



**United Nations
Development Programme**

Distr.
GENERAL

DP/SR.722
11 January 1982

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Twenty-eighth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 722nd MEETING

held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 18 June 1981, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. ABDULAH (Trinidad and Tobago)

CONTENTS

Other funds and programmes (continued)

- (b) United Nations Volunteers (continued)
- (c) United Nations Capital Development Fund (continued)
- (d) United Nations Revolving Fund for Natural Resources Exploration (continued)
- (e) United Nations Interim Fund for Science and Technology for Development (continued)
- (g) United Nations Special Fund for Land-locked Developing Countries (continued)
- (h) Assistance to drought-stricken countries in Africa and follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Desertification (continued)

This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent within one week of the date of this document to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, Department of Conference Services, room A-3550, 866 United Nations Plaza.

Any corrections to the records of the meetings of this session will be consolidated in a single corrigendum, to be issued shortly after the end of the session.

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

OTHER FUNDS AND PROGRAMMES (continued)

Consideration of draft decisions

(b) UNITED NATIONS VOLUNTEERS (continued) (DP/535)

1. Mr. PRESIDENT drew attention to the administrative report for 1980 (document DP/535) and to the recommendation, involving no financial implications, contained in paragraph 29.
2. Mr. FILIMONOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) noted that annex I of the document indicated that the Soviet Union had contributed one volunteer. There must be some misunderstanding, since his country was not officially sending specialists through the UNV programme.
3. Mr. NABULSI (Executive Co-ordinator, United Nations Volunteers) said that the person concerned was a citizen of the Soviet Union, but had been recruited in the recipient country.
4. Mr. CZARKOWSKI (Poland) said that there was also a reference to one Polish volunteer serving in the programme; it seemed that the agreed modalities for recruitment had not been followed.
5. Mr. NABULSI (Executive Co-ordinator, United Nations Volunteers) pointed out that the document did not state that the persons concerned in those two cases had been officially provided by their Governments, but merely indicated their "countries of origin". The modalities of recruitment were currently being negotiated with Poland as well as with other countries, and would be followed.
6. Mrs. VERVALCKE (Belgium) said that her delegation had no difficulty in approving the recommendation. However, subparagraph 29 (b) seemed unnecessary, since it had always been understood that the Administrator would inform the Council of the changing needs of the UNV secretariat, and should be deleted.
7. Mr. LEIKVANG (Norway) supported the Belgian proposal. It was part of the normal duties of the Administrator to inform the Governing Council when additional staffing or other needs arose.
8. Mr. WINTOP (Denmark) supported the views of the delegations of Belgium and Norway. He further proposed the addition of a recommendation requesting the

(Mr. Wintop, Denmark)

Administrator to prepare a short analytical report on the future use of volunteers in the development process. That proposal had been made before by the Nordic States, and should be reflected in the recommendation. \

9. Mr. AHLANDER (Sweden) supported the proposals made by the representatives of Belgium and of Denmark.

10. Mr. NABULSI (Executive Co-ordinator, United Nations Volunteers) accepted that it was part of the duty of the Administrator to report annually on the programme's needs and requirements. Subparagraph 29 (b) had been included in order to reflect the principle that the Council might review the needs of the programme when its growth warranted it. He could agree to its deletion, on the understanding that the Administrator could appear before the Council each year and obtain a review of the programme's needs.

11. As to the analytical study proposed by the representative of Denmark, he was not sure which aspect of the future use of volunteers it would be intended to cover.

12. Mr. WINTOP (Denmark) said that what he envisaged was a brief analysis of the role that volunteers might play in co-operation for development.

13. Mr. LINDORES (Canada) said that he wished to support the additional paragraph proposed by the delegations of the Nordic countries, and the Belgian proposal that subparagraph 29 (b) be deleted.

