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FOOD PROBLEMS

Report of the Second Committee

Rapporteur: Miss Paulina GARCIA DONOSO (Ecuador)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its 4th meeting, on 21 September 1979, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, included in its agenda the item entitled "Food problems: report of the World Food Council" and allocated it to the Second Committee.
2. The Second Committee considered this item at its 9th, 20th to 23rd, 25th, 33rd and 56th meetings, on 8, 24 to 26, and 29 October, 7 November, and 8 December 1979. An account of the discussion of the Committee is contained in the relevant summary records (A/C.2/34/SR.9, 20-23, 25, 33 and 56).
3. The Committee had before it the following documents:
  - (a) Report of the World Food Council on the work of its fifth session; 1/
  - (b) Letter dated 27 July 1979 from the Chargé d'Affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Morocco to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting the text of the resolutions and Final Communiqué of the Tenth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, held at Fez from 8 to 12 May 1979 (A/34/389 and Corr.1);
  - (c) Letter dated 24 October 1979 from the Permanent Representative of Democratic Kampuchea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (A/34/614);
  - (d) Letter dated 26 October 1979 from the Permanent Representative of Democratic Kampuchea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (A/34/621 and Add.1).

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1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 19 (A/34/19).

4. At its 9th meeting, on 8 October 1979, the Committee heard an introductory statement by the Executive Director of the World Food Council.

II. CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT RESOLUTIONS A/C.2/34/L.9,  
A/C.2/34/L.19 AND A/C.2/34/L.113

5. At the 33rd meeting, on 7 November, the representative of Canada introduced a draft resolution (A/C.2/34/L.9) entitled "Conclusions and recommendations of the World Food Council at its fifth session", operative paragraph 3 of which he orally revised by inserting the words "Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations" before the words "African Development Bank". The revised text read as follows:

"The General Assembly,

"Recalling its resolutions 3201 (S-VI) and 3202 (S-VI) of 1 May 1974, containing the Declaration and the Programme of Action on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order, 3281 (XXIX) of 12 December 1974, containing the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States, and 3362 (S-VII) of 16 September 1975 on development and international economic co-operation, as well as the agreed conclusions of the Committee of the Whole, established by the General Assembly in resolution 32/174,

"Recalling also its resolution 3348 (XXIX) of 17 December 1974, by which it established the World Food Council,

"Bearing in mind its resolution 33/90 of 15 December 1978, concerning implementation of the decisions, resolutions and programmes regarding food adopted since the World Food Conference in 1974,

"Having considered the report of the World Food Council on the work of its fifth ministerial session, held at Ottawa from 3 to 7 September 1979,

"Noting that mid-point has been reached in the decade since the World Food Conference was convened by the United Nations at Rome in 1974,

"1. Takes note with satisfaction of the report of the World Food Council on the work of its fifth ministerial session; 1/

"2. Endorses the conclusions and recommendations of the World Food Council at its fifth ministerial session 2/ and urges full implementation of the recommendations by all Governments and organizations concerned;

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"1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 19 (A/34/19).

"2/ Ibid., part one, para. 1.

"3. Expresses gratitude to the international financial and other institutions, particularly the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, African Development Bank, Asian Development Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, World Bank, Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries Special Fund, Economic Commission for Africa, Economic Commission for Latin America, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and Economic Commission for Western Asia, which co-operated with the World Food Council secretariat in the world-wide and regional consultations aimed at identifying and removing the constraints and bottle-necks to increasing food production in the developing countries and generating additional internal and external resources therefor;

"4. Endorses fully the concept of food sector strategies which emerged from the Council consultations as a means for developing countries to review their food efforts, revise the relevant policies and provide a framework for identification and preparation of investment projects in food and agriculture and to step up the capacity for and mobilization of investment including additional external finance; and calls upon food deficit countries which have not yet done so to consider the adoption of a food strategy;

"5. Calls upon donors to contribute resources to assist developing countries to prepare food-sector strategies;

"6. Strongly urges developed countries and others able to provide development assistance as well as international institutions, to substantially increase their assistance to the food sector;

"7. Endorses fully the Council's call for more direct action by Governments to achieve greater equity in food distribution and calls upon all Governments to co-operate with the Council secretariat in assessing experience and advancing practical action in this field;

