

27. Mr. S. N. SMIRNOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that his delegation had no objection to the documentation before the Council on the question of transport. He pointed out, however, that, as could be seen from the two reports, the question was highly technical. Moreover, the documents did not contain any specific proposal concerning measures that the Council could take. Under those circumstances, and taking into account the Council's decisions concerning the rationalization of its work, it would be preferable to invite the appropriate subsidiary organ of the Council to consider the question and then transmit its conclusions to the Council.

28. Mr. KLEIN (United States of America) said that his delegation, which in December had assumed the chairmanship of the Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods, would have liked to introduce two draft resolutions on behalf of that Committee. However, as the text of the draft resolutions had been circulated only that morning to the members of the Committee, he wished to wait until they had had time to make comments and reach a consensus before officially proposing the adoption of those texts by the Council. Accordingly, he requested that consideration of the agenda item be resumed later in the week.

29. Mr. DONNELLY (United Kingdom) said that his delegation also wished to hold consultations with

other members of the Committee before submitting draft resolutions on the item under consideration. He therefore supported the proposal of the United States representative.

30. The PRESIDENT suggested that the time-limit for the submission of draft proposals concerning transport questions should be extended to 12 noon on Wednesday, 30 April. If he heard no objection, he would take it that his suggestion was accepted.

*It was so decided.*

*The meeting was suspended at 4.10 p.m. and resumed at 4.40 p.m.*

### **Organization of work**

31. Mr. MACRAE (United Kingdom), replying to a question asked by the President in connexion with draft resolution II contained in the report of the Commission on Human Rights (E/5635), which was before the Council under agenda item 6, announced that his delegation would no doubt be in a position to submit a text the following day; it would probably take the form of a working paper rather than revised amendments.

*The meeting rose at 4.45 p.m.*

## **1946th meeting**

**Friday, 2 May 1975, at 3.25 p.m.**

*President:* Mr. Iqbal AKHUND (Pakistan).

E/SR.1946

### **Revision of the agenda (E/5652)**

1. Mr. FASLA (Algeria) said that his delegation would like a new item entitled "Assistance to Indo-China" to be added to the agenda of the Council (E/5652) as revised at the 1941st meeting. The war which had ravaged the countries of the region for 30 years had just come to an end. The international community had the duty to provide the Indo-Chinese people—who had struggled during those 30 years for freedom and unity—with aid which would enable them, in the short term, to solve the difficulties currently confronting them and, in the longer term, to face any problems which might arise.

2. The Secretary-General had already taken an initiative in that regard, but it had not met with the desired response; the Economic and Social Council must therefore now appeal to Member States to provide immediate humanitarian aid to the Viet-Nameese people and to help them later in their task of reconstruction.

3. To that end, the Council should adopt a resolution to supplement and strengthen the initiative taken by the Secretary-General.

4. Mr. BA-ISA (Democratic Yemen) and Mr. BALDÉ (Guinea) supported the Algerian representative's proposal to add a new item concerning assistance to Indo-China to the agenda.

5. The PRESIDENT said that, if there was no objection, he would take it that the members of the Council accepted the proposal by the representative of Algeria and decided to revise the agenda accordingly.

*The agenda, as revised, was adopted.*

### **AGENDA ITEM 2**

**Consideration of a system-wide attack on the drought problems in the Sudano-Sahelian region, Ethiopia and Somalia (E/5611, E/L.1625, 1637, 1645, 1646/Rev.1, 1647)**

6. Mr. MORSE (Under-Secretary-General for Political and General Assembly Affairs) said that, since November 1974, the United Nations had pursued its emergency relief operations and medium-term and long-term assistance programmes in the Sudano-Sahelian region, in conformity with General Assembly resolution 3253 (XXIX) and Economic and Social Council resolutions 1874 (LVII) and 1878 (LVII). The situation had improved somewhat in the region, since there had been more rain than in the preceding seven years.

7. The members of the Council would find in report No. 13 (see E/L.1645) of the Office for the Sahelian Relief Operation (OSRO) of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) information concerning the participation of many donor countries

and agencies in the technical evaluation teams and the multi-donor mission organized by OSRO to forecast short-term relief needs during 1975; the document also emphasized the generous assistance which had been provided by the international community. By the end of 1974, over \$20 million in cash or in kind had been contributed through OSRO to the region.

8. However, despite a definite improvement in the situation, there were still sizable population groups which would need help during the current year. New problems had compounded those caused by the drought. For example, the preceding year's rains had increased the danger of crops being damaged by insects, and OSRO had had to make arrangements to cope with any such emergency. Furthermore, the build-up of food reserves had demonstrated the inadequacy of storage facilities and had created transport problems.

9. The multi-donor mission had estimated that food requirements for 1975 would be about one third of the 1974 level and it appeared that donor pledges would meet those needs. Assistance provided through OSRO concerning the local purchase of cereals and the supply of vehicles for the distribution of food had been both prompt and generous. In addition, OSRO was co-operating closely with the United Nations Sahelian Office to ensure a smooth transition between the emergency period and the rehabilitation and reconstruction phase.

10. With regard to the medium-term and long-term rehabilitation and recovery programmes, the United Nations Sahelian Office, through its headquarters at Ouagadougou, was working in close collaboration with the Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) in order to further the co-ordination of medium-term and long-term assistance and to ensure the orderly and coherent elaboration of future assistance programmes in accordance with plans made by CILSS. The Sahelian Office also maintained close contacts with the relevant organizations and programmes of the United Nations system which possessed the requisite technical assistance capacity to undertake projects to which CILSS had accorded top priority.

