

49. Mr. SLIPCHENKO (Observer for the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic), speaking at the invitation of the President, said that the question of co-operation within the United Nations system was many-sided. The regional commissions had an important role in matters directly related to the economic and social development tasks of the countries in their regions. Their familiarity with the practical problems put the commissions in a unique position to suggest improvements in United Nations social and economic activities, bringing them more into line with immediate development needs and with the objectives of a new international economic order based on justice, equality and peace.

50. His delegation in general endorsed the ECE report (E/5781). The Commission's activities had helped to promote détente and peaceful relations among States, and his delegation welcomed the Executive Secretary's statement referring to the Helsinki Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe and his emphasis on the task of implementing its historic Final Act, which should govern activities in all the relevant spheres of international co-operation. In that connexion the proposal for three all-

European congresses on questions of co-operation in the field of protection of the environment, development of transport, and energy was particularly significant, and ECE could play a vitally useful role in organizing such gatherings.

51. The future work programme of ECE should concentrate on the development of mutual trade and on economic and technical co-operation between countries with differing social and economic systems, in order to promote equitable relations and remove political obstacles.

52. The machinery of ECE was basically suitable for such tasks. However, his delegation recognized the need to consider the possible restructuring of the regional commissions; the ultimate aim was, of course, to improve the means of tackling international economic problems, whose solution, as the Executive Secretary of ECE had said in his report, would help to eliminate political difficulties and strengthen world peace.

The meeting rose at 6.p.m.

2027th meeting

Monday, 26 July 1976, at 10.50 a.m.

President: Mr. S. AKÉ (Ivory Coast)

E/SR.2027

AGENDA ITEM 30

Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (E/5853 and Corr.1, E/L.1730)

1. Prince Sadruddin AGA KHAN (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) introduced his report (E/5853 and Corr.1), whose presentation had been modified to give effect to General Assembly resolution 3271 (XXIX), in which the Assembly had requested the High Commissioner to report on the special operations of his Office in the same manner as he reported on other activities. Tracing the institutional evolution of his Office since its inception, he said that UNHCR had had to intervene, primarily for humanitarian reasons, on behalf of displaced persons who, strictly speaking, did not come within the terms of its 1950 mandate and to co-ordinate the humanitarian action of the United Nations by acting as "focal point". That system of co-ordination had often been used since 1971, and UNHCR's mandate to participate in humanitarian activities of a more general nature had been confirmed by the General Assembly in its resolutions 2956 (XXVII) and 3454 (XXX). The humanitarian actions resulting from the expanded functions of UNHCR, which were known as "special operations", were often undertaken to follow up international agreements or treaties ending conflicts or situations of extreme internal or external tension (the Addis Ababa agreement of March 1972 relating to "returnees and displaced persons" in the southern Sudan, the New Delhi agreement of August 1973 on the transfer of

population groups from Pakistan to Bangladesh and from Bangladesh and Nepal to Pakistan and UNHCR assistance to displaced persons in Indo-China following the 1973 Paris and Vientiane agreements). The programme for co-ordinating United Nations humanitarian assistance for Cyprus had not resulted from an agreement or international treaty but was intended to make it possible to assist the people affected pending a negotiated solution to the conflict.

2. Some of UNHCR's activities following the extension of its original mandate were intended to assist repatriated persons to resettle in their country of origin (Algerian refugees returning from Tunisia and Morocco, the South Sudan operation in 1972, and more recently the assistance given to repatriated refugees and to displaced persons in Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and Angola).

3. The many activities in question required administrative and financial resources. Happily, Governments had always provided UNHCR with adequate means to accomplish its task and to meet requirements, which had increased more than 200 per cent in the past three years. During the five-year period starting in 1971, the programmes of material assistance had required a total input of \$60 million. Contributions in cash and kind to UNHCR for its special humanitarian tasks on behalf of refugees and displaced persons had risen during the same period to over \$350 million. Those figures showed the importance attached by the international community to the needs of

millions of persons who were victims of man-made disasters. With regard to the administrative apparatus of UNHCR, despite the considerable expansion in its activities and the increase in its financial resources, it had remained relatively small.