"8. Urges Governments which have not yet accepted the development of a new food aid convention of at least 10 million tons without waiting for the conclusion of a new wheat trade agreement to reconsider their position;

"9. Urges full implementation of the Council's recommendations on development aid, world food security, greater equity in the distribution of food, nutrition and international food trade;

"10. Decides that the United Nations system shall accord very high priority to meeting food needs and related actions in all economic sectors that contribute to the abolition of hunger and absolute poverty in the over-all context of economic and social development so that the 1980s may be known as a food and development decade rather than a decade of growing hunger and frustration;

"11. Encourages the World Food Council to continue and to intensify its monitoring, co-ordinating and catalytic role on food matters and urges Governments and international, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations within and outside the United Nations system to support and co-operate fully with the Council in this regard."

6. At the same meeting, the representative of India, on behalf of States Members of the United Nations which are members of the Group of 77, introduced a draft resolution (A/C.2/34/L.19) entitled "Report of the World Food Council at its fifth session", which read as follows:

"The General Assembly,

"Recalling its resolution 3201 (S-VI) and 3202 (S-VI) of 1 May 1974, containing the Declaration and Programme of Action on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order, 3281 (XXIX) of 12 December 1974, containing the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States and 3362 (S-VII) of 16 September 1975, on development and international economic co-operation as well as the agreed conclusions of the Committee of the Whole, established by the General Assembly in resolution 32/174,

"Recalling also its resolution 3348 (XXIX) of 17 December 1974, by which it established the World Food Council to serve as a co-ordinating mechanism to provide over-all integrated and continuing attention to the successful co-ordination and follow-up of policies concerning food production, nutrition, food security, food trade and food aid, as well as other related matters, by all organizations of the United Nations system,

"Further recalling the Programme of Action to Eradicate Hunger and Malnutrition contained in the Manila Communiqué of the World Food Council, and adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 32/52 of 8 December 1977,

"Bearing in mind its resolution 33/90 of 15 December 1978 concerning implementation of the decisions, resolutions and programmes regarding food adopted since the World Food Conference in 1974,

"Noting with regret the slow progress made in solving the fundamental food problems facing the developing countries, in particular the food-priority countries and other developing countries with large food deficits and whose food situation is still deteriorating, and in this context, noting with deep concern that the target of a 4 per cent annual growth rate in the food and agriculture sector of developing countries established in the International Development Strategy for the 1970s and endorsed by the World Food Conference held in 1974 has not been achieved,

"Noting with concern the strong impact of food-stuff imports on the balance of payments of developing countries, in particular the least developed countries,

"Reaffirming its strong commitment to overcome hunger and malnutrition everywhere,

"Taking into account the relevant part of the Programme of Action as adopted at the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development held at Rome in July 1979,

"Having considered the report of the World Food Council on the work of its fifth ministerial session, held at Ottawa, Canada, from 3 to 7 September 1979,

"1. Expresses its appreciation and thanks to the Government and people of Canada for the excellent facilities and generous hospitality provided for the World Food Council at its fifth ministerial session;

"2. Takes note of the agreed conclusion on food and agriculture arrived at by the Committee of the Whole at its second session, which constituted an important input for the work of the World Food Council at its fifth ministerial session;

"3. Takes note of the report of the World Food Council on the work of its fifth ministerial session; 1/

"4. Takes note of the concept of food sector strategies which emerged from the Council consultations, and invites the Council to examine this matter further, having due regard for the principle of full respect for the development plans and priorities of developing countries, with a view to enabling interested countries, particularly the food-deficit developing countries, to consider the advisability or otherwise of adopting food strategies within the framework of their national development programmes, and to report to the General Assembly at its thirty-fifth session, and considers that development assistance agencies, whether national or international, should not make the preparation of a national food strategy a condition for development assistance;

"5. Strongly urges developed countries, international institutions and others able to provide development assistance to increase substantially their assistance on concessional terms to the food sector in order to enable developing countries to achieve the agreed target of a 4 per cent annual growth rate in agricultural production, for which the estimated necessary element of external assistance was accepted as being \$US 8.3 billion, at 1975 prices, annually and with a high degree on concessionality;

"6. Further urges that this target should be reached by the end of 1980, having regard to the deep concern of the international community as a whole to its urgent nature;

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"1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 19 (A/34/19).