11. The preparation of projects had greatly advanced, in full co-operation with CILSS. For example, a road improvement project in the Sahelian region was being executed; the United Nations Sahelian Office had provided the Office of Technical Co-operation with the necessary initial funds and experts were already working in the field. Another CILSS project, in the preparation of which the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) were collaborating closely, concerned the reinforcement of agrometeorological and hydrological systems in the region; UNDP had already contributed \$4 million for the first phase of the project. In an effort to obtain additional funding, CILSS was convening a meeting of donor Governments at Niamey from 7 to 9 May 1975. It was hoped that donors would make concrete pledges amounting to approximately \$10 million. Furthermore, a number of other projects originally identified by the United Nations system as being within its competence had been undertaken by donor Governments on a bilateral basis. The United Nations Sahelian Office welcomed the donors' interest in and support for medium-term and long-term projects and had undertaken a re-evaluation of possible United Nations projects on a continuing basis in order to ensure that there was no duplication or overlapping.

12. Regarding future activities, the United Nations Sahelian Office had, in close consultation with CILSS, identified approximately 50 priority projects for which no donor input had yet been envisaged. Those projects—which were aimed at mitigating the consequences of the drought—endeavoured to bring the countries of the region to a level of self-sufficiency that would enable them to meet the needs of their populations, help them to accelerate their economic and social development, and help them to withstand the consequences of any future droughts. The projects included increased agricultural production, better crop protection, development of telecommunications, improvement of road systems, evaluation of nutritional needs and development of the forestry sector. The implementation of those programmes would require investments of the order of \$90 million. As soon as CILSS had approved them, the United Nations planned, probably at the end of May, to begin a fund-raising campaign to obtain the financial resources which were essential if the United Nations was to undertake the first phase of the projects. He therefore proposed, on behalf of the Secretary-General, to meet during the summer with representatives of potential donor countries with a view to obtaining definite pledges for the implementation of those priority projects which CILSS approved. Once those contributions were forthcoming, it would be the responsibility of the United Nations Sahelian Office to channel funds through the United Nations system, in particular UNDP, and ensure that projects were effectively and rapidly carried out. He expected to be able to present a detailed report on his fund-raising activities to the General Assembly at its thirtieth session, by which time he hoped that the initial programme would be ready for implementation and that the essential funds would be forthcoming.

13. The tragedy which had affected the Sahelian region was also prevalent in other parts of Africa such as Ethiopia, Somalia, the Sudan and Cape Verde. Increased efforts must be undertaken by the United Nations system and the international community to help the rehabilitation and recovery of those areas. That would require extensive technical and financial assistance and a firm commitment by donors. As far as the Sudano-Sahelian region was concerned, the United Nations Sahelian Office would continue its work, in close collaboration with CILSS, as long as was necessary. It would continue to seek and co-ordinate assistance for the peoples of the Sudano-Sahelian region. It should also be stressed that the Sudano-Sahelian countries had made enormous efforts for their part to mitigate the worst consequences of the tragic drought, and that the Governments of the coastal countries had accorded all possible facilities to enable the rapid transshipment of food-stuffs to the affected countries. That unity and concerned action in the face of such a large-scale disaster had greatly helped the donor countries, by enabling them to respond generously and swiftly to the appeals made to them.

14. In conclusion, he expressed the hope that Member States would continue to assist and would in future contribute permanently to the medium-term and long-term programmes of rehabilitation and recovery which were so vital if the countries of the Sudano-Sahelian region were to overcome fully the difficulties they were facing.

15. Mr. BERKOL (United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator) pointed out that the information in the report of the Secretary-General (E/5611) no longer

truly reflected the situation currently prevailing in Ethiopia. Normally, the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator (UNDRO) phased out its assistance as the emergency requirements of the affected countries were met and as those countries gradually started to implement medium-term and long-term recovery programmes with the assistance of bilateral sources, United Nations bodies and other organizations. However, owing to the continuing drought and famine in Ethiopia, and despite the efforts of the Ethiopian Government and of donors, UNDRO was not yet in a position to phase out its involvement.

16. The relief assistance provided to Ethiopia by the international community since August 1973 totalled over \$100 million, reflecting a very generous response to the appeals which had been made. Unfortunately, rainfall had continued to be inadequate in various regions of the country and many people, particularly women, children and the elderly, had continued to suffer from malnutrition and drought-related sicknesses. There were also logistical problems because the affected areas were mainly in south-eastern Ethiopia, where overland transport was very difficult and relief supplies, in most cases, could only be airlifted in the small number of transport aircraft available to the Government.

17. He had visited Ethiopia with his personal representative in order to conduct an aerial survey of some of the drought-affected regions and had been able to appreciate the enormous transport difficulties encountered by the teams seeking to succour the nomadic peoples of those remote areas where aircraft seemed to be the only feasible means of transport pending the implementation of medium-term and long-term rehabilitation programmes.

18. In the remote areas of Ogaden, Southern Bale and Sidamo, the drought continued to claim a considerable number of victims. The Commissioner responsible for Relief and Rehabilitation would like to have modern aircraft, capable of operating under the same conditions as the DC-3, but with a larger capacity and experienced crews, in order to facilitate the transport of food and other relief supplies and relief personnel.