4. For the new United Nations programme-budget cycle, it had been agreed that UNHCR's regular budget would remain constant in real terms during the first four years ending in 1977. UNHCR had abided by that understanding. The budget for special operations included a programme support component which made it possible to hire temporary staff for the duration of each operation at an average cost, during the five years since 1971, of about 5 per cent of the total input, or less than half the average proportion.

5. Three fundamental criteria were applicable to the humanitarian activities of UNHCR: they should be of a strictly humanitarian and non-political character; the Government or Governments concerned should request UNHCR to undertake them, and the beneficiaries must be refugees as defined in the UNHCR Statute or be in a situation analogous to that of refugees (persons displaced for reasons beyond their control, following events or circumstances attributable to man, such as international conflicts, civil war, general political and social instability, etc.). The criteria for intervention should be backed by a sufficiently broad consensus on the part of the international community to ensure its support, and it was necessary to ensure a co-ordinated approach to United Nations action.

6. None of those conditions was entirely new. The novelty lay rather in that they applied to far more varied situations than those originally envisaged, which did not necessarily fall within the earlier narrow framework of UNHCR's activities. There had undoubtedly been an extension in UNHCR's competence with regard to both the persons benefiting from its assistance and its functions. Nothing of course had changed in UNHCR's statutory function of protection.

7. Its institutional evolution was in no way abstract or theoretical but the result of events. The General Assembly had progressively extended UNHCR's sphere of competence, and it was now one of the principal instruments of United Nations humanitarian policy. The result was that UNHCR was better equipped today to come to the aid of persons uprooted as a result of man-made events. UNHCR was at the service of Governments, and it was for them to decide how to use it to implement international humanitarian policies. The confidence and support of Governments were in fact a prerequisite for the success of UNHCR's activities.

8. Mr. BOUDJAKDJI (Algeria) said that it was gratifying to note the positive results achieved by UNHCR's efforts, on which refugees depended for their existence and survival even if, as UNHCR had pointed out on various occasions, the refugees' lives were, first and foremost, dependent on the reactions of the international community. Material aid, when it was eventually given, was not enough to alleviate the plight of the refugees unless it was combined with a

qualitative factor. UNHCR, in its actions, had always been aware of the need to give the refugees moral support, and was to be commended for its admirable approach, which should be maintained and consolidated. UNHCR was also to be commended on the pragmatic nature of its actions, which were adapted to the different categories of refugees concerned. Those features made UNHCR a model which his delegation would like to see further developed in order to endow it with a more clearly defined framework for both administrative purposes and policy implementation, and to assure it of the necessary international co-ordination. The framework should, however, retain the flexibility which had so far ensured its success.

9. His delegation hoped that the Economic and Social Council would take note of UNHCR's years of experience and acknowledge the fact that it had devised a system of action that had proved its merits, and had built up a fund of experience in every kind of situation that might arise as a result of man-made disasters. The Pakistani delegation intended to submit a draft resolution to give UNHCR's institutional structure a more permanent stamp. His own delegation associated itself with that initiative, and hoped that the Council would preserve and develop the unique nature of the High Commissioner's Office.

10. Mr. AHMAD KHAN (Pakistan) said that his delegation unreservedly supported all of UNHCR's activities. Disasters, whether natural or man-made, were constantly occurring, and aid had to be provided to their victims on an increasing scale. It was to be hoped, of course, that the international community would one day no longer need the services of UNHCR, but in the meantime it should lend the Office its full support. His delegation would be submitting a draft resolution on the subject.

