



CONTENTS

	Page
Agenda items 38 and 43:	
United Nations Industrial Development Organization: report of the Industrial Development Board ( <i>continued</i> )	} 203
The role of the United Nations in training national technical personnel for the accelerated industrialization of the developing countries: report of the Secretary-General ( <i>continued</i> )	
.....	
Agenda item 21:	
Problems of the human environment: report of the Secretary-General	203

*Chairman:* Mr. Costa P. CARANICAS (Greece).

*In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Amirmokri (Iran), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.*

**AGENDA ITEMS 38 AND 43**

**United Nations Industrial Development Organization: report of the Industrial Development Board (*continued*) (A/7603, chap. VII; A/7617, A/7693 and Add.1, A/7705)**

**The role of the United Nations in training national technical personnel for the accelerated industrialization of the developing countries: report of the Secretary-General (*continued*) (A/7595, A/7719, A/C.2/L.1066/Rev.1)**

1. Mr. CHONG (Singapore) said that, although his delegation had abstained in the vote at the 1275th meeting, it had intended to vote in favour of the draft resolution (A/C.2/L.1065) regarding the regular programme of technical assistance for industrial development.

**AGENDA ITEM 21**

**Problems of the human environment: report of the Secretary-General (A/7514, A/7603, chap. V, sect. D; A/7707, A/7780, E/4667)**

2. Mr. ÅSTRÖM (Sweden) said that the General Assembly had decided in its resolution 2398 (XXIII) of 3 December 1968 to convene a United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in 1972. That decision, which had been preceded by a thorough study in the Economic and Social Council, indicated the importance the General Assembly attached to the question. The international community had recognized that the applications of modern science and technology, necessary as they were for

economic progress, had certain deleterious side-effects. At the same time, the unprecedented opportunities offered by science and technology, when wisely used, had been borne in mind. Some of the problems could be solved only through international action, whereas others had to be tackled at the national or regional level, but in all cases, the exchange of knowledge and experience would facilitate solutions, and it was in that respect that the proposed Conference would be valuable.

3. Sweden attached great importance to the preparations for the Conference, which should take the form of a dialogue between United Nations bodies and the participating Governments with a view to identifying problems of international concern. The Conference should be the culminating point of those efforts and, at the same time, the starting point for further efforts. The practical results of the Conference could not, of course, be foreseen in detail, but they might include the signing of an international convention on the protection of the oceans, agreements on the conservation of fresh water resources and an international agreement on the prevention of air pollution. One desirable result might be the establishment of procedures to make available to all countries, and particularly to the developing countries, information on the human environment and on measures to protect it. Such procedures would make it easier for the developing countries to solve such current problems as erosion and deforestation and help them to forestall other problems arising from rapid industrialization and urbanization. As matters stood, there appeared to be no need for new permanent international machinery and existing organizations seemed to be fully capable of coping with the work-load in their individual spheres of competence.

4. Referring to the Secretary-General's report (E/4667), he pointed out that it had been decided to survey two main types of problem: the changes in natural surroundings brought about by uncontrolled use of modern technology and the impact of those changes on man, his health, his working and living conditions and his dignity as an individual. The Economic and Social Council had recommended (see Council resolution 1448 (XLVII)) that the General Assembly should accept his Government's invitation (see A/7514) to hold the Conference in Sweden in June 1972. It had also recommended that the Secretary-General should be responsible for preparing and organizing the Conference and that a Preparatory Committee should be set up. The Second Committee would therefore have to draw up a list of Member States to serve on the Preparatory Committee for the Conference. That might be done in several ways and individual regions and sub-regions might wish to delegate one country to represent them. The work of the Preparatory Committee should, however, be carried

out with the active assistance of all Member States. The Secretary-General had also been requested to set up immediately a small secretariat to assist the Preparatory Committee. The officials of that secretariat should be specially qualified in the environmental field. The United Nations would not, of course, have to undertake any research of its own but only to collect and disseminate available data. There was therefore no risk of duplication. His delegation was gratified to note that the Secretary-General had found it possible to revise the initial cost estimates (see A/7707, paras. 6-8).

5. What the Second Committee had to do was to prepare a draft resolution which would allow the preparations to begin. The recommendations of the Economic and Social Council were a good starting point and its resolution 1448 (XLVII) provided excellent guidance. However, the General Assembly should be kept informed of the progress being made by the Preparatory Committee and, to that end, the item should be on its agenda for the twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth sessions. His delegation, with a number of others, was introducing a new draft resolution<sup>1</sup> in which all aspects of the problems were taken into account.

