (Ireland) thanked the Chairman and the members of the Committee for their condolences, which he would transmit to the Irish people and to the family of Mr. Childers.

#### AGENDA ITEM 60

Assistance in cases of natural disaster and other disaster situations (*continued*)\* (A/9603, chap. III, sect. B and chap. VI, sect. E):

- (a) Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator: report of the Secretary-General (A/9637);
- (b) Aid to the Sudano-Sahelian populations threatened with famine: report of the Secretary-General (A/9733, A/9737, A/C.2/L.1377 and 1380)

3. Mr. MORSE (Under-Secretary-General for Political and General Assembly Affairs), in his introductory statement,

\* Resumed from the 1624th meeting.

informed the Committee of the over-all situation in the Sahel and the current and planned activities of the Special Sahelian Office regarding medium-term and long-term recovery plans.

4. The rainy season which had just ended had been more satisfactory than in recent years and had brought some relief to the populations. However, short-term assistance efforts should not be slackened. The 1974 crop would not be sufficient to meet the food needs of the region and emergency operations would have to be maintained until October 1975.

5. The report of the Secretary-General (A/9737), which was before the Committee, summarized the medium-term and long-term measures taken by the United Nations system. It was an over-all report which should be read in conjunction with the two reports submitted by the Secretary-General to the Economic and Social Council at its fifty-sixth<sup>1</sup> and fifty-seventh<sup>2</sup> sessions and in the light of the resolutions adopted by the Council at those sessions (resolutions 1834 (LVI) and 1874 (LVII)).

6. In that connexion, he wished to inform the Committee of the developments since the fifty-seventh session of the Council, held in July 1974. The Council had assigned a series of tasks to the Special Sahelian Office which he directed. The first had been to undertake an in-depth examination of the economic situation in the Sudano-Sahelian region, and he was happy to state that that study had been completed; the second task had been to determine how the United Nations system could provide concrete assistance in meeting the medium-term and long-term needs of the countries in the Sudano-Sahelian region. The work of the Special Sahelian Office on that subject had also been completed and its report would be issued within a fortnight. The Special Sahelian Office had consulted the various organizations and programmes of the United Nations system in order to determine which activities they would be prepared to undertake, within the limits of available financial resources, and it had stressed the importance of selecting projects that were among those which had been approved at Ouagadougou on 11 and 12 September 1973 at the Conference of the Heads of State of the six countries in the Sudano-Sahelian region affected by the drought.<sup>3</sup> The projects which the United Nations system proposed to carry out would involve expenditure in excess of \$150 million. In the coming months, the Special Sahelian Office must therefore mobilize the necessary financial resources to ensure the success of the recovery operations.

7. The third task of the Special Sahelian Office had been to update the information on the projects approved at Ouagadougou in order to keep the international community abreast of developments. The latest review showed that between 1974 and 1983 a sum of \$800 million would be needed for the execution of national and regional projects. That figure might seem high, but it was modest in relation to needs.

8. Once the preparatory work and studies had been completed, the Special Sahelian Office had been able to place greater emphasis on on-the-spot execution, co-ordination and monitoring of the activities of the organizations of the United Nations system in the Sudano-Sahelian region.

9. In accordance with the recommendations of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, the Special Sahelian Office had strengthened its relations with the Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel by establishing, at Ouagadougou, the United Nations Sahelian Office, whose Director and staff had already begun to work closely with the Chairman of the Inter-State Committee. That co-operation was proving invaluable with regard to the identification of priorities and projects, the securing of the required financial resources and the effective co-ordination of all United Nations recovery and rehabilitation activities.

10. In order to be valid, any recovery and rehabilitation programme should have three basic objectives. First, measures should be taken to ensure that similar emergencies could be met more effectively in the future; that would require certain precautionary measures such as ensuring storage facilities for emergency stocks and organizing adequate transport facilities. Secondly, the countries of the region should be made self-sufficient in food staples. Thirdly, there should be an acceleration of the economic and social development of the developing countries, particularly the least developed among them. In the third case, the long-term effort would require a co-ordinated and coherent planning approach in order to achieve full and efficient utilization of available resources, a gradual restructuring and transformation of the economies, by diversifying them, the expansion of food production, and, more generally, the raising of agricultural productivity.

11. In order to achieve those objectives, a number of problems must first be solved, among which were land use and water resources management. That would require a pattern of land use which took into account the constraints arising from soil, climate and other ecological conditions. Similar considerations applied to water resources management. The fact that the crisis in the Sudano-Sahelian region had been exacerbated by a persistent drought showed that better use must be made of rainfall and the supply of ground water and rivers.

12. There should also be an attempt to strengthen the interdependence between livestock breeders and sedentary farmers in order to promote the development of mixed agriculture. However, to achieve that result, pricing policies for agriculture would have to be established and dependable markets ensured.