14. The Executive Co-ordinator had interpreted the Council's methods of approving the administrative budget rather too liberally. The budget was approved on a biennial basis, in the light of the Administrator's forecast of requirements. Should unforeseeable emergencies arise, he could then submit supplementary estimates. That was the procedure to be followed in all cases.

15. Mr. ZIMMERMAN (United States of America) proposed that in subparagraph 29 (a), after the words "coming years", the following should be added: "in accordance with the needs of developing countries and, in particular, least developed countries and newly independent countries;". That addition would strengthen the focus of the programme's activities, and respond to the comments made on the need to ensure that volunteers were assigned to the areas where they were most needed.

16. Mr. ALAKWAA (Yemen) supported the amendment proposed by the United States delegation.

17. Mr. TAKASU (Japan) said that he was in favour of deleting subparagraph 29 (b), as proposed by Belgium. It had emerged from the extensive discussions on UNV staffing requirements in the Budgetary and Finance Committee that misinterpretations by the Secretariat of certain Council decisions, particularly decision 80/41 (para. 5) had placed the recruitment procedures in a deplorable situation. The deletion might prevent further misunderstandings.

18. The PRESIDENT said that, if there were no objections, he would take it that the Council wished to adopt the amendments proposed by the United States, Belgian and Danish delegations and to adopt the recommendation in paragraph 29 of document DP/535, as amended.

19. It was so decided.

(c) UNITED NATIONS CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT FUND (continued) (DP/536 and Corr.1; DP/L.343)

20. The PRESIDENT drew attention to the Administrator's report for 1980 (DP/536) and the draft recommendation in paragraph 113, together with the views of the Budgetary and Finance Committee in paragraph 1 of document DP/L.343.

21. Mr. D'ORVILLE (Council Secretary) read out a letter from the Chairman of the Budgetary and Finance Committee accompanying its report (DP/L.343 and Corr.1), noting that in each case the Committee's consideration had had to be based on the assumptions contained in the Annual Reports of the Administrator for 1980, and that the final amount involved would naturally depend on the outcome of the Council's discussions and would be taken into account in the Committee's consideration of the biennial budget as a whole.

22. Mr. BIDAUT (France) drew attention to an error in paragraph A.1 of the French version of document DP/L.343, which referred to reimbursement by "FISE" (UNICEF), apparently in mistake for "FENU" (UNCDF).

23. Mr. BLAIN (Gambia) said that his delegation wished to submit a draft decision on item 7 (c), concerning the United Nations Capital Development Fund.*

24. The PRESIDENT noted that the text to be submitted by the Gambian delegation covered most of the recommendations in paragraph 113 of document DP/536, with the exception of subparagraph (d).

25. Mr. FARASHUDDIN (Bangladesh) said that his delegation strongly supported the draft decision to be submitted by the Gambian delegation, and believed that the substance of subparagraph 113 (d) should be included in some form.

26. The PRESIDENT said that a decision would be postponed until the Gambian draft decision had been circulated.

(d) UNITED NATIONS REVOLVING FUND FOR NATURAL RESOURCES EXPLORATION (continued) (DP/537 and 538; DP/L.343 and Corr.1; DP/NRE/PROJECTS/1-4)

27. The PRESIDENT drew the Council's attention to the Administrator's Report (DP/537) and the draft recommendation in paragraph 26, together with the views of the Budgetary and Finance Committee contained in document DP/L.343 (paras. 2 and 3).

* Subsequently circulated as document DP/L.350.

(The President)

28. He proposed that subparagraph (a) of the recommendation in paragraph 26 should be deleted and replaced by the following text:

"Takes note of the report of the Administrator (DP/537) on the activities of the United Nations Revolving Fund for Natural Resources Exploration in 1980;".

29. Mr. HAGGAG (Egypt) proposed that the following paragraph be added:

"Authorizes the Fund to continue negotiations with countries whose projects were approved by the Council in its decisions of last year, in order to reach agreement."

30. Ms. WACUP (Federal Republic of Germany) proposed that, in view of the voluntary nature of contributions, the word "imperative" in subparagraph (d) should be replaced by the word "desirable".

