

new system was working well. It also welcomed the Commission's concentration on priority areas, and the greater attention paid to the South Pacific region in its programme of work. It considered that the establishment of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives had been of great help to the Commission.

25. Her Government believed that regional commissions could play a useful part in promoting co-operation amongst countries in their regions, and wished to express its sincere thanks to ECWA and ECA for having granted Australia observer status at their 1975 meetings in Beirut and Nairobi respectively.

26. Mr. KANAZAWA (Japan) said that as the United Nations became more universal, more attention was being given to general policies, so that the practical problems of a particular region or group of countries tended to be forgotten. The Executive Secretary of ESCAP had rightly pointed out that the region had witnessed a modest economic expansion in the traditionally slow-growing economies and a slowing-down of economic growth in the traditionally fast-growing export-based economies. The problems of poverty, unemployment and under-employment had also remained acute in several countries of the region. His delegation believed that such problems could be solved by taking into account the characteristics of the region and the changes taking place in it.

27. The regional commissions should concentrate more on practical issues. Even in matters such as population, energy, food, housing and water, which needed to be handled on a global scale, they should address themselves to those aspects which were relevant to the region, and not duplicate the efforts of world conferences. They would then in fact have more to contribute to activities at the global level. ESCAP had already made welcome progress in that direction.

28. Thus, his delegation recommended that the regional commissions should be given an increased role to play in implementing policies and executing projects, and also that there should be more regional inputs in the planning and decision-making of central bodies. In short, it believed that

regional decentralization of the activities of the United Nations system was important.

29. Mr. DURÁN (Observer for Chile), speaking at the invitation of the President said that at its sixteenth session ECLA had adopted some important resolutions and made a significant contribution to the appraisal of the International Development Strategy. Although there had been progress in the economic and trading situation of the area, it had been limited and there was still a disparity of growth between Latin American countries, unsatisfactory distribution of income and excessive dependence on international markets. Latin America still needed international co-operation in all fields. All the important provisions adopted by the international community, including the Lima Declaration and Plan of Action on Industrial Development and Co-operation, the Declaration on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order, and the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States, should be fully applied to Latin America. A swift reform of the international monetary system was also essential, with SDRs being used for additional development assistance and priority being given to problems of excessive indebtedness.

30. His delegation had been pleased to note the reorganization of the ECLA secretariat so as to make it more capable of carrying out its new tasks, and the new arrangements for meetings of the executive secretaries.

31. Mr. QUÉGUINER (Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organization) said that IMCO took great interest in the work of the regional commissions. With the help of UNDP, it had undertaken the appointment of regional advisers in the various regions. That would strengthen the existing links between IMCO and the regional commissions and help it to tackle the regions' shipping problems in a more co-ordinated way. A joint ECA/ILO/IMCO/UNCTAD mission had just visited some African countries to identify their problems and to find integrated solutions. It was proposed that once the IMCO regional advisers for Latin America, Western Asia, and Asia and the Pacific had taken up their duties further arrangements should be made for co-operation with the regional commissions concerned.

The meeting rose at 4.30 p.m.

1969th meeting

Tuesday, 15 July 1975, at 10.45 a.m.

President: Mr. I. A. AKHUND (Pakistan)

E/SR.1969

Tribute to the memory of Mr. Cordier, former Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations

1. The PRESIDENT expressed the Council's deep sympathy with the United States delegation on Mr. Cordier's death in New York two days earlier and requested that

delegation to convey the Council's condolences to the United States Government and Mr. Cordier's family.

2. Mr. FERGUSON (United States of America) thanked the President and members of the Council for the tribute just paid to the memory of Mr. Cordier, whose death was mourned throughout the world.

AGENDA ITEM 4

Regional co-operation (*continued*) (E/5608/Rev.1, E/5608/Add.1, E/5619, E/5651, E/5656, E/5657 and Corr.1 and 2, E/5658, E/5700, E/5721-23; E/L.1665)

3. Mr. ŽIŽKA (Czechoslovakia) said that, in the light of Czechoslovakia's experience in ECE, his delegation regarded the United Nations regional commissions as important instruments for promoting and developing co-operation among countries.

4. His delegation had listened with interest to the statements of the executive secretaries of the regional commissions (1966th and 1967th meetings) and had studied all the documents submitted under agenda item 4. It had noted that the regional commissions had obtained many useful results which had made it possible to develop multilateral co-operation and promote the economic and social development of countries, and of developing countries in particular.

5. So far as concerned more particularly the activities of ECE, his delegation was in general agreement with the observations of the Executive Secretary of the Commission on the four priority areas (trade, scientific and technical co-operation, long-term planning and projection and the environment), as well as on the Commission's other main activities.