11. Mr. SIDKY (Observer for the Organization of African Unity), speaking at the invitation of the President, congratulated the High Commissioner on the work accomplished and encouraged him to intensify his activities, the aims of which were in harmony with those of OAU. A Refugee Day had recently been celebrated in Africa, and on that occasion the African States had stressed that UNHCR should adapt itself to the profound changes which had occurred in the region; many countries, on attaining independence, had had to face numerous problems of repatriating and resettling refugees and displaced persons — a very heavy burden for them, considering the demands made on them by development requirements, in the transitional period through which they were passing.

12. Furthermore, Africa was facing a serious situation as a result of the intransigence of the colonialist and racist régimes of southern Africa: confronted by that attitude of defiance, the international community must shoulder its responsibilities. OAU was therefore confident that UNHCR would play an important role in the fields within its competence and that it would intensify its activities in Africa. Much had already been done in regard to aid and co-operation between UNHCR and OAU, and it was to be hoped that such co-operation would continue and that consultations would be held in future between the two bodies.

13. The High Commissioner for Refugees had taken due account of the directives of the General Assembly, which had requested him, in resolution 3454 (XXX), to intensify his efforts on behalf of refugees in Africa, notably those returning to their countries following independence. It was desirable that the Council should reiterate that request in the resolution which was being prepared. For its part, OAU was doing everything it could to assist African refugees and to improve their prospects, for example by organizing a refugee employment bureau. At their latest conference, the Heads of State or Government of the African countries had considered those problems and had urged States members of OAU to offer refugees greater facilities for settlement and resettlement in their territories, e.g. jobs, scholarships and vocational training facilities. However, in order to be effective, the effort made by the African countries had to be reinforced by the action of UNHCR.

14. In resolution 3456 (XXX) the General Assembly had requested that a conference of plenipotentiaries should be convened to consider a draft Convention on Territorial Asylum. At their latest conference, the Heads of State or Government of the African countries had requested States members of OAU to participate as actively as possible in that conference.

15. Mr. TARCICI (Yemen) recalled that in the course of the past year disturbances which had taken place in the areas to the south and west of the Red Sea had caused a large number of destitute refugees to move into Yemen. Without losing a moment, UNHCR had sent officials to assess requirements and to take the necessary action, in co-operation with the Yemeni authorities. That was evidence of the exemplary efficiency of the activities undertaken by the High Commissioner and his colleagues and assistants.

16. Mr. FERNAND-LAURENT (France) said that he had listened with interest to the High Commissioner's analysis of the historical evolution of the functions of UNHCR; without neglecting its original mandate, UNHCR had been led, at the request of the United Nations or of Governments, to furnish its good offices or to co-ordinate humanitarian activities undertaken on behalf of displaced persons following various man-made disasters. It was noteworthy that UNHCR had always been able to cope with that enlarged role without substantially increasing its staff; the French delegation, which was not unaware of the problems posed by the recruitment of numerous additional staff for the performance of special tasks, intended to raise the matter again at the next meeting of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme.

17. He reaffirmed his country's support for UNHCR, both in the discharge of its traditional functions and in the performance of its enlarged role; he would support the draft resolution to be submitted by Pakistan.

18. Mr. LAZAREVIĆ (Yugoslavia) noted that UNHCR's activities had become increasingly diversified in recent years and that its role had been enlarged; at the same time, unfortunately, world refugee problems had become increasingly acute. UNHCR's effort to repatriate and resettle refugees was common knowledge, and the High Com-

missioner should not allow himself to be discouraged by recent events; the tribulations endured by many refugees called, more than ever before, for action by the international community.

19. Yugoslavia was a party to the international legal instruments relating to the protection of refugees and was applying them scrupulously; in some fields, such as social welfare and health, it went even further; it had recently replied to the questionnaire sent to it by the High Commissioner, and it welcomed the fact that a conference of plenipotentiaries was soon to be convened for the purpose of adopting a convention on territorial asylum; it was to be hoped that the conference would be a success and that it would be possible to prepare a convention acceptable to all.

