

*Declaration of Abidjan*

(E/L.1729)

59. Mr. EHSASSI (Iran), Chairman of the Contact Group, introduced the draft declaration of Abidjan (E/L.1729) and proposed that, in conformity with the agreement concluded in the Group, the Council should adopt it unanimously.

*It was so decided.*

*Decision of the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme relating to the coherence of the United Nations development system*

60. Mr. EHSASSI (Iran) recalled that, in his statement on 7 July (2017th meeting), the Administrator of UNDP had informed the Council that at its twenty-second session the Governing Council of UNDP had adopted a decision entitled "Coherence of the United Nations Development System", which it requested the Economic and Social Council to bring to the attention of the specialized agencies, requesting them to arrange for its distribution at their next session, where appropriate.

61. The report of the Governing Council of UNDP (E/5779 and E/5846) would be considered by the Council at Geneva during the second part of the session. Nevertheless, as the governing body of one of the large specialized agencies was opening its session on 12 July, a number of

delegations had held consultations with a view to ascertaining how the Council should act on the UNDP request and bring the decision in question to the attention of the governing bodies of the specialized agencies as soon as possible. In view of the exceptional circumstances, the Bureau had considered it desirable that the Council should immediately transmit the UNDP decision to the specialized agencies, without prejudging the subsequent consideration of the UNDP report. Therefore, he formally proposed that the Council should transmit to the heads of secretariats of the specialized agencies, without delay, the decision of the UNDP Governing Council entitled "Coherence of the United Nations Development System", the text of which had been circulated to members of the Council for their information.<sup>3</sup>

*It was so decided.*

62. The PRESIDENT announced that the Council had completed its working meetings for the first part of its sixty-first session.

*The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.*

<sup>3</sup> The Council had taken note of that decision at its 2031st meeting, when it had adopted the draft resolution submitted by the Policy and Programme Co-ordination Committee (E/5880, draft resolution V) on agenda item 19 (Operational activities for development).

## 2021st meeting

Friday, 9 July 1976, at 4.35 p.m.

*President:* Mr. S. AKÉ (Ivory Coast)

E/SR.2021

### *Closure of the first part of the session*

1. Mr. LONGERSTAEY (Belgium), Vice-President of the Council, introduced the following draft resolution:

"Expression of thanks to the Government and people of Ivory Coast

*"The Economic and Social Council,*

*"Meeting for the first time on the continent of Africa,*

*"Aware of its responsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations,*

*"Believing that its historic meeting at Abidjan has given new impetus to fulfil those responsibilities,*

*"1. Expresses its profound appreciation to His Excellency the President of the Republic of Ivory Coast and to the Government of the Republic of Ivory Coast for making this meeting possible;*

*"2. Invites the President of the Economic and Social Council to convey an expression of its deep gratitude to the people of the Republic of Ivory Coast for the*

generous hospitality and warm welcome accorded to them on every side and in particular to those responsible for the excellent arrangements for the meeting."

*The draft resolution was unanimously adopted.*

2. Mr. HARRIMAN (Nigeria), speaking on behalf of the African States, said that the meeting now coming to a close was a historic one. It was the first Council session to be held in Africa, a continent which had had its share of the problems that were the concern of the Council, having suffered from slavery, colonialism, neo-colonialism, aggression, occupation, disregard for human rights, *apartheid* and an abundance of natural disasters. The session was also taking place at a time when Africa and the rest of the third world could see the glimmerings of a new international economic order on the horizon, whose emergence was only a matter of time. Universal political independence was also not far off, as the President of Ivory Coast had said in his opening address (2006th meeting).

3. The President of Ivory Coast was renowned throughout Africa. He had been in the vanguard of the struggle for

national liberation, African unity and freedom, dignity and justice for all, and he was continuing to fight for the underprivileged and oppressed everywhere. The economic and social achievements of Ivory Coast were an example to the developing world. On behalf of the African countries, he thanked the Government and people of Ivory Coast for their kindness and hospitality.

4. He also thanked the President of the Economic and Social Council, a proud son of a proud country, whose indefatigable efforts on behalf of his own country, the African Group at the United Nations, the Group of 77 and the non-aligned and third world countries generally, together with his reputation as a man of principle, had won him recognition as an outstanding diplomat.

