

## 2076th meeting

Wednesday, 20 July 1977, at 10.45 a.m.

*President:* Mr. L. ŠMÍD (Czechoslovakia)

E/SR.2076

### AGENDA ITEM 4

**Regional co-operation and development (*continued*)**  
(E/5937 and Corr.1, E/5937/Add.1 and Corr.1 and 2, E/5937/Add.2 and 3, E/5937/Add.4 and Corr.1, E/5939 and Corr.1, E/5941 and Add.1, E/5943, E/5944 and Add.1, E/5945 and Add.1, E/5969 and Add.1, E/5997, E/5998, E/6021, E/CEPAL/1027)

1. Mr. van LAETHEM (Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs) said that at the 2075th meeting the representative of the Soviet Union had asked why only one of the five Executive Secretaries of the regional commissions had been present when the annual reports of the Commissions were being discussed in the Council, while the four others had each been represented by a deputy. That could be explained by the fact that the Executive Secretaries were compelled to be away from their offices for a long period because a meeting of Executive Secretaries of regional commissions was held immediately before the session of the Council, to which a report was then made. In 1977, that meeting had been held from 29 June to 1 July, just before the joint meetings of ACC and the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination, so that four of the five Executive Secretaries had in fact been out of touch with their services since 24 June. In addition, the Executive Secretaries who lived outside Europe generally

took advantage of their journey to make essential contacts in Europe and that was easier during the first fortnight of July. Nevertheless, even though their deputies gave an accurate account of the discussions to the Executive Secretaries, it was not a satisfactory situation. The Executive Secretaries admitted that, and had suggested two possible ways of improving it: either, subject to other obligations which the Council had to fulfil, the Executive Secretaries' reports could be taken up at the beginning of the Councils' summer session and discussed as early as possible afterwards, so that the Executive Secretaries would not have to stay at Geneva for longer than 10 days, or else the discussion of the report on the meeting of the Executive Secretaries could be postponed until the Councils' autumn session and they could hold their first meeting of the year during the 10 days when they had to be at Geneva for the submission and discussion of their reports in the Economic and Social Council. If the Council agreed to those changes, the risk of a recurrence of that unsatisfactory situation would be considerably reduced.

2. The responsibilities of the regional commissions were constantly increasing. That development, satisfactory in itself, inevitably entailed new obligations for the Executive Secretaries.

3. Mr. JURASZ (Poland) said that his delegation had noted with satisfaction the report of the Secretary-General

on long-term trends in the economic development of the regions of the world and the studies prepared by regional commissions on long-term development trends and prospects in their perspective regions (see E/5937 and addenda and corrigenda). It fully shared the main conclusions. The study of the long-term trends in the economic development of the world and of each region was only at the initial stage and long-term forecasts would have to be further developed and perfected, with a view to improving the international community's ability to assess the impact of economic policy decisions and to increase its awareness of their interrelationship in terms of regional, interregional, global and sectoral considerations. Indeed, the intensification of international economic co-operation and acceleration of the establishment of a new international economic order depended to a large extent on a more thorough knowledge of the long-term trends prevailing in the world economy, defined on the basis of regional studies and sectoral analyses. Once existing and estimated productive capacity and the degree of complementarity among the regions had been established, the specific fields in which further economic international co-operation would be of mutual benefit to all countries, the developing countries in particular, could be identified. In the long run, that type of study would contribute considerably to the rational international division of labour and to the specialization of production based on the optimal utilization of human and material resources of the regions and the world. Furthermore, they would provide an adequate basis for forthcoming international economic negotiations on issues of prime importance for economic and social development: trade in primary commodities and manufactures, food and nutrition, industrialization, monetary problems, science and technology. They would have special relevance to the formulation of the goals and provisions of the third United Nations development decade. His delegation was therefore in full agreement with the Secretary-General's conclusion that the scope of the work should be expanded and it agreed with the representative of the United Kingdom (2063rd meeting) that the research and analytical capabilities of the United Nations Secretariat should be strengthened.