6. Mr. OGBU (Nigeria) said that, in view of the importance and urgency of the problem, the preparatory work should begin without delay. The developing countries would have to be given the assistance they required to prevent the emergence of certain problems which the industrialized countries were already experiencing. In his delegation's view, the developing countries should be supplied with direct financial support to enable them to participate actively in the work of the Conference at all stages. His delegation wished to thank the Swedish Government for its generous invitation (see A/7514) and welcomed the Secretary-General's proposals (E/4667); it hoped that the principle of fair geographical representation would be respected in the composition of the Preparatory Committee. It was also desirable that all competent organizations should participate in the preparatory work. He commended the Secretary-General's efforts to keep the costs of the Conference as low as possible; however, if the Conference was to be truly fruitful, the necessary funds should be made available for it. In conclusion, his delegation fully supported the draft resolution recommended in Council resolution 1448 (XLVII) for adoption by the General Assembly.

7. Mr. HOVEYDA (Iran) spoke of the serious and urgent nature of the problem and cited several practical examples of air pollution. His Government had taken a number of steps to protect forests, pasturelands and water. The legislation it had promulgated also covered pollution and sought to prevent over-rapid urbanization and undue concentration of industrial undertakings. Efforts at the national level were not enough, however, and international action was essential for an over-all solution of the problems. His delegation was therefore grateful to the Swedish Government for its generous invitation (see A/7514).

8. Nevertheless, the fight against pollution should on no account be interpreted as resistance to progress: the aim should be the rational exploitation of the planet with a

view to a better life for all its inhabitants. In particular, the developing countries should in no case be penalized nor their progress checked. Work already being done at the national and international levels provided an adequate basis for the proposed undertaking. The scope of the proposed research should be delimited from the start, as should that of the action to be taken, and the Secretary-General's report (E/4667) contained excellent suggestions to that end, although it appeared to exclude the question of the human biological balance. Attention should be given to the reckless use of chemicals in food products. Moreover, the psychological changes inseparable from the advance of science and technology also had an effect on the environment, and any study of the problems of the human environment should therefore cover human problems and behaviour. In view of the scope of the proposed proceedings and the limited duration of the Conference, the participating delegations would be well advised to come fully prepared. For that reason, it might be wise to set up in each country one or more interministerial committees which would collaborate in preparing information documents and in evaluating national problems; after the Conference, they might collaborate in implementing its decisions. His delegation would support the draft resolution introduced by the Swedish delegation. It was grateful to the Secretary-General for his effort to reduce the cost of the Conference (see A/7707, paras. 6-8), but hoped that the proposed reductions would in no way affect the quality of the documentation and the discussions.

9. In conclusion, he said that, while there was much talk about the problems of youth, it should be remembered that the proposed Conference would help to give future generations a sound, balanced human environment. The Conference should, in fact, prove that mankind was rational enough to guide its own destinies correctly by making intelligent use of its knowledge and opportunities.

*Mr. Caranicas (Greece) took the Chair.*

10. Mr. BRADLEY (Argentina) said that the question of the human environment had aroused the interest of the various delegations since the time when Sweden had first requested it to be included as an item on the agenda of the forty-fifth session of the Economic and Social Council.<sup>2</sup> The representative of Sweden had stated that there should be two stages in the preparation of the Conference. At present, the end of the first stage had been reached. The report (E/4467) submitted to the Economic and Social Council and the note by the Secretary-General (A/7707) clearly indicated how the solution of the problems should be envisaged. By adopting its resolution 1448 (XLVII), the Council had approved a series of measures, the most important of which was the establishment of a Preparatory Committee for the Conference consisting of highly qualified representatives designated by Governments to advise the Secretary-General. The establishment of a small secretariat unit appeared equally important. However, the resolution adopted by the Council and the draft resolution introduced by Sweden did not give the intergovernmental Preparatory Committee a sufficiently clear-cut mandate. It was important to note that the representative of Sweden had urged that the item should remain on the agenda of the

<sup>1</sup> Subsequently circulated as document A/C.2/L.1069.

