

49. The Economic and Social Council and the specialized agencies should play a positive role in correcting the injustice inflicted upon the Palestinian people. They could help in establishing new projects for agricultural development and co-operative farming and for co-operative housing; supporting small industries under heavy stress owing to unfair competition and discriminatory legislation; expanding educational institutions and establishing health services and social welfare programmes to tackle the many problems arising from the splitting up of families or the loss of the breadwinner in exile or prison.

50. The Palestinians were in the forefront of nation-building in the Arab world. Skilled Palestinian workers, engineers, doctors, economists and lawyers played an important part in the development of the Arab countries as a whole. In the past few years the Palestinian people had achieved political autonomy of decision and had forged the instruments for preserving and reconstructing their society, threatened by Zionist occupation and physical dispersion.

51. Professional and social groups had assembled in general unions, all represented and actively participating in the parliament of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the National Council. A planning centre, a research centre, industrial units, medical services and many educational institutions had been set up. The Palestine Liberation Organization was trying hard and successfully to create the necessary organizational infrastructure to administer econ-

omic and social programmes for the benefit of the Palestinian people. Regular consultations and close co-operation between the United Nations system and the Palestine Liberation Organization would be of great assistance in consolidating the identity of the Palestinian people and in responding to the challenges with which they were faced.

52. Yet another ordeal through which the Lebanese and Palestinian peoples were passing was the recent plot by imperialism and neo-colonialism resulting in the tragedy of Lebanon. The Palestine Liberation Organization hoped that the territorial integrity, national sovereignty and well-being of the Lebanese people would be safeguarded, and therefore fully supported ECWA resolutions regarding the reconstruction and development of Lebanon.

53. The Palestine Liberation Organization strongly supported ECWA, which had worked hard and under difficult conditions for the well-being of the region of Western Asia, and wished to co-operate with the Commission in the best interests of all concerned.

54. Finally, he expressed the Palestinian people's support for the Declaration of Abidjan adopted by the Council (E/RES/2009 (LXI)) and stressed the need to put it into practice.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.

2024th meeting

Thursday, 22 July 1976, at 3.30 p.m.

President: Mr. S. AKÉ (Ivory Coast)

E/SR.2024

AGENDA ITEM 4

Regional co-operation (*continued*) (E/5607 and Corr.1 and E/5607/Add.1-2, E/5727 and Add.1-2, E/5781, E/5783-5786, E/5801, E/5832 (chap. III, sect. E), E/5835 and Corr.1 and E/5835/Add.1, E/5858)

1. Mr. PATHMARAJAH (International Labour Organisation) expressed the ILO's thanks to the regional commissions and the other United Nations bodies which had responded so effectively to the request of the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1968 (LIX) for co-operation in preparing the Tripartite World Conference on Employment, Income Distribution and Social Progress and the International Division of Labour.

2. ECLA, ESCAP and ECA/ECWA had held preparatory meetings at Cartagena, Bangkok and Tunis respectively, with the co-operation of the Governments of Colombia, Thailand and Tunisia, which had provided conference facilities while participants had met their own expenses. A document had been produced by the Commissions in conjunction with the ILO and based on the report entitled *Employment, growth and basic needs: A one-world prob-*

lem prepared by the ILO in 1976 for the Tripartite World Conference on Employment. Those two documents had in turn formed the basis of the tentative conclusions reached by consensus. The tentative conclusions and further studies by workers and employers had paved the way for the final document (E/5857), adopted by consensus at the Conference, which the Director-General of the ILO had already presented to the Council (2015th meeting). Proposals for a strategy to implement the Programme of Action in that document would be submitted to the Governing Body of the ILO in November 1976.

3. Other United Nations bodies had assisted in the preparatory work for the Conference, particularly the World Bank, FAO and WFP. The Trade and Development Board by decision 134 (XV) had requested the Secretary-General of UNCTAD to submit to the Conference a report on the impact on employment of international policy measures in the field of trade and development. That study and other working papers of the Conference were to be published in two volumes by the ILO in August 1976.

4. The Programme of Action adopted by the Conference had called for the continued collaboration of United

Nations organs in its implementation and in paragraph 29 thereof, it was recommended that the ACC should be requested to review, monitor and report on the work of the different agencies and regional commissions of the United Nations system. The ILO was prepared to play its part, but only through combined efforts of the entire United Nations system could poverty and unemployment be eradicated.

5. Mr. NOOR ADLAN (Malaysia) said that the reports of the regional commissions provided a valuable survey of the many problems facing the nations of the world which required for their solution an unprecedented degree of co-operation and political will. International co-operation needed support from the country level upwards, and in that scheme the regional commissions had their appointed place. In his report on regional structures of the United Nations system (E/5801), the Secretary-General had stressed the need to give due weight to the regional level. While his delegation was in favour of decentralizing operational activities, that should not result in their being concentrated in the centres where the regional commissions had their headquarters.

6. No single scheme was applicable to all regions; the strength of the regional commissions lay in the fact that their planning was adapted to the character and problems of their respective habitats. They could, for example, act as catalysts in the establishment of further co-operative groups, as had been the case with ESCAP and ASEAN, to which Malaysia belonged. In general terms, the regional commissions should be given greater support in order to enhance their role as effective instruments for assisting member Governments in the pursuit of their economic and social developments. Since 1974, ESCAP had adopted an integrated programme of work based on priorities identified by the Commission, but it needed the resources to tackle its tasks effectively.

