GOVERNING COUNCIL

Thirtieth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 34th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 22 June 1983, at 10.30 a.m.

President: Mr. SLIM (Tunisia)
later: Mr. SZEREMETA (Poland)

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OTHER FUNDS AND PROGRAMMES (continued)

(a) UNITED NATIONS TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION ACTIVITIES (continued) (DP/1983/18 and Add.l-2)

1. Mr. CHEN Xingnong (China) commended the department of Technical Co-operation for Development for its achievements during 1982 in the face of economic difficulties. In 1982 the Department's activities had accounted for roughly 42 per cent of all United Nations expenditures for technical co-operation activities. It was therefore commendable that, despite an overall budget reduction of 13 per cent, the Department's project delivery rate had risen by 2 per cent, so that project expenditures had decreased by only 7 per cent.

2. In response to the urgent needs of recipient countries, the Department had concentrated on development planning and natural resources development, and expenditures for those sectors were likely to account for 70 per cent of all expenditure during 1983. Much of that expenditure was for pre-investment activities, which had resulted in 1982 in a 19-fold increase in investment over 1981. In 1982 the Department had adopted further measures to streamline procedures and reduce costs. It had given priority to TCDC, particularly for the least developed island and land-locked countries, and had helped to organize round tables, in keeping with the recommendations of the Substantial New Programme of Action.

3. The Department's achievements had demonstrated its capability; the Governing Council should therefore attach greater importance to helping the Department to utilize that capability and to exploring co-operation between the Department and UNDP in order to provide increased technical support.

4. His Government attached great importance to its co-operation with the Department. In the autumn of 1982 the Department had helped the Chinese Ministry of Petroleum Industries to organize a regional seminar at Daqing. The Department had also been the executing agency for UNFPA assistance in the conduct of the 1982 census, and its role had been greatly appreciated by his country.

5. Mr. DORJEE (Bhutan) noted with satisfaction that the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development was carrying out many programmes in developing countries. It was a cause for concern, however, that the value of the Department's field activities had declined in 1982, reversing for the first time the pattern of continuous growth. The Department should reduce its administrative and staffing costs, streamline operational procedures and intensify efforts to secure extrabudgetary resources from donors so that it could continue to deliver its services. Other executing agencies in the United Nations system should consider making use of the Department's technical expertise and operational capability.
6. His delegation had been pleased to note an increase during 1982 in the Department's programme expenditures for training and it thanked the Department for its assistance in organizing a project planning and management course in Bhutan during 1982.

7. Ms. HILTON (United Kingdom) said that it was gratifying that the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development was improving project delivery while exercising financial conservatism. Her delegation welcomed the streamlining of management procedures, which was particularly important in view of the current financial situation, and hoped that the Department would register a small operating surplus in 1984.

8. The increasing duplication of work within the United Nations system was a cause of concern to her delegation, and she urged that every effort should be made to avoid such inefficient overlapping. She noted with pleasure the continuing emphasis placed on the needs of the least-developed countries in the Department's regular programme of activities and welcomed in particular the attention given to manpower shortages in the field of development administration. She also commended the close co-ordination which had been built up with development lending institutions in the area of pre-investment projects. The Department should continue to increase the quality of its services by concentrating on the prompt and effective delivery of technical co-operation in its traditional areas of competence.

9. Mr. HARE (Canada) said that his delegation was impressed by the range of special activities of the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development, including programmes relating to the integration of women in development and collaboration with UNDP in the organization of round tables. Furthermore, the Department's regular activities involved areas not usually covered by other specialized agencies, such as natural resources, energy and manpower development. He commended the Department for the evaluation of its activities which it had submitted to the Governing Council.

10. His delegation had taken note of the Department's decisions to reduce administrative costs and the measures taken to promote a greater use of its own expertise is seeking new sources of funding; those activities were essential in view of the reported operating deficit of $3.6 million. With regard to the duplication of co-operation activities within the United Nations system, he pledged his delegation's support in resisting the proliferation of co-operation activities.