<sup>2</sup> Document E/4466/Add.1.

twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth sessions of the General Assembly. His delegation could only approve of that innovation, which constituted an improvement. The Secretary-General's note (A/7707) showed that there would be a reduction of nearly \$400,000 compared with the original estimate. His delegation hoped that the financial implications of the Conference could be reduced still further.

11. Mr. KOIRANEN (Finland) said that he wished, first of all, to congratulate the Swedish Government on having drawn the attention of the General Assembly to the problems of the human environment and the Secretary-General on his excellent report (E/4667) on the biological, social, economic and psychological aspects of the human environment.

12. His delegation felt that the membership of the Preparatory Committee should be kept small. However, its composition should reflect the different regional aspects of the problem. The Conference secretariat should be constituted without delay and should be composed, as far as possible, of permanent staff members of the United Nations family. The documentation should make use of the knowledge accumulated from previous international activities, and in particular the extremely valuable work already accomplished by UNESCO.

13. The purpose of the Conference to provide guidelines for Governments and international organizations had been clearly defined by the Economic and Social Council. In order to achieve practical results, the Conference should try to analyse the consequences of environmental deterioration on the development of the Second Decade. It would be desirable for the General Assembly to consider the question relating to the organization of the Conference at the appropriate time by including them on the agenda of its twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth sessions. With that in mind, the Finnish delegation had joined as co-sponsor of the draft resolution introduced by the Swedish delegation.

14. In Finland, the most important environmental problem was water pollution. In spite of its 60,000 lakes, the country was short of water, the pulp and paper industry used about 80 per cent of all water consumed. That was one of the reasons why Finland shared in the general concern about the hazards caused by industrialization and urbanization.

15. Admittedly, at the present time, problems of the human environment were mainly a source of concern to the industrialized countries; however, in a broader perspective, a world-wide exchange of knowledge and practical data could help to provide the developing countries with most valuable advice to enable them to avoid the errors made by the industrialized countries during the last hundred years. His Government had a keen interest in finding satisfactory solutions to the problem of the human environment. At the fourteenth session of the General Conference of UNESCO in 1966, Finland, together with Czechoslovakia and India, had submitted an integrated UNESCO long-term programme on the human environment, which had been approved unanimously. In 1968, an expert Symposium on Man and His Environment had been organized in Finland under the auspices of UNESCO and the Finnish National

UNESCO Commission. During the same year, environmental problems in Africa had been studied at another international meeting held in Finland. Finally, his Government had recently established a central co-ordinating body to prepare an integrated programme on environment.

16. The issue was of such magnitude that the financial implications of the proposed Conference should not impede the preparatory work and the fruitful realization of its objectives.

17. His delegation strongly believed that the Conference to be held at Stockholm would constitute a landmark in the efforts of the international community towards the creation of a healthy world. It therefore hoped that the Committee would unanimously adopt the draft resolution introduced by Sweden.

18. Mrs. SCHOUWENAAR-FRANSSSEN (Netherlands) said it was appropriate that the question of the human environment had been included in the agenda of the Second Committee, as it was closely related to financial and economic questions. The financial aspects arose from the need to redress the damage caused to the human environment by economic development; on the other hand, planning for economic development should include planning for the human environment. As those problems were of concern both to developed and developing countries, it was logical for them to be considered following the discussions which had focused on development, of which they were an integral part. However, the social aspects of the human environment should be studied by the Third Committee.

19. In his report to the Economic and Social Council (E/4667), the Secretary-General had given a clear exposé of the origins, the complexity and the extent of the dangers that threatened the human environment unless effective steps were taken to avert them. The remedy appeared to be two-fold. First, applied science and technology were able to cope with the problems of industrial pollution whose solution was a matter of finance and economics. Secondly, if science and technology were applied rationally, with human progress in view, the devastation of the earth would be prevented.

20. When a large number of trees had started to die in the Netherlands, it was realized that there were defects in the way natural gas from the northern provinces was being transported. It would take years, and much effort and money to redress the situation. Millions of fish had died because poisonous material was being dumped into the Rhine. It could be said that the largest sewer in Europe was discharged at Rotterdam. Whole families had left the town because of the stench and pollution.

21. The biosphere, with its complex system of balances between living organisms was the home of humanity, which must learn to use it properly through the application of ecology. The warning had been given by scholars and many groups of citizens; it was repeated in the report of the Secretary-General and confirmed by substantial data; it was now up to the politicians to take action; there could be no economy without ecology.