6. At its thirtieth session, two months earlier, the Commission had reviewed the past year's work and approved its forthcoming programme of work. The Chairman of the Commission had recalled on that occasion that the thirtieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War and of the defeat of fascism was being celebrated and had emphasized that no international co-operation was possible unless peace and security were strengthened. Through the efforts of the USSR and the other socialist countries, international tension was diminishing and international co-operation was on the increase among countries with different systems. The unprecedented success of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe was particularly to be welcomed, and the socialist countries hoped that, as had been indicated by the Executive Secretary of ECE, the results of the Conference would create favourable conditions for international co-operation, particularly within the Commission.

7. The strengthening of peace and the development of co-operation among the Commission's member States would also have important repercussions in other regions: the other regional commissions could make good use of the experience gained, and his delegation endorsed the proposal of the Executive Secretary of the Commission that, with a view to the establishment of the new international economic order, the links with the other regional commission should be strengthened through the exchange of documents, experience and the services of experts, and through joint research, etc.

8. Some delegations had drawn attention to the economic crisis which was affecting the ECE region and the world as a whole and which was particularly evident in balance-

of-payments problems, increased unemployment and inflationary pressures. That applied to the capitalist economies but not to the socialist countries, which were successfully carrying out a complete programme of economic integration under CMEA.

9. His delegation considered that ECE should remain an instrument for mutual co-operation among countries having different economic and social systems. The Commission's activities would have to be strengthened, particularly in the four priority areas mentioned, but also in new areas as determined by the results of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe.

10. His delegation was confident that it would be possible, within the Commission, to develop co-operation, overcome the obstacles and solve certain problems, particularly with regard to east-west trade. ECE and the other regional commissions would undoubtedly contribute substantially, within the United Nations system, to the promotion of co-operation among all countries, and to their development.

11. Mr. HAMID ABDEL GHANI (Egypt) said that his delegation was prepared to endorse the recommendations submitted to the Council by the five regional commissions, on the basis of the annual reports on the commissions' activities, which concerned not only the development of individual States, but also regional and international co-operation.

12. His delegation was also willing to support measures directed at strengthening the role of the regional commissions through operational and administrative decentralization. At its fifty-seventh session the year before, the Economic and Social Council had recommended that the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Administrator of UNDP, should arrange for the Commissions to act as executing agencies for regional projects (resolution 1895 (LVII)). In his delegation's view, however, the decentralization should be carried out in accordance with agreed criteria and standards, with a view to effective implementation of UNDP as a whole. As to administrative decentralization, particularly in matters of personnel, the Council might ask the International Civil Service Commission to consider the various possibilities, in particular local recruitment of high-level staff.

13. That autonomy in operational and administrative matters should to some extent strengthen the regional commissions. Their work should, however, form part of the global effort of the United Nations system to establish the new economic order. The executive secretaries were in fact well aware of the importance of that consideration, and in the report on their meetings in 1975 (E/5700) they had affirmed that more use should be made of the United Nations system for bringing about the new economic order, particularly through the regional commissions, which could help to dovetail national and global economic policies (para. 7).

14. In that area, the Economic and Social Council should provide the regional commissions, either at its present session or at the next one, with general guidance in the

matter of fact-finding, analysis, evaluation and regional policy-making.

15. The public information activities of the regional commissions should be further developed with a view to familiarizing individuals and influential circles with the principles of the new international economic order and of the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States. It was questionable whether politicians, journalists or even teachers were well enough informed about those problems to be able to bring them to the attention of public opinion. Much remained to be done in that field, in which the regional commissions could play a useful part if they are provided with the necessary means and resources. His delegation therefore suggested that the executive secretaries should place the matter on the agenda of one of their future meetings and report on it to the Economic and Social Council.

16. With reference to ECA, of which Egypt was a member, he recalled that his delegation had endorsed the resolutions adopted by the Commission at the third Meeting of the Conference of Ministers (twelfth session of the Commission), in particular resolutions 254 (XII) and 255 (XII) concerning amendments respectively to the Commission's rules of procedure and to its terms of reference which would have the effect of making it possible to invite national liberation movements recognized by OAU to participate in the Commission's deliberations. Those two resolutions were in line with the African liberation movement which had been in evidence for the last two decades.

17. The Commission's first session had been attended by only nine African countries, six of which had become independent only a short time before. To-day, Mozambique, Angola and the Cape Verde Islands had gained their independence, and the Commission now comprised 42 sovereign African states. A few African countries were still struggling for liberation. It was because of its feeling of international responsibility to those peoples that his delegation had supported the Commission's invitation to the national liberation movements to participate in its meetings pending their full participation once they had gained independence.

18. He believed that the Economic and Social Council would endorse resolution 12 (II), unanimously adopted by ECWA, on the admission of the Palestine Liberation Organization as a permanent observer to the Commission. ECA resolution 253 (XII) on the inclusion of Arabic among the working languages of the Commission, eight of whose members' official language was Arabic, would also be welcomed.