7. In paragraph 34 of his report, the Secretary-General had stated that the terms of reference of the regional commissions contained adequate provision for them to undertake operational activities. His delegation hoped that the decision already taken by the Council to designate regional commissions as executing agencies for inter-regional, regional and subregional projects would be implemented at the earliest opportunity. Although during the current financial crisis of UNDP priority should be given to country programmes, it was important not to lose sight of the desirability, in certain areas, of intercountry programmes to stimulate co-operation on common problems.

8. The failure of previous development strategies constituted a convincing argument for adopting new approaches. The regional commissions had a creditable record in fulfilling the tasks so far required of them. They should therefore be given the necessary resources to make an effective contribution towards implementing the decisions of the sixth and seventh special sessions of the General Assembly on the establishment of a new international economic order.

9. Mr. ENE (Romania) said that the reports of the regional commissions testified to the concern of their member States and secretariats to extend regional co-oper-

ation; it was the Council's duty to encourage the fullest possible use of the opportunities provided for such co-operation. Recent international decisions and declarations had given new dimensions to the activities of the regional commissions: the example of ESCAP in adopting the New Delhi Declaration¹ on the regional contribution to the establishment of a new international economic order should be followed by the other regional commissions, for it constituted an important step towards adapting their activities to the needs of the modern world.

10. As a European country, Romania attached particular importance to ECE as a means of contributing to the development and diversification of co-operation between its member States and between those States and countries in other regions. The most recent session of ECE had been held under changed conditions as a result of the successful conclusion of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe: member States had shown a readiness to assume the new duties entrusted to them under the Final Act of that Conference. In that context, Romania had supported the proposal of the Soviet Union for the convening of all-European congresses on questions of co-operation in the field of protection of the environment, development of transport, and energy; such congresses should be prepared and conducted in strict conformity with the rules and procedures which had governed the work of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe.

11. The recent session of ECE had also shown the need, in the changed conditions prevailing in Europe, to reorient the Commission's activities so that it could make a greater contribution towards the establishment of a new international economic order. The Commission should promote more extensive relations between all States on an equal footing and organize its operational programmes strictly in harmony with the decisions of the sixth and seventh special sessions of the General Assembly. Since the concept of a new international economic order was universally applicable, Europe could not remain an exception. The Commission must make a greater contribution to the creation of favourable conditions for increasing and consolidating economic, technical and scientific co-operation in Europe, by the elimination of barriers to trade and general economic co-operation, and by giving greater attention to matters relating to the use of raw materials and energy. It should promote more stable economic relations between the countries of Europe, including those at a subregional level, such as the Balkans. There should be a case-by-case approach on the part of member States to specific issues and not a general, automatic response based on economic groupings. Increased attention should be paid to the developing countries in the region. The Commission should devote itself to carrying out practical programmes; that would require the elimination of the artificial division of Europe, which should be treated as a single entity composed of sovereign and equal States.

12. ECE should also give more active support to economic progress in the world as a whole. His delegation was

¹ See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Fifty-Ninth Session, Supplement No. 7*, chap. III, resolution 154 (XXXI).

particularly attached to the idea that the problems of the European region should be considered as part of a world complex of problems which Governments were endeavouring to solve by collective action through the United Nations. Owing to the economic and scientific potential of European countries, the impact of ECE's activities went beyond the continent of Europe. The Commission should identify problems which European countries shared with other countries in order to promote co-operation and thus support the efforts of the developing countries to achieve economic and social progress.

13. As a corollary of those ideas, it was essential that ECE's methods of work and procedures, which were unlike those of the other regional commissions, should be replaced by more democratic forms, including the equal and direct participation of all member States in decision making. In his delegation's view, the rules and regulations which had governed the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe should be adopted, since experience had shown that the application of the principle of consensus made it possible to achieve practical and generally acceptable results if there was a desire to co-operate on a basis of equality and mutual respect. During the 30 years of its existence, ECE had provided a useful framework for the exchange of ideas among its members and it had achieved a number of results, but it could not continue to deal with its problems separately from the problems of the rest of the world and must adapt itself to changing circumstances.

14. Mr. KAWAH (Liberia) said that the reports of the regional commissions reflected a measured optimism about the ability of the United Nations to play a significant role in revitalizing and restructuring regional and international economic relations. His Government wondered, however, whether the developed and developing countries had really learned from the experience of the recent recession the need for new policies which would bring about a rational and equitable use of the world's scarce resources. The fact that the Executive Secretary of ECE saw the furtherance of horizontal co-operation with other regions as part of the function of his Commission was worth noting as a move to give practical effect to the concept of global interdependence.

15. In submitting his report (E/5783), the Executive Secretary of ECA had underlined the many problems faced by African countries which, for their solution, required to be fully appreciated by the entire international community, and particularly by the Council. Although ECA had worked hard to assist States and subregional groups in Africa, it was incapable of dealing adequately with the unprecedented degree of socio-economic change which was taking place within the region. The Commission merely reflected the ability or lack of ability of the United Nations to help most African countries in their efforts to achieve self-sufficiency and self-sustaining growth.

16. The Council must give ECA the tools and finance it needed to deal realistically with its problems, which must be recognized and tackled as new problems, for otherwise the socio-economic structure not only of Africa but of the international community would be further weakened. The problems of Africa were unique. The current upturn in

economic activity would not have a significant effect on most African economies for another two or three years; meanwhile, far from achieving their development targets, most African countries were finding it difficult even to maintain their present economic levels, particularly the 19 of the least developed countries that were situated in Africa. His delegation therefore supported the views expressed by the Executive Secretary regarding the role of ECA.