22. The same applied to the developing as well as the developed countries. In the field of ecology, all countries were developing countries. The African Heads of State had realized that, when in 1968 they had adopted at a meeting of the Organization of African Unity a resolution on the conservation of nature and natural resources. For that reason, too, the General Assembly had unanimously decided to provide a framework for the examination of that question, in order to focus attention on its importance and urgency, and also to identify those problems that could be solved through international co-operation. Some very interesting discussions had been held on the matter in the Economic and Social Council.

23. She wished to comment briefly on the Secretary-General's report (E/4667). The figures which were given in the introduction and in part I could well inspire publications on various levels, in order to mobilize public opinion. Such publications should emphasize that present-day technology was adequate to cope with industrial pollution, but that it was not generally applied, for economic or political reasons. It should also be made quite clear that economic development was not incompatible with the preservation of the human environment but that some sacrifices and choices were required.

24. Part II which dealt with the nature, scope and progress of present work showed clearly that sufficient basic material was available for an international conference to reach factual conclusions and formulate practical proposals. Part III dealt with the organization of the Conference on the Human Environment, and it was on that subject that the Second Committee should take action. With regard to the definition of the human environment, the Conference should principally consider the economic, social and cultural effects of human action on the physical and biological environments. All countries stood together on the issue, and the Netherlands, whose very existence had always depended on the management of available soil and of the waters which penetrated it, would be happy to participate actively in the Conference. The Conference should not merely be a symposium of experts, nor a repetition of past conferences; it should continue to build upon the work already done and concentrate on the need for action by the political authorities. Participation in the Conference should therefore be at the policy-making level.

25. The Conference should be able to delineate areas for international agreement, to indicate to Governments what could be done at the international, as well as the regional and local levels, to stimulate co-ordination of existing legislation, and to make the public aware of its individual and collective responsibility for preserving the human environment. Since the success of the Conference would largely depend on the co-operation of the public and on the national use made of the tools of economic development, it should be widely publicized. The problems of the human environment and the solutions to those problems should be explained to the public, to producers, to consumers and to the younger generation.

26. She was not opposed in principle to the preparation of a declaration on the protection and betterment of the human environment, as proposed in paragraph 89 of the report, but felt that such a declaration would be meaningless unless supported by specific proposals.

27. Preparations for the Conference should be undertaken as soon as possible, as indicated in the draft resolution contained in Economic and Social Council resolution 1448 (XLVII). With regard to the structure of the Conference, the Netherlands agreed that work should be divided between four substantive and four strategic commissions, provided that their respective areas of competence were clearly indicated and that overlapping was avoided. The strategic commissions appeared to be the more important; the substantive commissions should confine themselves to factual discussions, and might also deal with financial aspects, i.e., with the cost of improving the human environment.

28. Her delegation was pleased to note that the over-all cost of the Conference had been reduced; it hoped that the Conference would yield positive results, and would have no difficulty in supporting the draft resolution of the Economic and Social Council. It would return in due time to the Swedish proposal which contained some very positive ideas.

29. Mr. CORREA (Chile) emphasized the importance of the Secretary-General's report (E/4667). The problems of the human environment were as pressing as those of development, for developed and developing countries alike. His delegation supported the views advanced by the representative of Sweden, who had stressed the importance of international action. Such action was essential for a number of problems and would assist in the solution of other national difficulties. Chile was particularly interested in such questions as erosion and deforestation, and population growth had alerted it to the problems of urbanization.

30. The Chilean Government had already taken positive steps to protect its natural resources. With regard to preparations for the Conference, his delegation was in favour of the Swedish draft resolution and intended to support it. The Conference would benefit all mankind. He was pleased to note that the draft entrusted to the Secretary-General the over-all responsibility for organizing the Conference. It was to be hoped that the representatives of the various countries would be able to discharge their respective responsibilities and that the results yielded could be assessed at the next two sessions of the General Assembly. A comprehensive analysis should include an examination of not only the economic, but the social and political aspects of the problems of the human environment.

31. Mr. BORSHCHEVSKY (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that the problems of the protection, conservation and restoration of the human environment were truly universal. They affected all human activities, were of great practical interest for all States without exception and required international action. At the preceding session of the General Assembly, his delegation had voted in favour of Assembly resolution 2398 (XXIII), adopted on the initiative of the Swedish delegation—an initiative which had lost none of its importance or urgency. His delegation also thanked the Swedish Government at whose invitation (see A/7514) the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment would be organized at Stockholm. The Secretary-General's report (E/4667) was based on sound reasoning.