5. The days at Abidjan, the words of the President of Ivory Coast and the achievements of the African continent would be an inspiration to the Council in its work at Geneva and elsewhere.

6. Mr. RASHID (Bangladesh), speaking on behalf of the Asian States, said that all speakers during the past few days had emphasized their desire for a happier, freer and more prosperous world with a fairer distribution of resources. The fact that the Council was meeting in a developing country had highlighted the determination of all countries to improve their economic conditions. Little had been done, however, to act on the proposals and resolutions of recent international and regional conferences. Unless concerted action was taken before long, there would be serious consequences. The establishment of a new international economic order depended to a large extent on the abolition of exploitation, racial discrimination, neo-colonialism and other evil practices and the nations of the world must join in pursuing that objective.

7. He wished to express the deep appreciation and gratitude of the Asian countries to the President, Government and people of Ivory Coast for making the meeting a success.

8. Mr. BARCELÓ (Mexico), speaking on behalf of the Latin American States, said that there were close ethnic and cultural links between Latin America and Africa, whose people had known and still faced the same battles. He had appreciated the wisdom of the President of Ivory Coast and thanked the Government and people for their generous hospitality and for the very efficient arrangements made for the Council's work. He was sure the spirit of Abidjan would inspire the remainder of the session at Geneva.

9. Mr. HOEHNE (German Democratic Republic), speaking on behalf of the socialist States of Eastern Europe, said that although progress had been made at Abidjan, the major task lay ahead at Geneva. The Council, like the rest of the United Nations, must work by seeking compromise between the positions of the different groups of States. He drew attention to an UNCTAD document,<sup>1</sup> in which a

number of socialist countries, including Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and his own country, had outlined their attitudes. The delegations of those four countries were taking an active part in the present work of the Council, on the basis of the principles expressed in the document. Those delegations took into account all decisions taken by United Nations bodies and supported them to the extent to which they served that objective and their countries would continue to do so in future.

10. The African countries were playing an increasing part in international relations, and were gaining a growing influence, as the meeting at Abidjan showed. He wished to express sincere thanks to the President, people and Government of Ivory Coast for making the meeting a useful and a pleasant one. He also wished the African people success in their fight against colonialism and neo-colonialism, in which the socialist countries were their natural allies.

11. Mr. SCOUROLIACOS (Greece), speaking on behalf of the West European and other States, said that he wished to stress how much the President of Ivory Coast had helped and inspired the Council by his presence and by his brilliant opening statement. Members deeply appreciated his interest in the work of the Council.

12. He also thanked the Government and people of Ivory Coast for their warm welcome and hospitality.

13. It had been a wise idea to hold the first part of the Council's session in Africa. It would live as a historic event and a constant source of inspiration in international economic and social co-operation.

14. Mr. M'BOW (Director-General, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), speaking on behalf of the specialized agencies, expressed his profound gratitude to the President, Government and people of Ivory Coast. President Houphouët-Boigny's stimulating personality and grasp of the world's problems had won him the respect of the international community.

15. The world had reached a stage where failure to solve its problems could only lead to tragedy. He was confident, however, that the present session of the Council would help it to emerge from its current difficulties.

16. The PRESIDENT expressed the gratitude of the Economic and Social Council to the President of Ivory Coast and to its Government and people for their kind invitation to the Council, the hospitality offered to it and the facilities placed at its disposal.

17. The Council had particularly appreciated the honour conferred upon it by the President of the Republic in attending the opening of the Council's first meeting to be held in Africa. President Houphouët-Boigny had also found time to receive most of the heads of delegations, thus demonstrating his interest in the Council's work and his wise advice had contributed substantially to its success. The President had analysed the serious economic and social problems confronting the international community in Africa and had pointed out ways and means that would

<sup>1</sup> See *Proceedings of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, Fourth Session, vol. I, Report and Annexes* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.76.II.D.10), annex VIII, document TD/211.

enable developed and developing countries to work out solutions that were practical and acceptable to all.