17. In conclusion, he said that the regional commissions should not be considered as isolated units but as inter-related entities, since the problems with which they dealt were interrelated.

18. Mr. CHEREDNIK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that regional co-operation was a leading topic for the Council's consideration at its present session, as the number of reports before it testified. The issues, however, were so numerous and complicated that it would be difficult to deal with all of them at once and his delegation would confine itself to a few main features.

19. The Soviet Union was convinced of the important role of the regional commissions in implementing the measures for social and economic progress; the strengthening of such measures was, in his delegation's view, the main point of the decentralization measures adopted recently within the United Nations. Each measure should, of course, take account of the specific economic, social and political features of the region concerned and it was encouraging to note that the measures taken so far by the Council in that connexion had been along those lines. In the general debate his delegation had spoken of the special role required of ECE, particularly in the light of the results of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe. At its thirty-first session the Commission had confirmed (E/5781, resolution 1 (XXXI)) the desire for collaboration in the spirit of the Final Act of that Conference; it could also play an important role in the implementation of the proposal on holding all-European congresses or inter-State meetings to discuss co-operation in dealing with problems such as environmental protection, transport development and energy.

20. In the Far East, ESCAP now had greater opportunities before it on account of the improved political situation resulting from the victories, during the past year, of the peoples of Viet-Nam, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Democratic Kampuchea. The Soviet Union was ready to collaborate further with ESCAP and the other regional commissions.

21. His delegation would support the strengthening of the regional commissions' powers. Decentralization should be viewed as the co-ordinating and orderly delegation of powers and functions to the corresponding regional bodies. At the same time, the regional commissions should not be given full autonomy to deal with all questions, particularly administrative and budgetary matters. His delegation felt the need for caution in considering new recommendations involving new bodies and significantly increased financing. Particular care was needed in considering the proposal to give the regional commissions the functions of executing agencies; although the proposal might be accepted in

principle, strict delineation of the commissions' specific powers in relation to specific projects, and of the financial implications, would be necessary.

22. His delegation felt that the question of considering regional commissions as forums for negotiation, as mentioned in the report of the Secretary-General on regional structures of the United Nations system (E/5801), called for careful consideration, since the designation of a body as the forum for negotiation would mean that the body concerned would be the place where binding decisions would be taken. In all cases, the question of whether binding decisions or simply recommendations could be adopted should be based on the relevant provisions of the United Nations Charter and of the instrument establishing the body concerned. There were cases in which the regional commissions might adopt international instruments, but the latter would not automatically be legally binding on Member States.

23. The establishment of a new international economic order was a goal constantly before the regional commissions and borne in mind by the *Ad Hoc* Committee on the Restructuring of the Economic and Social Sectors of the United Nations System. In his delegation's view, it should not be assumed that the major prerequisite for improving the efficiency of the United Nations system was an institutional restructuring of the organizations forming part of it. In many cases, a new superstructure might simply lead to complications and confusion. In seeking to establish a new international economic order, the primary question was not how to restructure but whether the programmes of the relevant United Nations bodies were suitably oriented and arranged and whether the genuine political will existed to carry them out.

24. At the Conference of 29 Communist and Workers' Parties of Europe, held at Berlin, the leader of the Soviet delegation had again declared his country's readiness to work towards the establishment in the world of a new, just economic order. That event, and the communiqué issued by CMEA at the conclusion of its thirtieth session, provided evidence of the firm intention of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries to help to achieve the aims set out in the relevant documents of the United Nations on the establishment of the new international economic order.

Mr. R. Rivas (Colombia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

25. Mr. BARCELÓ (Mexico) said that his delegation greatly appreciated the annual report of ECLA (E/5784), the statement by its Executive Secretary (2022nd meeting) and ECLA's achievements in Latin America, which had included practical steps towards the establishment of a new international economic order. The expansion of economic development among developing countries was an object of primary importance, and the Conference on Economic Co-operation among Developing Countries to be held at Mexico City in September would be an important step in that direction.

26. The economic survey of Latin America showed that growth of the GNP in the countries of that region had slackened recently; one basic reason was undoubtedly the world economic crisis. The analytical summary of the

annual reports of the regional commissions (E/5835/Add.1) had not sufficiently stressed the reference by ECLA's Executive Secretary to the need to provide increasing help for the recovery of the Latin American economies and to redress the imbalances caused by the varying impact of economic problems. It was important that ECLA and its subsidiary bodies such as the Latin American Demographic Centre and the Latin American Institute for Economic and Social Planning, through committees established jointly with other Latin American economic and social institutions, should endeavour to establish programmes and criteria for appropriate international action. Only in that way could real progress be made towards implementing the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States.

27. The recent international economic crisis, which had affected all countries of the region, had been particularly damaging in the commodity-producing countries, which had suffered adverse balance-of-payments problems and increased debt burdens. The economic situation remained serious throughout the region and it was important that the international community should provide the support and assurances to assist the region in dealing with its problems and relieving its debt burdens. It was essential for ECLA to make even greater efforts towards that goal, for which it would require broader international economic co-operation, especially in such fields as the transfer of technology. The action that each country must take for itself still required the backing of regional activity and international co-operation if those countries' economic vulnerability was to be reduced and their living standards raised. All the regional commissions should be given the requisite increased status to carry out the co-ordinating role involved; for that purpose, structural and staffing changes were essential in order that the commissions could comply with the requirements called for by the General Assembly at its sixth and seventh special sessions, and thus pave the way towards a new international economic order and the implementation of the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States.

