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New York

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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 24th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. GHEZAL (Tunisia)

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The meeting was called to order at 6 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 82: DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION (continued) (A/44/3, A/44/84, A/44/139, A/44/187, A/44/188, A/44/235, A/44/254, A/44/260, A/44/355, A/44/409 and Corr.1, A/44/467, A/44/499, A/44/598 and A/44/617)

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- (g) DESERTIFICATION AND DROUGHT (continued) (A/44/25, A/44/296 and A/44/351; DP/1989/50)
- (j) ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION OF EXTRATERRITORIAL SPACES FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS (continued) (A/44/193)

AGENDA ITEM 85: PROTECTION OF GLOBAL CLIMATE FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS OF MANKIND (continued) (A/44/260, A/44/264, A/44/340, A/44/394, A/44/409 and Corr.1, A/44/463, A/44/477 and A/44/484; A/C.2/44/2)

1. Dame Ann HERCUS (New Zealand) said that on 21 October 1989, at Langkawi, Malaysia, the Heads of Government of the 49 member States of the Commonwealth had adopted a declaration on the environment in which they pledged themselves to a comprehensive programme of action on environment and development. Her delegation wished to refer to three of its key issues: drift-net fishing and its environmental impact, ozone depletion and institutional reform.
2. Regarding drift-net fishing, she said that at Langkawi the Commonwealth Heads of Government had committed themselves to discouraging and restricting non-sustainable fishing practices and to seeking to ban tangle-net and pelagic drift-net fishing. New Zealand had first-hand experience of the impact of that fishing method and was opposed to its practice wherever it took place. Although pelagic drift-net fishing took place outside the territorial waters of the States concerned, generally developing countries which used fishing methods much less dangerous to fish stocks, it was highly prejudicial to them. Large-scale pelagic drift-nets, which could be as long as 55 km, entangled all living marine resources that came in contact with them, so that together with the targeted fish species were caught other fish types, marine mammals, sea-birds and turtles. In particular, that type of net was a threat to the sustainability of key fish species such as the albacore and skipjack tuna. Their use also had a direct impact on the viability of other fishing methods, such as trolling and long-lining, which directly targeted the same fish stocks. For many developing countries such fishing activities represented a major source of revenue. For that reason, the leaders of the countries constituting the South Pacific Forum had committed themselves at their annual meeting at Tarawa in Kiribati in July 1989 to calling for a ban on large-scale pelagic drift-net fishing in the South Pacific region. In November 1989, Wellington (New Zealand) would be the venue for a meeting of South

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(Dame Ann Hercus, New Zealand)

Pacific countries and territories which would seek to conclude a Convention banning large-scale pelagic driftnetting from their exclusive economic zones and by their nationals. The meeting would also be an opportunity to begin to formulate a management régime for albacore tuna in the region. New Zealand's aim was to agree on fishing policies which would ensure the continued viability of fish stocks and enable all interested parties to participate over time in economically and environmentally sustainable activity.

3. Turning to the question of the depletion of the ozone layer, she expressed the concern awakened in her country by the recent news that the so-called "Antarctic ozone-layer hole" was far larger than previously expected. The effects of the buildup of chlorine in the stratosphere, primarily through the continuing use of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), were much more dramatic than previously thought. New Zealand was totally committed to international efforts to reduce the use of those substances and to bring about their total elimination within the foreseeable future, and greatly appreciated the contribution of the United Nations system to achieving an international consensus on a matter of such priority interest. In that connection, she appealed to all States to support the call in the Langkawi Declaration for the reduction and eventual phasing-out of substances that depleted the ozone layer.

4. Regarding institutional reform, she said that New Zealand had always been, and remained, highly appreciative of the efforts of the United Nations system in the field of the environment, both through UNEP and through WMO, IMO, FAO and all the organs and specialized bodies of the system. However, it believed that the time had come to redefine the machinery for action in that field. Accordingly, the Prime Minister of New Zealand, in addressing the General Assembly, had stressed the desirability of including in the agenda of the 1992 conference on environment and development an item on the effectiveness of current United Nations bodies and raised the possibility of a new institutional link in that field. It was becoming increasingly clear that new and innovative international agreements were required, together with the resources needed for their implementation. The time had come to pass from talk to action. As the Prime Minister of New Zealand had said, the structures of the United Nations must be developed: to meet the needs of humanity in the course of the next century, the Organization must be ready to change itself.

5. Mr. KAKOURIS (Cyprus) said that the time had come to take global co-ordinated measures to protect the environment, as time was very much of the essence in that area. He welcomed the growing consensus in the international community regarding the serious nature of the issue of the environment and its deterioration, which involved the survival of the planet. Major steps in that connection had been General Assembly resolution 43/196, which called for the convening of a United Nations conference on environment and development, and UNEP Governing Council decision 15/3. He thanked the delegation of Brazil for its offer to host the 1992 conference and stressed that the available time before the conference must be used in a constructive manner so that its objective could be clearly defined.