20. His delegation wished to be added to the list of sponsors of the draft resolution to be submitted by Pakistan.

21. Mr. MIRCEA-MANEA (Romania) noted that, as always, the High Commissioner had shown a great sense of responsibility in his presentation of UNHCR activities for the benefit of the international community; his statement showed that those activities had embraced many new aspects, not so much in the material field, where possibilities had sometimes been fairly limited, as in regard to the methods adopted and the arrangements made to ensure that humanitarian programmes could be reflected in a progressive improvement in the condition of refugees. The programmes implemented by the High Commissioner in Indo-China and in certain areas of Africa and Latin America clearly showed the increased role of UNHCR and the new scope of its activities. What had been done had led to increased confidence on the part of a large number of countries, particularly developing countries, in the work of UNHCR.

22. Co-operation between Romania and the Office of the High Commissioner, which was developing in a continuous and encouraging way, had made it possible to solve the problem of the 1,500 Chilean refugees settled at Bucharest. As a result of the efforts made by the Romanian Government, which had allocated \$5 million to the programme up to the end of 1975, and of the co-operation of UNHCR, the Romanian authorities had been able to provide those refugees with housing, education, vocational training, free medical assistance and monthly allowances. Similarly, remarkable results had been obtained in the matter of reuniting families: Romania, a signatory to the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference, had been able to settle many cases which had been submitted to it by the High Commissioner. He confirmed that his country was willing to increase its co-operation with UNHCR, as far as its means permitted.

23. Mr. CARANICAS (Greece) said that his country, which was a member of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme, attached great importance to the activities of UNHCR; the High Commissioner's statement and the report before the Council (E/5853 and Corr.1) highlighted an important aspect of UNHCR's activities: the expansion of the Office's responsibilities.

24. The High Commissioner's report was exemplary in many ways, and chapters I and II, in particular, gave a comprehensive picture of the activities undertaken during the past year; chapter VII on assistance activities in the Middle East was also especially interesting. Chapter VIII gave an idea of what relations between the different organs of the United Nations, the other intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations ought to be. Chapters IX on administrative and financial questions and X on public information were also praiseworthy; however, in the information field, a special effort would need to be made to reach the public in the developing countries. Greece's support for UNHCR activities was greater than ever before.

25. Mr. KANNAWAT (Thailand), commenting on the refugee problem in his country, noted that that subject was dealt with in paragraphs 208 to 213 of the High Commissioner's report, which provided an opportunity to assess the extent of the problem and the assistance offered by UNHCR and by certain Members of the United Nations. His country greatly appreciated that assistance, but it bore a substantial share of the financial and administrative burden imposed by the influx of refugees and was doing its best, within the limits of its capability, to provide temporary care for them. Thailand in no way desired that influx of refugees from neighbouring countries, and it accepted them only out of humanitarian considerations, in the hope that other countries would render assistance or increase the assistance which they were already providing. The resettlement of the refugees in third countries offered a permanent solution and should therefore be facilitated, but voluntary repatriation was clearly the most natural solution.

26. Mr. AHMAD KHAN (Pakistan) read out a draft resolution relating to UNHCR submitted by his delegation and the delegations of eight other countries, to be circulated as document E/L.1730.

27. The PRESIDENT suggested that the Council should resume its consideration of agenda item 30 on 29 July and that it should then reach a decision on the draft resolution submitted by Pakistan.

It was so agreed.

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)

28. Mr. MARMARA (Observer for Malta), speaking at the invitation of the President, said that his delegation had noted with interest the statement by the Executive Secretary of ECE that the Commission wished to be more outward looking, not only by paying more attention to the European countries which were still developing but also by making the results of its work available to all developing countries. Malta had also noted with interest the views expressed by the Executive Secretary (2022nd meeting) on the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference on Security and

Co-operation in Europe and resolution 1 (XXXI) adopted on that subject by ECE at its thirty-first session (see E/5781, part IV). With respect to decision A (XXXI) concerning the encouragement of Mediterranean economic co-operation in implementation of the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, his delegation noted that ECE had asked the Executive Secretary to take due account of the need to encourage economic co-operation as envisaged in the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference and in Economic and Social Council resolution 1952 (LIX).

