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

AGENDA ITEM 21

Problems of the human environment: report of the Secretary-General (*continued*) (A/7514, A/7603, chap. V, sect. D; A/7707, A/7780, A/C.2/L.1069 and Add.1, E/4667)

1. Mr. DECASTIAUX (Belgium) said that the Secretary-General's report (E/4667) provided a substantial basis for discussing both the substance of the problems of the human environment and the practical aspects involved in organizing the proposed United Nations Conference on the Human Environment.

2. Situated between the heavy industry areas of Northern France and Western Germany and itself possessing a considerable heavy industry, Belgium was still suffering from the harmful consequences to the environment and to the health of its inhabitants of the period in which the human aspects of industrialization had been largely neglected. During that period, the physical environment had also deteriorated as a result of rapid industrial expansion. An interministerial co-ordinating body had been established in an attempt to solve the problems of pollution. On the more directly human level, public opinion was aroused and there were frequent newspaper articles on the subject. On the occasion of the recent reopening of Parliament, the President of the Chamber of Representatives had spoken at length on questions of pollution, such as that caused by oil tankers, and of the dangers of the uncontrolled use of certain pesticides, and had said that the protection of the environment must become a major concern of the community. Legislation should be modernized, scientific and technological means of combating pollution of the air and sea must be developed at both the national and the international level. The physical and mental well-being of mankind depended on the adequate solution of such problems.

3. With regard to the proposed Conference, he agreed with the representative of Sweden (see 1276th meeting, para. 4)

that a small secretariat should be established as soon as possible, making use of agreements with the specialized agencies interested in the subject and drawing on regular staff members with special qualifications in environmental problems. He also agreed that, for the Conference to achieve its goals, its agenda must be selective, its organizational structure simple and effective, and its documentation limited. Furthermore, he welcomed the preparation by the Secretary-General of the reduced estimate of financial implications (see A/7707).

4. The Preparatory Committee for the Conference should be kept small in the interests of efficiency, but should be large enough to ensure adequate representation of the various interests involved and discussion of the problems of special concern to individual countries. Those two requirements were not incompatible; within the United Nations system there were a number of committees with a membership in the neighbourhood of thirty which functioned very efficiently. The Preparatory Committee's members should be government representatives with, so far as possible, the qualifications referred to in Economic and Social Council resolution 1448 (XLVII), assisted by technical advisers where necessary. His delegation had participated in the drafting of that resolution and had supported it; however, its support did not exclude consideration of draft resolution A/C.2/L.1069 and Add.1 which was now before the Committee. Belgium, which on 31 December 1969 would cease to be a member of the Council, was anxious to fulfil its responsibilities and demonstrate its interest in problems of the environment by co-operating in the preparatory work for the Conference.

5. Mr. LACKO (Czechoslovakia) said that the international exchange of information and experience and eventual international co-operation in solving problems of the human environment would accelerate the development of an adequate environment and prevent technological progress from leading to the extinction of mankind.

6. The Secretary-General's report (E/4667) dealt with some cardinal problems relating to man's survival. Because of Czechoslovakia's geographical situation and social and economic development, the main environmental problems facing it included the relative slowness of housing and civil construction, as compared with industrial construction, and the unregulated development of individual recreational construction with slow progress in the tertiary sector, for example, in community services, retail trading and tourism. Industrial activities were excessively concentrated in certain regions, with resulting damage to the environment. Large areas had been laid waste as a result of open-pit mining, particularly of coal, and by the deposit of waste materials from mines. There were also shortcomings in the water supply, including a shortage of hygienic drinking water and

a high degree of pollution. Czechoslovakia was also beset by such problems as the noise generated by transport and industries and general atmospheric pollution. In all of those areas, the experience of other advanced countries could be applied to conditions in Czechoslovakia.

7. Since Czechoslovakia had within its territory highly industrialized and urbanized regions and also other areas on the threshold of industrialization, his Government was in a position to pass on its experience to countries which were only entering the phase of industrialization and believed that the possibilities for such co-operation could be used to a much fuller extent than at present.

8. Czechoslovakia had consistently urged the discussion of the human environment at the international level; in the Economic Commission for Europe, it had proposed a meeting of government experts to be held in Czechoslovakia in 1971. The meeting would deal mainly with the economic and social aspects and the consequences of change and the experience gained at it might well prove useful to the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment to be held in Stockholm in 1972. However, in view of the short time between the two meetings and of the fact that UNESCO and other organs might not be able to complete certain important projects by 1972, his delegation suggested that the Committee, the Government of Sweden and also the Preparatory Committee for the Conference should give serious consideration to postponing the Conference. Experience in the organization of the meeting to be held in Czechoslovakia showed that considerable time was needed for preparation.

