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President: Mr. MARAMIS (Indonesia)

AGENDA ITEM 6

Regional co-operation (*continued*)*

- (a) Reports of the regional economic commissions and of the United Nations Economic and Social Office in Beirut (E/4733 and Add.1, E/4781 and Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1, E/4806, E/4806/Summary, E/4822, E/4822/Summary, E/4823 and Add.1, E/4823/Summary, E/4824, E/4824/Summary, E/4825; E/L.1335 and Corr.1, E/L.1336, E/L.1337/Rev.1, E/L.1338)

- (b) Report on the meetings of the executive secretaries (E/4859)

1. Mr. ANGELOV TODOROV (Observer for the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance), speaking at the invitation of the President, said that in view of the importance of the question of planning and of harmonizing plans for regional co-operation in Europe, it might be useful to give an account of how co-operation was organized among the CMEA member countries.

2. Economic, scientific and technical co-operation within CMEA was based on co-ordination of national economic plans and on consultations regarding basic questions of economic policy. That co-operation was concerned, in particular, with the forecasts for the main economic, scientific and technical sectors, the co-ordination of long-term plans for the main economic activities and joint planning for certain types of production. The consultations dealt with problems of economic policy that were of interest to all the countries, such as the main trends and the instruments of economic policy. Within the framework of those consultations, the countries also exchanged information on the development projections for certain sectors

of production, on the policies followed in investment and foreign trade, on the possible forms of scientific and technical co-operation and on the improvement of the system of administration and the planning of the national economy. Those exchanges of views made it possible to know the orientation of each country and covered a wide range of matters of a bilateral or multilateral nature. They also made it possible for account to be taken of the results obtained in the different countries in the elaboration of national plans and other economic measures, and they often lead to the conclusion of agreements or protocols.

3. The exchanges of information on the preparation of forecasts for the principal economic, scientific and technical sectors made it possible to evaluate forecasting methods and the results obtained as a function of the projections made.

4. The organs of CMEA co-operated in that field by drawing up a list of the forecasts already made on the basis of proposals by the countries concerned and by helping those countries to benefit from the forecasts made for the economic sectors of particular interest to them. A particularly important element in that connexion was the co-ordination of long-term plans which reflected the main economic trends in the different countries and their development objectives and which provided the elements for shorter-term planning.

5. For the co-ordination of plans, the member States started from the principle that long-term planning in the main sectors of the national economy must relate to a period longer than five years (generally ten to twenty years). Those plans reflected the objectives of the countries' economic policy in all fields and also fixed the main outlines of medium-term planning and of the participation of each country in the international division of labour. The co-ordination of long-term plans came into play on specific matters of common interest to several countries, which were generally selected during bilateral and multilateral consultations between the representatives of national planning bodies, with the participation of the different bodies responsible for foreign trade and for related sectors. The co-ordination of long-term plans was undertaken directly on the basis of the plans established by each country, and the problems which were solved during debates on co-ordination were the subject of specific measures which the States adopted within the framework of bilateral or multilateral co-operation agreements. Co-ordination of long-term plans also presupposed implementation by stages, the most important of which was the collection of preliminary information showing the policies followed by the countries in several economic sectors; on the basis of that information, the problems in respect of which co-ordination was required were examined and selected.

* Resumed from the 1706th meeting.

6. As far as the joint planning of the different sectors and types of production was concerned, it did not seem possible to envisage the creation of supra-national planning bodies. As to the possibility of using new forms of co-operation between the member States in the field of planning, that depended on the very bases of the planned administration of the economy of each State.

7. Mr. THAJEB (Indonesia) thanked the executive secretaries of the economic regional commissions for having so clearly highlighted the economic and social problems still to be tackled in the regions. While most of those problems could be dealt with at the national level, others demanded concerted action at the regional level. The tendency towards regional co-operation was growing day by day. Thus the considerable improvement in the economic situation in Asia and the Far East, where in 1968 and 1969, many countries had attained higher growth rates than 5 per cent, was largely due to the untiring efforts of the Executive Secretary of ECAFE to promote regional co-operation. Despite those favourable results, the situation of the region was still precarious and beset by many problems. The improved growth performance had not been sufficient to raise the level of real income of the people appreciably; the accelerated rate of population growth in many member countries had cancelled out a great deal of what had been achieved, and member countries were still confronted by very serious problems in the social field. With regard to external aid, which was an important element in the development effort, a certain stagnation had been noted in recent years, and at the same time the terms of aid had progressively hardened. However, most developing countries in the region would continue to need aid on easy terms in order not to aggravate their external indebtedness.