13. It appeared that the current recovery and rehabilitation efforts undertaken in the Sahel were mainly directed towards integrated agriculture—including animal husbandry, crop production and forestry—working in harmony with the fragile ecological system of the Sahel, and with a corresponding industrial system focusing on processing raw agricultural produce and supplying industrial raw materials and products for the activities of the rural population. That co-ordinated development of the agricultural and industrial

<sup>1</sup> E/5457.

<sup>2</sup> E/5554 and Corr.1.

<sup>3</sup> See A/9178, annexes.

sectors would help to create employment opportunities in the rural sector, which would lead to investments in agricultural producer goods and in infrastructure and would thus help to provide the local population with more adequate social services such as rural health care and education. Thus, the socio-economic well-being of the rural population would be improved, while the constraints that had prevented the agricultural sector from realizing its maximum yield would be slowly overcome.

14. That concept appeared very clearly from the new development plans of the countries concerned, particularly among the projects proposed by the Permanent Inter-State Committee. An analysis of all the projects of the Committee showed that 80 per cent of the resources allocated to such projects would go to the development of agricultural production in the rural areas, from which four fifths of the population earned their livelihood. Since the projects in question had been chosen by the countries themselves, it was clear how much importance they attached to agricultural production, which they now made the corner-stone of their development, including industrialization.

15. He none the less emphasized in that connexion that all United Nations recovery and rehabilitation activities were being developed and implemented with the full and unconditional authority of the Governments of the Sudano-Sahelian countries. In fact, the over-all involvement of the United Nations in the recovery and rehabilitation programme rested on three basic principles. First, all programmes and projects must be determined by the Governments concerned and/or by the Permanent Inter-State Committee; while the United Nations might assist in the identification of such programmes and projects, they must be proposed by the countries themselves and fully reflect their needs. Secondly, the practical measures that the United Nations might be called upon to take as part of its involvement in the programme must be in harmony with the recovery and rehabilitation objectives of the Permanent Inter-State Committee and its member States. Thirdly, any action taken must be within the special competence of the specialized agencies, organizations and programmes of the United Nations system.

16. Those principles would certainly help to strengthen further the ties between the Permanent Inter-State Committee and the United Nations system and to ensure the success of the latter's contribution to the recovery and rehabilitation of the Sudano-Sahelian area. The United Nations system would do its best to assist the Permanent Inter-State Committee and the Governments of its member countries, whose own initiatives had won the respect of the international community. Since financial resources were essential in order to complete the work in hand, he would redouble his efforts to help secure the necessary funds. He had no doubt that donors would be responsive to the needs of a region which had been so severely affected.

17. Mr. DIALLO (Upper Volta) thanked the Under-Secretary-General for his report on the situation in the Sahel, and welcomed the appointment of Mr. Galal Magdi as Director of the United Nations Sahelian Office at Ouagadougou, which would further strengthen co-ordination and co-operation between the international community and the Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel.

18. He was satisfied with the activities of the Special Sahelian Office, which had made the international community aware of the exact nature of the problems confronting the countries of the region. He also thanked FAO, whose Office for the Sahelian Relief Operation (OSRO) had also provided invaluable assistance to the countries of the region. As the Under-Secretary-General had said, the heavy rainfall in the Sudano-Sahelian area gave room for some optimism concerning the 1974 harvest; however, there was nothing to suggest that the harvest could meet the needs of the population in that region: that would not be known until the report of the visiting mission was available. If, after all, the harvest proved inadequate, it was to be hoped that the international community would do what was required to make up the shortfall.

19. At the current stage of scientific knowledge, it was practically impossible to forecast the amount of precipitation; that was why an effort must be made to improve pluviometric forecasting methods. A more detailed study should also be made of the problems of the creeping desert and drought, particularly since drought was a phenomenon affecting almost every area in the world.

20. Since the twenty-eighth session of the General Assembly, a number of studies had been undertaken to determine the medium-term and long-term measures required in the drought-prone regions in order to make them less dependent on the climate, to speed up their agricultural production and to rationalize the use of their water resources.

21. As one FAO mission had shown, the real solution lay in a large-scale integrated approach, since periodic and sectoral efforts were merely palliatives.

22. He regretted that the international community, in particular the developed countries, had made no firm commitment to fund medium-term and long-term projects. He hoped that the rich countries would assist the countries of the Sahel to achieve the objectives they had set themselves, otherwise they would always be at the mercy of the climate.

23. He introduced draft resolution A/C.2/L.1377 on behalf of the sponsors, adding that Gabon, Nigeria, Sri Lanka, the United Arab Emirates, the United Republic of Tanzania and Yugoslavia had joined as sponsors.