11. Miss QOAANE (Lesotho) said that the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development had assisted her Government with projects in a number of areas, including planning and minerals exploration. Together with UNFPA, the Department, had assisted with the national census of 1976. In April 1983 the Department had worked with a number of other United Nations organizations to sponsor a successful regional workshop for English-speaking African countries at Maseru on the theme of "Efficient implementation of development plans". Following the workshop, one Department staff member had remained in Lesotho to render further assistance and offer advisory services to the country.
12. Her delegation was concerned at the impact that decreased resources would have for the Department's technical co-operation in certain key areas of economic and social development. It therefore encouraged the Department to maximize the use of available resources by strengthening its collaboration with UNDP field offices and other United Nations agencies in an effort to avoid duplication of work.

13. **Mr. BOHNET** (Federal Republic of Germany) welcomed the idea of closer co-operation among the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development, UNDP and the World Bank in the field of technical assistance. He agreed that the growing presence of the World Bank in the field of technical co-operation might include its execution of UNDP-funded projects in sectors such as development administration; all new ideas for collaboration should be considered.

14. The Department's efforts to strengthen public administration in the developing countries, particularly in the areas of institution-building, administrative reform and financial management, were commendable. The training of senior public managers, scientists and technical personnel was also very important. His delegation supported activities to strengthen national statistical institutes and their operations, including the compilation of population statistics in developing countries.

15. **Mr. Szeremeta** (Poland) took the Chair.

16. **Mr. ZLATANOV** (Bulgaria) said that the qualitative and quantitative analysis of project delivery and administrative costs contained in document DP/1983/18 was extremely valuable. The improvement which had been achieved in the project delivery rate during 1982, despite financial difficulties, was gratifying, as were the measures taken to offset the effects of the financial crisis. Efforts should be continued to maintain the quality of services while adjusting to reduced resources.

17. Fruitful co-operation existed between Bulgaria and the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development. The Department had participated in the implementation of two projects in Bulgaria, and six Bulgarian experts were involved in Department projects. In that connection, he drew attention to table 9 in document DP/1983/18/Add.2, which indicated that a more equitable geographical distribution of experts was being achieved in Department projects, and to table 20, which showed an increase in the number of countries from which equipment had been procured, a trend he hoped would continue in future.

18. **Mr. SILWAL** (Nepal) said that a decrease in the programmes of the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development would have serious repercussions for countries such as his own, which required technical assistance for their development. He welcomed the reduction in the number of Department posts and other efforts to streamline operations. The increase in the rate of project implementation was most satisfactory. However, in view of the great importance of projects for the least developed countries, he suggested that streamlining should not be taken too far and that greater use should be made of existing technical expertise. He expressed the hope that the kind of close collaboration which the Department enjoyed with UNDP and UNFPA would be developed with the World Bank and other agencies.
19. Mrs. BALLESTER (Observer for Cuba) said that the picture presented by the Assistant Secretary-General in her introduction to the item, although sobering, did have some bright spots. In the difficult times being experienced by all technical co-operation agencies, the Department had managed to intensify its development efforts and should be commended for its flexibility and efficiency. In 1982 Cuba had achieved a 99.7 per cent execution rate of the authorized expenditure under its third country programme, a level which would not have been possible without the expert assistance of the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development as executing agency for what was probably the most important and complex project in Cuba's country programme.

20. Mr. CERMAK (Austria) welcomed the reduction by the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development of its administrative costs and the measures it had taken to reduce project expenditures. However, he asked for clarification with regard to the reduction overhead posts during the period 1981-1983; according to document DP/1983/18, paragraph 4, there was expected to be a 27 per cent reduction, but at the 29th meeting the Assistant Secretary-General had said that post reductions for that period would amount to 38 per cent. He would welcome further information regarding the staffing cuts and their impact on the future work of the Department, particularly in view of the fact that an 8 per cent reduction in the number of posts in UNDP had been described as dramatic.

21. His delegation supported the establishment of a Central Evaluation Unit within UNDP, but wondered how that action would affect the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development. Specifically, he wished to know whether it would have any financial implications. His delegation also wished to know which of the six evaluation recommendations contained in the recent report of the Joint Inspection Unit would be applied in the Department.

22. Mr. LETNIKOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the report on United Nations technical co-operation activities (DP/1983/18 and Add.1-2) described the operational activities of the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development in implementing programmes in certain fields which were extremely important for development. As the report indicated, the programmes implemented by the Department in 1982 had amounted to about 42 per cent of the overall volume of technical co-operation delivered by the United Nations system.