8. Several regional projects had already been undertaken under the aegis of ECAFE, but it was not until 1968 that co-operation at the regional level had taken a big step forward, thanks to the adoption of an integrated strategy for Asian economic co-operation. Subsequently, the Commission had adopted a resolution in which it defined its role and responsibilities in the Second Development Decade as regards the implementation at the regional level of the development strategy for the 1970s. One of the main principles of that resolution, namely, that the United Nations should intensify measures of decentralization to the regional economic commissions of its economic and social activities, was a logical consequence of the recommendation made in the *Study of the Capacity of the United Nations Development System*.¹

9. With regard to ECAFE's future activities, his delegation was gratified that the Commission had worked out a balanced and realistic work programme, that it had adopted a subregional approach in the trade liberalization and monetary co-operation programme, and that it had placed proper emphasis on social questions. With reference to ECAFE's role in charting the development strategy at the regional level, his delegation agreed with the Executive

Secretary that the major responsibilities for review and appraisal at the regional level should lie with the regional commissions, the regional development banks and other regional and subregional institutions. It was therefore very much in agreement with the Joint Inspection Unit that there should be an increased delegation of authority by United Nations Headquarters to ECAFE, so that the latter could discharge its new tasks effectively. It was pleased that the meeting of executive secretaries had considered the possibility of designating the executive secretaries as regional representatives of UNDP, for that would ensure closer co-ordination between the national action undertaken by UNDP and the regional action of the commissions. It was in that spirit that his delegation had been a sponsor of a resolution on performance evaluation submitted at the twenty-sixth session of ECAFE, in which the Executive Secretary was requested to take action for conducting regular appraisals and evaluations of progress during the Second Development Decade.

10. Plan harmonization was an extremely important factor in organizing regional economic co-operation. It could be carried out on a commodity-by-commodity, project-by-project or subregional basis. The formation of the Asian Coconut Community was the first example of plan harmonization on a commodity-by-commodity basis. In view of the importance of that Community for the economies of the producing countries of the region and the role it could play in the establishment of an international commodity agreement for coconut products, his delegation sincerely hoped that the Council might establish relations with that intergovernmental organization in accordance with its resolution 1267 (XLIII). Similar measures should be taken in the case of rice, as the recent breakthrough in rice production had created difficulties for the rice-exporting countries of the region. Accordingly, his delegation supported the proposal to establish informal intergovernmental consultations on rice among the countries of the region (ECAFE resolution 105 (XXVI)).

11. Equally important for the furthering of regional co-operation was the development of national, subregional and regional shipping services and the establishment of regional and subregional centres for the training of maritime and port personnel. It was to be hoped that the developed countries would help the developing countries financially and technically to establish and expand their merchant marines.

12. Turning to the development of industry and the utilization of natural resources, he said that his delegation supported the view that regional and subregional co-operation in that field should be based on the need to achieve economies of scale in the various industries, by providing new markets and encouraging the maximum utilization of capacity. The rich countries of the region could play an increasingly important role in the development of the region as a whole, by providing financial and technical assistance. In that connexion, his delegation welcomed the progress achieved by the Asian Industrial Development Council in the harmonious development of the industries in the region. More attention should be paid

¹ United Nations publication, Sales No.: E.70.I.10.

to the transfer of technology to the developing countries and its adaptation to those countries' needs. His delegation approved of the ECAFE secretariat's suggestion that a technological unit should be established in the Commission's secretariat.

13. The Asian Development Bank and subregional groupings like the Association of South-East Asian Nations or the Indonesia-Pakistan Economic and Cultural Co-operation offered wide possibilities for positive and fruitful co-operation. The basic aims and purposes of the Association of South-East Asian Nations would be to accelerate the economic, social and cultural development of the region and to promote peace and stability; thus, they were in line not only with ECAFE's regional co-operation policies, but also with the purposes and principles embodied in the United Nations Charter. In that connexion, his delegation appreciated the support received from the Centre for Development Planning, Projections and Policies, the ECAFE secretariat and UNCTAD for the study of the economic co-operation possibilities of that Association.

14. In view of the gravity and magnitude of the problems which ECAFE had to tackle, the resources placed at its disposal were very inadequate, especially as the region embraced by the Commission was the biggest and most densely populated and many Asian countries were among the least developed of the developing countries. Moreover, the development of regional co-operation had obliged ECAFE to carry out an increasing number of regional and subregional projects. Consequently, more funds should be made available to the economic regional commissions.