29. Mr. FRAZÃO (Brazil) gave his delegation's views on the strengthening of the regional commissions, regional co-operation and technical co-operation among developing countries. Even before the creation of ECLA, the Brazilian delegation was championing the cause of decentralization and the strengthening of the regional commissions. Its position had not changed. With the diversification of world problems, the United Nations system had grown increasingly complex and its operation required co-ordination, which sometimes had to take priority over independence if incoherence and duplication were to be avoided.

30. In that connexion his Government considered it untimely to take any action that might prejudice the outcome of the 1977 conference on technical co-operation among developing countries. Such action would create serious conflicts of competence, impair co-ordination at the global level, and place the responsibility of leadership in the hands of institutions which had neither the requisite financial capacity nor the world-wide network of resident representatives that was available to UNDP. Furthermore, Brazil questioned the competence of the Council to interrupt the technical co-operation programmes among developing countries that had been approved by the General Assembly. The Brazilian delegation also had reservations about any action that might give the regional commissions exclusive responsibility for execution of UNDP-financed projects; ECLA had not been created with that in mind. An attempt was being made to give the regional commissions exclusivity in the execution of UNDP projects, which was at variance with the concept of government execution that had been agreed upon by consensus at the twentieth session of the UNDP Governing Council and reaffirmed at the twenty-second session. Brazil, a member of the Latin American Economic System, could not endorse the extension of ECLA's mandate in that area. Finally, the question of international co-operation was at present the subject of general consideration, and would be discussed at Colombo, Mexico City and Buenos Aires and in the *Ad Hoc* Committee on Restructuring of the Economic and Social Sectors of the United Nations system. It would be harmful to prejudice at that stage the future role of the regional commissions.

31. Mr. BOURGOIS (United Nations Development Programme) said that he would give, with respect to regional co-operation and technical co-operation among developing countries, some details concerning UNDP which he felt necessary in connexion with paragraphs 38 and 47 of the report of the Secretary-General on the regional structures of the United Nations system (E/5801). Although there was no formal model agreement designating the regional com-

missions as executing agencies, the commissions did in fact execute a number of regional UNDP-assisted projects and even, in the case of ECLA, some national projects. ECE also collaborated with the UNDP office at Geneva in carrying out a regional project. UNDP therefore had no objection to the full implementation of Economic and Social Council resolution 1896 (LVII), and no interest in delaying such implementation. On the contrary, it would like to see a rapid settlement of the administrative, financial and other questions outstanding with respect to transferring responsibility to the regional commissions as executing agencies.

32. In principle, projects were not “UNDP projects” or “projects of a given agency”; they were government projects assisted by UNDP. Certainly there was no automatic allocation of pseudo-right of pre-emption in respect of projects. In some cases the Government or Governments in question would execute the project themselves; in others, in accordance with the consensus adopted by the Governing Council of UNDP some years before, the Administrator designated an agency to carry out the project, in consultation and agreement with the Government or Governments in question. The designation of the executing agency was part of the Administrator’s duties, and he made sure beforehand that the agency designated was in fact the one that would implement the project in the most satisfactory way.

33. UNDP welcomed the close and fruitful co-operation that had been instituted with the regional commissions in preparing and organizing regional meetings on technical co-operation among developing countries, an essential stage in preparations for the Conference to be held at Buenos Aires in 1977. The Policy and Programme Co-ordination Committee of the Council would shortly consider the report of the Governing Council of UNDP (E/5846), and in particular the detailed recommendations concerning preparations for the Buenos Aires Conference. The regional commissions would be closely associated with those preparations and it would certainly be desirable for the Council, when deciding on regional co-operation, to bear in mind the detailed decisions and recommendations of the Governing Council of UNDP and the views expressed by the Policy and Programme Co-ordination Committee on operational co-operation activities. Any decision on the arrangement and responsibilities of each United Nations body with respect to the encouragement of technical co-operation among developing countries should be flexible enough not to prejudice the recommendations of the 1977 Conference.

