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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE THIRTY-NINTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 25 October 1989, at 10 a.m.

<u>President:</u>	Mr. ADOUKI	(Congo)
	(Vice-President)	
later:	Mr. GARBA	(Nigeria)
later:	Mr. SALLAH	(Gambia)
	(Vice-President)	

- Development and international economic co-operation [82]
 - (f) Environment: report of the Secretary-General
- Tentative programme of work
- Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency
 - (a) Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Agency
 - (b) Draft resolution

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In the absence of the President, Mr. Adouki (Congo), Vice-President, took the chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 82 (continued)

DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION

- (f) ENVIRONMENT: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/44/256 and Corr.1 and Add.1 and 2)

Mr. ATUBO (Uganda): The representative of Malaysia, speaking on behalf of the Group of 77, has already articulated the broad objectives of the Group on issues relating to the 1992 conference on environment and development. Uganda associates itself fully with the views expressed by the Chairman of the Group.

We wish to start from a basic premise. Environmental concerns should not be made into yet another issue of North-South contention. Today, issues of environment cut across national boundaries within regions. The effects of acid rain and nuclear fall-out know no boundaries. Global warming, the rise in sea levels and flooding have far-reaching consequences on low-lying areas of our planet. All of these threaten our existence if no concerted action is taken by us all. This means that each one of us not only must be aware of our global responsibility for preserving the environment in our own territories but must take into account the impact of our policies and actions on other States and regions as well.

Environment determines the status of life; without it there can be no life. While we engage, therefore, in economic activities aimed at the growth and development of our economies we must realize that these developments put demands on our environment and the onus is on us to mitigate the consequences of its

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deterioration. Its degradation threatens life-sustaining systems, which to any rational being should be a matter of great concern.

We have all come to realize that the resources of this earth are not infinite and there for man to continue to exploit indefinitely. The question that must be asked is how we face the future with current approaches to development, knowing full well that the resources of this earth are finite and the impact our activities will have on its degradation.

A new era must begin in which the future depends on integration of development and environmental concerns; a new era in which the proper costing of development is assessed on a resource base.

(Mr. Atubo, Uganda)

In all this, in striving to meet the pressing needs of the present generation, care must be taken that we do not compromise the requirements of posterity.

Environmental problems today stem from two major concerns. One is at the level of production and excessive consumption and the other at the level of degradation because of poverty. In the case of our region, the African region, the root cause of our environmental degradation is directly traceable to poverty. Despite our constant pleading with the outside world that poverty and environmental stress are inextricably related, this has not been adequately understood or appreciated. There is evidence that forests are being cleared for agricultural use and fuel wood, and because of the level of poverty reforestation programmes have not been affordable.

In spite of the poverty, however, Africa is convinced that this degradation can be reversed if certain things can be done and the right steps taken in the proper direction.

The first African Regional Conference on Environment and Sustainable Development was convened in Kampala, Uganda, by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in June 1989. This was in pursuance of General Assembly resolutions 42/186 and 42/187, which called for such conferences to be organized on a world-wide basis to discuss the challenges of environmental management and sustainable development as a direct follow-up to the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, entitled "Our Common Future". Following that Conference, Africa has now drawn up its agenda for action, as contained in the Kampala Declaration.

The basic tenet of the Kampala Declaration and the agenda for action derive mainly from the theme of the conference: the challenges of incorporating environmental considerations into sustainable national economic and social

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development programmes and activities - in short, how to follow a pattern of development that is at the same time sustainable and socially acceptable.

As a consequence, seven priority targets were drawn up, namely: first, managing demographic change and pressures; second, achieving food self-sufficiency and food security; third, ensuring efficient and equitable use of water resources; fourth, securing greater energy self-sufficiency; fifth, optimizing industrial production; sixth, maintaining species and ecosystems; and seventh, preventing and reversing desertification.

The approach adopted is that all seven priority areas should be action-oriented and focused specifically on practical measures needed to resolve them in an integrated manner. That explains why the Conference was attended by African Ministers responsible for education, planning and finance, plus representatives of women, youth and non-governmental organizations, who will be responsible for the success of the programmes.

The emphasis is therefore on an integrated approach to common problems, and indeed a start had already been made in that direction even before the Kampala Declaration and the action programme came into being. Notable initiatives in this direction have been the establishment of intergovernmental organizations charged with co-ordinating environment management, such as the Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS), the Inter-Governmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD), the Southern African Development Co-ordinating Conference (SADCC) and the Ministerial Conference on Drought and Desertification (COMIDES).