31. Mr. THYNESS (Assistant Administrator for Special Activities) said that the Egyptian proposal would create some difficulties, since the standard procedure was that projects not concluded in the time specified were dropped and had to be presented afresh as new projects. In Egypt's case, the project had been closed since 1 January 1981 and would be difficult to reactivate because the financial implications had altered radically; the Fund should present such projects to the next session of the Governing Council as new projects. UNDP was always happy to negotiate, but there must be a fixed procedure, in order to avoid unforeseeable financial complications.

32. Mr. HAGGAG (Egypt) said that he would be happy to redraft the end of his proposal to read "and report to the next Council session".

33. Mr. THYNESS (Assistant Administrator for Special Activities) said that the Fund was always willing to negotiate and did not require authorization to do so.

34. Mr. HAGGAG (Egypt) said that nevertheless he wished to maintain his proposal.

35. Mrs. VERVALCKE (Belgium) said that the rules as they stood allowed any country involved in negotiations with the Fund to submit or to resubmit a project to the Council. If the wording proposed by the Egyptian delegation was included in the recommendation, it might appear that those rules did not exist, thus setting an unfortunate precedent for the future. The sentence could perhaps not be included in the recommendation but inserted in the text of the report.

36. Mr. THYNESS (Assistant Administrator for Special Activities Fund) thought that the inclusion of the paragraph suggested by the Egyptian delegation would not create any problems either immediately or in the future, as long as it was clear that a project which was not signed within the specified time had in fact been cancelled and, when resubmitted, would be considered to be a new one.

37. The PRESIDENT said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Council adopted the recommendation in paragraph 26 of document DP/537, as orally amended.

38. It was so decided

39. The PRESIDENT drew the attention of the Council to the projects contained in documents DP/NRE/PROJECTS/1-4. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Council approved the projects contained in paragraph 13 of DP/NRE/PROJECT/1, paragraph 11 of DP/NRE/PROJECT/2, paragraph 17 of DP/NRE/PROJECT 3 and paragraph 10 of DP/NRE/PROJECT/4.

40. It was so decided.

41. The PRESIDENT drew attention to the report of the Working Group of Government Experts summarized in document DP/538 and to the resolution in paragraph 3 proposed for adoption by the Governing Council, which in turn contained a resolution recommended for adoption by the Economic and Social Council.

42. Mr. FILIMONOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that, since some delegations might not approve all the recommendations of the Working Group, as contained in document E/1981/23, the first word of paragraph 2 of the resolution for adoption by the Economic and Social Council should be changed from "Endorses" to "Takes note also of".

43. Ms. SCHELTEMA (Netherlands) said that her delegation had submitted a draft decision on the subject.*

44. The PRESIDENT said that a decision would be postponed until the Netherlands draft decision had been circulated.

(e) UNITED NATIONS INTERIM FUND FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT
(continued) (DP/539)

45. The PRESIDENT said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Council wished to take note of the introductory statement made by the Administrator and of the report of the Administrator (document DP/539).

46. It was so decided.

* Subsequently circulated as document DP/L.352.

- (g) UNITED NATIONS SPECIAL FUND FOR LAND-LOCKED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (continued) (DP/541)
- (h) ASSISTANCE TO DROUGHT-STRICKEN COUNTRIES IN AFRICA AND FOLLOW-UP TO THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON DESERTIFICATION (continued) (DP/542, DP/543, DP/544 and Corr.1)

47. Mr. BIDAUT (France) said that, since it had been established, the Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel had been responsible for co-ordination among its member States in all matters relating to development operations undertaken by a single country or a group of countries. UNDP and the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office (UNSO) co-operated with that Committee and supported regional projects in the area. He felt that the Committee should play a role in selecting priorities in the special assistance programme for African countries affected by drought and desertification, which was to be part of the UNDP regional programme for Africa in 1982-1986. He noted the permanent dialogue which had been established, through the Club du Sahel, between the Committee and the countries which gave major support to the Sahelian countries. The most recent meeting of the Club du Sahel had reviewed 300 first generation projects and the status of their financing, and had also examined the important question of recurring expenses.