19. ECA should direct its activities towards the establishment of the new international economic order. Commission resolution 256 (XII) provided for measures to be taken for instituting action-oriented programmes in fields such as natural resources, industrialization and the transfer of technology. Those programmes were aimed at objectives which conformed with the principles and measures of implementation envisaged in the Declaration and Programme of Action on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order.

20. Other regional commissions had adopted similar resolutions calling for action to carry out programmes that could contribute to the establishment of the new international economic order. Egypt supported all those resolutions.

21. With reference to the drought which had so tragically afflicted certain countries, he said that in the age of advanced technology and of economic forecasting and planning for the year 2000 and beyond, the fate of man could not be left entirely to the hazards of nature. The problems of desertification, for example, should be tackled with the means and methods of modern technology. His delegation had noted with satisfaction ECA resolution 280 (XII) on a remote sensing centre for Africa. The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space had expressed its appreciation of that resolution and its willingness to assist in its implementation, being aware that, when applied in agriculture, forestry, fisheries, water resource management and the discovery of earth resources, the technology of remote sensing was probably capable of revolutionizing national economies. He therefore hoped that when the Council took up the next report of ECA, the centre would be in full operation for the benefit of the African continent.

22. His delegation also welcomed resolution 281 (XII) on satellite broadcasting systems for education and development. He believed that the Executive Secretary, who had been asked to take the necessary steps to establish the system, would benefit from studying the measures already adopted by India in setting up a system of that kind.

23. Speaking about outer space seemed quite natural that day, when a great space experiment was to be undertaken by cosmonauts from the United States of America and cosmonauts from the Soviet Union. Egypt congratulated those countries on their great venture and hoped that their co-operation would be beneficial to all mankind.

24. In conclusion, he mentioned the youngest of the regional commissions, i.e. ECWA. The Executive Secretary of the Commission had reported eloquently on its activities and on the economic and social situation of the region. Egypt had not attended the Commission's second session, but had read its report (E/5658) with the greatest attention, and approved of its programme of work, which covered a range of activities of concern to the member States of the Commission and the region as a whole. His Government was ready to provide technical assistance for the implementation of that programme. Egypt followed the work of the Commission with great attention because Sinai was part of its territory. Moreover, most member States of the Commission had admitted a large number of highly-trained Egyptians, many of whom were to take part in carrying out the Commission's programme of work and assist more generally in the Arab countries' development.

25. Mr. EHSASSI (Iran) expressed his delegation's appreciation of the highly informative statements given by the executive secretaries of the regional commissions; in his view, they would contribute to a better understanding of the problems facing the developed and the developing countries of each region. He noted with satisfaction that for

the first time the Economic and Social Council had given the Secretary-General of RCD an opportunity of addressing it on the activities of his organization and the development efforts jointly undertaken by Iran, Pakistan and Turkey.

26. With reference more particularly to the annual report of ESCAP (E/5656), he said he agreed that the thirty-first session of ESCAP should be regarded as having provided an excellent opportunity of making a special regional contribution to the establishment of the new international economic order, and that its decisions and resolutions constituted a substantial input by the region to the forthcoming seventh special session of the General Assembly. The thirty-first session had led to the adoption of important resolutions and decisions in the fields of development planning, the transfer of technology, shipping and ports, agricultural mechanization and the role of women in development. Of particular importance to his delegation was resolution 157 (XXXI) on the regional plan of action for the enhancement of the role of women in Development. The active participation of women in development efforts had become a necessity, and, at the national level, his country had taken important steps to accelerate the integration of women in economic and social development. His delegation supported the Executive Secretary's efforts to ensure the implementation of the plan of action and the early establishment of a research and training centre for promoting the role of women in development. His Government would contribute \$500,000 to the initial expenses of establishing that centre.

27. His Government also supported the programme of work and priorities for 1975-1977 in the fields of food, energy, raw materials and the transfer of technology, etc., and it shared the hope expressed by the Commission that ESCAP would soon be designated as the executing agency for regional projects.

28. The Regional Preparatory Conference on Human Settlements, held at Teheran in June 1975, had provided a good opportunity for useful exchanges of views on the special problems facing the developing countries in the field of human environment; together with the recent establishment of the Asian Clearing Union, it had contributed to the promotion of regional co-operation in the fields of human environment and of trade and monetary problems.

29. His delegation welcomed the executive secretaries' decision to meet in rotation at the headquarters of each regional commission for consultations and exchanges of views (E/5700, para. 9), and it hoped that those meetings would prove useful in promoting greater interregional co-operation.

30. Mr. MAHMOOD (Pakistan) congratulated the executive secretaries of the five regional commissions on the quality of their annual reports, in particular the Executive Secretary of ESCAP, under whose guidance the Commission had done useful work.