19. Although rehabilitation work was beginning in the provinces of Tigre and Wollo, the situation in the south and south-eastern regions of the country, where cases of famine were still being reported, continued to be particularly serious. In addition, the situation for the country as a whole might deteriorate still further, for the 1974 rainfall in the regions inhabited by the nomadic peoples had been inadequate. Moreover, the transition from relief to rehabilitation measures had been slow. Most of the root causes of the 1973 famine—poor land utilization, deforestation, soil erosion and population increase in the regions with the lowest food resources—continued to exist. It could already be said that the rainfall in the south-eastern region of the country, which accounted for one third of the total area, had been well below normal; the potential for future disasters had therefore not abated and, so long as the land was not better utilized, even a partial failure of the rains would be sufficient to jeopardize the food supply of the entire country.

20. In 1974, external emergency assistance amounting to over \$93 million had been provided. Of the relief grain requirements estimated at 164,000 tons, approximately 149,000 tons had been pledged, of which

roughly 126,000 tons had arrived or been bought locally. In addition, 11,210 tons of food had been delivered in 1974 and some 226 trucks had been supplied by external donors. The Relief and Rehabilitation Commission currently had 268 vehicles, excluding those on loan from other ministries. However, the lack of adequate storage facilities for the large shipments of relief grain continued to pose a problem. An accelerated programme for the construction and conversion of 62 warehouses in the areas most seriously affected had been undertaken and should be nearing completion.

21. The role of the Ethiopian Government, especially that of the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission, merited particular mention. By mobilizing all its vehicles and personnel, the Government had made it possible to overcome many of the numerous logistical problems posed by the transportation of food-stuffs over long distances and rough terrain. In the opinion of the UNDP Regional Representative, it was thanks to the combined effort of civil and armed forces transport and their personnel that 2.5 million people had been able to receive food rations for periods ranging from one month to two years; that had saved thousands and perhaps even hundreds of thousands of lives. Mention should also be made of the efforts of numerous voluntary agencies, including the Red Cross, which had organized food distribution and medical assistance to famine victims in relief centres. The number of victims so far was high and, according to estimates from the Ethiopian Nutrition Institute, there had been between 107,000 and 150,000 deaths in the region of Wollo alone. In addition, it was thought that the nomads of the Tigre and Wollo regions had lost 80 percent of their cattle and between 30 and 50 per cent of their other herds.

22. Although only some regions in the highlands still needed emergency food assistance in 1975, the situation was far more serious in the semi-desert regions of the eastern, south-eastern and southern peripheries of the highlands, particularly in Ogaden, where rainfall in the last four years had been inadequate. In that connexion, he pointed out that the figures reported in paragraphs 7 to 9 of the report of the Secretary-General should be reviewed in the light of the latest estimates of the Ethiopian Government for the period 1975-1976 according to which a total of 235,000 tons of food would be needed, whereas government purchases and pledges of external assistance so far amounted to only 77,000 tons. As the Director-General of FAO had approved an allocation of 5,000 tons of grain from the emergency reserves of the World Food Programme (WFP), the estimated grain deficit for the period 1975-1976 would come to 153,000 tons. In addition, of the 16,500 tons of high-protein foods needed to assist children and nomads in particular, only 6,550 tons had been pledged. Finally, in the same context, he pointed out that the figure in the last sentence of paragraph 9 of the report should read 60,000 tons and not 6,000.

23. The prospect for the near future was not encouraging, and whatever the size of the next harvests there was no doubt that the drought-stricken regions would require external food aid until and perhaps even beyond August 1976. He again emphasized that rehabilitation programmes must necessarily accompany the emergency relief measures and he urged all Member States to continue to give their full support in those two fields in collaboration with the Ethiopian Government, UNDP, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the

World Health Organization (WHO), WFP and the other international bodies and voluntary agencies concerned.

24. Turning to the situation in the Somali Democratic Republic, he recalled the circumstances which had led the Somali Government to request the Secretary-General for emergency assistance in October 1974 to combat the drought in the northern regions of the country. Despite the quick response of the international community, WFP and UNICEF to that appeal, the drought had spread to other regions because of a second season of inadequate rainfall. Thousands of refugees had poured into the southern part of the country and that had had graver consequences than had been initially estimated.

25. The Somali Government had diligently and effectively mobilized all the resources at its disposal to meet the situation and to provide relief centres, basic medical services and food rations to over 200,000 nomads. In consultation with the UNDP Resident Representative, UNDRO had dispatched periodic reports on the development of the situation to donor Governments, United Nations agencies, intergovernmental organizations and voluntary agencies, and also to the International Red Cross. Very soon it became necessary for WFP to triple the volume of its assistance, and food shipments to Somalia eventually accounted for \$4 million or nearly 27 per cent of the total emergency reserve at the disposal of the Programme. On the medical front, UNICEF had sent large quantities of rehabilitative foods and rehydration fluid. By the end of 1974, UNICEF had committed over \$140,000 to the operation, and that was followed by a \$2 million appeal for financing further programmes of assistance and rehabilitation. WHO was currently procuring medical supplies and the Secretary-General had allocated for that purpose over \$500,000 from the Special Fund for emergency operations.

26. The external assistance provided by other members of the international community amounted to \$52.5 million, of which \$45 million represented bilateral contributions and the remaining \$7.5 million came from the United Nations system. However, the extent to which that assistance would be adequate to meet requirements was conditional on the amount of rain that fell that year as well as on the support given to the Somali Government's rehabilitation and resettlement programmes. It was feared that the rains in April and May might again prove insufficient. Furthermore, in the relief centres the population was increasing and had now reached over 237,000 persons—nearly half of them children. There was, however, a drop in the mortality rate.