23. Some favourable results had been achieved by the Department in assisting developing countries through the provision of the services of experts, the training of national personnel and the supply of equipment. His delegation noted with satisfaction the increase in the level of programme delivery in 1982. The work that the Department was doing, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 34/137, under projects to strengthen the role of the public sector and improve the work of state enterprises was also encouraging; 1982 expenditure on that group of projects, including development planning projects, had amounted to $31.1 million. Soviet organizations had great experience in state planning and the management of the economy and, in view of the great interest of developing countries in those problems, they would welcome specific proposals for participation in such activities.
24. In connection with the recruitment of experts for technical co-operation programmes, his delegation drew attention to the continuing unjustifiable violation of the principle of equitable geographical distribution; certain countries were still being favoured at the expense of others. In 1982, for example, of the overall total of 1,346 United Nations experts serving on projects of the Department, Soviet specialists had numbered only 21 or about 1.5 per cent. In the case of subcontracts, it was understandable that subcontracts should not be apportioned according to geographical criteria, but it was inexplicable that in 1982 almost a third of all subcontracts should have gone to two countries.

25. The developing countries attached particular importance to training national personnel as an important component of development. The abundant opportunities for holding seminars, courses and other forms of group training of developing countries' personnel which existed in the Soviet Union were far from being fully used; Soviet organizations were prepared to expand their co-operation with the Department in that respect.

26. His delegation was concerned about the restructuring taking place in the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development and the Department's intention to involve the World Bank and similar institutions more extensively in its activities. It was also disturbed by the proposal to eliminate an extremely useful unit, the Geneva section of the Recruitment Service.

27. His delegation reaffirmed its position of principle that all technical assistance of the United Nations system should be funded outside the regular budget of the United Nations on the basis of voluntary contributions. It was encouraging that since 1976, the Soviet Union's annual contributions to the regular programme of technical co-operation had been used almost in their entirety to finance the personnel training and other forms of technical assistance to developing countries. The effective utilization of those resources convincingly disproved assertions about the alleged difficulty of using non-convertible currencies.

28. Mr. Slim (Tunisia) resumed the Chair.

29. Mr. CZAMARSKI (Poland) agreed with other delegations that co-operation activities should continue to be aimed at achieving national and collective self-reliance, the basis for the new international economic order. Consequently, his Government attached great importance to that sphere of United Nations activities and believed that UNDP deserved particular support as the central body for operational activities for development. It had therefore been a wise decision to entrust overall operational responsibility for TCDC to UNDP.

30. His delegation fully supported the orientation of the work of the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development and its continuing efforts to make optimum use of the financial and technical resources of the United Nations on behalf of developing countries. Consequently, Poland was entering into preliminary contacts with the Department with regard to possible use of Polish expertise and facilities in the field of remote sensing. Under the proposed arrangements the
facilities of the Polish Remote Sensing Centre would be used to organize, in collaboration with the United Nations, an interregional training centre for instruction in the fundamentals of remote sensing and its applications. The Polish Centre would work in association with other centres in Poland and elsewhere and would provide facilities for aerial photography, the receiving and analog processing of satellite images, and mapping. The satellite photographs and images would be received from the LANDSAT ground station at Fucino, Italy, and the SALYUT orbital station.

31. His delegation believed that the applications of remote sensing held great promise for development and demonstrated the benefits of the peaceful uses of outer space. In addition, Poland believed that the training of national personnel from developing countries was extremely important; thus, the project under consideration would express Poland's support for the concept of TCDC.

32. Miss ANSTEE (Assistant Secretary-General, Department of Technical Co-operation for Development) said that the Governing Council's support and guidance were of vital importance to the Department, especially during the current crisis. The Department therefore welcomed not only praise but also constructive criticism.

33. The Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) had recommended that the Council should devote more of its time to discussing United Nations technical co-operation activities. The Department would try to provide all the information required by the Council for in-depth consideration of that subject.

34. Since the Department had a mandate to respond to the needs of the developing countries, it was always pleased when those countries expressed satisfaction with its work. It noted the references made by the representatives of Bhutan, Bulgaria, China, Cuba, Nepal and Lesotho to activities being carried out by their countries in conjunction with the Department. It also noted their concern about the possible effects on them of the decline in the Department's available resources. The Department appreciated the Council's understanding of its plight. It had to be stressed, however, that the measures being taken to rationalize structures and practise financial stringency were not a new departure: they reflected what had been constant concerns of the Department ever since its establishment. Several delegations had applauded the austerity being practised by the Department. "Austerity" was an understatement. The Department's staff had already been cut to skeletal proportions; to cut further would mean cutting into the bone.