31. The reports of the regional commissions showed that, more than ever, the international economic situation needed to be viewed as a unified system; the interdependent nature of the world economy called for co-

operative efforts. In that respect, the regional commissions had an important part to play, since, by promoting regional co-operation and understanding, they could serve as a bridge between national and global economic policy. The reports also revealed how the welfare and development of one region depended on and even benefited from the welfare and development of the others, and how development and planning at the regional level could contribute to the development of the countries of a region.

32. Like the Iranian representative, he noted with satisfaction that RCD was participating for the first time in a session of the Economic and Social Council. RCD had been set up to promote collaboration among the countries of the sub-region with a view to fostering their economic development. Although no spectacular results had yet been achieved, a start had been made towards co-operation in the fields of trade, industry and technology. His country firmly believed that a sub-regional organization like RCD could play an important part in the economic development of the countries concerned, provided there was identity of basic economic and political interests. Regional co-operation was many-sided; it went from the sub-regional level to the regional, interregional and international levels. That was why his country regarded RCD as a sort of bridge between ESCAP, ECWA and ECE.

33. At its thirty-first session ESCAP had considered in detail the mid-term review and appraisal of progress made in implementing the International Development Strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade at the regional level. It had noted with concern that the deterioration in the international situation was still having a profoundly unfavourable impact on the developing countries of the region. The world-wide food shortages, high prices of essential commodities and inputs, widespread inflation accompanied by recession in many developed market economies, the instability of the international monetary system, the energy situation, falling prices of raw materials and the danger of renewed trade protectionism – all had seriously impeded the development process. The progress made by the developing ESCAP countries towards reaching the targets of the Strategy continued to be uneven and, on the whole, unsatisfactory.

34. His delegation endorsed the action-oriented and integrated programme of work and priorities for 1975-1977, contained in chapter IV of the ESCAP report. The five priority areas of food, energy, raw materials, external financial resources and the transfer of technology rightly deserved special attention.

35. He had read with great interest the report by the Secretary-General on United Nations export promotion and development efforts (E/5619). It was encouraging to note that considerable progress had been made in the co-ordination of efforts in export promotion and development between various United Nations agencies. For a developing country like Pakistan, export promotion was a matter of great importance since it was closely linked with economic development. The field was therefore one which required concerted efforts on the part of the United Nations system for rendering assistance to the developing countries.

36. Mr. VINUESA SALTO (Spain) said that his Government attached great importance to the work of ECE, particularly since the Commission might be given a vital new role to play during the third phase of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe.

37. With regard to the annual report of the Commission (E/5651), his delegation wished to point out the difficulties facing some of the less developed countries as a result of the growing complexity of the work done by the Commission and its many subsidiary bodies, whose documentation was so voluminous that one ministry could not cope with it. In order to accelerate its relations with national administrations, ECE often entered into direct contact with the competent bodies, thus creating many problems of co-ordination between ministerial departments. His delegation considered that the system of direct contact should be reduced to a minimum with a view to improving co-ordination at the national level -- a prerequisite for avoiding duplication and concentrating efforts in the priority areas.

38. His delegation also wished to stress the need for the greatest possible co-ordination of effort both within ECE and with the other international organizations. Moreover, it would like to see ECE concerning itself with intra-regional economic problems that did not depend on East-West relations. The worsening of the situation in the ECE region had led many countries to adopt restrictive policies following the oil crisis, both to combat inflation and to limit balance-of-payments deficits. So far as Spain was concerned, the application of such policies had brought about a decrease in exports and in the number of tourists, and a halt to emigration movements. His Government hoped that ECE would deal more directly with those problems.

39. His delegation was interested to learn that at its recent sixteenth session ECLA had sought to establish a working relationship between the regional commissions and the new United Nations Information and Research Centre on Transnational Corporations. He hoped that question would be dealt with soon.

40. Mr. KACIMAIWAI (Fiji) said that his delegation appreciated the quality of the work done by the regional commissions during a difficult year, and paid a special tribute to the Executive Secretary of ESCAP.

41. In view of the number of inhabitants in the ESCAP region in relation to its available resources, the greatest efforts were needed if all were to have access to the fruits of economic and social development. More than in any other region, therefore, there should be a continuous rationalization of the relationship between economic and social development and population activities. The three-pronged objective defined in paragraph 174 of ESCAP's annual report (E/5656) was consistent with the most urgent development need of the region, which was to adapt its population strategy to the over-all tempo of its economic and social progress. For that reason, his delegation thought that the ESCAP region should be allocated a greater share of the financial resources of UNFPA.

42. His delegation considered that ESCAP resolution 157 (XXXI) (Regional plan of action for the enhancement of

the role of women in development) was in conformity with the need further to rationalize population activities, and it approved of the resolution's adoption.