27. While it appeared that immediate needs for food and medicaments were being met, the same could not be said for vehicles and spare parts. The Somali authorities estimated that 70 lorries of between 7 and 10 tons capacity and 30 water tankers of 4,000 litres capacity were required, the cost of which ranged between \$16,000 and \$30,000 each. A detailed list of the spare parts needed had been sent to the Governments of the countries which manufactured those vehicles. With regard to the drinking-water supplies in the affected regions, he drew attention to the fact that funds were necessary to finance well-drilling. Governments had already contributed \$176,000 to the Somali authorities for that purpose.

28. The visit he had made to Somalia and the consultations he had had on that occasion had enabled him to ascertain that the Somali Government's relief programme was being conducted with diligence and efficiency and that the Somali Government's dynamic action, combined with the generous contributions of the international community, had limited the consequences of a drought which might otherwise have assumed far more serious proportions.

29. However, additional financial aid must be provided for the implementation of the medium-term and longer-term rehabilitation programmes which the Government was preparing in consultation with the UNDP Representative. The success of those programmes, which involved 50,000 nomadic families, would undoubtedly facilitate the transition from emergency relief to longer-term recovery.

30. Even if the rainfall during the current season proved to be sufficient, it would not be possible to make an assessment of the harvest before August. While the food situation appeared adequate for current emergency needs, every effort should be made to expedite deliveries of food donations already pledged so that they would not arrive too late. In conclusion, he would again appeal to the international community to assist the Somali people in coping with the consequences of the drought.

31. Mr. LISTER (Office for Inter-Agency Affairs and Co-ordination) recalled that in its resolution 1878 (LVII) the Council had requested the Secretary-General and all the organizations of the United Nations system concerned to pursue vigorously their activities and efforts toward a broad, system-wide attack on the drought problem, and had requested the Secretary-General to submit an interim report on such activities to it at its fifty-eighth session.

32. For many years, several organizations of the United Nations system had been engaged in, or had provided resources for, activities related to arid and semi-arid lands, ranging from research and the dissemination of information to training and the application of existing knowledge. However, the recent serious droughts in the Sudano-Sahelian region and in Ethiopia, Somalia and other parts of East Africa had created an awareness of the interaction between the incidence of drought and the process of desertification, and of the impact of that interaction on arid-zone ecosystems and on man himself.

33. That growing concern was reflected in the large number of resolutions and decisions recently adopted on the subject by various United Nations bodies, and on 30 and 31 October 1974 the Secretary-General had convened an interagency meeting under the aegis of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC) for the purpose of working out an appropriate allocation of the tasks entrusted to the various United Nations organizations in those resolutions. However, when the General Assembly, in its resolution 3337 (XXIX), decided to convene a United Nations Conference on Desertification, it became necessary to set in motion the preparatory work for the Conference within the framework of the large number of existing activities.

34. Where operational activities were concerned, the organizations, under the leadership of the United Nations Sahelian Office and in co-ordination with UNDP, had directly contributed to the implementation of a



wide spectrum of operational projects which were reported on in the report of the Administrator of UNDP<sup>1</sup> and the report prepared by the United Nations Sahelian Office.<sup>2</sup>

35. With regard to research on the special problems of arid zones, work had been carried out under the world programme of development research and in connexion with the preparations for the United Nations Conference on Desertification, and the Secretary-General had convened an *ad hoc* Interagency Task Force to identify the obstacles which had not yet been overcome by science and technology in solving arid-zone problems. In view of its long experience in that field, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) had played a special role in the Task Force, whose report had been limited to the obstacles to development in arid and semi-arid zones, the inventory of research and development actions and programmes called for in Council resolution 1898 (LVII) being postponed to a later date. That report,<sup>3</sup> had been submitted to the Intergovernmental Working Group of the Committee on Science and Technology for Development, which had considered the relationship of the report's recommendations to the programme of work contemplated in connexion with the Conference on Desertification. It had just been decided that the Task Force should continue its work and report to the Committee in February 1976.

36. Still in the framework of the preparatory work for the Conference, a second interagency meeting had taken place in March 1975, when agreement had been reached on the importance of an integrated multidisciplinary approach and on the respective roles of the organizations of the United Nations system. The organizations concerned had expressed the desire to be represented in the Conference secretariat to be set up by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and the hope that UNEP and UNDP would consider providing them with the necessary financial support. It had also been agreed that regional technical meetings would be held when the preparations were sufficiently advanced, so as to facilitate consultations with Governments on the necessary scientific inputs. It had been decided that the preparatory work for the United Nations Conference on Desertification would have to be fully concerted with that for the United Nations Water Conference scheduled for 1977. The decisions taken at the interagency meeting had been approved by ACC during its session on 3 and 4 April 1975. The question of the preparations for the Conference on Desertification had subsequently been taken up at a co-ordination meeting held in conjunction with the third session of the Governing Council of UNEP at Nairobi, and it had been decided that the first meeting of the Interagency Task Force on the United Nations Conference on Desertification would take place in Geneva from 26 to 28 June 1975.

37. At its session in April, ACC had decided that a third interagency meeting might be convened to harmonize the very many activities now taking place in that realm. It was recognized that the various secretariats, governing bodies and legislative organs must keep each other informed of their relevant decisions and activities and ensure that new activities comple-

mented existing ones. Undoubtedly, all those activities would find a focal point in the preparations for the United Nations Conference on Desertification. At the same time, under the guidance of the United Nations Sahelian Office, every effort would be made to sustain and, if possible, to expand the direct assistance to the countries in Africa affected by the drought.

38. Mr. JEMBERE (Ethiopia) expressed appreciation to Mr. Morse and Mr. Lister for their interesting statements and to Mr. Berkol, the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator, for the up-to-date report on the situation in Ethiopia that he had presented to the Council.