34. Mr. AL-ATTAR (Executive Secretary, Economic Commission for Western Asia), replying to the points made by delegations concerning ECWA’s activities, recalled that the representative of Pakistan, whose analysis he endorsed, had spoken of the need to take account of social conditions in the region, and of statistical requirements (2023rd meeting). The Commission in fact intended to publish a “Statistical Year-book of the Arab World” and for that purpose had obtained extra-budgetary funds from Arab sources and regional organizations. It also had a regional project for a statistical centre in Iraq. The representative of Pakistan had also mentioned the GNP, but that was of no significance in a region with such great disparities, and other elements of analysis had to be taken into account.

35. The representative of Yemen had stressed the extent of the imbalance between rich and poor countries in the region. A major attempt was being made to change that state of affairs, with the help of bilateral and multilateral aid already being supplied by the rich countries and bodies of the League of Arab States. The Yemeni delegation had also spoken about decentralizing the regional commissions. In fact there was no question of extending their powers but merely of recognizing that they were closer to realities and had a better understanding of the development problems of the countries of their region.

36. With respect to relations with OAU, he said that ECWA wished to take part in Arab-African co-operation and would attend the employment conference to be held at Tunis. Furthermore, conversations on the subject would shortly be held in Addis Ababa.

37. He assured the Lebanese representative that no effort was being spared to implement ECWA resolution 24 (III) on the reconstruction and development of Lebanon (see E/5785, chap. III). The first assessment of the situation in Beirut was already out of date and another one would have to be made as soon as circumstances allowed. Meanwhile medical and food aid was being continued. The decision to move the Commission temporarily did not amount to a transfer.

38. In connexion with the remarks made by the observer for the Palestine Liberation Organization (2023rd meeting), he said that resolution 27 (III) on the general study of the economic and social situation and potential of the Palestinian Arab people and resolution 28 (III) on the census of the Palestine Arab people would be implemented to the extent possible. Resolution 27 (III), which required funds exceeding budgetary resources, would be implemented thanks to the commitment by Qatar to pay for the extra expenditure, namely \$143,000.

39. The United Kingdom representative, on behalf of EEC, had referred to the Community’s interest in a European-Arab dialogue (2024th meeting). ECWA had approached the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States in order to institute collaboration. The Executive Secretary of ECE had also mentioned his Commission’s interest in the development of co-operation with ECWA within the framework of regional co-operation.

40. The representative of Democratic Yemen had made some pertinent comments about income disparity in the region (2023rd meeting), which had been duly noted. ECWA was making every effort to implement the resolutions adopted by its members with respect to aid for the least developed States of the region, in particular resolution 33 (III) on the establishment of a voluntary fund, for which contributions had already been received.

41. He agreed with the Jordanian representative, who had said (2026th meeting) that it was not only desirable but necessary to increase co-operation with regional institutions, as envisaged in ECWA resolution 31 (III), in order to avoid duplication, not to speak of waste. The Commission was well aware, too, of the financial difficulties of UNDP, as could be seen from its resolution 32 (III), and the

Executive Secretary was about to embark on consultations to find ways of carrying out the projects already in the programme. In accommodating the Commission, owing to the present situation in Lebanon, the Government of Jordan had made a very great effort and had undertaken expenditure that had not been anticipated. Despite the fact that the rapid development of Amman involved problems for planners, Jordan would continue to help ECWA. Its responsible attitude was exemplified by the recent submission for opinion and discussion of its five-year plan.