There are also regional programmes either specifically targeted on environmental management or with strong environmental management components. The Cairo programme of action and the Kilimanjaro programme of action on population are

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two of the programmes being implemented. They may not be working effectively, or their impact may not be widely felt, because of various resource constraints, but they are meant to address common problems in an integrated response.

Africa's agenda for action must therefore be seen in the peculiar conditions in which it finds itself, mainly the condition of its abject poverty. For a better illustration, perhaps, let us look at two of the priority areas it has set itself.

What does securing greater energy self-sufficiency mean in the African context? In the majority of African countries wood accounts for almost 80 per cent of all energy requirements for cooking, heating and lighting. It is consumed with a low level of efficiency, causing forests to be depleted at an unsustainable rate. The resultant loss of plant cover, which leads to other problems - such as decreasing soil fertility, erosion and the loss of genetic resources and diversity - have been there for all to see.

It is imperative to reverse this trend, and the need to resort to the use of renewable energy sources, such as hydro-power, therefore assumes urgency. In the case of Uganda, as in that of a number of other countries in the region, the potential for developing this source remains one of our greatest hopes for a cheap, clean and efficient source of energy. Once developed, it will no doubt enhance our capacity to contribute better towards protection of the environment and assist us in meaningful development of our countries.

What can be said of optimizing industrial production as one of the priority targets? Of what environmental concern is it to the region?

We all know for a fact that mastery of science and technology is crucial in taming the environment. Whoever can master science and technology is better placed to utilize nature to his advantage.

(Mr. Atubo, Uganda)

No continent is so woefully behind in this area as the African region, to the extent that nature has come to dominate events with reckless abandon. Whether one is talking about drought or floods, disease or hunger, at centre stage has been the incapacity of the continent to tame nature. The continent's capacity to harness nature to its benefit is very low indeed.

It follows, therefore, that if the continent is to lay any claim to development on a sustainable basis it must begin now to develop the capacity to harness nature to its advantage. The floods that come now must be tamed with dams, to be used to ward off droughts, whenever and wherever they may occur, in an environmentally sound and sustainable manner.

For Africa to develop, therefore, the need to make optimum use of science and technology needs to be put in proper perspective. We have all seen all around us how those capable of harnessing nature to their advantage are the ones that are developed, while those least able to do so are the ones lagging behind.

Luckily, with the benefit of hindsight, we know that this technology will have to be sound and economize on resources. In short, we are striving for clean, low-cost technology that is yet able to do the job to maximum advantage.

We have gone on at great length all to underscore the degree to which poverty, more than anything else, has been a major factor in our environmental degradation and why its alleviation should be an essential element of an effective global response to an endangered environment. Favourable conditions for speedy economic recovery and sustained development need to be created if we are to stem the tide of further degradation. Current conditions, including structural adjustment programmes as at present applied, have succeeded only in aggravating the situation.

In addition, in order to be able to cope with the multiple environmental problems now before us, the 1992 conference will have to address the question of resources - financial, technical and information - and how these can be made

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available to developing countries to enable them to cope with the problems they face. We remain open to any suggestions on that score.

If the conference is to be successful an effective and efficient preparatory mechanism will have to be put in place. In order to have broad representation, the preparatory committee should be an ad hoc committee of the whole of the General Assembly to reflect the cross-sectoral character of the conference.

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The preparatory committee of the whole will require a technical support service; therefore, it is proposed that a special secretariat be created to facilitate this function. The staff could be drawn from the existing United Nations secretariats of relevant organs and agencies, under the co-ordination of UNEP.

We do not believe that the preparatory committee should be confined to the UNEP Governing Council, as the conference will not be limited to environmental concerns alone but will cover developmental issues as well. It is our view that a General Assembly preparatory committee of the whole is best placed to do this.

As has been widely recognized by many delegations in the debate on this item, the issue of environment is of fundamental importance to all countries. It is to us, therefore, a matter of utmost importance that the preparatory work be carried out with the widest possible involvement of Member States. Hence we strongly believe that New York provides the most cost-effective venue for the preparatory work.

This should be without prejudice to paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 40/243 I, in which the Assembly reaffirms the general principle that the United Nations bodies shall plan to meet at their respective established headquarters.