39. The description of the situation given by the Co-ordinator was correct; the rains had been very inadequate, particularly in the nomadic eastern, south-eastern and southern regions, and the 1974 harvest had been very disappointing. Only 40 per cent of the harvest areas had produced enough to be self-sufficient. Despite surpluses in a few areas, the authorities would be unable to provide a sustained solution to the situation in the deficit areas. The proportion of such areas—40 per cent—was an indicator of the worsening of the drought situation in the country, to which had recently been added inadequate rainfall once again and insect infestation. Except in the highlands, therefore, it was expected that the major areas of the country would be unable to meet local requirements for food grain. In addition, coffee-berry diseases had struck the coffee plantations in the western region, whose economy was dependent on that crop.

40. The immediate outlook for rainfall was so disappointing that previous estimates of food requirements for 1975 must be revised upwards, as had been confirmed by the Co-ordinator. Since the estimates were substantially higher than available stocks, and since the food aid received so far for 1975 was quite unsatisfactory, he feared that there would be a recurrence of the famine unless substantial relief aid was pledged in the coming months. It should also be noted that the effects on food production of the land reform measures recently announced was still uncertain. Nevertheless, his Government believed that land reform was beneficial to the Ethiopian people and must therefore be undertaken.

41. The Government's plan of action for rehabilitation programmes in the affected areas consisted of the following: short-term projects which included the distribution of seeds, fertilizers and oxen to agricultural areas and the restocking of cattle in nomadic areas; medium-term projects which included soil and water conservation, construction of rural roads, reforestation, drilling of water wells, and so forth; and long-term projects whose major contents were regional development and planning, range management, land improvement, irrigation and settlement schemes. However, there was no doubt that the cost of those projects, which amounted to several million dollars, was beyond Ethiopia's financial capacity.

42. Medium-term and long-term food aid was also required to establish a permanent reserve to minimize the effects of future drought. In that regard, his delegation hoped that the request for 60,000 tons of food would soon be approved by FAO.

43. The Ethiopian Government was doing everything it could to tackle the consequences of the drought. However, the scale of the problem was such that sub-

<sup>1</sup> DP/88.

<sup>2</sup> ST/SSO/28.

<sup>3</sup> E/C.8/WG.1/3.

stantial external assistance was needed. On behalf of the Ethiopian Government and people, his delegation once again expressed deep gratitude to the Council, to Member States, to the United Nations system, to voluntary organizations and to individuals for the generous aid they had given and were continuing to give Ethiopia in order to enable it to alleviate the consequences of the drought.

44. Mr. CAVAGLIERI (Italy), introducing draft resolution E/L.1646/Rev.1, said that the statement by the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator and the documents placed before the Council left no doubt as to the extreme gravity of the situation caused by the drought that had been afflicting Somalia since 1969. The Somali authorities had certainly made every effort to deal with the situation, but it must be remembered that Somalia was one of the least developed among the developing countries and that its resources were insufficient to enable it to combat alone the effects of a disaster on such a scale. Aid from the international community was therefore absolutely essential and he was pleased to note in particular the work done by the WFP, FAO, UNICEF, UNDP and the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator. It was clear, however, that a long and patient work of rehabilitation and economic reconstruction would be necessary and that international assistance must be increased. That was emphasized in draft resolution E/L.1646/Rev.1, the sponsors of which had been joined by Argentina, Cuba, Japan, Kenya, Mali, Turkey, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Yugoslavia, Zaire and Zambia. Paragraph 1 contained an expression of sympathy to the people and Government of Somalia. Paragraphs 2 and 3 contained an appeal to Member States and to all international organizations and voluntary agencies to continue to support the efforts being made by the Secretary-General and the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator. Paragraphs 4, 5, 6 and 7 singled out five United Nations agencies whose assistance had been especially helpful, particularly UNDP, whose Governing Council had already decided at its nineteenth session to give extraordinary assistance to Somalia and would review the problem at its twentieth session. In consideration of that, the sponsors of the draft resolution wished to reword paragraph 4, the beginning of which should read:

*"Notes that the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme at its twentieth session will review the drought situation in the light of its recent development, and requests the Governing Council to take . . ."*

Paragraph 8 concerned measures to prevent drought from causing such widespread damage in the future. UNDRO and other agencies, such as WMO, had a direct competence in that field. Finally, the General Assembly must be informed of the further progress of the situation as soon as possible, and paragraph 9 therefore requested the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly at its thirtieth session. The sponsors trusted that the draft resolution would meet with the unanimous approval of the Council.

45. Mr. ADALA (Kenya) announced that Algeria, Brazil, Democratic Yemen, Jamaica, Jordan, Liberia, Mali, Senegal, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Uganda, Yugoslavia and Zambia had become sponsors of draft resolution E/L.1647, concerning assistance to the drought-stricken areas of Ethiopia, and that the words

*"with satisfaction"* should be inserted after the words *"Taking note"* in the second preambular paragraph. The sponsors had noted the favourable response of the international community, including the United Nations system, to requests for emergency relief and medium-term and long-term assistance, and they were making a further appeal for continued and timely assistance from all sources. They hoped that the Council would adopt the resolution unanimously.