42. The ECWA secretariat would take account of the comments of the representative of Kuwait (2026th meeting) with respect to independence, the need to implement the guidelines of the new international economic order and the special interests of the countries of the region in improving the conditions of the Arab people of Palestine. He was convinced that bilateral and international co-operation was indispensable and that a direct dialogue with the poor countries should be established.

43. Mr. ADEDEJI (Executive Secretary, Economic Commission for Africa) said that the Jamaican and Greek representatives had done well to raise, at the 2026th meeting, the fundamental question for ECA and all the developing regions of the reappraisal of the International Development Strategy and the changes that would have to be made in it as a result of the new international economic order. ECA had spent several months reviewing its strategy, and had drawn up a general set of principles for the region based primarily on integrated rural development and collective self-reliance.

44. He informed the Greek representative that ECA had devoted a whole section of its report (E/5783) to questions of population and urbanization. Urbanization was going ahead very rapidly in Africa and, together with population problems, was an area for priority action.

45. A large number of delegations had stressed that it was important for the regional commissions to take part in the Fifth Conference of Non-Aligned Countries at Colombo and also in the United Nations Conference on Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries at Buenos Aires. ECA would do all it could to assist conferences whose purpose was to promote regional co-operation, and approved the idea that the regional commissions should prepare a joint paper for the Mexico Conference on Economic Co-operation among Developing Countries.

46. ECA had co-operated with other regional commissions and in particular with ECWA with regard to the Tunis conference on employment. Although the accent was placed on co-operation with developing regions, ECA was also co-operating with the ECE region, with which the African countries had 80 per cent of their trade.

47. A number of delegations had been concerned about the future of the UNDATs which certain donor countries were reluctant to continue financing. The teams had, however, been able to continue their activities with the assistance of UNDP and also of the United States International Development Agency. Many delegations had spoken of the useful work done by those teams at the

subregional level and of the need to strengthen them. A joint report on the subject by ECA and UNDP would be submitted to the ECA Conference of Ministers, whose recommendations would be transmitted to the Economic and Social Council.

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

48. Mr. STANOVNIK (Executive Secretary, Economic Commission for Europe) said that the very number of delegations taking part in the debate was proof of the support for and interest in regional co-operation activities undertaken through the regional commissions. Various delegations, notably those of Malta, Romania and Yugoslavia had expressed their satisfaction with ECE's outward-looking orientation.

49. Various measures had been taken in that connexion recently: the Executive Secretary of ECA had invited the ECE secretariat to co-operate in the preparation of a document for the Mexico Conference on Economic Co-operation among Developing Countries. The ECE secretariat had also decided to make a study of the present status and future prospects of economic relations between Europe and Latin America, and was in touch with the secretariats of ECWA and ESCAP with a view to co-operating on matters of mutual interest, such as economic co-operation in the Mediterranean and the problems posed by the interconnexion of road networks in those regions.

50. He explained to the Greek representative that the idea of non-convergence in co-operation, which he had referred to in his statement to the Council, reflected ECE's philosophy. As the ECE countries had different economic and social systems, co-operation there did not mean integration or changes in existing institutional arrangements. Operative paragraph 9 of ECE resolution 1 (XXXI) on the Commission's future activities and the implementation of the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe signified that the manner in which the Belgrade meeting would be informed of the progress made by ECE in carrying out the relevant provisions of the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe would be considered and determined by Governments at the thirty-second session of the Commission. As far as the second informal meeting of trade experts was concerned, it had had extremely useful results.

51. The representatives of Greece and of the German Democratic Republic had referred to certain aspects of the problem of the Commission's resources. He pointed out that 25 per cent of the 400 projects included in the Commission's programme of work reflected the relevant provisions of the Final Act.