48. More than other developing countries, the countries of the Sahel could not base their development on standard industrial models. They had to develop in a way which was compatible with their traditions, history and culture. That was the background against which foreign aid should be seen.

49. The food and agriculture sector was vital for those countries. Agricultural development assistance should occupy its proper place in an integrated approach to development incorporating the control of soil impoverishment and deforestation, major land development work, industrial undertakings and handicrafts. Through the training of manpower and suitable technology transfer, the countries concerned could improve the planning of their food strategies. However, food assistance and emergency assistance remained necessary. There was no contradiction between the provision of food aid and the development of production. Indeed, food aid, food security and increased production should go hand in hand. The French Government supported the efforts undertaken by the international community on behalf of the Sahel and had contributed approximately \$330 million in bilateral aid in 1980.

50. The encouraging results which the Niger had achieved in developing its rural sector and its agricultural and livestock production demonstrated that the countries of the region were not doomed beyond recall to suffer the destructive effects of drought.

51. Finally, he said that his delegation supported the inclusion of the Republic of Benin among the countries able to receive assistance through UNSO under the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification.

52. Mr. BLAIN (Gambia) said that the persistent drought which continued to afflict the Sudano-Sahelian region had not only changed the ecological balance in the countries of the region but had virtually paralysed the efforts to accelerate the development of the region and to raise the living standards of the people there. The serious food crisis in Africa had been exacerbated by prolonged drought conditions, unseasonal rains and the attendant effects of desert encroachment in the Sudano-Sahelian region.

53. He said that, since desertification was advancing at an estimated rate of six kilometres a year, it was essential that the international community ensured that resources to combat that phenomenon were provided as a matter of priority. His delegation was particularly concerned that action on the matter had lagged behind the good-will which had been generally expressed. He was also disappointed that contributions to the special account for financing the implementation of the Plan of Action, especially from the major donors, had been very poor. Even more serious was the decreasing volume of financial assistance which was desperately needed to improve the severe living conditions and critical food situation of the people in the region.

54. He was greatly satisfied at the useful role played by UNSO in mobilizing resources and co-ordinating the fight against desertification in the Sudano-Sahelian countries. In particular, he commended the comprehensive approach to project formulation adopted by the Office. Since the level of success obtained by UNSO was dependent on the support it received from the developed countries, he urged donor countries, particularly the major donors, to contribute generously at the United Nations pledging conference for development activities in 1981.

55. His delegation also fully supported the continuing financing by UNDP of its share of the administrative cost of the UNDP/UNEP joint venture. The UNSO Trust Fund and the interest accruing therefrom should continue to be used for the short-term and long-term rehabilitation programmes and projects of the small group of countries for whom the Fund was provided, particularly in relation to the implementation of the first and second generation programmes of the Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel.

56. In conclusion, he said that his delegation was submitting three draft decisions on the implementation of the plan of action to combat desertification in the Sudano-Sahelian region, on the implementation of the medium-term and long-term recovery and rehabilitation programme in the Sudano-Sahelian region, and on assistance to drought-stricken countries in Africa.*

57. Mr. RUKIRA (Rwanda) said that, as a land-locked State, Rwanda attached great importance to the United Nations Special Fund for Land-locked Developing Countries, which was to be used to finance projects in transport, communications and transit

* Subsequently circulated as documents DP/L.346, L.348 and L.349.

(Mr. Rukira, Rwanda)

facilities, inter alia. His delegation fully supported the Administrator's recommendation in document DP/541, and hoped that donor countries would be moved by that appeal.