15. Ever since its inception, ECAFE had played a significant role in the economic development of the region, and it hoped to play an even more active role in the improvement of the living conditions of the Asian masses in the context of the Second Development Decade. His delegation was confident that the international community, through the Council, would provide ECAFE with the necessary means and support to bring that challenging task to a successful conclusion.

16. Mr. GORSE (France) expressed his delegation's congratulations to the executive secretaries of the regional economic commissions on their achievements. Their statements had brought out the individuality of the commissions and also the similarity in their roles and objectives.

17. From the administrative point of view, of course, kinship imposed certain restrictions on the commissions' autonomy. The Council's attempts at decentralization some years previously had clarified the problems of certain countries or groups of countries, but had not gone so far as to allow the commissions control over the resources used in their own areas. His delegation still thought that such radical decentralization would affect the efficiency of UNDP, while nevertheless believing that the regional economic commissions could play a useful role in the implementation of regional and subregional projects approved by the UNDP Governing Council. Moreover, once country programming machinery had replaced individual project procedure, UNDP might derive more benefit from its relations with the regional economic commissions, and it was with

that point in mind that the UNDP Governing Council had proposed a study of regional and subregional structures in technical assistance and pre-investment. His delegation would willingly support that proposal, but with the proviso that the study should be confined to aid programme co-ordination problems within the United Nations system and not result in challenging administrative structures that had already stood the test.

18. Another example of joint action was assistance in planning. The commissions' secretariats could assist any countries of their region so desiring to prepare their development plans by helping to set up multinational teams of planners. Such action, to be fully effective, should be carried out in close collaboration with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, which had already thoroughly studied possible technical assistance procedures with special reference to the practical development planning problems of the third world. It was not in the commissions' own interests to keep on asking for greater autonomy, which would in the final resort amount to complete independence, but rather to merge into the general body of the United Nations, which, through its administrative and budgetary disciplines, could alone grant the commissions the hearing they needed in order to meet their responsibilities.

19. With regard to the different commissions' achievements, he welcomed first the reforms in the structures and working methods of ECE, which had produced marked progress along the two lines selected by the Executive Secretary and the Commission: continuing with traditional activities while spending less but spending more efficiently on them, and devoting funds saved to strengthening certain "priority" sectors and to widening the Commission's field of action. His country was prepared to continue its present co-operation with ECE and to help assiduously with work in new fields. It noted with interest that questions relating to trade between the countries of Eastern and Western Europe were among those to be given top priority, and that the Commission was about to begin discussing practical measures to promote that trade.

20. ECAFE activities seemed on balance mainly positive. That Commission was in fact playing a decisive role in the launching of important regional economic projects, and his delegation considered that ECAFE methods of dealing with practical problems in its region, and in particular its concentration on certain specific products, had often been models of their kind. His delegation also welcomed the conclusion of the agreement to set up the Asian Statistical Institute, which would certainly help to supplement knowledge about the situation in the region and improve planning, evaluation and economic projection techniques. He added that, because of its interest in the development of Asia as a whole, France had in the present year decided to contribute to the capital of the Asian Development Bank, which it regarded as an essential tool for rounding off and giving effect to ECAFE's projects and studies.

21. The economic growth rate target laid down by ECLA for 1980, ambitious as it was, should not obscure the more immediate needs of projects in the early years of the

Development Decade. There he thought the Latin American Institute for Economic and Social Planning could play a leading part in defining a fresh strategy to meet the needs of the South American continent. At the extraordinary session of the ECLA Committee of the Whole, the French delegation had been very keenly interested in the steps taken to demonstrate the solidarity of the international community in face of Peru's ordeal.

22. With regard to ECA, co-operation with FAO was reflected in a joint programme on agricultural development in Africa. In the industrial field, a dovetailing of the Commission's activities with those of UNIDO would certainly bear fruit, particularly in the small-scale industry sector. At subregional level, ECA was helping the Association for the Development of Rice Production in West Africa, the creation of which would result in practical projects. His country, with its previous special experience and knowledge of the subject was keenly following such projects, as they could catalyse the African countries' wishes and resources. Again, the Niger River and Lake Chad Basin Commissions made possible human, technical and financial contributions, whether bilateral or multilateral, to general programmes for the development of natural resources in those regions. The Conference of African Statisticians and the Conference of African Planners, held at Addis Ababa in late 1969, had permitted a round-up of the years of statistical and economic activities over the continent, and the better approach to regional economic phenomena noted should facilitate preparatory work for the Second Development Decade. The African Institute for Economic Development and Planning at Dakar was, it seemed, tending towards diversification of its activities with special emphasis on research, which should get that guide to knowledge of the African economy off to a new start. He commended the United Nations Economic and Social Office in Beirut on the important work done in planning, development of human resources, and industrialization.