52. The inclusion of the new projects had entailed some pruning, especially as the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly had authorized the addition of only one Professional post and two General Service posts to the ECE secretariat budget. In view of the situation, stringent financial control would be necessary, but he would nevertheless have to ask for additional funds at the next General Assembly. With regard to the statement made by the representative of the German Democratic Republic (2023rd

meeting) on the number of ECE meetings, he said that it had been almost the same in 1975 as in 1955.

53. Mr. GONTHA (Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific) said that ESCAP, in orienting its activities, would take into account the constructive comments made in the Economic and Social Council. He assured the Greek representative that although the Executive Secretary had not touched upon the problems of population and rural migration in his statement, ESCAP nevertheless attached great importance to them. ESCAP had helped to implement the Asian Plans for Population Activities in 1973, it had organized regional consultations in relation to the World Population Conference at Bucharest, and its Committee on Population had held its first session three weeks before. Under its resolution 161 (XXXII) on an "Integrated programme on rural development", ESCAP hoped to draw the entire rural labour force into the mainstream of economic activity while checking its drift to the towns. Moreover, ESCAP was fully aware of what the Jamaican representative had called the political, cultural and social aspects involved in an integrated rural development programme, which was closely linked to population and migration problems.

54. Mr. IGLESIAS (Executive Secretary, Economic Commission for Latin America) recalled that one of the Council's tasks was to evaluate the regional commissions' activities in matters of co-operation and to give the executive secretaries of the commissions an indication of how they might orient their activities.

55. He had obtained useful insights from a number of comments made on the work of ECLA. In the first place, various delegations from Latin American countries, developing countries and socialist countries had emphasized the concern they felt about the present economic situation. The ECLA secretariat had fully reflected the anxiety felt by the countries of the region in the Commission's annual report (E/5784).

56. A large number of delegations mainly from Latin American countries had stressed the need to encourage co-operation activities both within the region itself and at the interregional level. ECLA would therefore collaborate with the Latin American Economic System and would be promoting technical and economic co-operation among developing countries by participating in the 1977 Buenos Aires Conference on Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries, and the Mexico Conference on Economic Co-operation among Developing Countries to be held in September 1976.

57. The decentralization of regional co-operation activities, while desirable, was difficult to carry out, as it was bound up with the restructuring of the United Nations system as a whole. The report by the Chairman of the *Ad Hoc* Committee on Restructuring (A/31/34/Add.1) had indicated the major targets to be attained. ECLA and its secretariat had no intention of claiming exclusive rights, particularly as far as the implementation of regional projects was concerned, but the regional commissions certainly had a part to play as executing agencies.

58. Doubts had been expressed as to the new role of the regional commissions. The commissions had originally been set up to study the problems of their regions; they had then been entrusted with operational activities and, lastly, with completely new tasks. Consequently, they were expected to perform complex activities for which they were poorly equipped and lacked the necessary resources. A balance now had to be struck between those activities, while some latitude should be maintained to ensure that Governments would have organizations capable of assisting them. It was necessary to think about the problem and to make proposals for bringing the structures and activities of the regional commissions up to date. In view of the great future unfolding before the Latin American region, ECLA had a useful contribution to make to the thinking and discussion that should go on between the heads of the commissions and the Economic and Social Council.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.

2028th meeting

Monday, 2 August 1976, at 10.45 a.m.

President: Mr. S. AKÉ (Ivory Coast)

E/SR.2028

Message of sympathy to China

1. The PRESIDENT, on behalf of the Council, addressed a message of sympathy to the Government and people of China, recently affected by an extremely serious earthquake.

2. Mr. AN Chih-yuan (China) thanked the President and the Council for their words of sympathy and said that the Chinese people, under the leadership of their President, had started reconstructing the affected areas.

AGENDA ITEM 30

Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (concluded) (E/5883 and Corr.1, E/L.1730 and Corr.1)

3. Mr. MARTÍNEZ (Argentina) said that his delegation had followed with keen interest the important statement made at the 2027th meeting by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to the Council, in which he had set out the broad lines of UNHCR activities. His own