32. The various organizations of the United Nations system had already had occasion to consider the problems of the human environment. Reference might be made in that connexion to the preparations for the meeting of governmental experts on problems relating to environment to be held in Czechoslovakia in April-May 1971. The documents compiled for that meeting, which was to be organized by the Economic Commission for Europe, should be helpful in preparations for the Stockholm Conference. Likewise, use should be made of the experience acquired by UNESCO, particularly of the results of the Intergovernmental Conference of Experts on the Scientific Basis for Rational Use and Conservation of the Resources of the Biosphere, held in Paris in September 1968. The establishment within the United Nations Secretariat of a special provisional group composed of qualified staff of the Secretariat, the regional economic commissions, UNESCO, WHO, FAO, IAEA and WMO, would appear to be an excellent way of preparing for the Conference. In that respect, it should be possible to avoid duplication by economizing on the funds envisaged for financing the activities of the special preparatory committee of government experts.

33. The anxieties aroused by the problem of the human environment were largely the result of the scientific and technological revolution and of the increasing use of natural resources. The human environment should be protected by legislation and standards. The problem was therefore of practical concern to all States, both developed and developing.

34. As had been noted during the debate, it was essential that the questions to be discussed at the Conference on the Human Environment should be properly defined. The Secretary-General's report contained a number of valuable recommendations on the subject, and approached the question from the correct angle. The Conference should concentrate on methods and forms of national regulation and control with regard to the use, protection and restoration of the human environment. It was absolutely essential that emphasis should also be placed on the role of planning and forecasting. The documents so far transmitted were not sufficiently specific in that respect. His delegation agreed with the representative of Chile that any conference on the human environment, and the Stockholm Conference in particular, should be concerned not only with economic but also with social and political problems. For example, the question of the inalienable sovereignty of the developing countries over their natural resources should also be considered by the Conference. Attention should also be drawn to the importance for the human environment of the conclusion of the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water, signed in August 1963. During the current session of the General Assembly, the socialist countries had submitted a proposal for the conclusion of a convention on the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons and on the destruction of such weapons.<sup>3</sup> The adoption of that proposal would be in the interests of all mankind and would represent an important international action which in-

directly affected the question of the protection of the human environment.

35. The Byelorussian SSR attached great importance to the problem of protecting and rehabilitating the human environment. Rapid industrialization and economic development had been accompanied by the adoption of effective precautions to protect the environment. In fifty years of Soviet rule, production had grown eighty-one times and the economic geography of the country had completely changed, but the adoption of timely measures had averted serious mistakes so far as the relationship between man and his natural environment was concerned. Natural resources were unlimited, but they must be protected, used rationally, increased and constantly replenished. The Byelorussian SSR had adopted important legislation to that end. In 1966, for example, the planning of a comprehensive project for the utilization and protection of the Republic's water resources for the period 1970-1980 had been completed. Great pains had also been taken to improve the soils. During the current five-year period, over 1.5 million hectares of marshland would be drained. Similar efforts had been made in reforestation. Since the Second World War, over one million hectares of woodland had been planted.

36. His Government considered the protection of nature to be an essential task, which must provide the basis both for increasing the well-being of the population and for more fully satisfying its cultural and aesthetic needs. That had been possible thanks to the institution of collective ownership of the land and its natural resources. Lenin had attached such importance to the matter that, even in 1918-1919, the most difficult years of the young Soviet State, he had signed several decrees, on which subsequent legislation for the protection of the human environment had been based. The 1961 Act on the Protection of Nature in the Byelorussian SSR was a fundamental law in that State. Practice had shown how important it was to assign administrative and financial responsibility to the departments in charge of managing enterprise and the organizations utilizing natural resources. The ministries and departments concerned had certain obligations under the Act, which also prescribed essential controls. The Ministry of Health and the State Committee on the Protection of Nature of the Council of Ministers of the Byelorussian SSR supervised the protection of the human environment. A special standing committee of the Supreme Soviet of the Byelorussian SSR also played an important role. A Committee for the Protection of Nature worked with the Academy of Sciences of the Republic and co-ordinated scientific research in that field. Finally, work of great importance was being done by the Byelorussian Society for the Protection of Nature, a mass voluntary organization with a present membership of 1,250,000. The competent organizations of his country were prepared to share with other countries the benefit of their experience in the protection, utilization and regeneration of the environment.