46. Mr. QADRUD-DIN (Pakistan) thanked Mr. Morse, Mr. Berkol and Mr. Lister for the detailed reports they had given in their statements on the situation in the Sudano-Sahelian region, Ethiopia and Somalia. On behalf of Algeria, Brazil, Canada, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, France, Guinea, Italy, Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Pakistan, Senegal, Uganda, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Yugoslavia, Zaire and Zambia, he read out a draft resolution<sup>4</sup> entitled *"Measures to be taken for recovery and rehabilitation in the Sudano-Sahelian region stricken by drought"*, which he urged the Council to adopt unanimously. He recalled that Pakistan had always been able to count on the help of the Council when it had itself been the victim of natural disasters. His delegation was therefore fully aware of the importance of the role of the Council in such situations. Pakistan was a sponsor of draft resolution E/L.1646/Rev.1, concerning Somalia, and fully supported draft resolution E/L.1647, concerning Ethiopia. He took the opportunity to mention the efforts made by his country, as its means allowed, to help the regions affected by the drought and said that Pakistan, despite its own difficulties, would continue in the future to do everything it could in that respect.

47. The PRESIDENT suggested that the Council should consider the draft resolution submitted by the representative of Pakistan after it had been issued as a document and translated into all languages.

48. Mr. HUSSEN (Observer for Somalia) thanked the President and members of the Council for the inclusion of the item concerning the drought in Somalia in the agenda of the current session. He also wished to pay a tribute to the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator for his constructive report on the situation prevailing in Somalia and hoped that the conclusions and recommendations he had advanced would meet the sympathetic consideration of the Council and the international community. The Council was aware of the catastrophic proportions of the drought which had devastated over half of the territory of Somalia, with disastrous effects upon agriculture and livestock, which were the basis of the country's economic life. There was therefore no need to emphasize the fact that such a disaster constituted a major setback not only to Somalia's development plans but also to day-to-day governmental transactions. The already critical balance-of-payments situation was deteriorating at an alarming rate. As the Under-Secretary-General and the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator had pointed out, the national development effort based on self-help had had to be diverted from its initial aim so as to meet the pressing needs of the current emergency. His Government was deeply grateful for the generous aid extended to Somalia by individual countries, United Nations bodies, specialized agencies and non-governmental organizations. He thanked the International Red

<sup>4</sup> Subsequently circulated as document E/L.1653.

Cross and Red Crescent and the individuals who had participated in the effort to alleviate the sufferings of the population. In its communication of 28 January 1975 addressed to the President of the Council (E/L.1625), his delegation had already stressed that the assistance provided was inadequate, since the situation was deteriorating at an alarming rate. Indeed, conditions had continued to worsen. His delegation had made available to the Council a detailed report on the extent and severity of the drought and, although the data in the report had to be constantly updated, his delegation hoped that it would help members of the Council to form a clearer idea of the situation and of the Government's projected rehabilitation and recovery programmes.

49. According to some estimates, the number of people bordering on the starvation line would be over 700,000 by the end of May 1975. Help in the form of food grains had been pledged and should arrive at the same time as the spring rains. However, it was too early to predict the adequacy of the rainy season. If the rains failed, the already disastrous situation would become still worse. Another major concern was the fact that heavy rains, which would undoubtedly benefit agriculture, would inevitably cause further deaths and damage among the nomadic population, which was without shelter and severely debilitated by the prolonged drought. Those people had lost almost all their livestock and would have to be fed for a long time. Furthermore, it appeared that the supply of food grains was 20,000 tons below the minimum requirements of the population as of mid-February 1975—and that figure might, in fact, have to be revised upwards in view of the insufficient rainfall and the considerable increase in the number of people in camps. However heavy the rains were, an emergency situation would continue in Somalia for some time and would call for continued generous aid on both a bilateral and multilateral basis. In view of the gravity and urgency of the situation, he requested that the item on drought problems should be given the highest priority by the Council. His delegation wished, in conclusion, to thank the representative of Italy for having taken the initiative in introducing draft resolution E/L.1646/Rev.1. The fact that the Italian delegation had taken a similar initiative at the nineteenth session of the Governing Council of UNDP underscored the cordial relationship between the Governments and peoples of Somalia and Italy. He also expressed appreciation to the other sponsors of the draft resolution and requested that the report read out by the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator should be circulated as an official document of the Council.

50. Mr. BRITO (Brazil) said that the representative of Ethiopia and Mr. Morse, Mr. Berkol and Mr. Lister had painted a picture of the situation which showed that there was widespread suffering and which called for action by the international community, particularly by United Nations agencies. He hoped that draft resolution E/L.1646/Rev.1 and E/L.1647 as well as that submitted orally by the representative of Pakistan, would help to expedite action to assist the Sudano-Sahelian region, Ethiopia and Somalia. He considered that the United Nations had a catalytic role to play in such activities and that it was the Council's duty to ensure that the affected countries received appropriate assistance and were able to develop normally. He therefore hoped that the Council would promptly

and unanimously adopt the draft resolutions he had referred to.

51. Mr. HJORTH-NIELSEN (Denmark) thanked Mr. Morse, Mr. Berkol and Mr. Lister for their statements. He recalled that under agenda item 2, the Council had to deal with four serious problems: the drought in the Sudano-Sahelian region, Ethiopia and Somalia as well as the consideration of a system-wide attack on drought problems in Africa. Such problems were unfortunately not new to the Council and other United Nations bodies. During the nineteenth session of the Governing Council of UNDP, the representative of Finland, speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, had already made a statement on the subject. The Danish Government felt that UNDRO had a valuable contribution to make in co-ordinating international relief as well as in pre-disaster planning. It had accordingly decided to make a voluntary contribution for a two-year period to help strengthen such preventive activities. Emergency aid had already been granted to seven drought-stricken countries of the Sudano-Sahelian region; but long-term assistance was still necessary if those countries were to be rehabilitated. The United Nations Sahelian Office was currently elaborating more long-term rehabilitation projects and Denmark would be prepared to contribute to the implementation of one or more such projects through the specialized agencies. However, his Government believed that close co-ordination should be established between the specialized agencies and the other donor countries before implementation of those projects.