35. In that connection the representative of Austria had inquired about the expected impact of the large staffing cuts envisaged, referring to a 27 per cent reduction of overhead posts and a 38 per cent reduction overall. In fact, the total reduction of overhead posts would be 46 per cent and the overall reduction 38 per cent. It was in order to offset the effects of that reduction that the Department had prepared the streamlining plan which she had mentioned and which was under consideration by the Secretary-General with a view to its implementation. The reduction was bound to cause some disruption, but it was difficult to specify what its effects would be, most of the staffing cuts would involve administrative,
rather than technical, personnel. The Department would do its utmost to avoid any decline in the quality of its work. By the thirty-first session of the Council, it would be in a better position to assess the impact of the measures taken. With regard to the comments made by the Soviet representative to the effect that the purpose of the restructuring of the Department was to promote rapprochement with the World Bank, she said that in fact, the aim was simply to maintain services to the developing countries in view of the cuts that had to be made and to make optimum use of limited resources.

36. The representative of Belgium had recognized that the Department received no compensation for some activities, but several delegations had implied that administrative costs were too high. It was important to understand what "administrative cuts" meant: the Department's use of overheads covered much more than purely administrative funds. Thus it was misleading to compare a technical agency such as the Department with its financing partners such as UNDP, UNFPA or the World Bank, which had no responsibility for technical support. In judging cost-effectiveness, it should be borne in mind that the Department's figures for administrative and programme costs included the cost of technical backstopping staff at headquarters, whose services were vital to the credibility and quality of the programme. Staff costs accounted for 90 per cent of administrative expenditure. Of the overall staff costs, technical staff accounted for 50 per cent, 25 per cent was for staff working to carry out the Department's legislative mandates and engaged in research related to technical co-operation, in response to requests from intergovernmental bodies, and 25 per cent was for administrative support staff.

37. All the Department's financial forecasts were based on the assumption that the overhead rate would remain at the current level. One delegation had referred to the lower overhead rate charged by the World Bank. It was interesting to note that a World Bank official had recently informed her that the rate charged by the Department was far too low in relation to that of competing agencies.

38. Several delegations had requested more information on the breakdown of the Department's budget. The Department would seek specific guidance from delegations as to the kind of information they wanted and would be happy to provide it in its report at the thirty-first session. It would have been difficult to submit such information at the current session because the 1983 budget was just being revised and the 1984-1985 budget was just being finalized. As the Nordic States had rightly noted, the Fifth Committee was the proper forum for consideration of the budget. She was sure that members of the Governing Council who served as representatives in that Committee would closely monitor the discussion there.

39. Overhead-related sources of revenue were always unpredictable, whereas regular-budget sources reflected zero growth. There was therefore a fundamental difference between the two components. In 1980-1981 overhead earnings had accounted for about 66 per cent of the total budget, whereas they currently accounted for about 52 per cent. Technical co-operation activities under the regular programme and other programme activities called for by intergovernmental bodies on which no overhead was paid were also financed from the budget.
40. As to the size of the operating deficit, one major difficulty was that the Department was dependent on funding the level of which could not be accurately forecast. While the regular budget provided a stable input, extrabudgetary technical co-operation activities depended on the level of annual resources available to UNDP and UNFPA. Another unknown factor was the number of developing country requests for assistance received which came within the Department's competence.

41. Delegations had expressed the hope that the Department would have an operating surplus by the end of 1984 and had expressed concern at the size of the deficit in 1982. There had been no financial deficit and, in fact, the Department had had quite large operating surpluses in previous years, notably at the end of 1982, in addition to building up a sizable reserve against just such contingencies as the current one. In fact, the Department was in something of a dilemma: on the one hand, it was obviously important to ensure that income from overhead was ploughed back to strengthen technical capacities and so maximize benefits for the developing countries while at the same time it was necessary to keep funds in hand against the vagaries of an unpredictable financial situation. In fact, even a substantial reserve had been quickly diminished in the face of such a serious decline as had occurred but a small surplus was indeed anticipated by the end of 1984, at which time the reserve could be built up again.

