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*Chairman:* Mr. Richard M. AKWEI (Ghana).

## AGENDA ITEM 41

Resources of the sea: report of the Secretary-General (continued) (A/7203, chap. VI, sect. B; A/7245, A/7264, A/C.2/244, E/4449 and Add. 1 and 2, E/4487 and Corr. 1-5 and Add.1)

1. Mr. VISESSURAKARN (Thailand) said that for the developing countries the food problem was closely bound up with their economic relations with the wealthy nations and their own development efforts. The only way to avoid the world food shortage, which had loomed more threateningly in the past few decades, was to work out and implement constructive and coherent policies in time. In particular, modern agricultural techniques should be introduced in the developing countries, and their methods of food production should be thoroughly modernized. His delegation therefore welcomed the inclusion of the item "Resources of the sea" in the Committee's agenda. The utilization of those resources was of particular importance to the international community in view of the likelihood that agricultural production could not keep pace with world population growth.

2. Of course, food resources were not the only resources of the seas and oceans; there were also mineral resources, potential power sources, etc. All those resources should be explored and used for the benefit of all mankind, without infringing on the sovereign rights of nations. The living resources of the sea, not to speak of mineral deposits, were practically endless and could help to solve many of the world's economic problems, which, however, should be approached only in a spirit of international co-operation, and the United Nations had a leading role to play in that respect. His delegation expressed its appreciation of the Secretary-General's report entitled "Marine science and technology: survey and proposals" (E/4487 and Corr.1-5 and Add.1), which included a number of proposals made by the Secretary-General to improve international co-operation in marine science and technology.

3. His Government was studying with great interest the proposal to broaden the base of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) (see E/4487,

para. 256). Thailand attached great importance to oceanography, particularly oceanographic research, for which it had set aside an annual budget of \$2,090,000. It also operated five oceanographic research vessels. Moreover, his delegation recognized the need for international co-operation in the development and exploitation of the living resources of the sea, especially the rational exploitation and conservation of fish stocks. It was gratifying to note that the FAO Committee on Fisheries had already promoted closer co-operation between the various organizations concerned, such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Inter-governmental Maritime Consultative Organization (IMCO), the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and other intergovernmental organizations, in defining areas where international action was needed, in facilitating agreements and in setting up special international machinery. His delegation therefore supported the Secretary-General's proposal that the General Assembly should invite Member States to support more energetically international co-operation in fisheries, including the work of regional and other specialized bodies (*ibid.*, para. 271). His delegation also supported the proposal in paragraph 277 of the report (E/4487/Corr.5), to the effect that the General Assembly should take steps to expand further its activities relating to the continental shelf and to help to collect and disseminate information on marine and mineral deposits and techniques suitable for their development. Similarly, his delegation supported Economic and Social Council resolution 1380 (XLV) which requested the Secretary-General to follow closely new developments which might occur in the fields of marine mineral resources exploration, evaluation and exploitation beyond the continental shelf and the possible implications thereof, and to report when appropriate to the Council.

4. Lastly, in view of the inadequate number of persons trained in oceanography and the rational exploitation of marine resources, his delegation endorsed the Secretary-General's proposal, in paragraphs 283-285 of the report, recommending an expanded programme of co-operation in the fields of education and training in marine science.

5. Mr. PREZA QUEZADA (El Salvador) drew the Committee's attention to the statement on the item made in the General Assembly by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of El Salvador (see 1682nd plenary meeting, paras. 76-77), who had said that his country was deeply interested in the international programme for utilizing the ocean floor and that the programme would help to bring about a radical transformation of international development aid and to change current

trends in that respect. The Minister had said that El Salvador would like to see the United Nations institutionalize the exploitation and utilization of the ocean floor but also had certain misgivings with regard to the programme. If the ocean floor was exploited as the living resources of the upper and medium depths were being exploited, the technologically advanced countries would be in a favoured position, and there would be no point in giving the developing countries equal right of access to the sea-bed and ocean floor so long as they did not have the necessary financial and technological means to take advantage of it. The United Nations should therefore organize a system for utilizing the resources of the sea for the benefit of all mankind. Otherwise, the relevant development programme would be likely to widen still further the gap between the technologically advanced and the developing countries.