9. With regard to draft resolution A/C.2/L.1069 and Add.1, his delegation wished to make no formal proposals; however, it would have preferred operative paragraph 2 to be worded in more general terms, referring, for example, to the creation of a basis for permanent international co-operation in protecting the human environment against the deleterious effects resulting from the activities of human society itself as well as from the forces of nature.

10. The industrially advanced countries where the problems of the human environment were already urgent should pool their efforts to improve the environment and initiate an effective exchange of information and experience, including the exchange of experts. Countries at the initial stage of industrial development should be provided with the experience and information necessary to avoid the mistakes which the industrialized countries had not been able to avoid.

11. The Conference should concentrate on a general subject such as the repercussions of the development of civilization on the human environment and political, economic, social and technical counter measures. It would thus be easier to ensure that each question dealt with would result in a recommendation to Governments on how to prevent or remedy such repercussions. The Conference should be organized as a dialogue between the best available scientists, technicians and economists, on the one hand, and senior State representatives responsible for formulating policies, on the other. The Conference should not discuss matters of substance which had been already considered at meetings organized by international or regional organizations within or connected with the United Nations.

12. A Preparatory Committee should be set up to advise the Secretary-General, consisting of scientists, technicians, economists and politicians, selected on the basis of personal qualifications, taking equitable geographical distribution and representation of the various types of problems to be considered at the Conference into account. A smaller working group should be selected from that committee to prepare the background material necessary for preparing the Conference. The papers to be read at the Conference or submitted for discussion should be prepared by leading experts on the basis of suggestions by the Preparatory Committee, and all available material should be utilized to the maximum. Apart from its discussions, the Conference should prepare studies on the solution of special problems and steps should be taken to follow up the implementation of long-term measures by Governments and local authorities. His Government was prepared to co-operate to the full both in the preparations for the Conference and at the Conference itself.

13. Mr. RANKIN (Canada) said that the aim of the Conference should be to focus the attention of Governments and public opinion on the urgency of problems of the deteriorating human environment. It had already been agreed that the Conference should concentrate not on narrow technical discussions but on problems requiring action by public authorities, both national and international, and also that it should be short and serve to encourage Governments and international organizations to work together in order to improve the human environment and prevent its further impairment. Given only ten days in which to stir the conscience of the world, the Conference must be so designed in structure and content as to have the maximum impact not only on those attending it but on world public opinion. Its structure might be critical to its success, which in turn might be critical to the task of improving the human environment.

14. Its success or failure would thus depend largely on how the Preparatory Committee did its work. His delegation believed that the committee should be composed of government representatives chosen for their particular ability to deal with the range of subjects of concern to the Conference. Since they could not be experts in all aspects, it was better that they should provide the continuity necessary for effective organization and rely for expertise on specialist advisers. Among the criteria used by Governments in selecting experts should be a knowledge of population problems, general land conditions, water pollution, industrialization and urbanization, and unsettled climatic conditions giving rise to floods, droughts and meteorological problems. It was important to have experts on tropical soil conditions, desert soil technology and arctic and sub-arctic soil problems. Knowledge of the problems of the fishing industry, which were of world-wide significance, would also be important.

15. The matter of expertise should also be considered in connexion with the structure of the Conference. The Secretary-General had suggested in his report (see E/4667, paras.113-121) that the Conference should allocate its work to a number of commissions. His delegation agreed with that suggestion, but believed that it was also essential for the Preparatory Committee to avail itself of the expert services of conference design consultants from outside the

United Nations system; the cost would be small in comparison with the advantages of experienced professional advice.

16. The financial implications of the Conference must also be studied. The Conference was intended to make a significant contribution to economic and social development and, since neglect of the environment was much more costly in the long run than the adoption of remedial and preventive measures against the despoliation of natural resources, a clear statement by it on the need for, and action required from public authorities at the local, national, regional and international levels, to deal with the planning, management and control of the environment, would be extremely valuable.

17. In order to achieve the greatest benefit at the least cost, every effort should be made to utilize the extensive experience already available in such subjects as water pollution and in dealing with other environmental problems, such as those to be taken up at the meeting in Czechoslovakia in 1971 and in the studies undertaken by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. Full use should be made of the proceedings and conclusions of recent conferences and the published proceedings of such sources could form a substantial part of the documentation for the Conference. Consideration should be given to inviting representatives from other organizations or conferences to work with the Preparatory Committee and submit papers on their work to the Conference. The effective presentation of such information by respected experts could be one of the most important aspects of the Conference.