28. Mr. MARSHALL (United Kingdom), speaking on behalf of EEC and its member States, said that they attached great importance to the development of regional co-operation and, accordingly, welcomed the report of JIU on the regional structures of the United Nations system and the succinct comments thereon by the ACC, the Secretary-General and the Administrator of UNDP (E/5727 and Add.1-2). They were pleased to see evidence in the Secretary-General's report on the meetings of the executive secretaries of the regional commissions (E/5835 and Corr.1 and E/5835/Add.1) that all the regional commissions were clearly aware of its significance, particularly in the light of General Assembly resolution 3362 (S-VII). They wished to congratulate the secretariats concerned on the progress made in that respect, not least in the promotion of technical co-operation among developing countries.

29. The members of the Community attached great importance to the work of ECE, which had played a unique role in fostering economic relations between East and West and in developing co-operation throughout the region. It was, in general, the most appropriate forum in which to tackle questions concerning relations between countries in the region with different economic systems and should

continue to concentrate on those questions. It should, however, be ready to adapt itself to new circumstances.

30. The Community also welcomed the further impetus given to ECE by the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe. The members of the Community wished to implement all the provisions of that Act both in letter and in spirit. It was, in fact, the multilateral implementation of those provisions for co-operation in the field of economics, science and technology, and of the environment, which were of primary concern to the Commission. The Community considered that the Commission was admirably equipped to exploit such opportunities, without overtaxing its resources, and that an encouraging start had been made at its thirty-first session. That had produced important results both for the on-going work of ECE and for the incorporation in ECE's programmes of work of provisions contained in the Final Act. The Community looked forward to hearing reports at the next ECE session of positive progress in implementing the Commission's work programmes incorporating provisions of the Final Act. The Community also had in mind the meeting at Belgrade in 1977 provided for in the Final Act.

31. Among the measures taken by the Commission at its thirty-first session was decision B (XXXI) on the proposal by the Soviet Union for the holding of all-European congresses on questions of co-operation in the fields of protection of the environment, development of transport and energy. Other resolutions and decisions were also adopted, including a decision D (XXXI) on selected topics for attention. The Community's views on the Soviet Union's proposal would be found in the Commission's annual report (E/5781) and in the summary records of the thirty-first session. The members of the Community would abide by the terms of ECE's decision B (XXXI) and they thought that the report which the Executive Secretary was to submit to the thirty-second session would reflect the positive achievements of the Commission in the fields concerned.

32. Turning to the work of the other regional commissions, he said that the most important development in the relationship between the Community and the developing world in 1975 had been the signature and entry into effect of the ACP-EEC Lomé Convention, which provided a number of new tools for co-operation. The importance attached to the closest possible co-operation with African countries had been emphasized by spokesmen for the Community (2009th meeting) and representatives of other parties to the Convention in the general debate during the first part of the current session of the Council.

33. The Community noted with interest the work being carried out by ECA, including work on regional co-operation. The particular importance the Commission attached to the food and agriculture situation and to agricultural and rural development was in line with the recommendations of the World Food Conference.

34. The thirty-second session of ESCAP had been especially valuable. The Community was happy to support the work of ASEAN, with which it had set up a joint study

group to stimulate co-operation and trade relations. In the past year, it had concluded commercial co-operation agreements with Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, similar to that concluded with India in 1973.

35. The Community had followed with great interest the continuing progress of ECLA in promoting co-operation and economic integration and had been able to lend its support in appropriate fields.

36. It had noted with interest the importance attached to the Euro-Arab dialogue by ECWA.

37. With reference to the relationship between the regional commissions and the work in progress in the *Ad Hoc* Committee on the Restructuring of the Economic and Social Sectors of the United Nations System, the Community was firmly of the view that, while the regional commissions should play their full role within the system, particularly by assuming team leadership and responsibility for co-ordination and co-operation and by co-ordinating intersectoral approaches to development at the regional level, the specialized agencies and other appropriate United Nations bodies should continue to be responsible for leadership and operational responsibility in specific sectoral fields. Responsibility for co-ordinating operational activities at the country level should remain with UNDP.

38. The tightening of regional structures would enable the regional commissions more easily to provide guidance and advice for the global policy-making functions of United Nations bodies, and decentralization could more easily be achieved when regional structures had been established along desirable lines. The administrative rationalization of the Commissions should be accompanied by a greater degree of authority and responsibility suitable to their enhanced role.

39. The member States of the Community were ready to join in taking note of the reports of the regional commissions. In so doing, they wished to remark that there were certain elements in those reports and some resolutions contained in them on which the position of the Community and its member States had been made clear in the appropriate forums of the United Nations and which it was unnecessary to repeat on the present occasion.

40. Mr. LALOVIĆ (Yugoslavia) said that the annual reports of the regional commissions and the introductory statements of the executive secretaries had given members of the Council a greater insight into conditions and problems in the regions and the efforts being made to promote development and co-operation. The commissions had one important feature in common: they all had to face enormous development problems and they all concentrated a large part of their effort on co-operation among developing countries as one of the most important factors in promoting the development of those countries. In that respect the regional commissions could play an important part, especially in the formulation of projects based on the needs of the majority of countries in a region or subregion. Other regional commissions might well follow the example of ECA, which had formed a special unit in its secretariat for questions of regional and interregional co-operation.