42. A few delegations had expressed concern about the observance of the principle of equitable geographical distribution in the recruitment of experts. Although it was not mandatory or indeed practicable to apply that principle absolutely in the field programme, the Department was doing its best to ensure as wide and fair geographical distribution as possible. It was important, however, that there should be enough names of experts on its roster. The Department was circulating fewer job descriptions than in the past, and was instead maintaining regular contact with Governments, which were informed every six months of the kind of expertise it expected to need in the coming months and asked to submit the names of candidates. The roster contained the names of a relatively small proportion of experts from the Eastern European countries, and the Department was prepared to co-operate with them in increasing the proportion. Ultimately, however, the Department had little control over the decisions of recipient Governments, which were free to select experts from among the candidates proposed by the Department.

43. Some delegations had called for greater diversification in respect of procurement. There again more information was needed on sources of supply and on firms, institutions or other facilities available in individual countries. Account also had to be taken of the preferences expressed by the developing countries and of the relevant United Nations regulations. The main criteria for procurement were the technical quality and comparability of the services offered, delivery dates and the anticipated costs.

44. The Department was pleased that the training component of the programme of technical co-operation had expanded, especially as training was normally one of the first sectors to suffer when resources were scarce. It applauded Governments for the importance they were still attaching to training and was grateful to the Soviet Union for offering more training facilities. It was also gratified by the prospects for co-operation with Poland in remote sensing.
45. The Department gave priority to the role of women in development. With regard to the Nordic States' call for an increase in technical co-operation in social and humanitarian fields, it should not be forgotten that the Department's programme was formulated on the basis of priorities set by Governments. The statistical information in the Secretary-General's report (DP/1983/18/Add.2) could be misleading, since social development, considered by itself, could appear to be a small component. The Department did its best to ensure that the social aspects of projects described as economic projects were given full weight.

46. On the subject of work in the population field, she said that, as the representative of China had noted, the Department had co-operated with China in the conduct of the recent census. The Nordic States had been correct in saying that the change in priorities had led to the decline in technical assistance for census-related activities, data collection and demographic programmes in many countries. The Department hoped that the new priorities were not immutable. While family planning was extremely important, it had to be placed within a coherent framework for national development if it was to be effective. Several developing-country delegations, chiefly from Africa and Latin America, had called for a unified approach in that area during the discussion on UNFPA. In the context of item 6 (a), the representative of the Federal Republic of Germany had stressed the importance of data collection as a basis for population policy and development planning. The integrated approach was essential at a time of declining economic growth rates and declining food production in relation to continuing population growth. It was hoped that the 1984 International Conference on Population would be a forum for a review of existing priorities and for a thorough discussion and assessment of UNFPA's funding priorities.

47. She fully agreed with the representative of the Federal Republic of Germany that public administration and finance was an extremely important sector for development and pre-investment activities. More projects had failed because of institutional shortcomings than because of financial problems or the shortage of trained technical personnel. It had been suggested that the Department should place greater emphasis on public administration and finance at the expense of the natural resources sector; however, the programme had to respond to the wishes of the Governments of recipient countries. The Soviet representative had referred to the importance of State enterprises. The Department was implementing a number of projects in association with such enterprises. Technical co-operation among developing countries and support for the least developed countries were among the Department's major concerns, and the Department continued to use the regular programme as a catalyst for activities in that sphere. The Department was grateful to the Governments of Benin and Lesotho for acting as hosts for the workshops on development planning for the least developed countries, which had afforded a good example of TCDC in action.

48. The Department had taken due note of the statements regarding evaluation and would try to make a more detailed presentation on that subject at the thirty-first session. JIU had suggested the establishment of a separate evaluation unit which would report directly to the Under-Secretary-General for Technical Co-operation for
Development. Although the current financial situation did not permit that for the time being, the Department had ensured that the evaluation function would be performed by another section in the streamlined structure soon to come into force.

49. Recommendation of the Joint Inspection Unit (A/38/172, chap. V) concerning the co-ordination and harmonization of approaches, and the Department's terms of reference, was yet to be implemented; it was extremely important, and required the support of Governments. Recommendation 2, that the Department should be organized along more substantive lines, had already been implemented in the process of streamlining the services; there was accordingly no need for the AMS study recommended by JIU. Most of JIU's recommendations concerning the representation of the Department in the field had already been implemented; the financial situation prevented the implementation of the recommendation that staff from the Department should be outposted to regional commissions. Recommendation 4, concerning an evaluation unit, was being implemented in a modified form, as she had already explained. Recommendation 5, concerning the preparation of a roster of candidates, was already in operation. Recommendation 6, regarding the delegation of authority to the field for purchases up to $10,000, had also been implemented.