43. The extent of the ESCAP region and the dispersion of the island countries meant that communications were of immense significance. His delegation therefore approved of the importance which had been attached to that problem in paragraph 327 of the ESCAP report, and supported resolution 160 (XXXI) (Arrangements on shipping and ports), especially sub-paragraphs (a) and (b) of the second preambular paragraph. The establishment of one forum for shipping and ports, as envisaged in operative paragraph 1, would strengthen regional co-operation in that vital area.

44. His delegation also approved of resolution 154 (XXXI), entitled "New Delhi Declaration: Regional Contribution to the Establishment of a New International Economic Order". It likewise supported resolution 156 (XXXI) (Establishment of the Asian Centre for Agricultural Machinery), since it considered that, in a region where a large proportion of the population subsisted on agriculture, any effort to improve agricultural production and productivity was vital for the development of the region, and that the establishment of the Centre in question was a step in the right direction.

45. His delegation also supported ESCAP resolution 159 (XXXI) concerning a regional centre for technology transfer. The establishment of such a centre was in keeping with the needs of the region, where as in all developing countries, the transfer of technology, while calling for a certain selectivity, was of great importance. It also supported the other resolutions, as well as the integrated programme of work.

46. His delegation noted with satisfaction the incorporation of "the Pacific" in the revised designation of the Commission. That was a sign that the importance of the South Pacific in the development of the ESCAP region as a whole was being recognized. It was also pleased to note, from paragraph 57 of the report, that there was growing co-operation between ESCAP and the South Pacific Bureau of Economic Co-operation.

47. The international disasters which were constantly afflicting the region took a heavy toll of its resources and affected its development efforts. If the islands of Fiji, Tonga and Samoa, the devastation caused by tropical cyclones was stifling the urge to development. His delegation would like to see something done to ensure greater co-ordination of disaster relief in the various parts of the region and on an interregional basis.

48. His delegation joined others in the region in asking that UNDP should allocate funds to the regional commissions to meet their overhead costs as executing agencies for UNDP projects. It appreciated the high quality of the work accomplished by the regional commissions during the past year and hoped that they would show the same dedication in the future.

49. Mr. LONGERSTAEY (Belgium) said that his delegation was greatly interested in the work of ECE, whose

thirtieth session, held in April 1975, had been mainly a session for reflection. The transformation of economic trends and structures had in fact led the member countries to consider the Commission's tasks more closely and to ponder the future of regional co-operation. In addition, the possibility of a resumption of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe had continued to overshadow the debates. It would be impossible to answer the questions raised by the Executive Secretary in his report on the Commission's future activities until the following year, when Governments would have studied the implications of that Conference for the Commission's work.

50. The general discussion of ECE's future activities had made it easier to assess the place of the European region in the world economy. The Executive Secretary had rightly emphasized the fundamental interdependence of contemporary problems and had pointed out that the regional character of the Commission did not isolate it from world problems. For that reason, his delegation had supported the Executive Secretary's proposal for improving the exchange of information and experience among the regional commissions.

51. His Government supported the proposals which were designed to improve and rationalize the present methods of work by concentrating the activities of the various bodies on essential problems, co-ordinating common aspects and integrating them all into a coherent whole in order to achieve greater effectiveness. It considered that the implementation of those proposals would represent undeniable progress in the matter of integration and co-ordination of the work programmes of the subsidiary bodies.

52. With regard to the study on savings in energy,¹ his delegation supported the decision requesting the Executive Secretary to convene a meeting of experts, whose task would be limited to studying the document with a view to drawing up recommendations to the Commission for possible future work on energy economy and efficiency in the ECE region.

53. His Government attached great importance to the development of east-west trade and was accordingly much interested in the seminars devoted to that question. The most recent seminar, which had taken place at Geneva from 13 to 18 May 1975, had dealt mainly with east-west trade promotion, marketing and licensing. The questions of techniques, patents, trademarks and leasing had also been discussed.

54. His Government had taken great interest in the inquiry which the Executive Secretary had conducted in 1973 on the activities of national export promotion bodies in the least developed of the ECE countries as also in the consultations which had been undertaken with those countries with a view to pinpointing the problems which deserved more detailed study. It approved of the action

taken by the Commission to encourage indirectly the promotion of trade.

55. While, therefore, ECE would continue its activities in 1975-76 in the same fields as in the past, it would endeavour to make them more effective by better co-ordination and greater integration. In addition, it intended at the next session to work out a new kind of interregional collaboration, in the light of the results of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe.

56. The importance which Belgium attached to the work of ECE in no way prevented it from recognizing the competent and courageous undertakings of the regional commissions, whose efforts, in spite of difficulties, were helping their members to advance along the road of economic development. In that spirit, it was prepared to accept, subject to some slight reservations, the report on the meetings of the executive secretaries of the regional commissions. Moreover, it appreciated the efforts made by the United Nations to promote the development of exports in the framework of the regional commissions and of certain world organizations, such as the UNCTAD/GATT International Trade Centre, UNIDO and FAO (see E/5619). It was taking part in those efforts through training projects and activities.