4. International economic co-operation and development were among the main subjects for discussion in the United Nations. The idea of restructuring the economic and social sectors to increase their effectiveness had gained ground and would take shape in the near future. The United Nations should be given more possibilities for action at the regional level, for that was where national priorities and development objectives could be compared, from the angle of the trade and co-operation prospects among the countries of a region. The regional commissions, taking as their basis the studies under way, could play an important role in promoting economic and technical co-operation among developing countries.

5. ECE had gained considerable experience in that field and had done much to foster co-operation among member countries with different economic and social systems. The success of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe augured well for the development of the work of the Commission, which consisted for the most part of trade, industrial, scientific and technical co-operation,

long-term planning and projections, and the protection of the environment, along with the growing emphasis on transport and energy. Some projects, such as the Trans-European North-South Motorway, were of immediate practical importance. East-West co-operation should be strengthened within ECE and be given new, more advanced and dynamic forms. At the thirty-first session of the Commission, the Soviet Union had taken an important initiative in that direction by proposing that all-European congresses should be held on the environment, transport and energy. Section II of resolution 1 (XXXII) of the Commission (E/5944, p. 95) had created favourable conditions for preparing a high-level meeting on environmental protection. CMEA took an active part in the work of ECE and maintained close contacts with its secretariat. ECE thus served as a platform for exchanges not only between countries but also for subregional organizations; that role should be strengthened. His delegation welcomed the interest that other regional commissions had shown in economic co-operation with the socialist countries. It was desirable that the regional commissions should be given greater responsibilities in the promotion of regional and interregional co-operation.

6. Mr. NESTERENKO (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the reports of the regional commissions gave a good picture of the work that had been done during the past year and showed that the commissions were making ever greater efforts to promote commercial, economic, scientific and technical co-operation in their respective regions. That role should be strengthened.

7. The improvement of the political climate in Europe had created conditions favourable to the development of the activities of ECE. The Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, signed at Helsinki in 1975, could do much to stimulate co-operation among the ECE countries. Moreover, the Commission's programme of work for 1977-1978, and its long-term programme of work for 1978-1981 (E/5944/Add.1), clearly reflected the "post-Helsinki" atmosphere. The adjustment to the new conditions, however, was not yet quite complete and, in future, ECE should give more attention to trade and should seek to eliminate any trace of discrimination or injustice. He drew the Committee's attention to section I of resolution 1 (XXXII), in which the Commission reaffirmed the determination of the Governments of member States to implement, within the framework of the competence of the Commission, the pertinent provisions of the Final Act of the Conference calling for multilateral implementation.

8. In the spirit of the Helsinki Conference, the delegation of the USSR had proposed the holding of all-European congresses on the protection of the environment, transport and energy, starting from the principle that it was to the advantage of the European countries, the United States of America and Canada to work together in finding solutions to problems which could not be tackled successfully at the national or subregional level. The congresses would examine the state of co-operation in Europe in the three fields in question and would suggest what might be done to improve it. They might also identify areas in which European agreements, treaties or conventions should be concluded and provide guidelines for their preparation. The proposal

had given rise to a lively discussion at the thirty-first and thirty-second sessions of ECE, during which the delegation of the USSR had given further details of the subjects which might be dealt with at the congresses and the way in which the congresses might be organized. Other countries interested in the proposals had made interesting comments and suggestions showing a realistic approach to contemporary problems.

9. In a letter addressed to the Executive Secretary of ECE on 5 July 1977, the Government of the Soviet Union had made detailed proposals concerning the organization of the first all-European congress, namely the one on the protection of the environment. In its view, the congress might, *inter alia*, adopt measures for combating the transmission of pollution across frontiers and decide to set up a European network of stations for monitoring changes in the biosphere; it might prepare a convention for the protection of international rivers and lakes from pollution by pesticides and other chemical substances used in agriculture, study the development of technologies producing little or no waste products, set up a European monitoring system and a system for the settlement of disputes between States, and, lastly, examine problems of the pollution of the sea. In organizing the congress, it might be useful to follow the example of the Helsinki Conference and divide the work into three stages.