58. It was disturbing that more than half of the African countries were stricken by drought, and that even the countries which so far had been spared might face the same fate sooner or later. That might be the case for his country, whose nearest neighbours had experienced the phenomenon. Indeed, the south-eastern region had suffered a drought whose effects were still being felt. His Government had taken steps to provide assistance to the populations affected by the famine which had ensued. Currently, a programme for combating its effects was being formulated; it would be aimed, inter alia, at launching projects in irrigation, reforestation, promotion of new cultivation methods and distribution of selected and varied seeds to farmers. Fortunately, the phenomenon had been contained within a small area and the situation could be controlled.

59. The information in documents A/36/208, DP/543 and DP/544 was alarming, and showed the paucity of donor countries and donor agencies. All countries able to do so should make an increased effort to provide generous assistance to African countries stricken by drought or threatened by desertification. In view of the fact that that double scourge had pernicious effects on the environment, his delegation favoured interorganizational co-operation, and especially the joint UNDP/UNEP venture to combat those two catastrophic phenomena, which affected the entire African continent.

60. Mr. CHEN Xingnong (China) said that in the past year UNSO had made progress in implementing the medium-term and long-term recovery and rehabilitation programme in the Sudano-Sahelian region and the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification there. In 1980, three more countries had become eligible for UNSO assistance, bringing the number of recipient countries to 18. The struggle against desertification had progressed to the adoption of a comprehensive approach in the formulation of national development policies. UNSO had become the principle institution of the United Nations system dealing with those problems. His delegation welcomed the fact that UNSO-assisted projects for recovery and rehabilitation had increased to 113, and that projects combating desertification had grown to 118. The implementation of those projects would have a far-reaching effect on the development of the countries of the Sudano-Sahelian region. Since some of the required financing had not been secured, however, substantial support, especially financial, from the international community was required. Unearmarked contributions and project-linked assistance could be used in tandem without conflict. Capital investment and technical assistance could complement each other, and all those approaches should be encouraged. The persistence of the drought in the Sudano-Sahelian region made the raising of additional funds and the formulation of more emergency, medium-term and long-term assistance projects an unshirkable responsibility of the international community.

61. His delegation welcomed the fact that UNSO and some donor countries had sent joint programming missions to the recipient countries in order to investigate the situation and formulate assistance programmes together with them. He hoped that

(Mr. Chen Xingnong, China)

UNSO would take more initiatives along those lines. It had begun to stress the importance of solving fuel problems as a way of combating the devastation of vegetative cover and the encroachment of desertification. In some of its arid and semi-arid regions, China had similar problems, and was prepared to share with interested countries its experience in the use of solar energy, biogas and other alternative fuels. China had friendly relations with the Sudano-Sahelian countries and expressed sympathy for their hardships. His Government had, within its means, given assistance to some of them on a bilateral basis. China had always supported the work of UNSO, wished it success and hoped that the countries in the Sudano-Sahelian region would succeed in their fight against desertification and for recovery and rehabilitation.

62. Mr. MOUMOUNI (Niger) said that his country naturally attached great importance to United Nations activities to benefit land-locked countries; its own development efforts were hindered because it was land-locked and only the co-operation of its coastal neighbours enabled it to overcome the constraints of geography. His delegation was therefore greatly concerned about the low level of resources available to the Special Fund, and called on all Governments to contribute generously to it. Two thirds of the total amount of contributions for 1981 had been pledged by land-locked developing countries. The traditional donor developed countries and all those able to do so should become firmly convinced of the need to provide the Fund with the means of assisting land-locked countries, as recommended in the international strategy for the third Development Decade.

63. As a land-locked African country, Niger welcomed the fact that the Administrator had allocated \$535,400 to programmes for Africa, but was sure that more funds could have been allocated if the sum available after the pledging conference had been greater. Increased funds would have made it possible to finance many more projects for African land-locked countries and to provide them with much more financial and technical assistance, as recommended in resolution 123 (V) of UNCTAD.