18. The proceedings of such groups could also provide a source of topics for discussion and might lead to the identification of specific areas where the Conference could make recommendations for international action. Once the Preparatory Committee had surveyed the material produced by other bodies, it should encourage the preparation of discussion papers, including specific proposals, on areas where gaps in the coverage of relevant problems existed. The specific areas for the action programmes and guidelines to be produced by the Conference should be identified by the Preparatory Committee. For example, to combat specific environmental problems, recommendations might be necessary on legislation, the need for scientific knowledge, research in specific problems and new methods of management or means of implementation. To ensure that its preparations would enable specific guidelines to be laid down, the Preparatory Committee should perhaps draw up draft recommendations and declarations.

19. An early attempt should be made to identify perhaps ten or twelve major problems of the environment which were to a greater or lesser extent common to all mankind. Expert papers could then be prepared on those priority subjects by specialists from the countries most directly concerned with them. The secretariat could then analyse common points in the papers and delineate particular problems. Courses of action could be prepared, channels of co-operation investigated, and position papers prepared for discussion by the Conference. Those papers should be presented in such a way as to ensure maximum public impact, perhaps through television coverage. The Prepara-

tory Committee might usefully refer specific problems to United Nations bodies and agencies, which could also prepare concise reports and make recommendations for action. Specific United Nations agencies could also be invited to attend the Conference as full participants, in order to benefit from an exchange of experience.

20. The major problems to be discussed at the Conference were related to the two central subjects of population and technology. A superabundance or deficiency of one or the other seemed to underline most of the problems relating to food, urbanization, health, shelter and pollution. The Preparatory Committee should, at an early stage of its deliberations, give attention to the basic interaction of those concepts.

21. It was obvious that action at the national level alone would not result in an adequate solution of existing problems. However, many of those problems were amenable to international action. Specific guidelines were needed, setting out the rights of States to a sound environment and their obligation to ensure that they did not contribute to its destruction; it might also be possible to devise a set of principles, and of penalties for failure to abide by them. A significant increase in available knowledge of the causes, degree and effects of international pollution was also required. Procedures must be found whereby appropriate international machinery could be established, with the power to propose, prepare and implement common co-operative plans of action. A regulatory process was needed for the active encouragement of pollution prevention programmes and for a process of adjudication which would determine responsibilities and assess damages. Such regulatory and adjudicatory procedures would form an integral part of the long-term development of the environment. In order to introduce them, there must be an increasing recognition of national responsibility to the international community.

22. His delegation supported draft resolution A/C.2/L.1069 and Add.1.

23. Mr. KROYER (Iceland) said that unfortunately his delegation had not been able to participate in the debate on that subject at the General Assembly's twenty-third session in 1968 and he therefore wished to make certain general comments. Iceland believed that the question of the human environment was of vital importance and urgency, and consequently welcomed the initiative taken by Sweden in drawing the attention of the General Assembly to it and proposing a major conference. Much was already being done piecemeal at the local, national and international levels to combat various forms of pollution, but an over-all stock-taking was needed, which the proposed Conference would make possible. Sweden's generous offer (see A/7514) to be the host country for the Conference should be accepted.

24. Iceland was comparatively fortunate in having no serious pollution problem as yet; it had a small population living in a large country with a windy climate and hence plenty of clean air. But it was taking steps to preserve its good fortune. At one time the capital, Reykjavik, had lived up to its name—"smoky bay"—because of the smoke pouring out from chimneys, but that was no longer true

now that arrangements had been made to heat all the houses with water piped in from hot springs. Iceland was fully aware of the staggering problems of pollution in heavily populated areas and was taking good care to forestall them as far as possible.

25. Problems of the human environment were a matter of concern not only to the industrial countries; many aspects would before long be a matter of concern to everyone in the world, including the developing countries. A world-wide exchange of information would enable the latter to avoid the mistakes that the former had made in past decades. Iceland was mainly concerned with the marine environment and was very conscious of the problems posed by its pollution. It had uttered warnings on the subject both in the United Nations and in regional meetings, notably in relation to the exploitation of the sea-bed. At the sixth session of the Assembly of the Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organization, held in London in October 1969, a resolution had been adopted on marine pollution, on the initiative of Iceland with the co-operation of Sweden. That resolution urged member States to accelerate control measures and provided for the convening of an international conference on marine pollution in 1973. It was hoped that, at that conference, a comprehensive international convention on all aspects of marine pollution could be concluded. It would no doubt prove useful to be able to follow up at that conference one aspect of the general problem of the human environment that would be dealt with at the Stockholm Conference.