52. Denmark had also contributed to the relief operations in the drought-stricken areas in Ethiopia and Somalia. It had sent experts, provided direct assistance and assistance through international organizations, particularly UNICEF and the Emergency Assistance Programme of the European Economic Community (EEC). Denmark was also one of the main contributors to WFP. Furthermore it was a sponsor of draft resolution E/L.1646/Rev.1. Finally, the Danish Government attached the greatest importance to the prevention of drought disaster in Africa. It felt, however, that such endeavours should be carried out within the framework of existing organizations, and that co-operation between those organizations should be intensified. In that connexion, UNDRO would be in a particularly good position to launch a broad system-wide attack on the drought problems in Africa.

53. Mr. BERG (Norway) recalled that the drought problem in the Sudano-Sahelian region had been on the Council's agenda since 1973. At the current session, the Council was also considering the situation in Ethiopia and Somalia.

54. Resolution 1878 (LVII) was the first resolution adopted by the Council with a view to co-ordinating activities to counteract the drought problem in Africa and adopting an interdisciplinary approach. The Norwegian Government attached the greatest importance to the work carried out in that field and felt that there was an urgent need to improve the efficiency and co-ordination of international disaster relief and long-term assistance. There was a need for a new approach to the activities of the United Nations system in that field, with appropriate emphasis on disaster prevention, pre-disaster planning and co-ordination.

55. Disaster and emergency relief should no longer be considered as an exclusively humanitarian and social



problem, but as a major development problem. The situation currently prevailing in the Sudano-Sahelian region, Ethiopia and Somalia, with semi-permanent malnutrition, hunger and poverty, persisted in many developing countries and called for medium-term and long-term assistance. His delegation was in favour of allocating substantial funds annually under the United Nations regular budget to be used for emergency and disaster relief operations, thus enabling the Secretary-General and the Council to authorize the disbursement of funds when such operations were necessary. However, regular funds would not be sufficient. Care must also be taken to avoid any duplication of work in the various types of emergency relief operations. The structural aspects of the question should be very carefully considered at the seventh special session of the General Assembly. In his delegation's view, co-ordination was particularly important in prolonged emergency situations. In that connexion, the possibility of holding *ad hoc* emergency meetings of the Council might perhaps be considered.

56. His delegation was pleased to note that the situation in the Sudano-Sahelian zone had improved in recent months. Nevertheless, there were still some uncertainties about the future, and appropriate measures must be taken in such matters as water control, proper management of crop farming and the development of an adequate infrastructure in the countries concerned. A multidisciplinary and integrated approach was needed to avoid a dispersal of resources. His Government deplored the lack of progress which had characterized the formulation of United Nations medium-term and long-term projects for the Sudano-Sahelian zone, although the pace now seemed to have quickened.

57. Apart from its other contributions, Norway had pledged 25 million Norwegian kroner to support the assistance operations to be co-ordinated by the United Nations Sahelian Office. The Norwegian Government had subsequently decided to switch part of those funds (15 million kroner) to the special account of the Secretary-General, because the Sahelian countries were eligible for contributions from the special account. The remaining 10 million kroner continued to be held for projects to be carried out in the Sahel in 1975.

58. Mr. BALDÉ (Guinea) underlined the problems confronting the Sahelian countries as a result of the drought, which had intensified the sufferings of a people who even in normal times, owing to a hostile natural environment, lived in a precarious situation. His delegation wished to thank all those who, out of human solidarity, had shown sympathy for the plight of the drought-stricken countries by providing them with substantial assistance. The General Assembly had adopted two resolutions on the subject and the Economic and Social Council had adopted seven. However, developments in the region required even more forceful measures if a regular repetition of the tragedy was to be avoided.

59. In Ethiopia more than half the country had been stricken by the drought, which had affected millions of human beings and animals. In addition to the damage caused by the drought, there was the damage caused by caterpillars and other parasites; the result was a gradual weakening of a subsistence economy that had already been substantially undermined by two consecutive years of drought. The case of the nomads, whose herds constituted their main livelihood, was particularly serious, since the rate of loss of cattle would accelerate

as the dry season progressed. As for food, the inadequacy of external assistance was alarming.

60. The Somali Democratic Republic was undergoing the same difficulties, as was indicated in the communication circulated by the delegation of Somalia, which stated, *inter alia*, that "the extent of the disaster could be gauged from the fact that thus far 8 regions out of 14 were stricken with drought of the most extreme nature". The disaster was causing a massive exodus of the population to emergency relief camps. In addition to the disruption of social life caused by the drought, it was anticipated that the drought would result in a loss of some 1 million head of cattle, 5 million sheep and goats and 300,000 camels. Unless adequate measures were taken, that situation was likely to continue. The international community would therefore have to provide substantial assistance, since the Somali people could not overcome the current difficulties unaided. Other countries had also suffered, such as the Sudan, Senegal, Mauritania, Mali, the Upper Volta, the Niger, Chad and Guinea, although the latter country had been less severely affected than the others.

61. His delegation felt that, in order to overcome the problem and prevent it from becoming permanent, in addition to nutritional readjustment and health education of the drought-stricken populations, there was a need for long-term programmes which would be sufficiently appropriate and well prepared to be effective. Attention could be focused, for example, on the development of stock-breeding, irrigation, dry farming, large-scale use of tree belts, the improvement of road infrastructure, etc. That approach required investments and should be viewed within the context of integrated development. It must be borne in mind, however, that world-wide inflation had reduced the purchasing power of the countries concerned. As a result, resources initially earmarked for investments had ultimately had to be used to meet the immediate needs of the population, and that had naturally hampered development efforts.