57. Mr. CORDOVA MOYANO (Argentina) paid a tribute to the executive secretaries of the regional commissions for their reports, which gave a comprehensive picture of the regional commissions' activities and a preliminary evaluation of their results.

58. In order to help in solving the present-day world problems, countries should first direct their attention to the problems of their own region. Argentina, therefore, was particularly interested in the statement of the Executive Secretary of ECLA, since Latin America was the area in which its co-operation activities were primarily carried out. The intensification of integration efforts and the increase in co-operation among developing countries was of capital importance to the various regions, and ECLA offered an excellent sphere in which to study particular problems, carry out the requisite studies and implement the projects that would lead to a solution of the problems.

59. His delegation felt that, besides structural reform of the United Nations system, permanent elements existed, such as collaboration among the regional commissions and their role in co-operation with other United Nations bodies. An interdependent world required an integrated approach to problems and his country considered that collaboration should be developed to a level commensurate with the new requirements.

60. His delegation was convinced of the importance of the appraisals of the International Development Strategy which had been carried out at the regional level. The Chaguaramas Appraisal (ECLA resolution 347 (XVI)) constituted for Latin America a form of participation in the study and solution of the problems affecting the entire world.

61. Mr. TANK (United States of America) said that the reports of the regional commissions and their activities

¹ "Study on measures taken, or which might be taken, in order to achieve increased economy and efficiency in the extraction, conversion, transport and use of energy in the ECE region" (E/ECE/883 and Add.1).

during the year under review demonstrated the importance of regional co-operation in furthering the objectives of economic development in all areas of the world. His Government attached particular importance to Council resolution 1896 (LVII) concerning the decentralization of international activities to the regional commissions and hoped to see action on the executive secretaries' stand that the transfer of executing agency functions should be carried out expeditiously and systematically (E/5700, para. 39), so that the commissions would become more involved in planning and co-ordinating UNDP assistance for regional and interregional projects.

62. Although the United States of America was a member of only three of the regional commissions, his Government had followed the activities of them all closely. It was represented in ECA as an observer, and fully supported that commission's activities in livestock development, trade in agricultural produce, and manpower training, and it had provided \$1 million to finance development advisory teams for East Africa.

63. His delegation had noted the observation by the executive secretaries in their reports that the unfavourable economic situation prevailing during the past two years had deeply affected each of their regions. Inflation, unfavourable trade balances, energy costs and monetary disturbances had led everywhere to rising unemployment, economic stagnation and social unrest. The executive secretaries' reports showed more clearly than ever the interdependence of countries in all regions. The economic recession in the European region had had drastic consequences for the developing countries, where the decline in demand for raw materials, coupled with rising petroleum costs, had resulted in unprecedented trade deficits. Recession was quick to spread throughout the world economy, but prosperity spread slowly. The Executive Secretary of ECE had rightly advised Governments to seek solutions to their problems through measures conducive to growth.

64. Renewed growth and expansion in the industrialized countries was a key factor in the improvement of economic conditions in the developing countries. Co-operation among the ECE countries would offer new possibilities for trade and other economic activities which would redound to the benefit of the developing countries too. While the fundamental importance of economic interdependence had not been overlooked, increasing attention had been given to the need for the developing countries to achieve self-reliance. The Executive Secretary of ESCAP had drawn attention to that aspect of the International Development Strategy and to the social objectives of economic growth. He had pointed out that the longer-term problems of that region called for fundamental changes in development strategy. His delegation hoped that the World Population Conference would have served to provide fresh incentives for population activities in the ESCAP region and it endorsed the ESCAP work programme for the coming biennium.

65. His delegation hoped that possibilities for inter-regional co-operation would be explored further and it welcomed the intensification of inter-agency co-operation in the various regions. In general it was satisfied with the work programmes of the regional commissions and their

projected activities for the future; it would therefore support the adoption of the commissions' reports.

66. Mr. DUGERSUREN (Mongolia) said that his country attached great importance to the regional commissions, which were the Council's local representatives and could play a useful role in fostering wider co-operation, mutual understanding, trust and peaceful relations among States. The relaxation of international tension was presenting new vistas for enhancing the ability of the regional commissions to promote socio-economic development and co-operation at regional and sub-regional levels. The Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, the end of the war in Indo-China and the decolonization successes in Africa were a stimulus to regional co-operation in many fields. A peaceful environment and co-operation in political, economic and other fields were complementary and mutually encouraging. The regional commissions should not be passive onlookers but should help in the implementation of the provisions of the Declaration on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order and the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States.