41. Another important aspect was the need for the regional commissions to assume the central co-ordinating role in all regions with the particular objective of implementing or helping to implement the global activities of the United Nations. In both the aspects he had mentioned, ECLA had achieved the most and gained the widest experience. It would be useful if that experience could be developed and adapted in other regions.

42. Although time was short, the regional commissions and their expert bodies should consider ways of contributing to the forthcoming Conference on Economic Co-operation among Developing Countries, to be held in Mexico.

43. It was vital for the regional commissions to carry on their work in conformity with the principles underlying the establishment of the new international economic order; that was their most important contribution as decentralized organs of the United Nations most closely concerned with the problems of developing countries. Structures and relations within regional frameworks and the work of the regional commissions would influence structures and relations outside the regions and have an impact on the whole structure of the United Nations system.

44. The Executive Secretary of ESCAP had drawn attention to the problem of widespread poverty, particularly in the rural areas. The problem was undoubtedly important for other regions too, particularly in the context of reducing social differences at the country level. It was largely the responsibility of countries themselves to ensure that the development process did not bypass the rural areas and thereby increase inequalities within national frameworks.

45. Technical co-operation among developing countries, on which an international conference was to be held in 1977, was of the utmost importance. He welcomed the regional meetings being held in connexion with the conference for the contribution of the various regions would be particularly valuable.

46. As indicated by its Executive Secretary (2022nd meeting), ECE had the important and complex task of implementing the economic section of the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe – the basic subject discussed at the Commission's thirty-first session. The Executive Secretary's report made some valuable proposals for adapting ECE's work so as to involve it in new trends in Europe and enable it to contribute to the promotion and expansion of intra-European co-operation. His delegation attached particular importance to further relaxation of tension in Europe and development of the widest possible mutually beneficial co-operation and had pledged itself to implement the provisions of the Final Act. If there was to be stable peace and security in Europe and in the world at large, all forms of mutually useful co-operation must be developed, regardless of differences in economic and social systems and in levels of development. His country would be host to the conference to be held in 1977 to review and appraise the implementation of the Final Act. In the essential task of implementing all its provisions, new forms and methods of strengthening intra-European co-operation must be sought.

47. His delegation had consistently stressed the need for ECE to contribute to the global activities of the United Nations and not to limit its activities to the problems of its own region. He applauded some of the steps taken to strengthen co-operation with the secretariats of other regional commissions but felt that the possibilities had not yet been fully exploited. The practice of holding meetings of executive secretaries at the headquarters of the different regional commissions was a step in the right direction, but new ways should be constantly sought whereby the regional commissions could learn more about each other's work and exchange information about their problems. There should be a greater circulation of documents and the possibility of holding meetings and seminars and arranging study tours as interregional projects should be explored.

48. The Mediterranean dimension of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe and of its Final Act was of special interest and importance for ECE. The proximity and interdependence of countries of the Mediterranean area, even if they belonged to different regional commissions, should be reflected in specific forms of co-operation, for it was in their mutual interest to promote and develop their traditional and historical ties, especially in the fields of trade, tourism, transport and protection of the human environment with particular reference to the Mediterranean Sea.

49. His delegation attached great importance to the study on the over-all economic perspective for the ECE region up to 1990. The study should not only outline expectations regarding the development of developed countries but should influence perspectives and development in other parts of the world.

50. Mr. DARENKOV (Bulgaria) said it was clear from the documentation concerning the item under consideration that the regional commissions, as well as other United Nations bodies, were making efforts and had achieved some positive results in tackling the economic and social problems in the relevant regions, although, due to the economic crisis in the market-economy developed countries, the economic and social conditions in the majority of the developing countries had deteriorated. It was also clear from the annual reports of the regional commissions for 1975 that the development of subregional, regional and international co-operation in the fields of production, science and technology, trade and finance, and development of an up-to-date infrastructure were of a great importance for the development of the economies of the countries concerned, for overcoming the monostructural orientation of the economies of the developing countries inherited from colonial times, and for the elimination of neo-colonial exploitation. In that way, the commissions played an important role in the process of development and restructuring of international economic relations on an equitable and democratic basis, as called for by the General Assembly at its sixth and seventh special sessions.

51. CMEA, at its thirtieth session, had noted that one of the foremost current problems was the establishment of international economic relations of a new type. In accordance with socialist principles, the member countries of CMEA fully supported the developing countries' efforts

towards strengthening their political and economic independence and would continue to help them to achieve that objective in the light of the Declaration and Programme of Action on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order, and of other United Nations resolutions on the question. His delegation supported in principle the strengthening of the regional commissions, with a view to avoiding unnecessary dispersal of effort and to finding a correct common approach to the solving of a particular region's problems. Many of the measures proposed in that connexion seemed acceptable to his delegation; others, however, as the ACC had noted, were of great complexity and had implicit consequences which called for more detailed study. The differing requirements of various countries and regions were matters for separate appraisals.