23. In conclusion, he said that the regional economic commissions could, by virtue of their knowledge of their regions' special problems, be of invaluable help to the United Nations Secretariat and to the Committee for Development Planning in the Second Development Decade.

24. Mr. SWARUP (India) said he wished to praise the regional economic commissions for their useful work. So far as concerned ECAFE, his delegation especially welcomed its adoption at its twenty-sixth session of the resolutions concerning regional action in the context of global development strategy, periodical performance evaluation at regional level, shipping development, and the establishment of a regional centre for development administration, which would meet a long-felt need in the region, and which, it was to be hoped, would receive all necessary aid from UNDP and other interested organizations. His delegation also welcomed the setting-up of a Public Administration Unit within the ECAFE secretariat, and the forthcoming inauguration of the South-East Asia Iron and Steel Institute, with which the Indian Government would be co-operating. It was also happy to note that ECAFE had accepted his Government's offer to welcome to New Delhi

in 1972 the third Asian International Trade Fair, which would bear witness to future prospects for regional co-operation.

25. His delegation welcomed action by the regional economic commissions to promote intra-regional trade, as the latter could play an important part in the economic growth of developing countries, which should trade less exclusively with their former metropolitan countries and more among themselves. The dynamic growth of intra-European trade proved the benefits of such regional co-operation.

26. Since the Ministerial declaration of December 1968, the ECAFE secretariat had been endeavouring to promote regional co-operation by pragmatic activities based on purely Asian initiative and planned within the region itself. The Asian programme of regional economic co-operation was therefore eminently suitable for international aid, and it was to be hoped that developed countries would support the projects in accordance with their pledge given in the concerted declaration at the second session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.² Co-operation between developing countries should, as the representative of Ceylon had said (1704th meeting), also cover monetary matters, as regional machinery similar to the European Payments Union could prevent a programme of regional commercial co-operation from aggravating the balance-of-payments difficulties of the countries concerned.

27. Contrary to what some delegations seemed to think, there was no conflict between subregional and regional co-operation. In Asia at least, it was clear from ECAFE's technical studies that those two forms of co-operation were complementary.

28. The study on structural changes in European industry which ECE proposed to undertake shortly would be very useful with regard, not only to the general preference system, but to assistance measures developed countries might take to improve the international division of labour, to both of which questions the developing countries attached the greatest importance. Again, better co-ordination between the regional economic commissions would facilitate inter-regional co-operation and the implementation of complementary social and economic programmes designed to speed up economic development.

29. With reference to the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on ECAFE (E/4781) he hoped that the Council would take account of the Inspectors' recommendations on the decentralization of United Nations economic and social activities to the regional economic commissions. Year after year, the Council considered the reports of the commissions and adopted resolutions to increase their efficiency, but action so far taken had fallen short of the Council's wishes. Yet the regional economic commissions had become the main instruments for regional co-operation. Hence ECAFE's regional activities should receive fuller financial

² See *Proceedings of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, Second Session*, vol. I: *Report and Annexes* (United Nations publication, Sales No.: E.68.II.D.14), annex I, declaration 23 (II).

and technical backing from United Nations Headquarters and the Commission's secretariat should have more say on use of staff. His delegation particularly supported the following points in the summary of recommendations: (a), (c) and (d) of section III, relating to internal organization; and (a), (c) and (e) of section IV, concerning links between ECAFE and the specialized agencies. As to the suggestion that arrangements between the specialized agencies and ECAFE should receive more support, his delegation hoped the Council would encourage such arrangements between ECAFE and other bodies. Similarly, the recommendations concerning ECAFE's operational role and administration and management problems were entirely relevant. The Inspectors' conclusions were in line with reiterated recommendations of the Council, and his delegation thought the Co-ordination Committee should examine them very carefully.

30. As regards the multinational interdisciplinary development advisory teams, it was important to recruit highly-qualified experts familiar with conditions in the countries where they were to work, hence preferably selected from among experts of the developing countries in the region. The Indian Government hoped that their services would be financed through increased appropriations under the United Nations regular budget.