67. Mongolia was a member of ESCAP and appreciated the importance of the Commission's thirty-first session, at which the economic situation of the countries of that region had been discussed in the light of the goals and objectives of the International Development Strategy and the above-mentioned Declaration, and the programme of work and priorities for 1975-1977 had been established. His delegation thought that one of the Commission's commendable features was its increasing emphasis on an integrated approach to development issues; it welcomed the consultations organized by the Executive Secretary with the Governments of States members of the Commission; those consultations had been useful in the formulation of programmes more responsive to the realities, needs and requests of the countries of the region.

68. His delegation was also favourably disposed towards the reorganization of the conference structure in ESCAP, since the increased efficiency of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies was the pivotal issue. The Commission should concentrate on really vital problems of long-term significance and avoid duplication, overlapping and fragmentation of resources.

69. Regarding future activities, the Commission should pay increasing attention to measures to alleviate the difficulties in the war-torn economies of the countries of Indo-China. Although the decisive factor would be the efforts of the peoples concerned, the mobilization of some sort of regional endeavour would undoubtedly have a significant impact on the economy of those countries.

70. For various reasons arising from the diverse political, economic, social and geographical backgrounds of the countries of the ESCAP region, those countries did not all have the same opportunity to participate actively in the Commission's work and to benefit from the various kinds of regional projects. His delegation therefore considered that the Commission should devise some means of introducing flexibility into its programme of work so that all the countries of the region might have an equal chance to enjoy the benefits of co-operation efforts at the regional level.

71. Finally, the delegation of executing agency functions to the regional commissions should enable them to increase their capacity and efficacy in promoting socio-economic progress and regional co-operation.

72. Mr. FERNAND-LAURENT (France) said that the idea of the interdependence of world economic problems and the co-operation efforts it entailed in a changing, unstable world situation was dominating the discussion at the current session of the Economic and Social Council. The mid-term review and appraisal of the International Development Strategy, together with the preparation for the seventh special session of the General Assembly, should make it possible to place the problems in a realistic and dynamic perspective and to facilitate the progressive establishment of a new international economic order. It was with that essential aspect of the mission of the regional commissions in mind that his delegation wished to make some comments on their activities.

73. ESCAP, whose member countries accounted for half the world's population, had shown its desire to prepare for the future by integrating pragmatically the lessons of the past with the achievements of the present. Back in 1951 the Commission, at its seventh session held at Lahore, had settled the difficult problem of the participation in its work of certain members from outside the region² and their participation was becoming increasingly valuable in the present context of the world economy. Among the Commission's important projects, that of the Committee for Co-ordination of Investigations of the Lower Mekong Basin deserved special mention. At a time when several of its members were beginning to reconstruct their economies, its work should be an extremely valuable element of the policy of development based on the attainment of greater autonomy.

74. In the performance of its task, ESCAP should be able to use, in addition to its own resources, the assistance it received from the United Nations and the specialized agencies. His delegation welcomed the reorganization of the Commission's conference machinery and the decision to establish a single intergovernmental governing council for the four regional institutions. It approved of the adoption of an integrated work programme directed towards action during the period 1975-1977, particularly in the vital fields of food supply, energy, raw materials, external financial resources and transfer of technology. It would like to see greater implementation of Council resolution 1896 (LVII), in which the Economic and Social Council requested the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Administrator of UNDP, to make the necessary arrangements allowing for the delegation of the appropriate functions of an executing agency to the regional commissions for regional, sub-regional and interregional projects financed by the Programme. The specialized agencies and UNFPA should also exert special efforts to make the maximum resources available to the Commission.

75. With regard to ECLA, he was pleased to note that the Executive Secretary's qualities as a man of action had had a stimulating effect on the work of that Commission. During the 1960s, the French Government had attentively followed Mr. Raúl Prebisch's efforts to draw up a Latin American development doctrine and to train the human instruments to carry out that policy of promotion and solidarity, such as the members of the Latin American Institute for Economic and Social Planning and the Latin American Demographic Centre. His successor as Executive Secretary, Mr. Iglesias, now had to his credit the development of interregional relations, particularly between the Caribbean and the continent. It was, therefore, in a spirit of confidence in the future that his delegation welcomed in general the results of the Commission's thirty-first session and associated itself with the adoption of the Chaguaramas Appraisal.

76. The statement by the Executive Secretary of ECA had clearly shown the obstacles to the development of that continent, which was grappling with certain structural aspects of poverty and which also suffered the effects of natural disasters such as prolonged drought and desertification. In view of the gravity of the situation, France had tried to help the stricken African States and was devoting most of its bilateral aid to them. That aid was directed principally to the development of agriculture and had been particularly substantial in respect to the campaign against the consequences of the drought in the Sahel and the development of a road infrastructure which was vitally important as a lifeline to the land-locked States and in the promotion of interregional trade.