10. The all-European congresses would have two advantages: they would make it possible to work out a common method for tackling a number of regional problems and, on the basis of that method, to seek solutions to the more general problems arising at the world level. ECE would have an important part to play in the organization of the congresses and in implementing their decisions; in that way, it would contribute not only to the solution of European problems but to the development of international co-operation in general.

11. The USSR proposal and the corresponding resolution adopted by ECE at its thirty-second session provided the ECE secretariat with the legal basis to enable it to start preparations for the congress on protection of the environment and to give further consideration to the possibility of convening the other two congresses.

12. Turning to the other aspects of ECE activities, he stressed the importance of long-term economic projections for increasing co-operation among European countries: such projections made it easier to define the main problems in Europe which required the attention of Governments and international organizations and to identify areas in which intergovernmental co-operation was essential, in particular between countries with different economic and social systems. His delegation was satisfied with the work done on the long-term study of the region entitled "over-all economic perspective for the ECE region up to 1990" (see E/5937/Add.1 and Corr.1 and 2), but it could not give a final opinion on it until the work was completed.

13. He noted with satisfaction that the programme of work on essential trade problems had been improved since the thirty-first session of ECE and, in particular, that at the

second Informal Meeting of Trade Experts in May 1976 a far-reaching discussion on trade policies had taken place for the first time between the Eastern and the Western countries.

14. The delegation of the USSR was also satisfied with ECE industrial co-operation activities. It had noted the results of the second *Ad Hoc* Meeting of Experts on Industrial Co-operation, held in October 1976, and thought that meetings of that sort should be more frequent, because the purpose of their work, which was linked to the provisions of the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference, was to promote long-term industrial co-operation.

15. The balance-sheet of ECE activities would be more positive if certain countries which supported co-operation in words had not obstructed it in practice. He expressed the hope that the resistance to the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference would disappear and that the countries which did not support the USSR proposal for all-European congresses would adopt a more realistic attitude.

16. The Soviet Union was equally interested in the work of the other commissions, and in particular, owing to its geographical situation, in that of ESCAP. In particular, it approved of the activities of the Asian Clearing Union and, in general, of everything which tended to reduce the dependence of the Asian countries on the monopolies which threatened their autonomy. The Soviet Union participated directly in ESCAP activities by organizing scientific missions—in particular, on the continental shelf of the Pacific and Indian Oceans—by participating in regional projects, such as the Transasian railway, and by preparing and acting as host to seminars.

17. The Soviet Union fully shared the view of ECA that rapid industrialization, agrarian reform, the mobilization of internal resources, the growth of agricultural productivity and the harmonization of national development programmes were the principal means of enhancing the autonomy of the developing countries in Africa. Another essential task of ECA was to take part in the struggle against colonialism and racism and the *apartheid* policy in southern Africa.

18. ECLA had done some excellent research work on the economic problems of the region, in particular on regional and subregional commercial and economic integration.

19. It was not yet possible to say anything about ECWA, since it had not long been established, but he was convinced that that commission would adhere strictly to the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations.

20. The Soviet Union fully appreciated the efforts of the developing countries to intensify co-operation among themselves with a view to a better utilization of their internal resources, the strengthening of their sovereignty over their natural resources and their rapid industrialization. While it approved of co-operation, his delegation pointed out that the developing countries should not isolate themselves but, on the contrary, should expand their relations with other countries in the interests of harmonious world-wide development and a rational international division of labour.

21. Another area in which the regional commissions might show themselves more active was that of the status of women. He drew the attention of the commissions to General Assembly resolution 3520 (XXX) entitled "World Conference of the International Women's Year", which called upon them to develop strategies at the regional and subregional levels.