52. Although regional bodies admittedly required reasonable powers of initiative, it was important to avoid any threat to the over-all character of the United Nations and to the balance and interrelationship in regional, interregional and global activities carried out by the various bodies in the system. In his delegation's view, therefore, the leadership and operational responsibility of the specialized agencies in their specific fields of competence should continue to be ensured. Any proposed changes should be dealt with cautiously and step by step; financial details in particular should be provided and specific approval for each case should be required. His delegation supported the proposal that UNDP resident representatives should be given more extensive powers on administrative matters, including the raising of the financial ceiling of projects subject to their approval. The JIU's report (E/5607 and Corr.1), with delegations' comments, would contribute to the study of decentralization and of the role of the regional commissions, and would be of value for the *Ad Hoc* Committee on the Restructuring of the Economic and Social Sectors of the United Nations System.

53. His delegation welcomed the annual report of the Executive Secretary of ECE and in particular its reference to the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, which embodied important principles for the coexistence and collaboration of countries with different economic and social systems, not only in Europe but throughout the world. As a further step in that connexion his delegation noted in particular the Soviet Union's call for the convening of three all-European congresses on problems of environmental protection, development of transport, and energy, being convinced that the solution of those global problems would be of benefit not only to the region but also to the peoples of the whole world.

54. In connexion with the activities of ECE during the past year, Bulgaria had been the host country for seminars on technologies for utilization of low-calorie fuels, the control of water resources and co-operation in energy technology. His country would continue to support ECE in its endeavours to improve economic co-operation within the region and to secure progress not only for European countries but also for countries throughout the world.

55. Mr. DAVIS (Australia) expressed his appreciation of the extensive and valuable material in the reports before the Council.

56. ESCAP, of which his country was a member, had a vast task which, within its limited resources, it was tackling with energy and imagination. The region accounted for more than half the world's population and a significant number of the least developed countries. He warmly endorsed the emphasis that the Commission was giving to the promotion of rural development.

57. Those directly involved with ESCAP were concerned that, despite efforts to rationalize its work programme, the resources required to implement the programme were \$10 million short. In the light of the present state of the world economy, the budgetary deficits of many countries and the growing costs of the United Nations, the ESCAP secretariat had made genuine efforts to prune the work programme and to concentrate on the priority areas. His country supported the suggestion that the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives should be authorized to take a critical look at the work programme with a view to ensuring that it was kept at a rational level (E/5786, para. 304).

58. At the thirty-second session of ESCAP the developing country members had shown greater willingness to share the financial and other responsibilities for the continuing viability of the Commission. That was particularly true of Indonesia and the other ASEAN countries. The resistance to further bureaucratic proliferation had marked the emergence of a realistic acceptance of the need for increased co-ordination and efficiency within the limits of the available resources.

59. The past year had seen the emergence of the South Pacific and ASEAN members as distinct subregional groupings within ESCAP. His Government hoped that in the coming year ESCAP's importance as a vehicle for regional co-operation across ideological barriers would be enhanced by the participation of the reunified Viet-Nam.

60. Commenting on some of the wider issues raised by the reports of the Secretary-General on regional structures of the United Nations system (E/5801) and the JIU on the decentralization of the United Nations economic, social and related activities and the strengthening of the regional economic commissions (E/5607 and Corr.1) and on the regional structures of the United Nations system (E/5727), he said that it would be difficult not to agree with the JIU's criticism of the lack of co-ordination between the members of the United Nations system, including the specialized agencies, and the regional commissions. His Government fully supported the Inspectors' proposal for a common definition of regions and subregions throughout the United Nations system. It also supported the proposal that regional and subregional offices for all United Nations bodies should be in the same place. That was only logical, but it would entail the expense of relocating offices at a time when United Nations resources were strained to the limit. Moreover, some host countries would be reluctant to lose the prestige and foreign currency associated with the presence of such offices. The proposal could be implemented over a period of years, placing new offices in the town agreed upon and moving existing offices gradually.

61. With regard to the proposals for rationalizing existing structures, he felt that it would be premature to establish

an ESCAP subregional office to cover the Pacific, firstly because ESCAP was trying to economize and, secondly, because the Commission's activities were already being carried out in the Pacific by a variety of ESCAP institutes or committees which operated independently and rarely needed headquarters guidance once their work programme had been determined.

62. He agreed in principle with the JIU recommendations aimed at forging closer links between the specialized agencies and the regional commissions but felt they should be more specific and take more account of the cost – notably the relocation of regional and subregional offices. The question of how those and other proposals would fit in with the work of the *Ad Hoc* Committee on the Restructuring of the Economic and Social Sectors of the United Nations System would need further consideration.

63. On decentralization, he agreed in principle with the JIU proposals on such subjects as co-ordination of work programmes, advisory services and training projects but felt that they should be more specific if they were to solve problems which were endemic in an organization as large and complex as the United Nations.

64. The JIU recommendation that regional commissions should to a greater extent be appointed executing agents for projects and that by 1979 all regional and subregional projects should be carried out by commissions required further careful evaluation before it could be endorsed. Full use should be made of the technical expertise of the specialized agencies and care should be taken to ensure that the present sectoral compartmentalization was not replaced by regional compartmentalization.

65. He agreed with the recommendation that co-ordination between UNDP and the regional commissions should include the posting of UNDP liaison officers to the headquarters of the regional commissions and meetings between the executive secretaries and the directors of UNDP regional bureaux. He also agreed with the recommendations that UNCTAD and UNIDO should transfer some of their regional and subregional programmes to the commissions and that UNIDO and UNCTAD should establish joint industrial divisions with the commissions. It should be noted, however, that although FAO had established joint agricultural development divisions in all the regional commissions, there were still problems of duplication and lack of co-ordination in ESCAP.