62. His delegation hoped that still greater attention would be paid to the drought-stricken countries and that the Council would endorse the views expressed in the draft resolutions before it.

63. Mr. DUMAS (France) said that it would be fair to say that international solidarity had made it possible to avert the worst in the drought-stricken regions of Africa. But, emergency assistance, however necessary and effective it might have been, had not solved all the problems. It was now necessary to ensure that the people in those regions could resume normal activities and that real opportunities for economic and social advancement opened up for them again. Over the longer term, therefore, study should be given to means of preventing a repetition of such tragedies through far-reaching and permanent improvements in farming and stock-raising conditions and practices in the Sudano-Sahelian zone.

64. His delegation thanked Mr. Morse for the oral report he had delivered on the medium-term and long-term activities undertaken by the United Nations Sahelian Office, in close and constant liaison with the Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel, with a view to rehabilitating the economies of the Sahelian countries. His delegation entirely approved of the objectives set by the countries concerned. However, since development should be viewed as a



whole, he felt that a number of other immediate needs, such as the development of hydrogeology, agrometeorology and communications must be taken into consideration.

65. His delegation was pleased to note the arrangements made by the Secretary-General to support the action taken by the Sahelian States within the framework of the priorities they themselves had established, particularly at the Conference of the Heads of State of the Six Countries affected by the Drought, held at Ouagadougou on 11 and 12 September 1973. It was to be hoped that, in order to avoid duplication, the Sahelian Office would ensure close co-ordination with the specialized agencies and programmes in the United Nations system, particularly UNDP, FAO, UNEP, UNESCO and the Committee on Science and Technology for Development.

66. The French Government was already spending more than 4,000 million CFA francs a year on rural development in the Sahel, and it was prepared to do its part, in conjunction with other sources of international assistance, to implement the programme prepared by the Permanent Inter-State Committee. Since September 1973 the French Government had done its utmost to play an effective part in the execution of that programme. To that end, it had sent missions to the States concerned to discuss with the local authorities the development projects that could be financed by its Aid and Co-operation Fund. As of the end of April 1974, 24 projects had been financed through the Fund, at a cost of approximately 29 million francs for the period 1973-April 1974.

67. The drought assistance provided directly by France in the form of food aid and vehicles had amounted to over 46 million francs in 1973 and over 118 million francs in 1974. In addition to that direct assistance, the French Government had contributed substantially to the food aid provided by EEC and to the relief operations undertaken by the European Development Fund and the EEC Council, thus bringing the total amount of French emergency aid to the Sahelian States to the equivalent of some \$50 million. Finally, his delegation supported the draft resolutions before the Council in connexion with agenda item 2.

68. Mr. SAYAR (Iran) said that the drought had profoundly affected the physical environment in the Sudano-Sahelian zone and in Ethiopia, and brought

about an exceptionally critical situation in the past few years. In 1975, too, the situation was far from encouraging and according to the report of the Secretary-General on Ethiopia (E/5611), despite the rainfall in the highland areas, the situation continued to be precarious in the southern and south-eastern regions and in Eritrea. As for food supplies, the Secretary-General's report indicated that the 1974 emergency target had not been met and that the grains imported for relief purposes would be exhausted by the end of February 1975. The drought had had disastrous effects both economically and socially. Agriculture had been badly disrupted, and industry, which was connected with agricultural production, had also been seriously affected. In the circumstances, it was clear that the drought-stricken countries required immediate assistance. Priority should therefore be given to short-term measures. However, it was encouraging to note that the leaders of the countries concerned also attached great importance to medium-term and long-term development programmes. Nevertheless, despite the considerable efforts made by those countries, it would be impossible for them to overcome their difficulties without energetic assistance from the international community.

69. In his delegation's view, all assistance provided by the international community should be co-ordinated; in particular, more emphasis should be placed on agricultural development, to help the rural population to restore their farms and reconstitute their herds in order to meet their own needs. To that end, the available resources should be scientifically utilized, production patterns diversified, water resources rationalized, grazing lands improved, and so on. Needless to say, the industrialized countries should assume greater responsibility and make more know-how and technology available to the drought-stricken countries so that they could prevent such disasters in the future. His Government was fully aware of the need to help the countries affected by the drought. In addition to an immediate contribution, Iran had provided bilateral and multilateral assistance to strengthen the economies of the affected countries. Lastly, his delegation supported draft resolutions E/L.1646/Rev.1 and E/L.1647, as well as the draft resolution submitted by the representative of Pakistan.

*The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.*

## 1947th meeting

Monday, 5 May 1975, at 3.15 p.m.

President: Mr. Iqbal AKHUND (Pakistan).

E/SR.1947

### AGENDA ITEM 2

**Consideration of a system-wide attack on the drought problems in the Sudano-Sahelian region, Ethiopia and Somalia (concluded) (E/5611; E/L.1625, 1637, 1645, 1646/Rev.1, 1647, 1653)**

1. Mr. CHANG Hsien-wu (China) said that his delegation supported draft resolutions E/L.1646/Rev.1, E/L.1647 and E/L.1653. The situation in the Sudano-

Sahelian region, Ethiopia and Somalia was still very serious, and his delegation wished to express its sympathy to the peoples of those regions who, under the direction of their Governments and with the support of international assistance, were struggling valiantly against the drought. His delegation was convinced that they would succeed in overcoming the difficulties caused by the disaster and believed that the competent United Nations organs should continue to provide them with all necessary assistance and relief to help them in that task.