18. The first meeting of the Council to be held in Africa was a very significant event, since it constituted a mark of homage to Africa and attested to the growing interest of the international community in Africa's economic and social development.

19. The quality of representation at the Council's Abidjan session was noteworthy: many countries had been represented by ministers and other senior officials, whose participation could not but strengthen the authority of the Council, enabling it to perform its functions effectively under the United Nations Charter and the resolutions of the General Assembly.

20. The Government and people of Ivory Coast considered it an honour to welcome the sixty-first session of the Council. But that honour was shared by the whole of Africa, which was why President Houphouët-Boigny had invited all the African countries that were not members of the Council to be represented at the session and thus make it a genuinely African occasion. He thanked all those countries which had been good enough to respond to that invitation by sending delegations, led, in most cases, by ministers.

21. The Council was particularly satisfied to see that the importance of its first meeting in Africa had been recognized throughout the world. The effect of the statements full of goodwill made by many representatives would be felt throughout Africa and elsewhere.

22. The nature of the Council's work had enabled it to concentrate on the problems faced by Africa, a continent consisting mainly of young countries, many of which had achieved independence after a long struggle against colonial domination. Despite all they had gone through before their legitimate rights to freedom and dignity were recognized, those countries harboured no feelings of animosity towards those who had been their overlords. Quite the contrary, they extended the hand of friendship to all with a view to the confident and fruitful co-operation which would ensure them the external contribution they needed to supplement their own efforts for economic and social development.

23. Unfortunately, because of the stubbornness and blindness of the minority of white racists, millions of Africans were not yet able to enjoy the benefits of freedom and were still the victims of racial discrimination and *apartheid*. It was high time for that small minority to understand that peace implied full recognition of the right of the majority to freedom, equality and justice through the elimination of colonialism and racial discrimination in Africa. Nothing could stop the wind of change and the forward march of the forces of progress. If the world community spoke with a united voice and acted with resolution, the walls of tyranny would surely crumble and peace would be possible in Africa.

24. The problems of Africa were in no way unique. Such problems had been experienced in many parts of the world; examples came readily to mind from the history not only

of other developing regions but also of some developed countries. The United States of America was that week celebrating the 200th anniversary of its independence from colonial rule, and all members of the Council offered it their warmest congratulations. No people should be denied the freedom to shape its destiny in accordance with its own aspirations.

25. It was about 200 years, also, since the industrial revolution had begun in Europe. The technological and material advances made had prompted scholars to start analysing crucial aspects of nations' economic and social progress. Since the eighteenth century, the economies of the developed countries had been radically transformed. In the span of a few generations, they had moved from poverty to affluence, from crude methods of production to the use of highly complex and sophisticated techniques, from the earth to outer space.

26. Today the developing countries were also seeking a radical change in their economies. There was, of course, no reason to believe that they would necessarily follow the same path as the developed had. Circumstances differed markedly from one country to another, and in the final analysis it was up to each country to forge its economic destiny according to the wishes of its people, and by its own genius, discipline and dedication.

27. Clearly, however, at least the basic transformation of the economies of the developing countries must take place in a much shorter time-span than had been the case in the developed countries. Indeed, there could be no enduring peace and stability in the world if some parts of it remained enmeshed in extreme poverty. The international community must therefore create an environment that would help to meet the basic needs of the third world and ensure its sustained development.

28. The work of the United Nations in the economic and social domain derived its basic inspiration from Article 55 of the United Nations Charter. But it had been given a new sense of direction and a new vigour by the important decisions of the General Assembly in recent years, especially those relating to the International Development Strategy for the Second Development Decade (resolution 2626 (XXV) and the Declaration and Programme of Action on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order (resolutions 3201 (S-VI) and 3202 (S-VI)). The central idea behind those decisions was that through concerted national and international measures, it should be possible to transform the economies of developing countries, provide their people with growing opportunities for a better life and hold out hope for a world of peace, justice and progress. It was that idea of the whole world community acting in harmony, that distinguished present endeavours from those of past centuries, when efforts had indeed been made, but on a *laissez-faire* basis and without international co-operation, except in the purely commercial movement of goods, services and finance from one country to another. The international community now had the advantage of being able to learn from the mistakes of the past. But was it ready to seize the opportunities offered? Was it willing to translate lofty principles into action, or

must there always be a yawning gap between aspiration and achievement?