66. Mr. KAGUNDA (Kenya) thanked the Executive Secretary of ECA for the co-operation which the Kenyan Government had received from ECA in various fields.

67. His delegation fully supported the ECA report, particularly its project activities and programmes within the revised framework of principles for the implementation of the new international economic order, which it understood as a review and appraisal of the strategy for the economic and social development of the region, with special emphasis on the restructuring of international trade, transfer of real resources, industrial development, rural transformation, regional co-operation, sovereignty over natural resources, agriculture and food production, and on

the need for self-reliance, intraAfrican co-operation, and co-operation among the developing countries and with other countries.

68. With regard to the medium-term plan approved by ECA in February 1975, his delegation welcomed the adjustments which had been made to accommodate the new proposals for the establishment of a new international economic order.

69. He drew attention to the Commission's activities in the development of African agriculture, an important field which should continue to receive priority. He commended in particular the increased emphasis on programmes for increasing food availability, encouragement of integrated rural development, mixed farming and problems of agricultural input, production and distribution. He welcomed the medium-term and long-term plans for arresting the southward advance of the Sahara desert and for reclaiming and transforming the Sudano-Sahelian region into arable land.

70. In connexion with industry, he noted the recommendations of the Third Conference of African Ministers of Industry, which had resulted in the preparation of a comprehensive industrial programme for the period 1976-1981. He suggested that, in implementing the programme, full consideration should be given to environmental factors, without which sustained development was impossible.

71. There was an urgent need to speed up economic co-operation among developing countries, whose major obstacle to development was the small size of their economies. Their small markets and limited domestic demand hampered the development of industrial undertakings which required large markets to be viable. Self-reliance among the developing countries, through development of their own markets and free trade areas, would help to overcome the difficulties. The developing countries had a great potential for mutual trade in a number of fields and should take full advantage of it.

72. His delegation fully supported ECA's activities in the establishment of multinational, interdisciplinary UNDATs and noted with regret that their activities were threatened by serious liquidity problems. He urged that funds should be made available through the United Nations regular budget and through UNDP and other agencies to enable ECA to continue the valuable work of the UNDATs programme. In view of its vital importance he intended to raise the matter at the thirty-first session of the General Assembly.

73. Mr. KANAZAWA (Japan) expressed his delegation's appreciation and support for the activities of the regional commissions, in particular ESCAP.

74. At its thirty-second session, ESCAP had adopted two particularly important resolutions, resolution 161 (XXXII) on the integrated programme on rural development and resolution 162 (XXXII) on technical co-operation among developing countries. Rural development was a cardinal point in development strategy, but it raised considerable problems owing to the fact that, as ESCAP's report pointed

out, there was no single prescription applicable to all developing countries of the region although certain essential elements for effective policies and programmes for rural development could be identified. His delegation agreed that the Commission had an important role to play in the conceptualization and co-ordination of activities at the regional and subregional levels. His Government had offered to act as host to an intergovernmental meeting of experts on rural development, which he hoped would make a useful contribution.

75. Although technical co-operation among developing countries of the ESCAP region had, as stated in paragraph 72 of the report, continued at a high level since the Colombo Plan, it should be further developed, with the Commission acting as a regional focal and co-ordinating point. His delegation considered that the regional commissions should place more emphasis on the promotion of suitable regional activities and, accordingly, that ESCAP had followed the correct approach both to rural development and to technical co-operation. It was particularly unfortunate that the recent financial difficulties of UNDP had affected regional projects to a greater extent than others. He urged that a proper balance should be struck between regional and country projects to enable ESCAP and the other regional commissions to carry out their valuable work.

76. As the activities of the various United Nations bodies proliferated and became more complex, it was becoming increasingly necessary to maintain and promote co-ordination and to ensure that programmes were implemented in such a way as to meet the special conditions of the regions. The regional commissions were best suited to perform that task and decentralization should go hand in hand with a strengthening of their co-ordinating role.

77. The recent extension of the activities of FAO, UNIDO and the ILO to include export promotion of agricultural products, promotion of export-related industries and products, and the training of trade-related personnel had reached the stage where it was necessary to emphasize the need for arrangements at an early stage to avoid possible duplication with the activities of the International Trade Centre and to promote co-operation and co-ordination with it. His delegation welcomed the arrangements made in that regard between the International Trade Centre and ESCAP in 1973 and expected that co-operation between the two would be further strengthened; the International Trade Centre liaison officer should continue to be stationed at ESCAP.

78. Mr. ASHTAL (Democratic Yemen) commended the reports of the regional commissions, which provided valuable information and analyses. He agreed with the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs that adequate means should be placed at their disposal, since their work complemented that of the global organizations. They should be given the necessary resources and the authority to intervene in operational activities within their regions. Their co-operation with UNDP had proved mutually beneficial.

79. In spite of the special difficulties created by the tragic situation in Lebanon, ECWA had continued to render useful services, thanks to the dedication of its Executive Secretary and his staff. Its extended missions were performing their duties admirably.