50. She welcomed the support expressed by several delegations for the programme on energy questions. The representative of Belgium had expressed concern about lack of co-operation between UNDP and the World Bank, on the one hand, and the Department; in fact, there had been some co-operation, and departmental technical staff had taken part in some World Bank missions. None the less, the fact was that much more could be done to use the Department's expertise in energy, and the Council might consider appropriate modalities including closer collaboration with the World Bank, when it took up item 6 (h). A number of delegations had, in fact, referred to the need for funding agencies to make greater use of the Department's technical capacity and the need to avoid overlapping and duplication, a matter that had been taken into account by JIU in its recommendation 1. The avoidance of duplication was something that did not depend primarily on the Department; it required action by Governments. For its part, the Department had no desire to duplicate the functions of others; its concern was to make maximum use of the expertise and capacity built up over the years and was prepared to collaborate in any way possible with other organizations. In that, however, it needed support at the intergovernmental level, within the Council and other bodies.

51. She could assure the representative of Poland that the Department recognized the importance of the central funding role of UNDP. The representative of Lesotho had suggested that the Department should have closer relations with UNDP offices; in fact, for many years the UNDP Resident Representatives had been the Department's formal and only representatives in each country.

52. She welcomed the favourable comments made by several delegations about the Department's efforts to improve co-operation with UNDP and the World Bank. Contacts with the World Bank had been increasing, and it was hoped that by the following session it would be possible to report a great deal of progress in that respect.
53. The President suggested that the Council should refer item 6 (a) to the Drafting Committee for the preparation of a draft decision.

54. It was so decided.

(i) ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SUDANO-SAHELIAN OFFICE (UNSO) AND OTHER ASSISTANCE TO DROUGHT-STRICKEN COUNTRIES IN AFRICA

(ii) PLAN OF ACTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION IN THE SUDANO-SAHELIAN REGION (DP/1983/38, 41)

(iii) IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MEDIUM-TERM AND LONG-TERM RECOVERY AND REHABILITATION PROGRAMME IN THE SUDANO-SAHELIAN REGION (A/38/152)

(iii) OTHER ASSISTANCE TO DROUGHT-STRICKEN COUNTRIES IN AFRICA (DP/1983/40 AND CORR.1)

55. Mr. La Munier (Director, United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office), said that UNSO had reached the stage in its activities when drought-related and desertification control programmes in the region had been fully evolved, covering a wide range of sectors and involving a variety of national and international services, as well as a number of international donors. The tasks ahead remained monumental and, because of the vagaries of climate in the Sudano-Sahelian region, increasing demographic pressure, and other factors, they would have to be sustained and expanded in many parts of the region. During the past decade, however, UNSO had developed an insight into the main issues involved and technically sound approaches to deal with them, which were adopted as new data and information emerged. It had a well-defined programme at both the national and the regional levels and it benefited from the direct involvement of competent national counterparts in all the countries of the region and the dedication of a growing number of international donors.

56. Since the distribution of the reports before the Council, further progress had been made in mobilizing additional resources to benefit the countries of the region. The Government of Italy had made a pledge of $12.2 million to support the UNSO/CILSS regional programme for the construction, improvement and maintenance of secondary roads in the Niger and Senegal; of that amount, $4 million was earmarked for road construction in the Niger and $8.2 million for Senegal to construct roads providing year-round access to areas which had previously been cut off in the rainy season, and to facilitate their agricultural development and the marketing of agricultural produce. The Government of Denmark had approved a contribution of $5.9 million to UNSO for a project in Ethiopia; those funds would be used for the establishment of fuelwood plantations to serve the energy needs of two important towns in the Ethiopian highlands where deforestation was of catastrophic proportions. The Government of the Netherlands had made a contribution of $2.8 million to the Trust Fund which would be used for a project in the Niger concerned with research on the manufacture of agricultural equipment suitable for the Sahelian zone. The Government of Norway had agreed to contribute $560,000 for a project in the Niger for the control of sand encroachment in the Bilma oasis.
region. The Government of Australia had contributed $529,000 for the construction of small dams on the tributaries of the Gambia River. An additional $500,000 was expected from the Government of Finland for a project in Ethiopia to assist the Government in establishing fuelwood plantations and strengthening the national infrastructure for forestry and ecological protection. The funds mobilized so far in 1983 totalled some $22.4 million. Discussions were under way with the donors he had mentioned and others concerning an additional amount of approximately $10 million.