77. In ECWA, there was a great contrast between the description of African poverty and the picture of a region affected by a sudden influx of financial resources. Thus on the one hand there were national incomes which were among the lowest in the world -- some barely \$100 *per capita* per annum -- and on the other the highest ever attained, the record being over \$8,500 *per capita*. That sudden increase in monetary resources, however, presented almost as many problems as it resolved, accentuated internal and external imbalances and contributed, through excessive liquidity, to the tensions affecting the world monetary system. Nevertheless, the economies of the countries of the region, like those of the poor countries, were still vulnerable owing to lack of diversification of production and to financial uncertainty. That state of affairs illustrated the interdependence by which the world economy was increasingly characterized. The Executive Secretary's statement had shown that that young Commission could contribute to the rational reorientation of financial flows towards the under-developed sectors of the region and the least developed countries in the rest of the world.

78. The Executive Secretary of ECE had shown how conscious the States members of the region were, despite their different approaches, of their collective responsibility towards the other regions of the world and especially towards the developing countries. He had expressed the confidence of the countries of the region that industrial, commercial and technical co-operation between States members of the region would be to the benefit of the world

² In this regard, see the annual report of the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (*Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Fourteenth Session, Supplement No. 3*).

as a whole. Since its inception, the Commission's particular vocation had been to stimulate trade between countries with different economic and social systems and his delegation was convinced that it would remain faithful to that vocation. It would also no doubt be encouraged to develop and increase that trade by the political will of the Governments which would be expressed in the closing statements at the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe.

79. He was convinced that the activities of ECE would converge with the efforts of the other regional commissions to give practical effect to the important directives upon which consensus had been reached at the recent world conferences on food and industrialization and to those which would be adopted at the seventh special session of the General Assembly.

80. It was obvious that States should show increasing solidarity in order to confront the grave dangers threatening the world economy; the regional commissions formed a

network through which that solidarity could and should best be expressed. To that end, the commissions should not interpret their mandate too narrowly and should be careful not to become self-centred. It was therefore desirable that the commissions should strengthen the links between them and increase the exchange of information and the number of joint undertakings. In that connexion, the decision of the executive secretaries to hold one of their two annual meetings at the headquarters of each regional commission in turn seemed a step in the right direction. United Nations Headquarters, UNCTAD, UNDP and the specialized agencies should also show their willingness to decentralize and in return the commissions should take account of the decisions adopted by the United Nations at the world level and be careful not to go beyond the measures adopted by the competent central organ. As the regional commissions' action should be subject to a certain unity of vision, it was the responsibility of the Economic and Social Council to provide doctrinal direction.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.

1970th meeting

Tuesday, 15 July 1975, at 3.10 p.m.

President: Mr. I. A. AKHUND (Pakistan)

E/SR.1970

AGENDA ITEM 4

Regional co-operation (*continued*) (E/5608/Rev.1, E/5608/Add.1, E/5619, E/5651, E/5656, E/5657 and Corr.1 and 2, E/5658, E/5700, E/5721, E/5722 and Corr.1, E/5723; E/L.1665)

1. Mr. DIETZE (German Democratic Republic) said that the reports of the regional commissions and the statements by their executive secretaries had shown that the progress of *détente* had brought about an improvement in the conditions in which the commissions worked. Much nevertheless remained to be done, and the regional commissions should make greater efforts to promote arms limitation and disarmament, since the policy of the armament monopolies was aggravating the prevailing crisis, absorbing vast resources and hampering the development of harmonious economic relations. He was therefore convinced that the coming conclusion of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe would represent a decisive step towards peace and the activities of ECE would take on new life as a result.

2. His country attached great importance to co-operation through ECE, whose thirtieth session had been fruitful. A high level of priority had been assigned to certain activities – in the fields of trade, scientific and technological co-operation, long-term projections and planning and the protection of the environment – which could promote peaceful co-existence among countries with different social systems. That applied particularly to projects such as those for the rational utilization of energy and raw materials or

the unification of electricity networks in eastern and western Europe. Mention should also be made of the study on measures to effect economy in the use of energy¹ in which there were a number of suggestions that could promote scientific and technical co-operation through ECE. Lastly, the development of long-term economic forecasts for the ECE region was a highly important task.

3. His delegation considered that ECE would be distinctly more effective if the activities of its subsidiary bodies – for example, those relating to scientific co-operation or environmental protection – were better co-ordinated: the implementation of Commission resolutions 1 (XXX) and 2 (XXX) would help in that direction.

4. The executive secretaries had emphasized the harmful effects on regional co-operation of the acute crisis affecting the capitalist countries: his delegation shared their concern and considered that the time had come to remove the many obstacles to east-west trade, particularly by applying the most-favoured-nation principle. With regard to the economic crisis, it should be noted that the industrial production of the CMEA member countries represented more than 33 per cent of world industrial production and that they were not suffering from any recession in industrial production or from inflation, speculation or unemployment.

¹ ECE, "Study on measures taken, or which might be taken, to achieve increased economy and efficiency in the extraction, conversion, transport and use of energy in the ECE region" (E/ECE/883 and Add.1).