26. He referred to part III of the Secretary-General's report (E/4667), and to Economic and Social Council resolution 1448 (XLVII), both of which dealt with the arrangements for the proposed Conference, including the preparatory work. He agreed with those who considered that, if the Preparatory Committee was to be effective, it should be relatively small; however, it was also important to arrange for all interested delegations to participate in, or be associated with, the preparatory work for the Conference.

27. Miss WILLIAMS (New Zealand) welcomed the fact that the United Nations was devoting more attention to such practical questions as the conservation of mankind's environment and the control of pollution. She appreciated the Swedish Government's initiative and the report of the Secretary-General (E/4667).

28. It was not true that environmental problems were of interest only to the major industrial countries. New Zealand was not in that group; it had no large concentration of urban population and was separated from its nearest neighbour by a large expanse of ocean. Nevertheless, it was deeply concerned with environmental problems occurring within its jurisdiction. Those problems were essentially administrative rather than technical, since appropriate legislative machinery existed for controlling air, land and water pollution. The difficulty was in applying the legislation and there were few financial incentives or sanctions. Problems relating to air pollution and noise levels occurred in much the same forms as in larger countries, but so far on an acceptably small scale. The aim was to prevent their growth rather than reduce existing levels. Water pollution was a more serious problem, particularly with the increase of urban and industrial wastes. There was a growing

demand for water in urban areas and from agricultural users, which was beginning to outstrip the easily available natural supplies. Changes in the character and uses of catchments were increasing the need for adequate water treatment. The adoption in New Zealand of the World Health Organization's International Standards for Drinking Water had made possible an evaluation of public water supplies which had shown that improved water treatment was needed, at considerable cost. Coastal oil pollution was increasing and fish were being destroyed by industrial wastes. Another problem was the growing amount of solid waste matter to be disposed of on land, and the present widely used method of disposal by controlled tipping was often unsatisfactorily operated and caused pollution.

29. Probably those environmental problems were shared by many other of the smaller countries in the Committee. Concern in New Zealand had been reflected in comprehensive studies of the subject during the past and, as a result, a National Conference on Physical Environment was to be held in May 1970. It would consider the following subjects: government machinery for conservation; urban development; the needs of an urbanized population for recreational, productive and aesthetic land; and the control of pollution and the creation of a healthy environment. New Zealand believed that the steps it was taking would equip it to contribute substantially to, and benefit from, the United Nations Conference in 1972. It hoped to share its own experience with other small less industrial countries with similar problems, and would be pleased to do so as part of preparations for that Conference.

30. Her Government would support all practical measures to ensure the effective functioning of the Conference and hoped that the general approval given so far to the proposal indicated the desire to see constructive progress made with the minimum intrusion of political issues that could impede the work of the Conference. No doubt some countries would like to emphasize problems unique to their own circumstances, but it would be more conducive to constructive results if the Conference could confine its discussions to problems of concern to most countries, with a view to establishing guidelines for legislative and administrative measures which could be interpreted by individual Governments as they thought appropriate.

31. New Zealand fully agreed that the Conference would be valuable because it would afford an opportunity for domestic consideration of an increasingly important issue. But its support for the Conference was also based on the belief that it would provide a real opportunity for progress through international co-operation.

32. Mr. HAYMERLE (Austria) said that few sets of problems had such an immediate impact on the individual as problems of the environment, which were of increasing concern to Governments, legislators and public opinion. Since industrial development had begun in Europe a hundred and fifty years before, the first steps to deal with those problems had been taken in that region, and many countries had taken action to deal with air and water pollution, depletion of forests and soil erosion. In dealing with such problems, effective measures required regional co-operation and much had been done in that respect by the Council of Europe, the Economic Commission for

Europe, the European Conference of Ministers of Transport and the Danube Commission.