6. The item under discussion was quite new and a challenge to man's creativity and to the efforts of the various States and international organizations to exploit the vast wealth of the seas and oceans in such a way that the benefits derived were used for the advancement of all mankind. The exploitation of the sea-bed, the ocean floor and their subsoil should be viewed as a means, not an end. The technologically more advanced countries with their greater financial potential should realize the obligations implicit in present and future interdependence and bestow on the less-developed countries the blessings which progress put within reach of mankind. The developing countries should simultaneously modernize their structures and their ways of thinking and acting. An appropriate system should be worked out for exploiting the resources of the sea, which would provide not only for changing the present concept of international development aid but for equitable distribution if the benefits derived from the exploitation of the resources of the sea among all countries in the best possible conditions and with proper regard for their respective needs. Attention should be given, *inter alia*, to the possibility of using those benefits to make the United Nations self-supporting.

7. There would clearly be pitfalls on the road leading to the fulfilment of the above-mentioned objectives, but given sufficient enthusiasm and self-sacrifice, and if appropriate structures and the necessary administrative machinery were set up within the United Nations, the vast potential of the future could be turned to account for the benefit of all peoples.

8. Mr. FIGUEREDO PLANCHART (Venezuela) said that his delegation had closely followed the debate on the same subject under agenda item 26 which was still continuing in the First Committee. His delegation was surprised that the entry in the Journal of the United Nations concerning the current meeting did not mention the Secretary-General's report (E/4487 and Corr.1-5 and Add.1), in view of the fact that the Economic and Social Council had been unable to devote to it all the attention it warranted at its forty-fifth session and had not commented on the main recommendations in its resolution 1381 (XLV), and that the report dealt with substantive questions which should, in the opinion of some delegations, be decided

upon by the Second Committee. However, until the First Committee had arrived at certain conclusions on economic and social questions, it would be difficult and premature for the Second Committee to try to reach a decision, even on purely technical aspects. Caution was in order, since decisions taken would affect the future. His delegation had taken part in the debate in the Council leading to the adoption of resolution 1381 (XLV) on the long-range programme for the exploration of the sea. At that time it had entered reservations concerning the approach to certain objectives. Its proposed amendments had sought to reflect its belief that international co-operation should not be restricted to the exploration of the resources of the sea beyond the present limits of national jurisdiction. Before the final programme for such a vast undertaking was formulated, it was necessary clearly to define the main objective of that co-operation, which should be the exploration of the sea for eventual exploitation, namely, the utilization of its resources for the benefit of all mankind.

9. Certain basic points should be borne in mind in considering the recommendation in operative paragraph 4 of Council resolution 1381 (XLV). The recommendation should seek primarily to support a co-ordinated long-term programme of oceanographic research, with a view to facilitating exploitation of the resources in the oceans, the ocean floor and the subsoil thereof. Such research should benefit all countries, particularly the developing countries, but operative paragraph 4 was not explicit enough on that point.

10. The approval of a co-ordinated long-term programme of oceanographic research involved the mobilization of substantial financial, technological and human resources, and the return from them should be measured in terms of the benefits reaped by the entire international community. Only a few industrialized countries would stand to gain if it was felt that the programme's major purpose was to draw up an inventory of natural resources which only a few fortunate countries were able to develop. After a while, the developing countries might have occasion to regret that the resources mobilized for the undertaking had not been used for other priority objectives more consistent with their current economic needs. International officials, motivated by genuine enthusiasm, could to some extent modify the approach which the developing countries hoped would be applied to the project. In that connexion, the representative of UNESCO had recently stated (see 1224th meeting, para. 31) that it was impossible to know in advance what specific aspect of pure research might lead to the exploitation of a given resource.