22. The extension of the work programmes of the regional commissions should not, however, entail an increase in expenditure. The commissions had only to organize their work more efficiently, select their objectives more carefully and use their efforts and their resources in order to attain those objectives.

23. Finally, his delegation had taken note of the reply that the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs had given to the question it had raised at the 2075th meeting. While it understood that the Executive Secretaries might have some difficulty in attending the meetings of the Economic and Social Council, it nevertheless found their absence abnormal. The Council was the most important United Nations body dealing with economic and social questions. If its role was to be strengthened in the manner desired, it must have the possibility of working seriously. At the present stage, his delegation could not say whether one of the two ideas suggested by the Secretariat was better than the other; but it could say that it was essential for the Executive Secretaries of the regional commissions to attend the discussions on the activities of their commissions, so that they could take account of the useful comments and suggestions made by delegations. Otherwise, it would be useless even to try to improve those activities.

24. Mr. LALOVIĆ (Yugoslavia) said that it was clear from the annual reports of the regional commissions and from the statements made by their Executive Secretaries that the commissions had continued to promote co-operation among countries at the regional and, to a certain extent, at the global level. They had proved to be an irreplaceable forum for the harmonization of national interests within the regions with a view to a better use of complementary advantages and a more rational international division of labour. With the present level of international co-operation and the growing interdependence of countries, particularly in economic matters, the commissions should support all efforts exerted at the sub-regional, regional and global level for the development of various types of mutual co-operation and integration. They would become effective centres for the co-operative efforts of Governments to harmonize and streamline their development programmes to the advantage of all countries in the context of new international economic relations.

25. Each commission had its special characteristics and work programmes, based on the specific needs and the degree of development of the particular region. At the same time, as part of the United Nations system, they were also concerned in the international action to establish a new international economic order.

26. Reviewing the work of the regional commissions, he was pleased to note that ECLA was devoting particular attention to the integral development of Latin America,

with particular reference to its social aspects. ECLA was playing an important role in assessing the world economic situation and in emphasizing the need for structural changes.

27. ESCAP, which included the most populous countries in the world, continued to attach importance to programmes for the alleviation of mass poverty. The fact that the over-all food situation had improved a little could not be a source of complete satisfaction.

28. ECWA had started to work in the normal way, in spite of many difficulties. Although, like the other commissions, it was faced with numerous economic and social problems, it was becoming increasingly able to influence the direction of co-operation and regional integration. The resources at the disposal of some of its members were such that they could help to accelerate development not only within the region, but far beyond it, in Africa and Asia. The most depressing situation seemed to be in Africa. The low level of activity, and consequently of economic growth, in most African countries had slowed down development and prompted ECA to formulate a new strategy, approved at the OAU Summit Meeting at Libreville, Gabon, held from 2 to 5 July 1977, which called for the establishment of a new national economic order in each country of the region and for the release of the African economies from excessive external dependence. The economic situation in Africa was burdened with the remnants of colonialism, which were a threat to peace in the countries bordering on Zimbabwe. The problems of the African countries should be accorded priority by the international community, in particular by the United Nations, where ECA should be given first consideration in the allocation of resources.

29. In present circumstances, the developing countries were relying increasingly on mutual co-operation, but for that they needed the assistance of the United Nations, particularly of the regional commissions, and of other international organizations.

30. With regard to the ECE report, he was pleased to see that ECE had rapidly adapted its work programme to the requirements embodied in the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe and had thus contributed to its implementation. Much remained to be done, however, both bilaterally and multilaterally, through ECE to bring the level of economic co-operation among the countries of the region into line with actual needs and to remove the obstacles to normal economic relations. The European countries should resolutely promote regional co-operation, especially in the areas of trade and the environment.

31. His delegation was confident that the Belgrade meeting in autumn 1977 would give new impetus to the policy of détente, to co-operation among ECE member countries and to the implementation of the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference. In fact, the ECE member countries had no alternative but to co-operate, and the relaxation of tension in Europe could contribute to world stability only if détente became the watchword of all countries.