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(Mr. Kakouris, Cyprus)

6. Two years earlier the General Assembly had adopted resolutions 42/186 on the Environmental Perspective to the Year 2000 and Beyond, and 42/187, on the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development; those resolutions had marked the beginning of a new era in which the United Nations had drawn attention to the undeniable linkage between the environment and development and had stated clearly that sustainable development must become the central guiding principle in seeking a solution to environmental problems. Sustainable development could not, however, be achieved, particularly in the developing countries, without protecting the environment just as environmental protection was not possible without achieving sustainable development. International efforts were needed to solve the economic problems that hindered the development of those countries.

7. It was the responsibility of all to protect the environment, but, as the Secretary-General had pointed out, the industrialized countries had a special obligation to check and mitigate the damage caused to the global environment and to assist the developing countries. His delegation hoped that the meeting of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe currently taking place at Sofia would adopt necessary measures to solve the major environmental problems in the industrialized countries.

8. The Government of Cyprus attached great importance to the issue of illegal trafficking and dumping of toxic and hazardous wastes, and considered that it was essential to correct the situation, which had reached unacceptable proportions. The Secretary-General's report (A/44/362) had identified that the movement of those substances was from the industrialized countries to the developing countries. Cyprus welcomed the attention that was being given to the problem and stressed the importance of the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal. Cyprus considered that the exportation of such wastes should take place only after the prior written consent of the country of final destination and that of the transit countries had been obtained, as stipulated in the Basel Convention. The United Nations system had an important role to play in combating the environmental degradation which threatened survival. It could contribute significantly towards the elaboration of an integrated environmental policy to tackle problems such as toxic and hazardous wastes, the depletion of the ozone layer, climate, and also drought and desertification. As the President of Cyprus had said before the General Assembly, all that had been achieved in the political, economic and social spheres would have been in vain unless the ecological crisis faced by the planet was tackled.

9. Miss HASSAN (Egypt) said that the environment was a matter of high priority for Egypt as the country depended on the Nile for survival. It was of fundamental importance to preserve the delta area against the risk of unexpected flooding resulting from climatic change and the greenhouse effect because the majority of the population lived in that area, which was also the centre of agricultural production. In addition, desertification and drought were spreading in Africa and urgent action was needed in that respect. It was in that spirit that Egypt had hosted meetings such as the first African Ministerial Conference on the Environment in 1985, the Arab Ministerial Conference on Environment in October 1989 and the

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(Miss Hassan, Egypt)

forthcoming World Climate Conference to be held in Cairo in December 1989. Her delegation also wished to underline the valuable assistance rendered by UNEP on environmental issues, as reflected in Governing Council decisions 15/7, 15/23 and 14/25.

10. Her Government considered that the interest aroused by the United Nations conference on environment and development to be convened in 1992 and the expanding task of UNEP in assisting the developing countries as well as in its co-ordinating role within the United Nations system made it necessary to strengthen UNEP financially. In that connection her delegation welcomed Governing Council decision 15/1 relating to the target of \$100 million by 1982. In connection with the co-ordinating role of UNEP within the United Nations system and bearing in mind the multisectoral approach to the issue of the environment, the importance of Governing Council decision 15/6 must be emphasized. A strong UNEP was needed, and the activities undertaken by other organs and bodies of the United Nations should be conducted in consultation and co-ordination with UNEP. At the intergovernmental level, UNEP could assist the discussions in the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly provided items were dealt with in a concerted manner. In that connection, her delegation considered that initiatives for the inclusion of new agenda items should be seen in the light of the priorities set by the Governing Council of UNEP in its decision 15/1.

11. Although her delegation had supported Governing Council decision 15/4 on holding a special session of the Governing Council in 1990, it did not consider that such an issue could afford ad hoc treatment. It therefore reiterated what it had suggested the previous year in the Second Committee that, in view of the unofficial annualization of the items on environment, the Governing Council of UNEP should be able to meet annually to cope with the issue.

12. Mr. MILINTACHINDA (Thailand) informed the Committee of the progress made by his country towards implementing General Assembly resolution 43/53 entitled "Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind". Regarding paragraph 6 in which Governments and other agencies were urged to treat global climate change as a priority issue and to undertake and promote research, he noted that Thailand had always attached great importance to that issue. Since the adoption of the resolution, his Government had implemented several programmes aimed at making the public aware of problems concerning the environment. His Government had participated actively in World Environment Day, the main theme of which had been global climate change. Printed matter and posters had been produced to broaden public understanding of those issues and the Ministry of Science and Technology, in co-ordination with UNEP, had undertaken studies on the socio-economic consequences and policy response resulting from climate change.

13. In connection with paragraph 9 of the resolution, which had called upon Governments and other organizations to collaborate in making every effort to prevent detrimental effects on climate and activities which affected the ecological balance, he wished to inform the Committee that his Government had controlled the use of chlorofluorocarbons as stipulated in the Montreal Protocol on Substances

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(Mr. Milintachinda, Thailand)

that Deplete the Ozone Layer. His Government stood ready to consider the possibility of controlling the use of other substances if scientific evidence indicated the need to do so. Furthermore, instructions had already been issued to the authorities concerned to disseminate information on resolution 43/53 to other agencies and to the public at large.

14. The CHAIRMAN said that the general debate on sub-items (f), (g) and (j) of item 82 and on item 85 had concluded.

The meeting rose at 7.05 p.m.