"7. Endorses the Council's call for greater equity in food distribution through more direct action by Governments and stresses the need for such action at the international and national levels, with due regard to the policies followed and conditions prevailing in the respective countries;

"8. Calls on Governments, all relevant organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, other international organizations, and the international community as a whole to give very high priority in their policies, programmes and actions to the eradication of hunger and malnutrition everywhere in the world;

"9. Urges Governments that have not yet agreed to the conclusion of a new food aid convention for an absolute minimum flow of assistance of at least 10 million tons, even in times of high prices and food shortage, to do so without delay and in any case not later than mid-1980, and without awaiting the conclusion of a new wheat trade agreement;

"10. Urges all countries, particularly those developed countries which are not yet contributing to it, to achieve immediately the 500,000-ton target for the International Emergency Reserve and consider its enlargement in response to growing emergency needs;

"11. Urges the traditional donor countries and those in a position to do so to provide additional food aid to developing countries in order to assist them in building national food reserves;

"12. Strongly calls upon donor countries to do their utmost to preserve the nutritional value - in particular the protein element - of their food aid;

"13. Calls upon traditional donor countries and those in a position to do so, considering the growing need of the developing countries for agricultural inputs and their increasing costs, to increase their assistance for agricultural inputs, especially fertilizer, through the appropriate bilateral and/or multilateral channels, in particular the International Fertilizer Supply Scheme of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and also to make substantial contributions to the Seed Improvement and Development Programme and the Action Programme for Prevention of Food Losses of the Food and Agriculture Organization, so as to reach the agreed funding level of \$20 million for each;

"14. Recommends that the Food and Agriculture Organization, the World Bank and the regional development banks undertake systematic assessment of the need to improve food security infrastructure at the national level and on that basis, initiate major investment efforts in the developing countries that request such assistance;

"15. Requests the International Monetary Fund to provide, within the context of its financing facilities, additional balance-of-payments support for meeting the rise in the food import bills of low-income, food-deficit countries;

"16. Notes with deep concern that no progress has been achieved towards the solution of the long-standing problems of agricultural trade which seriously hamper over-all food production in the world and affect in particular the exports of developing countries;

"17. Urges the developed countries to take urgent action in the different negotiating fora to approve and implement long-standing proposals which will bring about the removal of distortive patterns of production, maintained through a system of subsidies and protectionism;

"18. Calls upon the developed countries to draw up concrete programmes for adjusting their agricultural sectors in order to facilitate the access of developing countries to their markets of food and agricultural products, in raw, semi-processed and processed form;

"19. Recommends that the developed countries should take steps to improve the Generalized System of Preferences and to extend it to a wider range of agricultural commodities, including processed and semi-processed products of direct export interest to developing countries; in this connexion, technical assistance, including assistance in the fields of research, development and marketing, must be provided so as to enable developing countries to take full advantage of agreed concessions;

"20. Recommends that the World Food Council keep constantly under review the impact of trade on the levels of food production in the world, with particular reference to the economies of the developing countries, taking into consideration the necessary inputs which the different organs of the United Nations system could provide;

"21. Encourages the World Food Council to continue and intensify its monitoring, co-ordinating and catalytic role on food matters and urges Governments and international, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations within and outside the United Nations system to accord very high priority to food needs and to support and co-operate fully with the Council in this regard;

"22. Requests the Economic and Social Council to consider at its second regular session of 1980 the proposal to declare a United Nations Food and Development Decade in the 1980s and submit appropriate recommendations to the Assembly at its thirty-fifth session;

"23. Recommends that all Member States and international organizations concerned take immediate steps to put into operation the Five-Point Plan of Action on World Food Security approved by the seventy-fifth session of the Council of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and endorsed by the World Food Council at its fifth session, mainly as an interim measure after the failure of efforts to achieve a more adequate system of world food security."

7. At the 56th meeting, on 8 December, the Committee considered a draft resolution (A/C.2/34/L.113) entitled "Report of the World Food Council on its fifth session", which was submitted by Mr. Ahsan, Vice-Chairman of the Committee, on the basis of informal consultations held on draft resolutions A/C.2/34/L.9 and A/C.2/34/L.19. Consequently, the latter two draft resolutions were withdrawn.

8. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.2/34/L.113 (see para. 10).

9. After the adoption of the draft resolution, statements were made by the representatives of Brazil, Canada, Bulgaria (on behalf of Bulgaria, the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Mongolia, Poland, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), China, Japan, New Zealand and the United States of America.