As we prepare for the 1992 conference, it is important to remind ourselves that henceforth we must learn to co-operate with nature by restoring to it what has been destroyed and desisting from destroying it further. In her brilliant statement on this item in plenary meeting the Permanent Representative of Barbados cited an African proverb which we believe to be pertinent to the preparation of this conference:

(Mr. Atubo, Uganda)

"Treat the Earth well.

It was not given to you by your parents;

It was loaned to you by your children."

The conference should indeed see to it that this turns out to be the case in providing for our common future.

Mrs. THORPE (Trinidad and Tobago): Trinidad and Tobago endorses the views expressed by the Permanent Representative of Malaysia, who spoke on behalf of the Group of 77. My delegation wishes now to focus primarily on other considerations which impact not only on the physical and institutional arrangements for the 1992 conference on environment and development but also on the ideas and deliberations which must inform the preparatory process and, ultimately, the conference itself.

Twenty years ago, the former United Nations Secretary-General U Thant observed that:

"For the first time in the history of humanity a crisis of world-wide scope has come into existence ... concerning the relationship of man to his environment."

The subsequent convening of the 1972 Stockholm United Nations Conference on the Human Environment was followed by the creation of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) as the focal point within the United Nations system for activities aimed at the preservation of the environment. My delegation wishes to express its appreciation of UNEP's valuable contribution in this area.

Despite the fact that the United Nations was able to address the environmental crisis at an early stage, in the words of the Secretary-General, "daily signs of an ailing and exhausted Earth are evoking universal concern". (A/44/1, p. 21) The evolving crisis is now manifest at the national, regional and global levels.

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At the national level, one of the more urgent problems is deforestation through land clearing for food crops and forage production, commercial timber harvesting, fuel-wood gathering, and settlement programmes. In many places deforestation is followed by severe soil loss, aggravation of droughts and floods, disruption of water supplies and reduced productivity of the land. It may also lead to the destruction of the habitats of flora and fauna and the consequent reduction of biological diversity - a process more pronounced in small developing island-countries with fragile ecosystems.

The World Commission on Environment and Development, which reported in 1987, observed that half of all pharmaceutical prescriptions dispensed had their origins in wild organisms. The Commission estimated that world trade of all materials originating from this source stood at over \$40 billion a year. The Commission therefore concluded that the loss of material which may be useful in the development of new medicines and the introduction of new industrial processes, together with the loss of gene pools needed to improve agricultural yields, carried high economic costs.

Existing technology is another source of serious challenge to the environment. At the national level, the deposit of hazardous substances and toxic wastes in land fills and the excessive use of fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides which find their way into ground water and food chains continue to pose serious long-term threats. There are also immediate and short-term threats from industrial accidents, such as the leak from the pesticides factory at Bhopal, India, which caused the death of over 2,000 people and blinded and injured 200,000 more.

But some industrial accidents may impact at the wider regional level owing to man's inability to contain the damage. The warehouse fire in Switzerland which

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caused the release of agricultural chemicals, solvents and mercury into the Rhine River, resulting in the death of millions of fish and threatening drinking-water supplies in the Federal Republic of Germany and the Netherlands, is an example of this. So, too, is the Chernobyl nuclear reactor explosion which sent nuclear fall-out across Europe, increasing the risks of future human cancers.

Moreover, decades of industrial activities in the developed countries have placed chemical stresses from air pollution and acid rain on temperate forests. It has been reported that in Europe some 31 million hectares of trees are showing signs of damage linked to air pollution.

In my own region, we remain deeply concerned over the hazards posed by the heavy traffic of oil tankers in the region. From the experience of the Valdez, we have seen how devastating a major oil spill can be in an area with a delicate ecological balance. As stated by our Minister of External Affairs and International Trade when he addressed the plenary meeting on 9 October 1989:

"For us in the Caribbean, the preservation of the environment is especially important since it forms the cradle of our tourism industry, the dynamic sector in the economic life of many of our countries." (A/44/PV.25, p. 76)

Environmental problems at the global level have resulted from the cumulative effects of activities at the national and regional levels. The two most urgent problems which now confront us are the depletion of the ozone layer and the greenhouse effect.

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Global warming, however, is by far the most serious universal environmental problem of our time. It may be manifested in climate changes of such a magnitude that they would have catastrophic consequences for the habitability and productivity of the whole planet. Current information suggests that if the concentration of carbon dioxide reaches twice the pre-industrial level the atmosphere will be committed to a warming of 1.5°C to 4.5°C relative to average pre-industrial temperatures.