64. Throughout the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea, his country had always strongly supported provisions on the rights of transit, access to the sea and the exploitation of its resources. He called again on the littoral States to accept the idea of the creation of a fund for the common heritage of mankind, which in his delegation's view was a necessary supplement to the United Nations Special Fund for Land-locked Developing Countries. Such a fund would give substance to the idea of the common heritage of mankind, which should form part of the efforts to restructure international economic relations.

65. His Government placed the overcoming of the drawbacks of being land-locked among its highest priorities, and hoped to be able to receive assistance in project financing from the Fund. He encouraged the Administrator and the Assistant Administrator to pursue their efforts to mobilize the necessary resources, and fully endorsed the recommendation in document DP/541.

66. As a Sahelian country which had undergone the nightmare of the great drought (1968-1973), the Niger strongly supported joint UNDP, UNEP and UNSO activities

(Mr. Moumouni, Niger)

which gave special priority to the struggle against desertification. The problem of desertification should be considered in the context of over-all economic and social conditions, in an integrated approach. His delegation welcomed UNSO activities aimed at assisting the countries of the Sudano-Sahelian region, including his own, in combating desertification.

67. Since the terrible drought, his country had established as a priority the total and rapid eradication of famine and malnutrition. For that reason, food problems were of special importance. Hunger and malnutrition were still world-wide problems, and could be solved only through a dynamic, integrated and persistent global approach. In accordance with its principle of self-reliance, the Niger had resolved to put food security above all other concerns with a policy of expanding the area of cultivated land, continuous attempts to increase productivity and agricultural production, reconstitution, protection and improvement of herds and an intensive struggle against soil impoverishment and desertification.

68. Despite the progress made, the struggle against desertification was still in the forefront of the concerns of African countries in general and of the Sudano-Sahelian countries in particular. The fact that the situation had not substantially improved, and that more countries had been added to the list of those suffering from problems of desertification and drought, gave a clear idea of the size of the task before UNDP and UNSO. His delegation expressed gratitude to those organizations for their efforts but called on them to be persistent. The international community should give all necessary financial assistance to those agencies so that they could accomplish their mission. His delegation fully endorsed the draft decisions submitted by the representative of the Gambia, and hoped that they would be adopted by consensus.

69. Mr. HAGGAG (Egypt) said that the drought in Africa was apparently even worse than document DP/543 indicated. The number of drought-stricken countries had increased to 27, only 18 of which would be receiving assistance. The latest information suggested that even more countries in Africa should be added to the list. Foreign aid was urgently required because the countries' own food resources were inadequate. In view of the immensity of the task, it was essential to undertake, in a sustained and cohesive manner, immediate and concerted action to assist the Governments of the countries affected by drought and desertification in achieving self-sufficiency.

70. Egypt also suffered from desertification, and special efforts had been made by his Government to combat that phenomenon. It had developed expertise to deal with the main causes of desertification and was ready to share its experience with interested Governments on the African continent.

71. His delegation recommended the establishment of a special programme to protect the African environment. It urged that, in addition to the intensification of the anti-desertification effort, the resources of the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office should be increased so that it could carry out its responsibilities. It trusted that UNDP, through its regular programme, through the special efforts of the Sudano-Sahelian Office and in co-operation with other competent organs, would

(Mr. Haggag, Egypt)

take the necessary measures to assist the drought-stricken countries. The international community as a whole should increase its involvement in that area. In conclusion, he welcomed the co-operation between UNDP and UNEP.

72. Mr. KRSTAJIC (Observer for Yugoslavia) said that action to combat desertification and implement rehabilitation programmes in the Sudano-Sahelian region deserved more active support. In 1980, Yugoslavia had established close co-operation with the Sudano-Sahelian Office and had pledged its first contribution. His Government had initiated activities to provide assistance to the Sudano-Sahelian region and to support the Office's work there. In addition to the significant assistance provided under technical co-operation agreements and programmes, it had expressed its readiness to participate in activities undertaken at the international level, particularly those undertaken by the Sudano-Sahelian Office. Following the Office's first mission to Yugoslavia in 1980, a number of proposals for joint co-operative activities had been submitted by the Yugoslav side. It had since been agreed that technical missions with representatives from Yugoslavia and the Sudano-Sahelian Office would proceed to some of the drought-stricken countries of Africa to discuss with the technical services concerned the substantive and operational specifics of the projects which his Government would be prepared to support.