31. The regional economic commissions had an important part to play in development planning, but, if they were to operate effectively, they must be strengthened both financially and functionally. The Council should bear that need in mind when considering agenda item 6 (c).

32. Mr. ABE (Japan) said that he had followed with interest the statements by the executive secretaries of the regional economic commissions on conditions in their respective regions. He would, however, stress the danger in members of the Council over-concentrating on their own regions instead of taking a global view of issues, since exaggerated regional interest would result in isolation to the detriment of co-operation.

33. The role of the regional economic commissions would be even more important during the Second Development Decade than during the First. But, to make it effective, it would be necessary to work out a strategy flexible enough to allow for the fact that the member countries of the regional economic commissions differed from one another not only in their stage of economic and social development but also in their historical backgrounds. In that connexion, it was particularly interesting to note in the report of ECA (E/4824) the proposal to divide up the countries of the region into seven subregions. Mention should also be made of the special measures ECAFE and ECA were considering to solve the problems of land-locked countries. Welcome, too, should be the fact that the regional economic commissions were attaching greater importance than in the past to the social aspects of development.

34. Being convinced that the regional economic commissions' role in the economic and social development of their regions could but grow in importance, the Japanese Government had closely co-operated in their activities. For

instance, in 1969, Japan had contributed \$20 million to the Asian Development Bank, the same amount to its Multi-purpose Special Fund, and \$200,000 to its Technical Assistance Special Fund. It had also made a substantial contribution to the Asian Institute for Economic Development and Planning and to the Asian Industrial Development Council, and planned to increase its contribution to ECAFE in future years.

35. While every regional economic commission should endeavour to increase the effectiveness of its work by more efficient organization, it was equally important to strengthen to the utmost the commissions' co-operation and co-ordination with the various United Nations organizations. That was one of the chief subjects discussed in the Capacity Study, and at its last session UNDP had suggested various measures such as the introduction of country programming and the strengthening of the role of the resident representatives. Other important suggestions included seconding UNDP officials to each one of the regional economic commissions and appointing officials from the commissions to posts at UNDP headquarters. His delegation hoped that the Governing Council of UNDP would favourably consider those suggestions at its next session. Furthermore, as the regional economic commissions were working to promote the industrialization of developing countries, it would be in their interest to co-ordinate their work in that field closely with that of UNDP, which itself should take account of the special needs of the various regions when framing its directives for co-operation in that field.

36. Referring to ECAFE activities, he welcomed first that Commission's decision at its twenty-sixth session to admit the Territory of Papua and New Guinea as an associate member. His delegation also supported the draft resolution to amend the terms of reference of ECAFE so as to make Bangkok the Commission's headquarters. It also welcomed the Commission's decision to simplify administration during the session and to continue to hold annual sessions. Lastly, it was to be hoped that the United Nations would take account of resolution 104 (XXVI) concerning ECAFE headquarters and the building extension programme, as the proposed measures were wholly justified.

37. Mr. ROUAMBA (Upper Volta) regretted that bodies which had been created in a wave of enthusiasm and good intentions were thereafter deprived of the support needed for constructive action. The regional commissions and the Beirut Office, which were engaged in a useful but thankless task – thankless because they were not in the limelight – needed the Council's support, and he was glad that the UNDP Governing Council had requested the Council to study the problems pertaining to the regional and sub-regional structures of the United Nations system. While the regional economic commissions' reports did not, unfortunately, contain any precise suggestions towards better co-ordination of their activities and their internal administration, a perusal of them did bring out the perennial nature of certain problems and the lack of over-all solutions. Instead of merely taking note of the commissions' reports, the Council should tackle the problem of regional co-

operation at a high level, with due regard to certain essential factors.

38. First of all, amidst the disquieting proliferation of organs, there was a certain erosion of the regional system, which would call for a fresh definition of the term "region". He therefore awaited with interest the first results of the study envisaged by the Secretary-General (E/4886 and Corr.1, para. 20). Constituting as it did for many countries the best mechanism for regional economic co-operation, the United Nations could not allow its regional economic commissions to be reduced to mere hack-work for lack of an over-all strategy, long-term plans and, above all, the requisite facilities. The Council should at all events modify its procedure for examining reports: the problems treated were often too specific for delegations to be able to make knowledgeable comments on them.