32. In conclusion, he expressed his delegation's firm belief that ECE would continue to facilitate co-operation in

Europe, taking due account of the situation and the special interests of its less developed member countries, and to help to accelerate the development of developing countries, particularly those in the Mediterranean area whose problems were linked with developments in Europe itself.

33. Mr. IBRAHIM (Malaysia) said that his delegation was glad to note from the ESCAP report and the statement of its Executive Secretary (2071st meeting), that ESCAP was devoting particular attention to questions of economic and technical co-operation among developing countries, to the inter-agency plan of action and to the integrated programme on rural development, which would be included in its future strategy. The developing countries could not become really self-reliant except through their combined efforts and by a vigorous attack on poverty, particularly in rural areas. The ambitious objective of Malaysia's Third Development Plan was to eradicate poverty, both in rural and in urban areas, through the restructuring of society.

34. Together with the other members of ASEAN (Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand), Malaysia was endeavouring to give substance to the concept of regional co-operation, from which it had already obtained some benefits. At home, the Malaysian Government had always given priority to development programmes for the rural areas, where the majority of its population lived. With the aim of making life in those areas as attractive and work as remunerative as in the urban areas, it had successfully encouraged and would continue to promote the installation of industries based on agriculture and other industries in the hitherto under-developed parts of the country.

35. Development in the past had been synonymous with growth, but his delegation shared the view of ESCAP that rapid growth *per se* did not ensure the elimination of poverty. For that reason, Malaysia had always preferred steady, continuous growth to rapid growth in its efforts to achieve development and to ensure that the fruits of development were equally shared among all sections of the population.

36. Malaysia realized that, while economic and technical co-operation among developing countries was a matter for those countries themselves, and while the alleviation of poverty was primarily the responsibility of Governments, considerable scope existed for international action within each region. His delegation was grateful to the countries which were co-operating with ESCAP, particularly Japan and New Zealand, and at the same time hoped that the Commission would do more, both in regional and in international meetings concerning the new international economic order, to promote the interests of its less fortunate members in sectors such as those of commodities and the transfer of technology.

37. His delegation expressed its thanks to ESCAP and to the other United Nations agencies and bodies for their assistance to Malaysia in its development efforts. It supported the appeal for aid by the international community for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Lebanon.

38. Mr. SZABO (Council for Mutual Economic Assistance), speaking at the invitation of the President, said that,

in accordance with the spirit of the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, CMEA and United Nations bodies, particularly ECE, had established close working relationships in a number of fields, many of which dealt with projections. Projecting had in fact become a current management method, in business, in specific branches of activity and in the national economy. In CMEA, there were three types of co-operation in projecting; exchange of information on methods used, exchange of information with a view to establishing national projections on firmer foundations, and the joint preparation of projections to solve the problems of member countries and prepare future decisions. Experience had shown that those three forms of co-operation made it possible to deal with the problems of member countries.

39. The various bodies of CMEA had worked out some 220 to 230 projections, approximately 90 of which were scientific and concerned the orientation of scientific research towards the production of quality foodstuffs and the improvement or development of building materials; those projections were used as a basis for co-operation in the scientific and technical fields. In the industrial field, CMEA had worked out projections on fuel and energy requirements up to the year 2000, had formulated proposals for co-operation among the countries concerned and defined the trends in the utilization of the various forms of energy, with a view to adopting a more profitable energy policy. It had also made projections on the development of nuclear energy in member countries up to 1990 and had estimated trends up to 2000. Those projections should facilitate international co-operation and specialization in the manufacture of nuclear power plant equipment. CMEA had also made projections on the development of raw materials, in particular raw materials based on phosphorus, and of the principal chemical and iron and steel products. It had examined the probable trends of scientific and technical progress in iron and steel and, by a quantitative assessment of the production and consumption of iron and steel products in the member countries and in Yugoslavia up to the year 2000, it had shown the difficulty of meeting requirements and had considered ways of overcoming that difficulty. Projections had also been made for agriculture, transport and construction.