### III. RECOMMENDATION OF THE SECOND COMMITTEE

10. The Second Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

#### Report of the World Food Council

##### The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 3201 (S-VI) and 3202 (S-VI) of 1 May 1974 containing the Declaration and the Programme of Action on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order, 3281 (XXIX) of 12 December 1974 containing the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States, and 3362 (S-VII) of 16 September 1975 on development and international economic co-operation, as well as the agreed conclusions of the Committee of the Whole Established under General Assembly Resolution 32/174 on some aspects concerning food and agriculture, 2/

Recalling also its resolution 3348 (XXIX) of 17 December 1974, by which it established the World Food Council to serve as a co-ordinating mechanism to provide over-all integrated and continuing attention to the successful co-ordination and follow-up of policies concerning food production, nutrition, food security, food trade and food aid, as well as other related matters, by all organizations of the United Nations system,

Further recalling the Programme of Action to Eradicate Hunger and Malnutrition, contained in the Manila Communiqué of the World Food Council 3/ and adopted by the General Assembly, in its resolution 32/52 of 8 December 1977,

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2/ See A/34/34 (Part II), sect. II, para. 18.

3/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-second Session, Supplement No. 19 (A/32/19), part one, para. 1.



as well as the Mexico Declaration of the World Food Council, 4/ adopted by the Assembly in its resolution 33/90 of 15 December 1978,

Bearing in mind the provisions of its resolution 33/90 concerning the implementation of the decisions, resolutions and programmes regarding food adopted since the World Food Conference in 1974,

Noting with regret the slow progress made in solving the fundamental food problems facing the developing countries, in particular food-priority countries and other developing countries with large food deficits, whose food situation is still deteriorating, and in this context, noting with deep concern that the target of a 4 per cent annual growth rate in the food and agriculture sector of developing countries established in the International Development Strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade and endorsed by the World Food Conference in 1974 has not been achieved,

Noting with concern the strong impact of food stuff imports on the balance of payments of food-importing developing countries, in particular the least developed countries,

Recognizing that the responsibility for the development of food and agricultural production lies primarily with the developing countries themselves and that there is an increasing effort and growing commitment by developing countries to accelerate the development of their food and agricultural sectors,

Reaffirming its strong commitment to overcome hunger and malnutrition everywhere and, in that context, the need for greater international action to improve the production and distribution of food,

Taking into account the relevant parts of the Declaration of Principles and the Programme of Action adopted at the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, 5/

Expressing its deep concern that a substantial part of world resources, material as well as human, continues to be diverted to armaments with detrimental effect on the international security and on efforts to achieve the new international economic order, including the solution of food problems, and calling upon Governments to take effective measures in the field of real disarmament that would increase the possibilities of allocation of the resources now being used for military purposes to economic and social development, especially development of developing countries, and upgrading their food conditions,

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4/ Ibid., Thirty-third Session, Supplement No. 19 (A/33/19 and Corr.1), part one, para. 1.

5/ See Report of the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, Rome, 12-20 July 1979 (WCAARD/REP); transmitted to the General Assembly by a note by the Secretary-General (A/34/485).

Having considered the report of the World Food Council on the work of its fifth session, held at Ottawa from 3 to 7 September 1979, 6/

1. Expresses its appreciation and thanks to the Government and people of Canada for the excellent facilities and generous hospitality provided for the World Food Council at its fifth ministerial session;
2. Takes note with satisfaction of the agreed conclusion on food and agriculture arrived at by the Committee of the Whole Established under General Assembly Resolution 32/174 at its second session, which constituted an important input for the work of the World Food Council at its fifth ministerial session;
3. Takes note with satisfaction of the report of the World Food Council on the work of its fifth ministerial session; 6/
4. Takes note of the concept of food sector strategies that emerged from the Council consultations, invites the World Food Council to examine this matter further, having due regard for the principle of full respect for the development plans and priorities of developing countries, with a view to enabling interested countries, particularly food-deficit developing countries, to consider the advisability or otherwise of adopting food strategies within the framework of their national development programmes, and to report to the General Assembly at its thirty-fifth session, and considers that development assistance agencies, whether national or international, should not make the preparation of a national food strategy a condition for development assistance;
5. Strongly urges developed countries, international institutions and others able to provide development assistance to increase substantially their assistance on concessional terms to the food sector in order to facilitate for developing countries the achievement of the agreed target of a 4 per cent annual growth rate in agricultural production, for which an estimated necessary element of external assistance is \$8.3 billion, with \$6.5 billion on concessional terms, at 1975 prices, as mentioned in the Programme of Action to Eradicate Hunger and Malnutrition contained in the Manila Communiqué of the World Food Council; 3/
6. Further urges that this target [should] be reached if possible by the end of 1980, having regard to the deep concern of the international community as a whole regarding its urgent nature;
7. Endorses the World Food Council's call for greater equity in food distribution through more direct action by Governments and stresses the need for supportive action by all Governments, with due regard to the policies followed and conditions prevailing in the respective countries;