33. Further, the far-reaching effects of pollution resulting from accelerated industrial development pointed to the need for international action. The Secretary-General's report (see E/4667, annex) gave a comprehensive picture of the work being done by United Nations bodies. The Swedish delegation had made a notable contribution to international action on human environment problems and Austria had been one of the first countries to support the Swedish initiative, since it was concerned not only as an industrial country, but also as a country in which tourism was of vital importance. Austria, like many other countries, had to reconcile the conflicting needs of tourism, the mechanization of agriculture, and the need for industrial growth. Considerable research had been carried out by various institutions in Austria concerned with plant protection, water biology, forestry, and water and fishery research, and measures had been taken to check the undesirable effects of industrial development and urbanization and to protect the country's recreational heritage.

34. From the world-wide standpoint, there was a serious threat to the human environment and the need for action was becoming urgent. The Secretary-General's report would provide a useful basis for discussion in the preparation for the Conference in 1972. The work done so far, including the discussion in the General Assembly, had led to some progress. Referring to draft resolution A/C.2/L.1069 and Add.1, he said that his delegation attached particular importance to the reference, in operative paragraph 2, to the importance of enabling developing countries to forestall the occurrence of environmental problems. One of the major goals of the Conference should be to make available the industrial countries' experience in scientific research and concerning the effect of legal and administrative measures, in order to help the developing countries to prevent the emergence of environmental problems. No doubt the Conference would reveal the complexity of the problems involved and the need to reconcile many conflicting interests. The national reports, suggested in paragraph 123 of the Secretary-General's report, would provide Governments with a welcome challenge to stimulate action. The idea of setting up interministerial co-ordination committees, as proposed by the representative of Iran (see 1276th meeting, para. 8), deserved serious consideration.

35. The preparatory work for the Conference might well produce some "spin-off" knowledge that could be put to immediate use. Regional efforts, too, were of special significance and should be an important element in the programme of the Conference. In preparing the Conference, there should be close co-operation with the specialized agencies, the International Atomic Energy Agency, and other governmental and non-governmental bodies. Problems of the human environment should also be considered in relation to the programme for the Second United Nations Development Decade, particularly in connexion with the programmes of the United Nations organizations concerned with development. The documents prepared for the twenty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations should also include some reference to human environment problems.

36. He appreciated Sweden's offer to act as the host country for the Conference (see A/7514). Austria would be

happy to participate in the activities of the Conference and in the preparatory work.

37. Mr. WAPENYI (Uganda) said that Sweden should be congratulated on the initiative that had led to the adoption of General Assembly resolution 2398 (XXIII). He also thanked the Swedish Government for its offer to act as host country for the Conference in 1972. Uganda fully supported the holding of the Conference and wished to co-sponsor draft resolution A/C.2/L.1069 and Add.1.

38. Uganda had no major environmental problems, but there was no doubt that, as growth proceeded, the danger of dealing with such problems would increase. Before the end of the Twentieth Century, over 40 per cent of Uganda's population might be living in urban centres. If the Government was to plan ahead so that those urban centres would be decent places to live in, it would have to borrow funds in order to meet the very heavy costs involved. Uganda would welcome the introduction of rules for regulating industrial pollution and settling such questions between nations on an amicable basis.

39. It could not be expected that the 1972 Conference could achieve a great deal in the two weeks allotted to it, and consequently it was to be hoped that a good deal of the work would be done ahead of time. Most of the groundwork and the scientific research should be done in advance and the documents circulated to participating countries before the Conference. His Government looked forward to the Conference as a valuable experience and intended to send a qualified scientific delegation.

40. Mr. ROUAMBA (Upper Volta) said that, although he had not taken a very active part in the discussions of the Committee so far, that did not imply any lack of interest. However, he had felt that in many cases the discussions seemed unlikely to lead to any vigorous action, but that did not apply to the discussion on human environment problems. Considerable progress had already been made in laying the basis for an international Conference in 1972. General Assembly resolution 2398 (XXIII) had made explicit recommendations for the holding of the Conference, and the Secretary-General had provided a most useful reference document (E/4667). The Economic and Social Council had in general endorsed, in its resolution 1448 (XLVII), the proposal the Secretary-General had put forward regarding the purposes and objectives of the Conference. He agreed with the view that the Council's resolution, in which a draft resolution was recommended for adoption by the General Assembly, was perhaps not as complete as it might have been and he therefore supported draft resolution A/C.2/L.1069 and Add.1.