11. While IOC should indeed be strengthened and its base expanded to a certain extent, its activities should remain purely scientific. Consideration should also be given to the possibility of setting up appropriate machinery for the exploration of the sea, the sea-bed and the subsoil thereof, with a view to their possible exploitation. That called for the formulation of co-ordinated rational programmes in which the developing countries, as well as those possessing the technical facilities, would participate. Efforts should be made to increase resources for world economic develop-

ment, particular attention being given to the needs of the developing countries. In the second paragraph of the summary submitted by the Secretary-General in his note on the resources of the sea (see A/C.2/244) it was stated that IOC would have a most important function in the formulation and co-ordination of the expanded programme, which would include scientific research and related service activities concerning not only the ocean itself but also its boundaries and its resources. The last two terms were not explicit enough. Nor was that part of the note which stated that that function would not detract in any way from the respective present responsibilities of the individual Governments and that they would use the Commission as an instrument for discharging certain of those responsibilities in the field of marine science. He looked forward to hearing the replies to the questions raised concerning the report of the Secretary-General, particularly those concerning paragraph 277 (see E/4487/Corr.5) which dealt with economic marine mineral deposits.

12. His delegation did not wish to take a rigid position and was ready to help in seeking solutions to that important problem, but the matter should be approached from a historical perspective to avoid mistakes which it would later prove difficult to rectify.

13. Mr. ALLEN (United Kingdom) recalled that his delegation had commented in detail on the two reports of the Secretary-General (E/4449 and Add.1 and 2; E/4487 and Corr.1-5 and Add.1) at the Economic and Social Council's forty-fifth session, adding that the reports would be useful works of reference for the future.

14. Chapter III of the report of the Secretary-General on marine science and technology (see E/4487 and Corr.4 and 5) contained a number of proposals designed to maximize international co-operation efforts in that field. The second correction in document E/4487/Corr.5, dealing with paragraph 277, clarified the paragraph about which his delegation, among others, had expressed reservations in the Economic and Social Council. He accepted that clarification of the role of the Resources and Transport Division, of the United Nations Secretariat, so long as it was not taken as a mandate for further expansion of its activities.

15. IOC should be the main body co-ordinating work in marine science. But his Government could not agree to a proposal that Governments should provide direct financing for the expanded activities of IOC. The United Kingdom could not accept the principle of direct governmental contributions to bodies which it already supported through assessed contributions to multilateral funds. For that reason, any proposal involving inter-agency financing would have to be considered very carefully and his delegation would not wish to reach any conclusion on the matter before hearing the Secretary-General's views in greater detail.

16. As to the future activities of IOC, it was important to distinguish between activities in which the Commission would have the sole responsibility and those in which it should act in liaison or partnership with

other agencies. Under the first heading came such activities as the promotion of co-operative ocean surveys, the preparation of data documentation, the exchange of information and the standardization of instruments and methods. While members should welcome the concern of that body with the legal aspects of scientific research at sea, it was the responsibility of the United Nations to draw up conventions concerning the law of the sea.

17. Turning to the activities under the second heading, he was pleased to note the arrangements for consultation between FAO and UNESCO on marine science. In the matter of marine pollution, his delegation supported the proposal of the Secretary-General for effective co-ordination and the establishment of the joint group of experts, but felt that IOC should not aim to become a deliberative body with regard to pollution, a subject with which the International Atomic Energy Agency and IMCO, among others, were already concerned in their respective areas of competence. Therefore it was clear that IOC should continue to operate within the framework of UNESCO and under the authority of its General Conference and Director-General. His delegation shared the opinion of the Belgian delegation on that point. At the same time, IOC should be able to present its own costed programme of activities for each biennial, and funds earmarked by the General Conference for that programme could usefully be shown as a separate appropriation line within UNESCO's budget.

18. In the statement made by the Chairman of IOC at the 1224th meeting, his delegation had been interested to hear the IOC proposal to appoint, as its official scientific advisory bodies, the Scientific Committee on Oceanic Research of the International Council of Scientific Unions and the Advisory Committee for Marine Resources Research of FAO. It had also been pleased to hear that the proposals prepared by the group of experts were to be forwarded to Member States for their consideration and that the Council of FAO and the General Conference of UNESCO had already endorsed those proposals, although they would still have to be considered by the Consultative Council of IOC before being implemented under article 6 of the IOC statutes.

#### Organization of the Committee's work

19. Mr. RANKIN (Canada) recalled that, over the past several years, various delegations had put forward recommendations concerning the organization of the Second Committee's work. He reminded the Committee of some of the proposals made at previous sessions. His own delegation had prepared a statement on that subject for the twenty-second session but had been unable to present it owing to lack of time.