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6/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-Fourth Session, Supplement No. 19 (A/34/19).

8. Calls upon Governments, all relevant organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, other international organizations and the international community as a whole to give very high priority in their policies, programmes and actions to the eradication of hunger and malnutrition everywhere in the world;

9. Urges all Governments that have not yet agreed to the conclusion of a new food aid convention for securing the achievement of an absolute minimum flow of assistance of at least 10 million tons, even in times of high price and food shortage, to reconsider their position and urges that every effort should be made to enlist new contributors and to increase the commitments of existing ones, in order that a new food aid convention can be concluded without delay, in any case not later than the middle of 1980, and without awaiting the conclusion of a new international grains agreement;

10. Urges all countries, particularly those developed countries which are not yet contributing to it, to achieve immediately the 500,000-ton target for the International Emergency Reserve and to consider its enlargement in response to growing emergency needs;

11. Urges the traditional donor countries and those in a position to do so to provide additional food aid to developing countries in order to assist them in building national food reserves;

12. Strongly calls upon donor countries to do their utmost to preserve the nutritional value, including the protein element, of their food aid;

13. Calls upon traditional donor countries and those in a position to do so, considering the growing need of the developing countries for agricultural inputs and the increasing costs of such inputs, to increase their assistance for agricultural inputs, especially fertilizer, through the appropriate bilateral and/or multilateral channels, in particular the International Fertilizer Supply Scheme of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and also to make substantial contributions to the Seed Improvement and Development Programme and the Action Programme for Prevention of Food Losses of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations so as to reach the agreed funding level of \$20 million for each;

14. Recommends that the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Bank and the regional development banks should consider undertaking a systematic assessment of the need to improve food security infrastructure at the national level as a basis for a major investment effort in the developing countries that request such assistance;

15. Invites the International Monetary Fund to consider providing, within the context of its financing facilities, additional balance-of-payments support for meeting the rise in the food import bills of low-income, food-deficit countries;

16. Notes with deep concern that only limited progress has been achieved towards the solution of the long-standing problems of international trade in agricultural products which adversely affect exports, particularly of developing countries, and whose solution could make an important contribution to improving over-all food production in the world;

17. Calls for urgent action in the different negotiating forums to move towards the approval and implementation of proposals to bring about the reduction and elimination of barriers to trade in agricultural products, in particular in relation to those of export interest to developing countries and thus to facilitate, inter alia, more efficient patterns of production;

18. Urges developed countries to make their best efforts to adjust those sectors of their agricultural and manufacturing economies which require protection against exports from developing countries, thus facilitating access to the markets of food and agricultural products;

19. Recommends that the general system of preferences should be expanded to cover a wider range of processed and semi-processed products and, whenever possible, agricultural commodities and that the system of information on using the general system of preferences, providing technical assistance - including assistance in the field of research, development and marketing - should be enlarged and improved to enable developing countries to take full advantage of such preferences;

20. Recommends that the World Food Council, in accordance with its mandate, should give continuing attention to the impact of food trade on levels of food production in the world, in particular with reference to the economies of the developing countries, using to the maximum extent possible the necessary inputs which the different organs and organizations of the United Nations system should provide;

21. Recommends that all Member States and international organizations concerned should take appropriate steps to put into operation the Five-Point Plan of Action on World Food Security approved by the Council of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations at its seventy-fifth session and endorsed by the World Food Council at its fifth session, 7/ mainly as an interim measure until a new international grains agreement has been concluded.

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7/ Ibid., part one, para. 27 (d) and part two, para. 65.