41. There were certain specific points his delegation wished to have clarified. The first was what participation in the Conference would mean, what the basis for the Preparatory Committee would be, and what the financial implications would be for a participating State. Secondly, he wondered if it would not be possible to make provision, in the preparations for the Conference, for regional meetings, on the same lines as those arranged by the Commission on International Development, so that government authorities or experts would find it easier to make themselves available for consultations. Many high-level

officials might hesitate to attend a conference if not fully convinced in advance that practical results would be achieved. Due regard for regional considerations in the preparation of the Conference would make it possible to take account of government programmes and regional arrangements. If priorities at the regional level were defined beforehand, the Conference would have a clear view of the basic problems for specific regions. Regional considerations were being given increasing importance in Africa because of the concern of the African countries with many common problems and, furthermore, there was in general an increasing emphasis on multilateral aid and programmes on a regional or inter-State basis. The conclusions reached by the Conference might therefore fit into an international and regional context.

42. The draft resolution recommended in Council resolution 1448 (XLVII) and draft resolution A/C.2/L.1069, in their respective operative paragraph 2, emphasized that the main purposes of the Conference must be to encourage action by Governments and international organizations. Nothing could be accomplished unless Governments decided to take action, particularly in Africa.

43. He noted that suggestions were made, in paragraph 135 of the Secretary-General's report, for visits by the chairman and members of the Preparatory Committee and the executive secretary to a number of countries to promote participation in the Conference, and he believed that regional meetings could reduce the costs involved. There was the problem of how far government experts should be assisted by technical experts and he was convinced that regional meetings would result in more explicit government decisions.

44. Draft resolution A/C.2/L.1069 was correct in referring, in operative paragraph 2, to the importance of forestalling the occurrence of environmental problems in developing countries. However, it must be borne in mind that environmental problems were very different in the developing countries. No doubt the time would come in many developing countries when industrial development would pose a threat. But it must also be remembered that it would be pointless to advise the developing countries to adopt methods which they did not have the resources to apply.

45. If the Conference was to succeed, it was of great importance to set up machinery for its preparation and perhaps for periodic evaluation. Above all there must be participation at the regional level in order to safeguard special interests.

46. Mr. VINCI (Italy) said that Italy had co-sponsored General Assembly resolution 2398 (XXIII). The substantive parts of Economic and Social Council resolution 1448 (XLVII) and of the draft resolution introduced by Sweden (A/C.2/L.1069 and Add.1) were also acceptable to his delegation which would support and co-sponsor any further document on the subject.

47. The preparatory work to be undertaken by United Nations bodies for the proposed Conference must be strictly co-ordinated so as to ensure that the best use was made of studies already in progress and to avoid duplica-

tion. Account should be taken, for instance, of the meeting of government experts of the Economic Commission for Europe, to be held in Czechoslovakia in 1971, and of the discussions on the proposed Conference which had taken place during the sixth session of the Committee on Housing, Building and Planning. Attention should also be paid to the relevant experience of all competent inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the European Economic Community, the Council of Europe and the Organization of African Unity. Account must also be taken in the preparatory work of studies being carried out at the national level. The human environment was a topical subject in Italy which would be prepared to serve on any committee established to prepare for the Conference. The Italian scientific community had acquired considerable experience in the subject: for instance, a symposium of highly qualified scientists had recently met at Rome to examine the guidelines to be suggested to the Government for future action in science and technology, bearing in mind the fact that, although science could control nature, it could in the process endanger biological equilibrium and the survival of future generations. A report was also expected from the special committee which was considering Italy's contribution to the European Year for the Conservation of Nature.

48. Italy was gratified that the Secretary-General had decided to re-examine the financial implications of the preparations for the Conference (see A/7707, paras. 6-8). It should be noted that, if the Preparatory Committee were to be composed of highly qualified experts, there would be no need to incur the expense of hiring external consultants.

49. Mr. PAO-NAN CHENG (China) said that immediate action must be taken, at the national and international levels, to halt the damage to the human environment caused by air, land and sea pollution. The evils of modern technology must not be allowed to outweigh its benefits. As the representatives of Iran and the Netherlands had pointed out (see 1276th meeting), the process of economic development was not incompatible with the rational use of the human environment, the damage to which was caused by the lack of planning and protective measures. His delegation therefore welcomed the decision to convene a Conference in 1972 and requested that, as for all United Nations conferences, Chinese interpretation and documents in Chinese should be provided.

50. Since the basic purpose of the Conference was to focus the attention of Governments on the importance of the problem and to identify those aspects of the matter which could be solved only through international co-operation and agreement, priority should be given to such matters as sea pollution, radioactive contamination and the conservation of marine resources. Emphasis should also be placed on the need to promote awareness of the benefits of a better organization of relations between man and his environment and of the part to be played by education and mass media in stimulating that awareness.