73. In Yugoslavia, appropriate resources had already been provided through the Solidarity Fund for Co-operation with Non-Aligned and Developing Countries, which had been operating under the auspices of his Government. The Fund provided assistance and other incentives to promote economic and technical co-operation intended primarily to benefit the least developed countries. Yugoslavia would continue to support the Sudano-Sahelian Office and to participate actively in the effort to alleviate the devastating effects of drought in the Sudano-Sahelian region.

74. Mr. BRUNI (Italy) said that, recognizing the immensity of the problems of drought and desertification in the Sudano-Sahelian region, his Government was providing assistance on a bilateral basis to the affected countries; the ongoing Cape Verde project was a case in point. At the same time, his Government was co-operating closely with the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office, which would certainly make significant progress in combating desertification and assisting the Sudano-Sahelian countries. Greater international awareness of the problems and a major international effort to solve them were essential, as was closer co-ordination among the relevant United Nations bodies. In that connexion, Italy welcomed the co-operation between UNDP and UNEP.

75. His delegation looked forward to examining in depth the draft decisions submitted by the representative of the Gambia.

76. Mr. FILIMONOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the attention being given to the provision of assistance to drought-stricken countries in Africa and the follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Desertification was entirely justified, since those matters involved political and socio-economic concerns.

(Mr. Filimonov, USSR)

Foreign assistance, both bilateral and through international organizations, aptly supplemented efforts by the Governments of countries in the Sudano-Sahelian region, and the work done in those fields was generally commendable.

77. His country understood the problems faced by the peoples of the region, since around one fifth of its territory was covered by similar areas. Its experience showed that the problems could be solved effectively only through the integrated resolution of major socio-economic problems and the constant enhancement of the Government's role. For that reason, the exploitation of the natural riches of those areas had become the Government's task and an integral part of its economic policy. Based on scientific research and prospecting, large hydrotechnical installations had been built in arid and semi-arid areas and technically advanced irrigation systems had been set up. Major efforts had been made in protective forest cultivation and soil enrichment, improvement of pasture land and provision of water to villages and towns. As agriculture had developed in the region, which contained open deposits of mineral resources, a powerful industry had sprung up. Integrated economic development had made it possible to transform formerly lifeless, arid areas into modern agro-industrial zones. The economic, social and cultural environment of the populations in those regions had changed radically.

78. The Soviet experience showed that desertification could be not only halted but even reversed. His country shared its experience in that field with a number of countries in the Sudano-Sahelian region and provided them with economic, scientific and technological assistance in developing the most important branches of their economies. Examples of such co-operation could be found in agriculture and animal husbandry, the building of installations for light industry and food industries, pasture land irrigation and livestock farm construction, hydrotechnical plants and irrigation, electricity and non-ferrous metallurgy, the oil-refining and gas-extracting industries, transport and communications, geology and prospecting. Many African countries had received foodstuffs and medicines from the Soviet Union through its public organizations, and thousands of skilled specialists had been trained for them with Soviet assistance.

79. His delegation believed in an integrated approach and considered that the task of assisting those countries consisted not only in overcoming the immediate consequences of drought and combating desertification, but also in promoting the creation of a technical and economic base that would allow similar phenomena to be effectively dealt with in future. His delegation hoped that the countries of the Sudano-Sahelian region would successfully solve the complex and important problems facing them.