20. The organization and nature of the Committee's agenda seemed to be a problem which hindered the General Assembly from playing a more important role in the decision-making process in the development field. The agenda should be brief and organized in functional categories. That was already being done in the case of certain questions, such as industrial development, trade, and technical assistance, but a miscellaneous collection of Economic and Social Council items was left to be considered in an unrelated

way. The result was that, whatever their individual importance, they were accorded a similar degree of attention because a large number of delegations felt an obligation to speak on each agenda item in order to show their interest in it.

21. It was recognized that there could be no question of deciding at the current session how the General Assembly should do its work at the twenty-fourth session, but the Committee could certainly make recommendations to that effect. Two basic facts seemed to emerge from the current situation: first, the agenda was too long and too diffuse and, secondly, owing to the proliferation of expert agencies and institutions and the expansion of their activities, the Committee was increasingly playing a passive rubber-stamping role. It was clear that the annual agenda of the Second Committee had become overloaded. His delegation doubted whether it would ever be possible to eliminate all the deadwood from the agenda, but every effort should be made to do so. As the representative of Ghana had suggested at the twenty-first session,<sup>1/</sup> any reform in the Committee's working methods should be designed to ensure that technical proposals involving the work of the United Nations itself or inter-agency co-ordination were first examined by the Economic and Social Council, which was primarily responsible for the economic activities of the United Nations family. In that way the Committee should be able to avoid what were, in effect, token speeches on token items. Furthermore, an attempt might be made to terminate the pointless practice of calling for a report to the General Assembly on questions also referred to the Council. If the Council believed that further action by the General Assembly was required, it would so inform it. If, on the other hand, the sponsors of a proposal regarded the consideration given by the Council to their ideas as inadequate, they would be free to ask for them to be examined by the Committee under the item "Report of the Economic and Social Council".

22. There were three alternatives with regard to the so-called "general debate": the Committee could continue the practice followed at the current session, in which case it would have to assign up to three valuable weeks for the purpose; it could discard the general debate altogether, as had been recommended by some delegations at the eighteenth session; or it could limit it to certain topics suggested by the members of the Committee at the preceding session. His delegation agreed with the view expressed by the representative of Ghana at the twenty-first session

<sup>1/</sup> See Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-first Session, Second Committee, 1067th meeting, para. 18.

that the Committee's agenda should include an item entitled "Report of the Economic and Social Council". Next, the Committee should discuss two items relating to the world economic situation and the United Nations Development Decade which would form a basis for the general debate. The Committee should then take up the reports of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and the United Nations Development Programme and, finally, carry out a general review of the economic activities of the United Nations family. His delegation hoped that at future sessions of the Committee, whatever the form of its agenda, the specialized agencies would make their voice heard more frequently than in the past, so that a dialogue could be established between the Assembly as the policy-maker and the agencies as administrators.

23. While it was difficult to impose a limitation on length of speeches, it was a problem which parliaments and legislative forums throughout the world had had to tackle and which the Assembly would perhaps eventually have to face in the light of the vastly increased number of Member States. The Canadian Parliament had recently changed its rules to impose a limitation on length of speeches. Although that was perhaps too radical a step in the circumstances, debates would be greatly speeded up if maximum opportunity was taken to refer briefly to more detailed statements made in other United Nations bodies. In addition, the elimination of expressions of congratulations to officers on their election could save at least the equivalent of one entire meeting. Such a saving would be far from negligible, especially when it was realized that, on the basis of a rapid mental calculation, the cost of debates was as much as \$150 per minute.

24. He hoped that other members of the Committee would join in the discussion of that important problem. A paragraph or two might then be prepared for the report to serve as guidance for the Secretary-General in preparing the provisional agenda for the twenty-fourth session as well as for the Council in preparing its own report. Perhaps the next Chairman of the Committee would wish to convene, before the Committee itself met, a small representative group to join with him in formulating specific proposals as to how the general debate might be conducted and how the Committee might best approach its agenda.

25. The CHAIRMAN said that the matter was open for discussion and that delegations were free to make interventions at future meetings.

*The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.*