40. All those jointly prepared projections provided valuable information on the orientation of co-operation among the countries members of CMEA, and CMEA would continue its work in that field. All projections were approved by the competent organs of CMEA, which took them into account in their decisions, and they were taken into consideration by member countries in their plans.

41. Mr. YUNUS (Pakistan) said that he shared the opinion of the representative of Argentina (2075th meeting) on the interesting concept of "basic needs". That concept was both simple and complex; it was simple to the extent that it was derived from the universally accepted ideals of social justice and morality, and complex on account of the diversity of national development plans, the econometric factors involved, the interdependence of economic and social phenomena, the increases in production vis-à-vis consumption, and the spectre of increasing poverty. Even if countries knew that they required additional

resources to solve their problems, they had not managed to obtain them. His delegation therefore welcomed what the representative of the United States of America had said (2063rd meeting) about the lack of resources in the developing countries. Care must be taken not to oversimplify the concept of "basic needs"—possibly in order to evade the obligation to establish a new international economic order—and not to overburden it at the risk of depriving it of all real content. In fact, even in the developed countries it was difficult to know exactly what the basic needs of the population were and, even if they were known, it would be preferable to define them rather than to set a ceiling for them. It was a constantly developing concept and attention should therefore be focused on what the international community could do, in the attendant circumstances, to bring the living standards of the various peoples as far as possible into line. The dimensions of the development problem would thus be put into proper perspective.

42. After sounding that general note of caution, he turned to the principal object of his statement, namely the activities of the regional commissions. He had appreciated the explanations given by the Executive Secretary of ESCAP and generally supported the proposed programme of work and the plans for strengthening the secretariat in order to promote co-operation among the countries of the region. In fact, his delegation was in favour of strengthening the secretariats of all the regional commissions, for regional co-operation was one of the most important features of development. Nevertheless, it left a good deal to be desired and it was important that it should be intensified, particularly in Africa and Asia.

43. His delegation took a deep interest in the activities of ECWA and urged the Economic and Social Council to endorse resolution 40 (IV) adopted by that Commission concerning the reconstruction and development of Lebanon (E/5969, p. 26), which were the responsibility of the entire international community. The figures quoted by the representative of Lebanon (2075th meeting) formed sufficient grounds for the Council to take a unanimous stand on the urgent provision of humanitarian aid. His delegation also supported ECWA resolution 36 (IV) (*ibid.*, p. 22) concerning the granting of full membership to the Palestine Liberation Organization, particularly since it was already a member of the League of Arab States, all the members of which were members of ECWA. Failure to grant full membership status to the Palestine Liberation Organization would be to perpetuate an anomaly, and the time had come to rectify that anomaly. His delegation also recommended that the Council should adopt ECWA resolution 37 (IV) (*ibid.*, p. 23) regarding the admission of Egypt to the Commission. Resolutions 36 (IV) and 37 (IV) had been adopted unanimously by the Commission, which should be sufficient reason for the Council to endorse them wholeheartedly.

44. Mr. KASTOFT (Denmark), speaking on behalf of the European Economic Community, congratulated the secretariats of all the regional commissions on their work during the past year and assured them of the active support of the Community in the future.

45. It was natural that States members of the Community should take a particular interest in the activities of ECE. They appreciated its value as a forum for co-operation among countries of the region and welcomed the fact that it had established links with other regional commissions. The Community was highly satisfied with the steps taken by the ECE secretariat to carry out the particular functions which fell to it as a result of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, particularly in adapting the work programmes of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission to bring them into line with the Final Act of the Conference. It looked forward to the Executive Secretary's report for the Belgrade meeting to be held on the implementation of the provisions of the Final Act.