37. The main function of the Stockholm Conference would be to make widely accessible the experience gained to date in protecting the human environment. The Conference must draw attention to the importance of the problems involved, establish guidelines for research and adopt specific measures. The competent specialized agencies should be recommended to study those problems.

<sup>3</sup> See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-fourth Session, Annexes*, agenda item 104, document A/7655.

In view of the universal nature of the question of the human environment, it seemed indispensable to apply the principle of universality with regard to the participation of countries in the Conference. The importance of the statement by the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination on the problems of the human environment<sup>4</sup> should be stressed. His delegation drew attention particularly to paragraph 4 (b) and (j) of that report. It endorsed the ideas expressed in that paragraph and felt that the principle of universality should also be applied with regard to the problems to be studied in connexion with the participation of States in the Conference.

38. Mr. SAKSENA (India) said he would not dwell on the urgency of the item before the Committee, as the concern of the entire international community had already been expressed in the Economic and Social Council and at the twenty-third session of the General Assembly. Furthermore, the Secretary-General's report (E/4667) stressed the importance of the problem, as a crisis of world-wide importance involving developing and the developed countries alike.

39. Nevertheless, it would be well to recall the serious warnings recently issued by prominent scientists, particularly at the twenty-second World Health Assembly, held at Boston in July 1969 to the effect that the earth was rapidly becoming unfit for human life. It was paradoxical that those warnings had been made precisely at the time when man had been setting forth to conquer the moon.

40. In his zeal to exploit nature's riches and establish his supremacy over nature, man had too often been unaware of the fact that he was inadvertently sowing the seeds of his own destruction. The lesson was obvious: man must co-operate with nature and not defy it. He must temper his demands and conserve natural resources; by comprehension of the enduring processes of nature man alone could provide for the continuation of civilization.

41. His delegation thanked the Secretary-General and the members of the *ad hoc* working group of the Advisory Committee on the Application of Science and Technology to Development who had helped in the preparation of the very comprehensive report before the Committee (E/4667). The report identified the main problems involved, the activities that were under way at the national and international levels and the ways and means of formulating a concerted programme of action. In general, his delegation agreed with the programme proposed for the international Conference and the revised financial implications contained in the Secretary-General's note (see A/7707, paras. 6-8).

42. In his report (see E/4667, para. 8), the Secretary-General indicated three phenomena that had led to the present crisis, namely, the population explosion, the poor integration of advanced technology with environmental necessities and uncontrolled urban sprawl. Another phenomenon, which affected the developing countries, should be added: the economic factor and, to a certain degree, the lack of technical know-how. The problem for the developed industrial countries was to find out how to prevent the deterioration of the human environment resulting from technical progress and how to curb the

unfavourable consequences of what had already happened. The problem for the developing countries was how to utilize modern technology to avoid environmental depredation. It had been said that the problem of the developing nations was one of development rather than of environment. But the two were inseparable. Without concerted action, the developing countries would soon be faced with the problems that now confronted the developed countries. The former countries must therefore take preventive measures. They must find ways of using fertilizers and insecticides without destroying nature's ecological systems. In the transition from an agricultural economy to an industrial one, care must be taken to avoid the psychological, sociological and physical problems that had gone hand-in-hand with the industrialization of the developed countries. The fact that the developing countries needed to take preventive measures did not necessarily mean that they were free from the kind of problems the developed countries faced. However, they needed international assistance in solving them, so as to have access to the key technology that would enable them not only to industrialize but to tackle environmental problems as well.

43. Every country should also educate its citizens in environmental problems. His delegation was pleased to note that UNESCO was concerning itself more and more with the scientific, educational and cultural aspects of the over-all environment and its relation to man. Man and his environment had become one of the main themes of UNESCO's programme of activities. UNESCO and other United Nations bodies must therefore help the developing countries to establish research institutes and laboratories to study the problems involved. Current research should be co-ordinated at the international level. Nevertheless, a great many problems affecting the human environment could be solved through proper use of existing know-how. In order to do so, appropriate administrative measures and suitable legislation must be adopted.