80. Mrs. VERVALCKE (Belgium) said that her delegation was somewhat disappointed that the reports submitted under item 7 (h) did not give a fuller picture of the activities undertaken and the persistent co-ordinating efforts made by the countries that were assisting the drought-stricken countries. She was not saying that the reports should catalogue in detail what each of the donor countries was doing. However, a greater acknowledgement of their efforts could be one way to sustain their commitment to the development of the Sudano-Sahelian countries and to mobilize more funds to combat desertification.

(Mrs. Vervalcke, Belgium)

81. For many years, the Belgian national budget had included special appropriations for the Sudano-Sahelian countries, and her Government would continue its bilateral and multilateral assistance to those countries.

82. Mr. FARASHUDDIN (Bangladesh) said that his country was concerned at the deterioration of conditions in the drought-stricken countries of Africa and hoped for an early and effective solution to the problems. His delegation appreciated the positive role played by UNDP and UNSO and had no difficulty in supporting the draft decisions submitted by the representative of the Gambia.

83. Mr. TUAN (Liberia) called on the international community to support the Sudano-Sahelian Office. The technologically advanced countries should come to the immediate assistance of the Sudano-Sahelian countries with a view to improving socio-economic conditions in the region.

84. His delegation hoped that the Governing Council would adopt the draft decisions submitted by the representative of the Gambia and remain committed to combating desertification in Africa.

85. Mr. AMOKO (Uganda) said that his country was grateful for the much-needed assistance provided by UNDP, as well as the other United Nations agencies and the non-governmental organizations that were engaged in relief operations in the northern region of Uganda. His delegation noted with deep regret that the international community had paid little attention to the drought-stricken areas of Africa. It appealed to all countries in a position to do so to provide more generous assistance so that the grave social conditions could be remedied; millions of lives could be saved if more food and medicine were donated and less military hardware sold to the developing countries.

86. Mr. AL-EBRAHIM (Kuwait) agreed with the representative of Belgium that the reports could usefully mention instances of co-operation provided to the drought-stricken countries by other countries. Kuwait had invited the leaders of some of the affected countries to discuss the question of joint projects. His Government was spending millions of dollars on anti-desertification programmes and could give valuable technical assistance in that field.

87. Mr. ZIMMERMAN (United States of America) said that UNDP appeared to be seriously committed to ensuring that the institutional mechanisms for the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification were in place and operating efficiently. His delegation hoped that there would be increasing co-operation among the organizations active in the Sudano-Sahelian region.

88. The United States was making significant financial and technical contributions, on a bilateral and multilateral basis, to the implementation of the Plan of Action. It was involved in watershed management projects in Cape Verde and reforestation projects in Mauritania. In the fiscal year 1980, the Agency for International Development, which was providing substantial support for activities in the Sudano-Sahelian region, had committed \$20.4 million for programmes designed

(Mr. Zimmerman, United States)

to restore vegetation cover or retard vegetation loss. An additional \$11.3 million had been committed for wood-fuel programmes. For the fiscal year 1982, \$43.9 million and \$37.6 million had been requested for vegetation cover and wood-fuel programmes respectively. His delegation hoped that funding levels would continue to rise as countries recognized the problems in the Sudano-Sahelian region and gave higher priority to requests for assistance.

89. The United States believed that the Consultative Group on Desertification Control, referred to in paragraph 8 of document DP/543, should become more involved in policy and programme review. The primary responsibility for developing and funding projects should rest with the development assistance community. A small number of unique projects might be developed and reviewed by UNEP and UNDP.

90. Mr. KABA (Guinea) said that Guinea had been seriously threatened by desertification in recent years and greatly appreciated the generous assistance it had received through UNDP and the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office. His delegation fully supported the draft decisions submitted by the representative of the Gambia; it hoped that the major donors would heed the appeals contained therein and help to solve the problem of desertification.

91. Mr. CZARKOWSKI (Poland) said his Government recognized that desertification was affecting the poorest countries and that those who were suffering needed bilateral and multilateral assistance urgently. It was discussing with the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office the form which Polish co-operation could take.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.