46. With regard to the convening of a meeting on the protection of the environment in Europe, a number of criteria clearly indicated in the preamble to section II of ECE resolution 1 (XXXII) (E/5944, p. 96) would first of all have to be met. The Community had given the Executive Secretary of ECE written notification of its readiness to participate in the exploratory work for that meeting. It had also communicated in writing, and explained at the thirty-second session of the Commission, its views on the Soviet proposal for the holding of all-European congresses in the fields of transport and energy.

47. Mr. PANOV (Bulgaria) recalled that his delegation had explained its position on regional economic co-operation at the thirty-second session of ECE; he would therefore confine himself to a number of points which he considered important.

48. In view of the ECE dialogue on détente and coexistence among countries with different economic and social systems, Bulgaria wholeheartedly supported the Soviet Union's proposal for the holding of three all-European congresses and was in favour of the early implementation of section II of ECE resolution 1 (XXXII). It welcomed the statement by the Executive Secretary of ECE (2071st meeting), from which it appeared that conditions would be suitable for the preparation of those meetings. They would be in line with the spirit of the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe and would help to normalize relations between Western and Eastern Europe, which had been the aim of the Conference. The Bulgarian people considered that ECE could do a great deal to improve the political climate in Europe by co-operation between the two groups of countries of which it consisted. Such co-operation could be exercised in all fields and the long-term programme adopted at the thirty-second session of the Commission (E/5944/Add.1) was entirely consistent with the provisions of the Final Act of the Conference. Bulgaria would be careful to respect the Conference principles scrupulously and it intended to take an active part in economic and social co-operation in Europe and throughout the world.

49. Mr. ROUGÉ (France) said that France participated as a full member, an associate member or an observer at the meetings of the five regional commissions and read or listened with interest to the reports of their Executive Secretaries. It had gained a favourable impression of the work of those commissions and hoped that they would be

strengthened; that would lie, in particular, with the *Ad Hoc* Committee on the Restructuring of the Economic and Social Sectors of the United Nations System. France therefore endorsed the regional and interregional co-operation measures which were described in the working documents before that Committee, particularly the projects to consolidate the structure of the commissions in order to make them more effective, within the budgetary constraints imposed on the United Nations.

50. His delegation had already spoken in favour of making the regional commissions the executing agencies for subregional, regional and interregional intersectoral technical co-operation projects. The commissions could be particularly useful in co-ordinating the action of Governments and of the specialized agencies in their region. In his eloquent plea for his sorely tried country, the representative of Lebanon had emphasized the solidarity between the countries of the particular region and the co-ordination which ECWA could provide for aid originating from within the region and from outside it.

51. His delegation considered that the strengthening of the regional commissions and the decentralization of certain United Nations activities for their benefit would be rewarding for all and would in no way affect world solidarity. In view of the positive contribution which the commissions could make to the establishment of a new international economic order and the implementation of the long-term strategies defined by the United Nations General Assembly, his delegation supported the Polish

proposal concerning studies of the trends in the economy of the regions, which could be integrated in analogous studies undertaken at United Nations level. Furthermore, he drew attention to the role which the commissions could play in the preparations for and the follow-up to the major world conferences of the United Nations, such as those on water, the status of women, science and technology, etc.

52. Notwithstanding their eminently regional vocation, the regional commissions of the United Nations could not isolate themselves from world concerns; if they were to play a leading role in interregional co-operation, they must also take part in wider-ranging activities, such as the dialogue opened by the Paris Conference on International Economic Co-operation. In that connexion, he deplored the bias displayed by the Executive Secretary of one of the regional commissions with regard to the outcome of that Conference and the attitude of some of the participants, even if he had merely reflected the opinion of some of the countries in his region. In any event, the regional commissions should not avoid dialogue with countries outside their region, particularly the developed countries, and they should endeavour to promote general solidarity, since all economies were interdependent. While promoting economic and technical co-operation among developing countries, they must continue to be a forum for the exchange of ideas and experience between those countries and the industrialized nations, in the general interest.

*The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.*