80. Although the ECWA region was characterized by historical, cultural and social homogeneity, it was, economically, as diverse as any other region. Some of its countries were affluent while others were listed among the least developed countries of the world and suffered great deprivation. Within the countries there were great disparities between rich and poor, even in the urban centres, to which signs of modernity were confined. Monetary growth in some parts of the region contrasted with social lag and, in spite of an increase in revenues, due solely to oil exports, most countries of the region were net importers of food supplies and of agricultural and industrial machinery. Illiteracy and infant mortality throughout the greater part of the region stood at unacceptably high levels.

81. The imbalance in economic growth in the region was not conducive to the establishment of a viable socio-economic infrastructure, even in the oil producing countries, some of which were emulating the advanced market economies and creating consumer societies that generated a demand for unnecessary gadgets. The indiscriminate importation of modern technology was proving to be counter-productive, since it created employment in the metropolitan centres while it undermined the improvement of local techniques, especially in agriculture. Prestige projects with little productive value were of benefit only to international contractors and resulted in the recycling of petro-dollars to the advantage of the developed countries. While capable of generating economic growth, oil could curtail the freedom of those who produced it. The capitalist developed countries claimed that an uninterrupted flow of oil at almost fixed prices was important for world economic stability; yet the price of their exports was rising at a rate which many developing countries could scarcely keep up with. He therefore commended the regional commissions which adapted their work programmes to conform with the guidelines laid down at the sixth and seventh special sessions of the General Assembly, which were in the best interests of the peoples of the world.

82. He joined the representative of Pakistan (2023rd meeting) in paying a tribute to the oil producing countries of the region that had generously contributed to the economic development of developing countries.

83. Democratic Yemen was not only a non-oil producing country, it was a net importer of food supplies and industrial goods. Imported inflation was consequently too heavy a burden for it to bear. The country's successive economic plans and its wide range of social programmes were beginning to bear fruit. Illiteracy was to be eradicated by the end of the decade and laws had been promulgated giving social, economic and political rights to women equal to those of men. The emphasis placed on agricultural production had reversed the trend of migration to the towns.

84. In conclusion, he spoke of a whole people in the ECWA region — the Palestinian people — who had been deprived of the economic and social services provided by the United Nations and its agencies. Without prejudice to their political independence and their right to national

self-determination, he called upon the Council to respond to their economic and social needs.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.

2025th meeting

Friday, 23 July 1976, at 11.05 a.m.

President: Mr. S. AKÉ (Ivory Coast)

E/SR.2025

In the absence of the President, Mr. R. Rivas (Colombia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

AGENDA ITEM 5

United Nations University (A/31/31)

1. Mr. HESTER (Rector of the United Nations University) said that in the eleven months since the University had begun operations at its world headquarters at Tokyo, its activities had been focused on two primary objectives: planning and implementing its first research and training programmes; and seeking contributions from Member Governments to the endowment fund that provided the University's basic financing. His report to the Council would be largely concerned with those two objectives.

2. As the Council was aware, the General Assembly had chartered the University (A/9149/Add.2) to be different from traditional universities and to be instead an instrument for research, post-graduate training and dissemination of knowledge, functioning through a central programming and co-ordinating body and a network of research and post-graduate centres and programmes devoted to pressing global problems of human survival, development and welfare.

3. The charter defined the University only in general terms, however, and it was left to the University's Council, the Rector and his staff to give substance to the general concepts. That had been started in deliberations of the University Council prior to his appointment and had been continued in the work of the staff and in three biannual meetings of the Council held since his appointment in November 1974. By then, more than 100 offers of institutional and governmental co-operation with the University had been received and the University might have been brought into being simply by responding to such initiatives. That would not, however, have been a rational way to organize a coherent institution. Instead, at its January 1975 meeting, the University Council had reached the conclusion that the University should not accept outside offers until it had formulated its own priorities and operating principles. It had also decided against establishing a large staff of permanent University experts. Instead, it had decided to administer the University through a relatively small international, multi-disciplinary committee

composed of the Rector and several Vice-Rectors who would be responsible for maintaining frequent contact with experts around the world.

4. Following that meeting, Dr. Ichiro Kato, a former President of the University of Tokyo had been appointed Vice-Rector for Administration and General Council and had begun to organize the basic staff in April 1975. The second major appointment had been that of Dr. Alexander Kwabong of the University of Ghana as Vice-Rector for Planning and Development; he had started full-time service in January 1976. When Dr. Kato had resigned as Vice-Rector in April 1976, Dr. Kinhide Mushakoji, former Director of the Institute of International Relations of Sophia University at Tokyo, had become Vice-Rector for Programme in the Human and Social Development area. The University was now seeking a third Vice-Rector from another part of the world for programme work in the area of natural resources.

5. The January 1975 Council meeting had approved three priority areas for the University's initial work: world hunger; human and social development; and the use and management of natural resources. At the meeting in June 1975, the Council had decided to approach those three areas by assembling working committees of experts to advise the University on the strategies it should follow in order to avoid unnecessary duplication of work and to take full advantage of the University's unique mandate. It had also agreed that, in view of the University's financial limitations, its initial work would probably be undertaken in association with existing institutions rather than through incorporated institutions under its own management.

6. The University's operations had begun with three working meetings held at Tokyo in the autumn of 1975, attended by 69 experts from 39 countries. The meetings had been useful because they had elicited a variety of informed opinions from the participants on the activities which the University should or should not undertake. The reports and recommendations could not be definitive but they had provided a useful foundation for the beginning of the University's activities.

7. Many of the experts had originally been somewhat sceptical about the need for yet another international organization, but once they had examined the potentialities