57. Accordingly, despite unfavourable world economic conditions and the prevailing scarcity of resources, UNSO was likely to succeed in 1983 in mobilizing resources for the priority projects of the 19 countries of the region to a level roughly equal or perhaps even greater than that of 1982. In terms of project activities and funds mobilized, the most significant UNSO-supported venture continued to be that of the construction, improvement and maintenance of a region-wide system of all-weather feeder roads in the member countries of CILSS. Progress had also been made in developing other regional activities, such as those relating to the strengthening of regional agro-meteorological and hydrological services in the western Sahel, the design, development and production of fuel-efficient cooking stoves, the development and implementation of a programme on sand dune stabilization, support of the Sahel Institute, and regional training activities.

58. As to national projects of the countries served by UNSO, the reports before the Council demonstrated the significant contribution made by UNSO and the international community of donors in such areas as livestock and range management, the restoration and production of vegetation cover, the development of renewable alternatives to fuelwood, water resources management, sand dune stabilization and, to an increasing extent, the planning, co-ordination and monitoring of drought-related and desertification control activities as part of national development plans and long-term national development strategies. Those developments were encouraging inasmuch as medium- and long-term solutions to the problems facing those countries could be achieved only within broader national and regional strategies.

59. He had taken careful note of the observations in the JIU report on UNSO (A/38/180). UNSO was awaiting the observations and decisions of the Council, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly on JIU's findings and recommendations.

60. Mr. BLAIN (Observer for the Gambia) said that the entire United Nations system could be proud of the record of the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office (UNSO) over the years. He fully endorsed the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit with regard to UNSO and stressed the pressing need for additional resources for its activities, in view of the enormous needs of the drought-stricken countries of the Sahel.

61. His delegation expressed its appreciation of continued UNDP support for the joint venture with UNEP (DP/1983/41) and its support for the tied-contribution
scheme utilized by UNSO and UNCDF, among others, for the implementation of projects accorded priority status by the Governments of the region. That method of financing was an efficient way of mobilizing additional resources. It also believed that UNSO should be more involved in projects receiving multi-bi financing. In that connection, he invited the Director of UNSO to prepare a compendium of drought-related and anti-desertification projects to be distributed to donor countries and to report at the thirty-first session of the Governing Council on action taken by UNSO in that regard and the level of response by donor countries as of May 1984.

62. More than half the amount of resources required to implement the 129 drought-related projects in CILSS member States had been secured, and he commended the Director and Deputy Director of UNSO for their vigorous efforts in that respect. He commended them also for the assistance which they provided to CILSS member States in the formulation of medium- and long-term recovery and rehabilitation programmes and projects.

63. The all-weather secondary road construction programme being supported by UNSO in the region was particularly significant. To date over 1,500 km of roads had been completed in the Sahel, a remarkable achievement in relation to the 3,000 km of roads for which funding had been obtained; in the Gambia alone, as of May 1983, 360 km of secondary roads had been completed. The socio-economic impact of the programme in the Gambia had been tremendous in terms of promoting economic activities, opening up the country for agricultural development, facilitating travel and the transport of goods and agricultural produce to rural areas, and the extension of social services. His Government was grateful for the financial resources and heavy equipment provided by the Governments of Canada, the Netherlands and the Federal Republic of Germany and hoped that UNSO would be able to mobilize the resources needed for the construction of the remaining 310 km of secondary roads to be built in the Gambia.

64. Among other important sectoral projects in the Gambia being funded by UNSO were the preparation of an energy master plan, the project on the promotion and production of improved cooking stoves, for which the Danish International Development Agency had provided $398,000, and a project on pasture development and protection of land around livestock watering points, which the Arab Gulf Fund had contributed $420,000 and UNSO $270,000. He thanked the Australian Government for its commitment to provide $A 500,000 for the construction of small dams on the tributaries of the River Gambia. His delegation urged the international donor community and the Governments of all countries in a position to do so to contribute generously to the United Nations Trust Fund for Sudano-Sahelian Activities so as to enhance UNSO's capacity to respond to the pressing needs of the Sahelian countries.