A warming of this magnitude will affect many physical aspects of the earth's systems. The sea level will rise by approximately 1 metre, putting at risk the integrity of island developing countries. Several will become smaller owing to encroachment by the sea; one may even disappear. There will be widespread flooding in many low-lying coastal areas, increasing salt-water intrusion into aquifers, as well as inundation of mangrove areas and destruction of commercially important spawning grounds. The projected warming may lead also to an increased sea-surface temperature, which could, in turn, increase the frequency of tropical cyclones and storms.

On the economic front, it has been estimated that up to 50 per cent of the earth's population inhabiting coastal regions could be displaced, with loss of land and property, thereby creating serious and unprecedented refugee problems on a global scale.

Emissions of carbon dioxide have been singled out as the greatest cause of the greenhouse effect, accounting for approximately one half of the problem. It has been suggested that industrial activity, deforestation in the South and the consumption of fossil fuel in the North are primarily responsible for releasing carbon dioxide. Greenhouse gases, which account for the other 50 per cent of the global temperature rise, emanate primarily from the developed countries. These gases include nitrous oxide derived from the use of heavier fossil fuels and

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greater agricultural activity; methane, which is the principal component of natural gas; low-level ozone; and chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs).

Because the environmental crisis has manifested itself at the national, regional and global levels, my delegation is of the view that our response to the problem must be three-tiered and co-ordinated. The work already undertaken by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in the management of tropical forests is welcome. Initiatives should be expanded to include all developing countries, and the basic reasons for the depletion of forestry reserves in developing countries should be addressed. The work done by UNEP in respect of the problem of acid rain should also be expanded to include other areas where temperate forests are threatened.

Technical assistance on terms that are fair and acceptable to developing countries should be an important component of the strategy at the national level. Assistance should be available in all areas that have an impact on the environment, including the recycling of solid waste - an area of particular importance to small developing countries, given their limited land space.

The Port-of-Spain accord on the management and conservation of the Caribbean environment is an example of the type of regional co-operation that is necessary in the comprehensive assault on the environmental crisis. This accord was the outcome of the conference of Ministers of the Caribbean Community with responsibility for environmental matters held earlier this year. Its three objectives were: to achieve increased appreciation of the significance of the issues and needs relevant to management and protection of the Caribbean environment, and of the relationship between environment and development; to identify matters for priority attention in the region in relation to the environment; and to identify approaches that would allow for better regional co-ordination and monitoring of activities, agencies and resources.

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In addressing the environmental problem at the global level we must recognize that security must be redefined to take account of contemporary realities in the area of environment. The World Commission on Environment and Development reported that global military expenditure stood at \$1 trillion a year - about \$2.5 billion a day - and was still growing. Thus, half of the world's military expenditure for one day would meet the yearly cost - \$1.3 billion - of action plan for tropical forests over the course of five years. Another two days' military spending would meet the cost of implementing the United Nations action plan on desertification, which has been estimated at \$4.5 million a year for 20 years.

In addressing the crisis at the global level the problems of developing countries must also be taken into account. The World Commission on Environment and Development identified poverty as one of the main factors contributing to environmentally unsound policies in the South. A call was therefore made for a major new commitment to third world development using economic practices attuned to environmental needs.

The World Commission concluded also that the present level of debt servicing by many indebted countries was inconsistent with sustainable development. Debtors are required to use a significant portion of their trade surpluses to service debts - a situation that forces them to draw heavily on their non-renewable resources. Alleviation of the debt problem is therefore a necessity. These are only two of the many areas in which action is urgently required.

The development of clean technology should constitute a priority in research and development. Moreover, modalities should be developed to give developing countries access to the mainstream of information on science and technology. Mechanisms to renew the flow of appropriate technology to developing countries

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should also be created. These initiatives would assist in the cleaning up of "dirty" industries and in the promotion of development in developing countries, while avoiding the setting up of "pollution havens". This might be complemented by a "dump watch" in the form of national units to monitor and exchange information on companies and ships involved in the illegal dumping of hazardous waste in developing countries, as well as in their territorial waters and exclusive economic zones - an approach proposed at the Ministerial Meeting of the Co-ordinating Bureau of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, in Harare.