39. Secondly, it might well be asked whether regional co-operation was not in danger, and whether a subtle attempt was not being made to replace the regional concept by a national one likely to squeeze co-operation into a mesh of bilateral relationships; for all attempts to introduce regional economic co-operation units seemed to face a blanket reluctance. An effort should therefore be made to analyse the basic reasons for the disenchantment with regional co-operation and for the slackness in certain activities, both at administrative level in the commissions and policy level in certain countries, as also in connexion with the Council's difficulties in trying to play its full role as guide and co-ordinator. The variegated nature of the reports and statements submitted to the Council bore witness to a lack of communication between the regional commissions; so, instead of endorsing specific activities, the Council should concentrate on the wider aims of particular projects.

40. In ECE, an unfavourable international atmosphere had prevented examination of the basic problem of the nature and scope of commitments required to stave off increasing under-development. In ECLA, hopes had been so dashed that more and more meetings had been held outside the Commission to draft petitions in order to direct the rich countries' attention to the region's problems. In ECAFE, the basic problems whose solution was essential to the proper functioning of the Commission had not been solved. As to the Beirut Office, it would appear from its Director's statement (1705th meeting) that the time had come to review its status. Regarding ECA, there were doubts about the object of the reform proposed by OAU, and in any event the Commission and its subregional offices must be free to play a more dynamic role than that of serving as venues of meetings. The Council should therefore rethink the problem of regional co-operation; and the regional commissions, if they could rise above their role as mere providers of technical assistance, were best able to help it do so.

41. His third point was that, while the report of the meetings of the executive secretaries of the regional economic commissions had stated the problem very cogently in its general conclusions (E/4859, para. 4), it unfortunately proposed hardly any practical solutions for

the future. The first of the "bold and dynamic approaches" proposed in the report was the creation of multinational interdisciplinary development advisory teams, which entailed three problems: recruitment of experts, to be done locally – with the well-known difficulties, financing, which must not prejudice the resources of the regional commissions and the continuous evaluation of the teams' activities, to ensure that they did not, like the regional commissions, end up concentrating on minor tasks. The report also proposed that the regional commissions should play a role in evaluating the implementation of the international development strategy, and that the operational activities of the United Nations should be decentralized in their favour, it being understood that they would have the resources needed to act as executing agencies. The report likewise mentioned co-operation between the regional economic commissions and UNCTAD and UNIDO; unfortunately, that was as far as it went. The document should be examined in close conjunction with the report of the tenth session of the Governing Council of UNDP (E/4884), particularly paragraphs 62 and 63 of the annex to the draft resolution contained in paragraph 94, which dealt with the role of the resident representatives of UNDP. He could not help wondering what the regional economic commissions and the Beirut Office were supposed to do in their role as regional outposts of development, why States were hesitating to have recourse to them, why the *Study of the Capacity of the United Nations Development System* had not dealt with the role of the regional economic commissions (see E/4859, para. 33), and where the apparent tendency to concentrate all to do with regional co-operation on UNDP would ultimately lead.

42. The report of the meetings of the executive secretaries (E/4859) indicated, in paragraph 11, that the regional economic commissions and the Beirut Office would need to strengthen their machinery, which was the precise point on which the Economic and Social Council should intervene to support those bodies, by providing them with more resources and giving them the necessary guidance. Rather than endlessly grafting new bodies on to the regional commissions, the Council should seek to give them the power and the means to play their proper role in economic development.

43. The PRESIDENT noted that a large number of speakers had still to take the floor on items 6 (a) and (b) of the agenda, and proposed that the discussion on those points be resumed at the next plenary meeting.

It was so decided.

Request for the inclusion of an additional item in the agenda of the forty-ninth session (E/4896)

44. Mr. KOTSCHNIG (United States of America) referring to his delegation's communication (E/4896), pointed out that the Council had only to decide whether it wished to convene a special session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs before the next session of the General Assembly. His delegation expected no objection to the proposal.

45. Some delegations had suggested a change in the title of the item proposed by the United States in order to make specific mention of psychotropic substances, which, they feared, might be passed over under the wording proposed. The change seemed unnecessary to his delegation, which considered its proposed title applicable to the abuse of all addiction-producing substances, including psychotropic substances, which had already been discussed in detail by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and could, of course, also be discussed at the special session, although the intention was to hold a special conference on the subject later.

46. The special session would also have to consider measures: (a) to control the supply of narcotic raw materials in accordance with General Assembly resolution 2434 (XXIII) (which had requested a special study of the question, which the Commission on Narcotic Drugs had not yet undertaken); (b) to limit and then suppress the illicit drug traffic; and (c) to reduce the demand for drugs, that was to say, illicit demand, not drugs used for medical purposes, of which India and the USSR were the main suppliers and over which they exercised strict control.