44. With regard to the agenda of the Conference, the Secretary-General had suggested in paragraph 9 of his report classifying the questions in three groups: problems of human settlements, for which action was primarily the responsibility of local Governments or authorities; territorial problems, for which action was also primarily the responsibility of Governments; and global problems, potentially affecting all countries and amenable to solution only by international agreement and measures. However, it was not enough simply to identify the problems arising at the national or international level. A concerted programme of action and recommendations as appropriate should also be the main concern of the Conference. Further, a comprehensive analysis should include an examination of not only physical ecological problems but also socio-cultural and psychological problems relating to human environments.

45. In conclusion, he thanked the Swedish Government for having taken constructive steps to enable the entire international community to share its concern about environmental problems. In general, his delegation endorsed the views expressed by the representative of Sweden with regard to the preparatory work for the Conference.

46. Mr. RATH (Uruguay) said that the problems of the human environment presented the following characteristics:

<sup>4</sup> Document E/4710.

they were world-wide; they affected all aspects of the life of human beings who had a very complex relationship with their environment; they were dynamic, in that they were continually being transformed by science, technology and industry; they were alarming, because the environment was becoming more and more hostile to all forms of life. It was therefore to be hoped that General Assembly resolution 2398 (XXIII) would be the starting-point of an effort to achieve a solution. It was relevant to mention also the recommendations of the Intergovernmental Conference of Experts on the Scientific Basis for Rational Use and Conservation of the Resources of the Biosphere,<sup>5</sup> and the work of the specialized agencies and many international organizations. Finally, the Swedish Government was to be commended for having invited the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment to Stockholm. Owing to its complexity, the problem was frequently beyond national capabilities and had to be tackled on an international scale.

47. He wished to stress the following points which seemed first of all that the causes of the deterioration in the human environment, namely, urban sprawl, industrialization, the population explosion and the application of technology also determined the mutation which characterized the present era; they should be subjected to scientific research so that precautions could be taken for the future.

48. It should also be noted that the deterioration in the environment could jeopardize the very survival of the human race. That was not a mere theory formulated by panic-mongers, but a matter which was being seriously considered in a number of countries.

49. It would be very useful if the United Nations were to lay down a set of guidelines which would then be made available to Member States. Those guidelines would not be definitive but would be revised in the light of research. That could be one of the items on the agenda of the 1972 Conference.

50. Within the context of regional planning, industrialization should be decentralized; the avoidance of excessive urban concentrations could have nothing but favourable repercussions on the human environment, as also in the economic, socio-political and population fields. The way in which such a process of decongestion was carried out should, however, depend on the level of development and the characteristics of each country, as François Perroux had emphasized. Uruguay had set up agro-industrial complexes where an attempt was being made to integrate the products of the land and the industries for which they were the raw material. That question had been considered in UNIDO and OECD.

51. It had been said that in twenty-five years' time, the population of the United States would be concentrated in three giant conurbations. Such creeping urbanization also threatened to affect the developing countries. In the face of such a phenomenon, which could give rise to a "dis-economy of agglomeration", it was necessary to review the

emplacement and growth of cities in the light of the characteristics of the end of the Twentieth Century.

52. In the large industrial urban complexes, characterized by noise and pollution, not only man's physical health but also his mental health were in danger. There existed schools of psychology concerned with the relationship between man and his environment. Research should be undertaken to discover whether man was not being dehumanized by the environment created by industrial society. In the face of such a danger, certain types of neuroses or pseudo-liberations were of little significance. Karl Jaspers had held that modern man had to undergo a psychological metamorphosis in order to survive. Objective analysis of the nature of that metamorphosis was perhaps the great revolution of the present age.

53. On the subject of man's working environment, the ILO had performed a useful service. It was also relevant to examine the psychological repercussions caused by automation, professional mobility, and the upsetting of the work-leisure relationship, which had been stressed by Jean Fourastié.

54. Finally, education had an important part to play in the solution of ecological problems. It was necessary at all levels to emphasize the importance of those problems, which could not be solved until the population of the whole world had become aware of them. In that respect, a simple compilation of figures on air and water pollution or atmospheric radioactivity was not enough. The biosphere must be considered as a whole so as to try to reconcile nature, which evolved harmoniously, with the works of the mind of man, who as a result of his technical and scientific discoveries seemed to be on the threshold of a major mutation.