29. For a while after the launching of the Second United Nations Development Decade, hopes had been high that the goals set in the International Development Strategy would be achieved. But in the light of experience it was difficult to remain optimistic. After a welcome increase during the first three years of the Decade, the rate of economic growth in developing countries had trailed off ominously during 1974 and 1975. Moreover, in the poorer countries, where structural imbalances were acute, the pace of economic growth had generally been well below the average for the developing countries as a whole.

30. In part, that might be attributed to the turbulence that had shaken the world economy in recent years. The developed market economies had undergone a severe recession during 1974 and 1975, with harmful repercussions for the economies of developing countries which were highly dependent on external trade. The developing countries other than those which were petroleum exporters had been hard hit. A deterioration in their terms of trade and large deficits in their balances of payments gravely jeopardized their development efforts.

31. Those events had demonstrated beyond doubt the interdependent nature of the world economy. Economic upheavals in one part of the world were felt rapidly in others. It was vital, therefore, that the industrially advanced countries should find a way of making economic recessions a thing of the past. Idle labour and production capacity in the industrialized countries needed to be put to effective use, not only for the good of their own societies, but also for the benefit of people in the rest of the world, especially in the developing countries. There was no lack of knowledge on how to ensure sustained economic expansion. The problem was rather one of finding appropriate institutional means and reconciling the interests of different sections of society. Undoubtedly that would often require difficult decisions, but in view of what was at stake no one could afford to be complacent.

32. In many developing countries, the pace of economic expansion during recent years had also been checked by the sluggishness of agriculture. In fact, food production had been lagging dangerously behind the increase in their population. Everyone knew of the tragic drought suffered by countries of the Sahel in recent years; science and technology were sufficiently advanced, however, to make it possible to supply water both for irrigation and for human consumption and to halt the encroachment of deserts on arable land. The developing world would therefore await with interest the results of the forthcoming United Nations Water Conference and the United Nations Conference on Desertification.

33. Planners and policy makers in the developing countries were placing renewed emphasis on the expansion and modernization of agriculture, which was by far the largest sector in most developing economies. The welfare of millions of people, in terms of both food and employment, depended on the expansion and diversification of agricultural production and allied rural activities. Assured supplies

of water, fertilizer, technology and finance were essential for sustained agricultural development. As was to be expected, much of the effort in that regard came from the developing countries themselves, but a great deal also depended on what the international community could do. In that connexion, the establishment of the IFAD was a welcome new development.

34. The expansion and modernization of agriculture could not take place without advances in industrialization. Similarly, industrial progress might be retarded if agriculture failed to move forward. The developing countries needed rapid development of both industry and agriculture, with efforts in one sector supporting and reinforcing efforts in the other. Indeed, it was industry that served as the engine of expansion, modernization and diversification throughout the economy, including agriculture. Many developing countries, particularly in Africa, were at a very early stage of industrialization and much ground had to be covered to make the industrial sector contribute significantly to their economic and social progress.

35. However, both the rate and the pattern of production in the developing countries were closely linked with their channels of trade and finance. It was necessary for them to find expanding external markets for their agricultural and industrial goods. Some progress had been made in that regard, for example, by means of the arrangements agreed to between EEC and the Associated States under the ACP-EEC Convention of Lomé. Another step had been taken recently at the fourth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development with regard to the Integrated Programme for Commodities. The Secretary-General of UNCTAD had been requested to convene a series of meetings and conferences intended to give shape and content to the Integrated Programme, which should have the support of all Governments.

36. International trade was a two-way traffic. Developing countries sought a steady expansion in their exports not because they wished to pile up stocks of gold or foreign exchange but because they needed more imports of machinery, equipment and other crucial development goods. Increases in the imports of developing countries would bring corresponding increases in the exports of developed countries, including market economies and centrally planned economies. An expanding flow of international trade should therefore bring benefits to all countries, promote rational and efficient production and strengthen the international division of labour. National self-sufficiency was not the answer. Even the path to recovery from the recent recession lay through the expansion and not the contraction of trade. Members had all heard with interest that the socialist countries had recently launched their new development plans, which, it was hoped, would mean substantial increases in their imports from the developing world. As those plans coincided with the second half of the current United Nations Development Decade, they could do much to help in the achievement of its goals.