The United Nations is best placed to be the architect of any effective strategy to arrest global environmental problems and preserve the environment for future generations. At the beginning of 1989 the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer took effect, with 46 signatures, one of which was that of an international organization. The Montreal Protocol, which resulted from negotiations sponsored by UNEP, represents a diplomatic milestone for international co-operation on environmental problems and serves as an important precedent for other multilateral agreements. The 1992 conference should build on the experience of Montreal, but should be much wider in scope. The conference should address all environmental problems at the global and regional levels, while being mindful of the linkage with national problems. Attention should be given also to the development of developing countries and to other complementary strategies to achieve sustainable development.

In view of the fact that the conference will address problems of universal concern, both the preparatory process and the 1992 conference itself should have provision for the participation of all representatives of the international community.

(Mrs. Thorpe, Trinidad and Tobago)

The establishment of the secretariat and the convening of preparatory meetings at a location in which all Member States are represented would be the best option on that occasion. Other options are less attractive because of the limited resources of developing countries - particularly small island developing countries and least developed countries - and the relatively short time available before the preparatory process commences. The fund proposed by the Governing Council of UNEP may be looked at in detail with a view to facilitating the involvement of home-based experts of developing countries in the preparatory process and participation of those countries in the 1992 conference, likely to be held in Brazil.

In respect of the preparatory process, my delegation is of the view that a United Nations General Assembly committee of the whole will best facilitate the effective participation of developing countries, particularly small island developing countries and least developed countries. Those meetings should be convened in New York, where all Member States are represented, thus allowing proper co-ordination and continuity within delegations. There is no doubt that UNEP should play an active part in the preparatory mechanism. An inter-agency network should also be put in place to ensure that the committee of the whole benefits from the expertise of other bodies and organizations within the United Nations system. My delegation is persuaded that the secretariat will carry out its support function most effectively if it is located where preparatory meetings are held.

Finally, I should like to recall that my delegation has joined others in supporting Brazil as the venue for the 1992 conference on three previous occasions. My delegation takes this opportunity to support once again the offer of the Government of Brazil to host the conference.

Mr. ZAPOTOCKY (Czechoslovakia): The broad and interesting discussion on environment taking place here, as well as the documents submitted on the item,

(Mr. Zapotocky, Czechoslovakia)

confirm that environment questions have come to the forefront of political discussions at international forums. We noted that shift of focus at the forty-third session of the General Assembly, at the fifteenth session of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Governing Council, and at the summer session of the Economic and Social Council. As a country located in the centre of Europe, we attach great significance to the consideration of the pressing problems in the field of environmental protection in the framework of the present Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe follow-up session in Sofia.

We regard as the most significant aspect in the ongoing discussion the growing degree of consensus in the international community on the need for new environmental thinking and for a joint search for solutions to the pressing environmental problems through an intensification of international environmental co-operation. We welcome this trend because we realize that it will not be possible to ensure proper conditions for the lives of the present and future generations of mankind unless the accumulated environmental problems, the impacts of which on nature and man were underestimated for a long time, are resolved. Environmental factors as a new element are reflected ever more distinctly in international relations and in the lives of individual countries. It will therefore be necessary to deal seriously with the question of eliminating the growing risks of environmental emergencies and of minimizing the environmental vulnerability of countries, which should be facilitated by the proposals for early identification, monitoring, assessment and prevention of environmental problems and threats.

The Czechoslovak Socialist Republic supported the adoption of General Assembly resolution 43/196 and attaches extraordinary importance to the preparation and holding of a United Nations conference on environment and development. We believe that the convening of the conference in a period of growing activity on the part of

(Mr. Zapotocky, Czechoslovakia)

the international community in the field of environmental protection is an urgently needed step of far-reaching significance.

Czechoslovakia expects the conference to speed up the implementation of the existing national and international measures for the sustained and environmentally sound development of all countries of the world, and to lay the groundwork for new such measures. In our view, it will be necessary for the conference not only to review the past 20 years in the environmental sphere since the holding of the first United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in 1972 but also to identify the major environmental problems and threats to the present and future generations of mankind and define the basic political strategy for international organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, as well as for all countries of the world, in the next decade. Such a strategy should imply the global nature, as well as the individual aspects, of the problem of the environment, which also includes the impact on the environment of the existing diversity of production and consumption patterns in the world. At the same time, it might be advisable to adopt at the conference a schedule of specific action conducive to the solution of the most serious environmental problems.