65. Mr. SANGARE (Mali) said that for over 10 years the Sudano-Sahelian region had been afflicted by drought and the related problem of desertification; those phenomena had had very severe repercussions on socio-economic development and the living conditions of the population. Mali and other member States of the CILSS had drawn up medium- and long-term programmes and projects to deal with those
phenomena, for which they needed the active assistance of the international community. The work done by UNSO to benefit the region was commendable, and the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (A/38/180) confirmed the effectiveness of UNSO's activities.

66. In 1983 Mali had once again been severely affected by drought; the situation was critical in the sixth and seventh regions which were very important for Mali's animal production. Pastureland had deteriorated during the dry season and Lake Faguibine, the largest water source in the region, was shrinking. His Government therefore attached great importance to the project to promote the integrated agro-sylvo-pastoral development of the region. He expressed appreciation to UNSO and the Government of Australia for their contribution to the implementation of the project, which was also receiving bilateral assistance from the Federal Republic of Germany.

67. His Government gave very high priority to the development of road transport infrastructure in order to cope with the problem of Mali's land-locked situation. Under the UNSO programme for the construction, improvement and upkeep of secondary roads, which was being assisted by the Government of the Netherlands, over 500 km of roads had already been built. On the basis of a feasibility study prepared by UNSO/OPE, construction work on the Kati-Kolokani road (114 km) had begun thanks to contributions from UNSO, UNDP and UNCDF.

68. He expressed appreciation to all the countries and international organizations which were supporting Mali's efforts in its unending struggle against desertification. He also commended UNDP's and UNSO's efforts to mobilize resources for the implementation of projects for Mali and the priority projects submitted by the member States of CILSS and expressed the hope that the Council would support them in their efforts.

69. His delegation well remembered the warning given by the then Secretary-General in 1977 at the United Nations Conference on Desertification, that unless the international community paid attention, the countries of the Sahel would vanish from the map within a few decades. Every year the countries of the Sahel realized increasingly clearly what that warning meant in reality.

70. Mr. KESSELEY (Chad) said that the two reports on UNSO (A/38/152 and A/38/180) confirmed his Government's view of UNSO as a dynamic organization which was devoted to helping the countries of the Sudano-Sahelian region to cope with the scourge of persistent drought. In Chad, lack of rainfall had led to desertification of half the Sahelian region, and the sands were gaining ground daily. Most of the rivers had dwindled to streams, and Lake Chad, which had once been the eleventh largest lake in the world, had been turned into sand dunes. That situation had been aggravated by the breakdown of administrative services and infrastructures after over 17 years of an exceptionally violent and intense civil war. The consequences included the development of serious food deficits and the collapse of basic infrastructures; health, education and agro-sylvo-pastoral development programmes had been suspended or disrupted - an enormous setback to Chad's recovery and its efforts to build a progressive society which could control its environment.
71. In that difficult situation Chad, while relying on its own resources, needed the assistance of the international community; his Government was grateful for the positive response of donors at the international conference on assistance to Chad, held at Geneva in November 1982, although, unfortunately, the final outcome had been disappointing. He called upon all countries to take appropriate measures to ensure the implementation of his country's priority projects and programmes.

72. In that connection he commended the speed, determination and flexibility of the UNSO machinery. For example, during a joint mission of officials from CILSS, the Sahel Club and UNSO in January 1983, his Government had drawn attention to the sudden emergence of an epidemic of rinderpest which represented an extremely serious threat to the rehabilitation efforts. UNSO had immediately allocated $250,000, and without awaiting the signing of the project document, it had requested the executing agency, FAO, to initiate consultations on the purchase of vaccines and equipment. Other donors, notably UNDP, had joined in those efforts and within a few weeks a national vaccination campaign, partly financed by UNSO, was under way, thus saving Chad from a new catastrophe. UNSO had also sent several other missions to Chad; one of them had reorganized the important road programme which had been financed by UNSO before the recent hostilities, and another had been concerned with programming and planning and had identified 20 priority projects in the agro-sylvo-pastoral sectors. The implementation of those projects would require resources of tens of millions of dollars and it was to be hoped that UNSO would be able to mobilize them.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.