55. Mr. KELSO (Australia) said that the discussions at the twenty-third session of the General Assembly and in the Economic and Social Council had brought out the importance of the problems relating to the human environment. Both the developing and the industrialized countries had an interest in correctly identifying the problems to be solved and the policies to be followed. The Australian Minister for External Affairs had devoted an important part of his statement to that subject at the General Assembly meeting on 22 September (see 1759th plenary meeting) and had announced that Australia was supporting the organization of the 1972 Conference.

56. The Australian Senate had set up two committees to study air and water pollution. A committee of the House of Representatives was examining the problem of noise in the vicinity of airports. The Senate committee on air pollution had prepared an interesting report, in which it had made proposals for action in connexion with research and information, financial assistance to industry and co-operation with the Australian States. But air pollution was only part of the general problem of the pollution of the environment. The problems of pollution were interlinked. For example, water scrubbing of industrial gases could bring about a water pollution problem.

57. Since Australia was a federation of six States, it was difficult to standardize the administrative measures against

<sup>5</sup> See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-third Session, Annexes*, agenda item 91, document A/7291, annex.

pollution of the environment. The State Governments were responsible for formulating laws and applying the requisite measures within their territories.

58. One of the most important aspects of the Conference would be that of defining the problems that had to be solved at the international level. The Minister for External Affairs had laid particular stress in the General Assembly on four specific points that concerned all countries. First, man had to be made aware of what was involved in the problem and of its practical aspects. Secondly, international research and aid had to be stimulated in the most efficient way. Thirdly, steps had to be taken to make all States aware of the results of the research and of the techniques to be used. Fourthly, international guidelines must be established with regard to the norms to be applied. The Minister had also referred to the sectors in which international guidelines or norms could be established, including fertilizers and insecticides. Those guidelines would usually be of an indicative nature, but it would be possible in certain cases to go further and have Governments agree to abide by definite norms or criteria.

59. The report of the Secretary-General suggested, with regard to the organization of the Conference, that four commissions should be established with a view to studying the basic problems (see E/4667, paras. 113-116). Since the Conference would last only two weeks, the number of commissions should be kept to a minimum. Too large a conference would be unwieldy and, by reducing the number of commissions, expenses could be kept to a minimum and the widest participation of all countries ensured. For that reason, his delegation suggested that the commission on maintenance of values of the human environment, the commission on problems of human settlements and industrial development and the commission on rational use and development of natural resources should be combined. As for the commissions for strategic problems (*idem*, paras. 117-121), his delegation suggested that the commission on environmental aspects of economic and social planning and the commission on financial, fiscal and pricing policies should be combined, since those subjects were closely linked.

60. Australia's geographical situation, its warm climate, its extensive rather than intensive agriculture and its sparsely distributed population did not have a parallel in any other developed country. Australia had developed considerable expertise of a unique nature which could be of particular

interest to the developing countries, and which could be made available in the preparations for the Conference.

61. Mr. ASANTE (Ghana) said that the world was confronted with an urgent problem which fortunately could be solved, but it was absolutely necessary to act without delay. As was clearly shown in the report of the Secretary-General (E/4667), in spite of scientific and technical progress, the future of the human race was threatened. The problem did not concern the developed countries only: it concerned the entire international community. An action programme was necessary and it was therefore fortunate that an international conference on the human environment would soon be held.

62. His delegation was grateful to the Secretary-General for having prepared a report on the subject; however, it would like the Preparatory Committee and the Conference itself to consider the method of stimulating the interest of international public opinion by the provision of adequate information. Moreover, if the problems were to be solved, it would be necessary for countries to enact appropriate legislation and for the entire international community to reach agreement on certain norms.

63. His delegation agreed with the Economic and Social Council that the cost of the proposed Conference should be cut. It supported the proposal in Council resolution 1448 (XLVII) that a Preparatory Committee composed of Government representatives should be established; that proposal would make it possible to reduce expenses. It endorsed the Secretary-General's recommendation that the volume of documentation should not be reduced by more than 20 per cent (see A/7707, para. 6 (b)).

64. As a general remark, his delegation doubted whether the Conference could accomplish in only two weeks the considerable amount of work it was proposed to assign to it. It therefore proposed that the Preparatory Committee should examine that aspect further. It also noted with satisfaction the activities undertaken and the programmes prepared by various United Nations bodies for the Conference.

65. In the main, his delegation supported the proposals put forward by the Swedish representative with regard to the physical arrangements for the Conference.

*The meeting rose at 6.35 p.m.*