24. After commenting briefly on the preamble and the beginning of the operative part of the draft resolution, he drew attention to paragraph 3, which concerned the establishment of a research institute for the arid Sahelian zone, a project to which the countries of the regions attached great importance. Among other tasks, the institute could carry out essential research, develop projects and ensure their implementation, and also draw up an inventory of ongoing research of interest to the countries of the Sahel. In paragraph 4, the sponsors recommended the establishment of a United Nations information centre at Ouagadougou, the task of which would be to keep the international community informed of the progress of work and current needs, in order to encourage international assistance. With reference to paragraph 5, it was gratifying to note that recently some developed countries and one developing country—Iran—had shown their practical support for the countries of the Sudano-Sahelian region.

25. In conclusion, he hoped that the Committee would adopt draft resolution A/C.2/L.1377. That would be a first step towards mobilizing the assistance so greatly needed by the countries of the Sahel for the reconstruction of their economies and the acquisitions of more solid structures for the future. It was important to remember that almost all the countries of the Sudano-Sahelian region were in the category of the least developed countries, that the majority of them were land-locked, and that they were also among the countries most seriously affected by the current economic crisis.

26. Mr. O'RIORDAN (Ireland) said that the Special Sahelian Office had earned the gratitude of the Irish Government by helping it to channel its assistance to the countries of the Sudano-Sahelian region. Ireland had made donations of \$184,000 for two projects in the Upper Volta, \$53,000 to the Special Sahelian Office and \$300,000 to UNICEF earmarked for aid to the countries in the Sudano-Sahelian region. In addition, Ireland contributed to the relief efforts of EEC. His delegation would study draft resolution A/C.2/L.1377 from the standpoint that the international community should co-ordinate its efforts to assist the drought-stricken countries.

27. Mr. STIEPEL (Federal Republic of Germany) said that his delegation had been gratified to note that the situation in the Sudano-Sahelian region had improved somewhat in 1974 owing to a greater rainfall than in the preceding years. Nevertheless, the drought-stricken countries were still in need of massive international assistance, particularly food aid. However, his delegation shared the opinion of the Secretary-General that short-term measures should be phased out during 1975. With regard to medium-term and long-term recovery and reconstruction programmes, he believed that one of the first things to be done was to strike the right balance between population density and the resources of the region. A significant attempt should be made to modernize agriculture and to increase its productivity, as well as to constitute water and food stocks.

28. The contributions of the Federal Republic of Germany to bilateral and multilateral assistance to the countries of the Sudano-Sahelian region would amount to DM 322.5 million, or \$128 million, for 1974. The amount planned for 1975 was DM 271 million, or \$104 million.

29. He generally endorsed the measures proposed in draft resolution A/C.2/L.1377 but wondered whether it might not be better for the United Nations information centre mentioned in paragraph 4 to be part of the United Nations Sahelian Office at Ouagadougou instead of being a separate entity. He would like to hear the opinion of Mr. Morse on that subject.

30. Miss COURSON (France) said that the programmes of assistance to the countries of the Sudano-Sahelian region had taken into account both the available data and the

priorities of the affected countries themselves. The major role in selecting measures and programmes fell to the Permanent Inter-State Committee, as had been intended in Economic and Social Council resolution 1874 (LVII) which had been sponsored by France. In conclusion, she announced that France had joined in sponsoring draft resolution A/C.2/L.1377.

31. Mr. WRIGSTAD (Sweden) favoured the establishment at Ouagadougou of a co-ordinating office of the Special Sahelian Office. His delegation endorsed the general lines of the draft resolution under consideration, although, in its opinion, it did not give the United Nations a large enough role in co-ordinating medium-term and long-term activities. It would have been preferable for the draft resolution to have been based on the idea contained in paragraph 6 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1874 (LVII).

32. Mr. BROAD (United Kingdom) said that, as had become clear when the nature of the problems had been revealed, it had not been possible to redress quickly the damage caused by the drought in the Sudano-Sahelian region. The international community should therefore not let up in its efforts, and the United Kingdom for its part intended to continue its assistance to the countries of the region. Without going into detail, he said that the United Kingdom had already allocated £ 6 million, or \$16 million, for such assistance.

33. His delegation was particularly concerned over the situation of persons in the refugee camps set up three years earlier. The refugees managed to survive only by virtue of large-scale food assistance from the international community. That situation must not be allowed to become a permanent one. It would therefore be advisable to encourage the refugees to leave the camps and to return to their previous way of life.

34. His delegation supported draft resolution A/C.2/L.1377.

35. Mr. DIAW (Mali) thanked Mr. Morse for his unrelenting efforts to ensure constant and growing support for the drought-stricken countries from the international community. His delegation considered draft resolution A/C.2/L.1377 to be extremely important.

36. The CHAIRMAN announced that Brazil and Uganda had become sponsors of draft resolution A/C.2/L.1377.

37. Mr. ATANGANA (United Republic of Cameroon) welcomed the establishment of a United Nations co-ordinating office for the Sahel at Ougadougou and hoped that the international community would now be in a better position to intensify its efforts to promote the recovery of the countries of the region.

*The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.*