47. His delegation hoped that the Council would include the proposed item in its agenda, thus taking the opportunity of contributing to the solution of a cardinal problem by enabling the Commission on Narcotic Drugs to discuss and submit to the General Assembly the immediate and long-term measures to be taken.

48. Mr. KRISHNAN (India) said that his delegation was among those that had expressed misgivings as to the wording of the new item proposed for inclusion in the agenda by the United States delegation. As those misgivings had been allayed by the United States representative's explanation, the Indian delegation was prepared to accept the inclusion of the new item in the agenda, provided that it did not come up for discussion immediately, and also that, as stated by the United States representative, the word "drugs" covered all addiction-producing substances, including psychotropic substances.

49. With regard to the purpose of the special session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, his delegation had certain reservations regarding specific measures for inclusion in policy recommendations, particularly with respect to points (1) and (3) in the antepenultimate paragraph of document E/4896, the meaning and scope of which were not clear. The United States representative's explanations had removed some, but not all, of the doubts concerning them.

50. With those reservations, his delegation accepted the inclusion of the new agenda item, while reserving the right to speak again on the substance of the question in due course.

51. Mr. CARANICAS (Greece) said that, while supporting the proposal before the Council, he was surprised that it came from the same delegation as had previously wanted to remove certain items from the agenda.

52. Mr. NESTERENKO (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that he was also prepared to accept the proposal, if the United States really considered drug abuse to be a particularly serious threat in present circumstances; but he thought it wise for the Council to decide in advance that discussion on the new agenda item should be mainly concerned with the convening of the special session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, and not aim at over-precisely defining the agenda for that session. His delegation, like others probably, included no experts on narcotic drugs and could make no real contribution to a highly technical discussion.

53. The PRESIDENT proposed the inclusion in the agenda of the forty-ninth session of the Economic and Social Council of an additional item entitled "United Nations action against drug abuse: special session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs".

It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 33

Measures to be taken for famine relief in the Yemen Arab Republic (E/L.1339)

54. Mr. HAMID (Sudan), introducing the joint draft resolution of Bulgaria, Sudan and Tunisia (E/L.1339), thanked the Council for having agreed to include that urgent item in its agenda and hoped that the Council would unanimously adopt the resolution, which was of a purely humanitarian nature.

55. For three years the Yemen Arab Republic had been in the throes of a widespread famine. With under-average rainfall, the grain yield had fallen 53 per cent below the normal. Great hope had been reposed in the spring rains, which usually preceded the monsoon; but, unfortunately, neither the highlands nor the coastal regions of the Yemen Arab Republic had had any rain during the first six months of 1970.

56. Generally speaking, the regions most affected were the southern part of the country, the highlands of the centre and north, and most of the coastal plain. Thousands of Yemenis at present faced death from hunger and thirst; financial resources were exhausted, and the population was almost entirely dependent on free food issue; stock losses in the lowlands had recently increased to about 80 per cent of the total. Moreover, famine was forcing the agricultural population to converge on the large villages or towns. According to recent statistics, the net deficit of food supplies was estimated at 217,000 tons for a total population of 5 million inhabitants, calculating at the rate of 100 kg of food per year per person. It was hoped that 163,000 tons of foodstuffs would be supplied, through foreign aid, private imports and the spring harvests, which would reduce to 54,000 tons the deficit to be made good between now and December 1970. The Government was making enormous efforts to help the inhabitants of the most severely affected regions.

57. The draft resolution submitted to the Council was therefore a distress signal appealing to the international agencies and organizations and to Governments to come to the help of the Yemen Arab Republic while there was still time.

58. Mr. OLDS (United States of America) said that his delegation was moved by the tragedy that had struck the Yemen Arab Republic, as it had been by that which had hit Peru, and that it hoped, no doubt with all other delegations, that the draft resolution proposed would be unanimously adopted. Hence it had hesitated to mention a question which had already arisen over the adoption of the draft resolution contained in document E/L.1333 (1703rd meeting), and would probably arise pretty often.

59. In view of the decision already taken, regarding that draft resolution, to reject the amendment proposed by the Soviet Union in document E/L.1334, his delegation suggested that the words "the Governments of all States" be replaced by the words "the Governments of Member States and non-governmental organizations" in operative paragraph 1 of the draft resolution. In submitting that amendment, his delegation hoped that no protracted discussion would ensue, and that the decision taken would settle the matter once for all.