37. Trade among the developing countries themselves was also important, and vigorous efforts should be made to increase it. The decisions taken by the General Assembly at

its sixth and seventh special sessions and its thirtieth session attested to the strong desire of developing countries to promote trade and other forms of economic co-operation among themselves. Latin American countries had provided noteworthy examples of effective action in that regard. Recently, in Africa and Asia some innovative steps had been taken which should bear fruit in due course.

38. However, it was not likely that the growing import requirements of developing countries could be paid for wholly through their own exports. The struggle against poverty and underdevelopment could not be won without an adequate flow of finance from developed countries. The world community had set a target in that respect, but it was obviously still far from being achieved. It could be argued that private capital represented an important source of development finance, and each country was entitled to decide whether it wished to obtain private foreign capital and, if so, to enter into appropriate arrangements for that purpose. It must not be forgotten, however, that private capital transactions took place on commercial terms and that private foreign capital, however useful it might be for some countries, could not be equated with financial assistance. Furthermore, experience had shown that private foreign capital tended to be concentrated in a small number of developing countries.

39. Understandably, therefore, it was the target for official development assistance, comprising grants and loans on concessional terms, that attracted attention. However, attention did not always imply implementation, and the general picture, despite the remarkable efforts of a few developed countries, remained bleak. The consequences were particularly grave for low-income developing countries, most of which were in Africa and Asia.

40. For a large number of developing countries, the financial problem was made more difficult by the fact that the burden of their external indebtedness had become alarming. It was unfortunate that it had not been possible

to resolve the problem at the fourth session of UNCTAD. He had no doubt that as members examined the results of UNCTAD's proceedings, considerable attention would be given to the debt question. It was important that the forthcoming discussions on the matter within the framework of UNCTAD should yield results. He hoped that the Paris Conference on International Economic Co-operation would also help to deal with that and other outstanding development issues.

41. The search for bold and imaginative means to speed up development and to eradicate poverty must continue. Developing countries themselves were intensifying their efforts, and the meetings to be held by them in the coming months would surely give new impetus for economic and social change. The Council would await with interest the results of the Fifth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, to be held at Colombo, and the Conference on Economic Co-operation among Developing Countries, to be held at Mexico City. The Council had also noted the proposal by the Prime Minister of Pakistan that a summit conference of third world countries should be convened.

42. For the Economic and Social Council, there was no greater challenge than the need to bring about a just and humane international economic order which ensured progress and peace for all. All countries, rich and poor, must wholeheartedly participate in that global undertaking. The efforts made by both developed and developing countries during the Council's meetings, and particularly the adoption at the 2020th meeting of the Declaration of Abidjan, had given a glimpse of what could be achieved when men and women of goodwill put their minds and hearts into a common cause – the well-being of man.

43. He declared closed the first part of the sixty-first session of the Economic and Social Council.

*The meeting rose at 5.45 p.m.*

## 2022nd meeting

Wednesday, 21 July 1976, at 10.45 a.m.

*President:* Mr. S. AKÉ (Ivory Coast)

E/SR.2022

### AGENDA ITEM 4

**Regional co-operation (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/5802 (chap. III, sect. E), E/5835 and Corr.1 and E/5835/Add.1, E/5858)**

1. Mr. AL-ATTAR (Executive Secretary, Economic Commission for Western Asia), introducing the annual report of ECWA (E/5785), said that, despite the recent trend towards economic recovery, world inflation and unemployment were still formidable problems. The situation had had

adverse effects on the already vulnerable trade and payments position of developing countries, affecting their terms of trade and export earnings and increasing their current account deficits. Moreover, the international community continued to be faced with a number of structural problems and urgent issues in the economic and social fields, including food shortages, population pressures, the ever-widening gap in living standards between developed and developing countries, instability in the international monetary system, unemployment and underemployment, and problems to do with the transfer of technology to developing countries, the role of women in the development process and the exploitation of the sea-bed.