51. Pre-sessional national committees should be established to assist in the preparations and should remain in being after the Conference in order to ensure implementation of its decisions. Bodies had already been established in

the Province of Taiwan to deal with such matters as soil conservation, sewage and irrigation, the rational use of natural resources and the improvement of the human environment in general.

52. Emphasis should be placed during the Conference on the consequences of human action on the environment rather than on purely natural phenomena such as typhoons and earthquakes. In other words, the Conference should deal mainly with the economic, social, cultural and health consequences of human action on the physical and biological environment.

AGENDA ITEM 37

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development: report of the Trade and Development Board (*continued*)* (A/7603/Add.1, A/7616, A/7703, A/C.2/L.1068/Rev.1 and Rev.1/Add.1)

53. Mr. SINGH (India) said that two amendments should be made to the draft resolution on preferential or free entry of exports of manufactures and semi-manufactures of developing countries to the developed countries (A/C.2/L.1068/Rev.1 and Rev.1/Add.1): the words "in its entirety" should be inserted after the word "Recalling" in the first preambular paragraph; and, in operative paragraph 2, the word "offers" should be replaced by the word "information".

54. Introducing the revised draft resolution, he drew attention to the last three preambular paragraphs. The fact that the details of the arrangements for preferences would probably not be settled in 1969 should be a matter of concern to the international community, particularly since a generalized, non-reciprocal, non-discriminatory system of preferences was one of the very few major issues on which agreement had been reached in UNCTAD.¹ The significance of the agreement was stressed in the fourth preambular paragraph and, in the fifth preambular paragraph, attention was drawn to the Trade and Development Board's decision in its resolution 61 (IX) that the Special Committee on Preferences should submit its final report early in 1970 (see A/7616, p. 209).

55. Operative paragraph 1 emphasized the importance of early implementation of a scheme of preferences both from the point of view of reviving the faltering spirit of international economic co-operation and for imparting some real substance to the strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade.

56. The deadline in operative paragraph 2 had been included, in spite of the fact that it would expire in a few days, because the very consideration of the resolution, including consultations with Headquarters, would convey the importance attached by developing countries to reviving concrete and specific offers. The paragraph was also intended to impress on developed countries the need to

move away in future discussions on the subject in UNCTAD, from generalities to specific details relating to commodity coverage, margin of preferences, rules of origin, etc. Unless negotiations in UNCTAD were based on specific offers, further time would be lost in putting the arrangements into effect. The time mentioned in operative paragraph 3 for the coming into effect of the arrangements, namely, early in 1970, was based on the hope expressed by many countries at the second session of the Conference and at subsequent meetings. No country had stated that it could not meet that deadline.

57. The sponsors of the draft resolution appreciated the co-operation they had received from developed countries, which in reaching agreement on the draft, demonstrated their determination to renew endeavours to reach early agreement on the details of the arrangements. By adopting the draft resolution the General Assembly would show that it had the will to respond to specific developments and to act on specific issues.

58. Unless the draft resolution was adopted by 15 November 1969 some parts of it would lack significance. He proposed, therefore, that the Committee should send a separate report on the subject to the General Assembly to enable it to adopt the resolution by that date.

59. Miss WILLIAMS (New Zealand) said that her delegation had voted in favour of UNCTAD resolution 21 (II) and was prepared to vote for the draft resolution under discussion. It must be understood, however, that New Zealand would find it extremely difficult to implement a system of generalized, non-reciprocal and non-discriminatory preferences at present, since it was at a relatively early stage of industrial development. There were four factors New Zealand must take into account. First, it must have regard for the position of its manufacturing industries, many of which were as vulnerable as those of developing countries. Secondly, it must consider the implications of any preference scheme on the preferential arrangements to which it was already party. Thirdly, it must take steps to protect the position of the Pacific island nations and territories which depended for their entire economic livelihood on the New Zealand market. Fourthly, given the unsatisfactory state of international commodity trade, it would be unrealistic to expect satisfactory progress to be made at the current stage by extending discussions to cover processed and semi-processed agricultural products. For those reasons her delegation recalled the two reservations it had made when UNCTAD resolution 21 (II) had been adopted. They were: first, that New Zealand must reserve the extent to which it would participate in a general scheme of preferences on manufactures and semi-manufactures because it would have to take account of a number of factors, particularly the comparatively underdeveloped state of many of its manufacturing industries; secondly, should the preferential system be extended to processed and semi-processed products included in chapters 1-24 of the Brussels Tariff Nomenclature, special attention must be given to temperate-zone products in cases where developing countries were already competitive in world trade in many processed primary commodities. New Zealand would regard the granting of preferences in such circumstances as inequitable to countries like itself and inconsistent with the real purpose of a general arrangement.