60. The PRESIDENT appealed to delegations not to try to introduce politics into the discussion and to adopt a generally acceptable formula without delay.

61. Mr. NESTERENKO (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that, though he was second to none in hoping that a single formula would be adopted without more ado, that formula could not be the one proposed, for basically political reasons, by the United States delegation.

62. On a purely humanitarian question, the Council had the chance to put an end to unfair discrimination by allowing the German Democratic Republic to help the Yemen Arab Republic on the same basis as all other countries. Debarments of the sort could not be maintained where so sorely distressed smaller countries were concerned. Hence his delegation held that the formula used in document E/L.1339 was the only one appropriate to a humanitarian project.

63. Mrs. ZAEFFERER de GOYENECHE (Argentina) said that her delegation supported the joint draft resolution with the amendment proposed by the United States representative, on the ground that the amendment did not prevent any State so wishing from offering its aid to the Yemen Arab Republic.

64. Mr. GUELEV (Bulgaria) was glad that the Council had agreed to consider steps to be taken to remedy the serious situation in the Yemen Arab Republic.

65. That situation did call for urgent measures by States and international agencies. As in the case of Peru a few days previously (1703rd meeting), the Council would no doubt

wish to help the Yemen Arab Republic, threatened as it was by famine and epidemics likely to break out owing to shortage of drinking water. His delegation therefore urgently appealed to the Council to adopt unanimously the joint draft resolution as submitted by the representative of Sudan.

66. Mr. LECOURTIER (France) pointed out that, though his delegation normally considered that in such cases it was directly incumbent upon Governments to take the necessary steps, it had been deeply moved by the details just given on the situation in Yemen, and congratulated the sponsors of the draft resolution on arousing world opinion, which had not been very well informed on the subject. It was therefore prepared to support the draft resolution, but felt that, to avoid any difficulty, it would be better to adhere to traditionally approved formulae. It therefore also supported the proposed amendment submitted by the United States representative.

67. Mr. NDUNG'U (Kenya) thought that the Council should begin by trying to reach a decision whereby to ensure the immediate implementation of practical measures to help the Yemen Arab Republic. His delegation was therefore not taking a stand on the point raised with regard to operative paragraph 1 of the draft resolution, but hoped to propose a minor amendment to paragraph 2. In order to recognize the assistance which certain specialized agencies had already supplied, as mentioned in paragraph 2, the end of that paragraph should be replaced after the words "to initiate rapid action . . .", by the phrase: "to facilitate accelerated action by the specialized agencies, especially FAO and WHO, as well as by the World Food Programme and UNICEF, in rendering assistance to the people of the Yemen Arab Republic".

68. Mr. HAMID (Sudan) earnestly regretted that political considerations had interfered with the examination of a proposal that purported to be of a purely humanitarian nature. His delegation did not feel that it could accept the amendment proposed by the United States. In such a context, there was no reason to make precedents legal and binding. All that the sponsors of the resolution required was that all Governments might co-operate in giving the assistance required, be they members of the United Nations or not. His delegation therefore felt obliged to ask that the amendment concerned be put to the vote.

69. It did not, on the other hand, see any objection to the amendment proposed by the representative of Kenya.

70. Mr. OLDS (United States of America) was quite prepared to have his amendment put to the vote, and hastened to assure the members of the Council that it was no part of his intention to exclude any Government from action in a humanitarian cause. The Council was nevertheless an organ of the United Nations, and his delegation hoped that any decision taken would not be questioned every time similar draft resolutions were submitted.

71. Mr. NESTERENKO (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) was also glad that the proposed United States amendment was to be put to the vote separately, in order that it might be known who was in favour of what; for the ostracism of a particular State was indeed a political problem.

72. The PRESIDENT put the amendment submitted by the United States delegation to the vote.

The amendment was adopted by 13 votes to 5, with 8 abstentions.

73. The PRESIDENT put to the vote the draft resolution submitted by Bulgaria, Sudan and Tunisia (E/L.1339), as a

whole, including the amendments proposed by the United States and Kenya delegations.

The draft resolution, as amended, was unanimously adopted.

74. Explaining his vote, Mr. NESTERENKO (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), repeated his view that the Council's failure to prevent political considerations being introduced into a debate which should have been purely humanitarian was proof of its weakness; but his delegation had voted for the draft resolution because of its world-wide interest.

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.