* Resumed from the 1272nd meeting.

¹ See *Proceedings of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, Second Session*, vol. I and Corr.1 and 3 and Add.1 and 2, *Report and Annexes*, (United Nations publication, Sales No.: E.68.II.D.14), annex 1, resolution 21 (II), p. 38.

60. Since it believed that the early establishment of an acceptable system of generalized non-discriminatory preferences would benefit the developing countries, New Zealand had submitted to the OECD Working Group on Preferences a list of commodities on which it would be willing to consider the granting of preferences. For the same reason it would support the revised draft resolution.

61. Mr. BLAU (United States of America) said that, as a result of the spirit of co-operation shown by the sponsors, his delegation could support the draft resolution. Arrangements were being made in OECD to "submit substantive documentation" to UNCTAD by the deadline agreed on in the Trade and Development Board. The documentation contained a great deal of specific information. It did not, and could not, given the nature of the exercise agreed on at the second session of UNCTAD and subsequently discussed in the Special Committee on Preferences and the Trade and Development Board, contain offers in the conventional sense of the word.

62. His delegation would have preferred a different wording for operative paragraph 3, because the Trade and Development Board could not "arrive at satisfactory solutions regarding the arrangements"; such solutions would be the result of the decisions taken by individual Governments as they gave effect to their own conception of a system of preferences. The Board could facilitate action by national Governments but could not take decisions binding on Governments. In that sense his delegation accepted operative paragraph 3 and would vote for the revised draft resolution.

63. Such preferences as the United States could put into effect would be granted by the Government subject to modification as circumstances permitted; they would not be an agreed system of preferences.

64. Mr. KELSO (Australia) welcomed the spirit of co-operation shown by the sponsors of the revised draft resolution. However, Australia had some hesitation concerning the timing referred to in the text. There was no single or simple division between "developed", "developing" and "least developed" countries, but rather a spectrum or range of development, with much overlapping as between the levels. Being in a middle or overlapping position, Australia wished to ensure that there would be adequate time to give full consideration to the special problems of concern to countries in that position. Accepting that tariff preferences for the export of manufactures and semi-manufactures of the developing countries were both necessary and justified, Australia had, since 1966, operated such a system of preferences for developing countries. It had accorded preferences to products which the developing countries generally had indicated were of potential interest to them and had taken account of specific requests for the inclusion of particular products. In the opinion of his Government, the system it was applying was the most effective way in which Australia could assist the developing countries through tariff preferences. Like the

developing countries, Australia was trying to promote the development of new industries and diversification of existing manufacturing industries. The selective use of tariffs was an important instrument in furthering that objective. Australia's policy towards imports from developing countries was, however, very liberal; 80 per cent of its imports from those countries entered duty-free and Australia imposed very few restrictions of a non-tariff nature on imports.

65. Mr. RUTTEN (Netherlands) said that the six members of the European Economic Community supported the revised draft resolution. It would be remembered that the Council of Ministers of the Community had recently decided to communicate offers to UNCTAD in accordance with agreements reached in the Trade and Development Board.

66. Mr. LACKO (Czechoslovakia) said that, in the absence of instructions from its Government, his delegation would have to abstain if the revised draft resolution was put to the vote at the current meeting.

67. Mr. CORREA (Chile) said that the constructive statements recently made on the matter by the developed countries, particularly the Netherlands, France and the United States, encouraged the hope that the Special Committee on Preferences would reach a solution acceptable to all.

68. Mr. ASTAFYEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that his delegation would vote in favour of the revised draft resolution.

69. Mr. ASANTE (Ghana) pointed out that, under the terms of the draft resolution, Governments were requested merely to supply specific information. The difficulties would start when the information had been received by UNCTAD. He appealed to all members of the Committee to support the revised draft resolution.

70. Mr. LACKO (Czechoslovakia) said that his delegation would support it.

71. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee should adopt the revised draft resolution (A/C.2/L.1068/Rev.1 and Rev.1/Add.1) unanimously.

It was so decided.

72. The CHAIRMAN, referring to the Indian representative's proposal (see para. 58 above) that the Committee should send a separate report on the subject to the General Assembly, suggested that the Committee should authorize the Rapporteur to prepare and submit such a special report to the General Assembly by the end of the week.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.