Regarding the scope, aims, contents and title of the conference, we believe that the suggestions embodied in the report of the Secretary-General (A/44/256) and its addendum, as well as in General Assembly resolution 43/196, supplemented by decision 15/3 of the UNEP Governing Council, provide ample room for a businesslike and constructive discussion. We support Brazil as the venue for the conference and express our appreciation to the Government of that country for its offer to host it. We should resolve promptly the aspects of organization, budget and personnel, and proceed with the practical conceptual preparation of the conference.

In our view, the discussion at the conference should proceed from the fact that the gradual deterioration of the environment entails ecological threats that

(Mr. Zapotocky, Czechoslovakia)

jeopardize the very existence of human civilization. As regards the complexity and interrelation of environmental problems, emphasis should be put on the following aspects: the need for a multisectoral nature of the proposed measures and actions; the integration of environmental demands in economic and development programmes; the strengthening of the role of UNEP and of other United Nations bodies in meeting the environmental challenges in the development of international environmental co-operation; and the search for ways and means of increasing the effectiveness of the implementation of the existing and planned conventions and agreements in the field of environment.

The recommendations of the conference should include financial and technological arrangements for the joint action of countries in promoting an environmentally sound, sustainable development, and should provide for their implementation in both industrially advanced and developing countries. At the same time, we realize that most developing countries are not in a position today, owing to their own development problems, to resolve effectively their crucial environmental problems. Therefore, we support the strengthening of the existing and the creation of new sustaining mechanisms to enable those countries to meet the new standards in a way not threatening to their development priorities. In our view, a constructive consideration of the question of establishment of an international environmental fund to cover the expenses of collective and individual steps towards the fulfilment of the conference's conclusions would also serve the purpose.

(Mr. Zapotocky, Czechoslovakia)

My country, which supports the convening of the conference with representation at the highest possible level, intends to take an active part in its preparatory process. We support the setting up of an independent secretariat for the conference whose task, apart from dealing with technical questions, would be to prepare expert background material on the individual agenda items. We expect our specialists to engage, within the framework of the preparatory process, in the discussion of the topics that will constitute the subject matter of the conference.

Mr. PIBULSONGRAM (Thailand): At the outset, my delegation would like to thank Mr. Mostafa Tolha, the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), for the comprehensive introductory statement he made in the Second Committee on the issue of the environment. My delegation agrees that the current environmental crisis demands "nothing less than a revolution in the conduct of international affairs." We also concur that "the United Nations is the last and best hope for our embattled human environment".

My delegation has listened with deep interest to all the statements delivered here so far on the subject of the environment. We are pleased to see that environmental issues have received the serious international attention they deserve in this as well as other forums.

Environmental concerns vary substantially with the degree of development. Developed countries tend to focus on the removal of those elements which threaten the quality of life, such as toxic wastes or poisonous chemicals. Funds and expertise are available closely to monitor environmental trends and to design preventive as well as corrective actions.

In developing countries, poverty, overpopulation and intense competition for access to natural endowments have rendered environmental protection that much more

(Mr. Pibulsonggram, Thailand)

difficult. Natural resources are being rapidly exploited and depleted while the environment is progressively being destroyed.

Thailand is experiencing rapid economic growth. However, with industrialization come serious environmental problems. Our environment is deteriorating. We pollute the water as well as the air. Our natural resources are being depleted. With the increasing number of factories and motor vehicles, our cities are witnessing worrisome increases in the level of carbon monoxide.

During the past decade tropical forests in Thailand have been overexploited by illegal encroachments and excessive logging. The traditional practice of slash-and-burn farming, popular among some of our highland people, has proved harmful. These activities have led to the loss and degradation of our forests, serious erosion of our soil, and flash floods.

Last year the southern part of Thailand experienced a serious flash flood, with many casualties and destruction. Many villages were totally destroyed. The Royal Thai Government reacted swiftly. My Government also entrusted the Chulabhorn Research Institute to study and implement plans for reviving the environment as well as the livelihood of the people in the flood-affected areas. The Chulabhorn Research Institute is headed by Her Royal Highness Princess Chulabhorn, herself a leading scientist, researcher and professor of chemistry. She is also the youngest daughter of Their Majesties the King and Queen of Thailand.

My Government has implemented numerous measures aimed at preserving our natural heritage. In order to increase public awareness of environmental issues, 1989 has been designated the "Year of Natural Resources Preservation and Environmental Protection." Logging has been banned, as part of our reforestation efforts. In drafting our Seventh National Economic and Social Development Plan for 1992 to 1996, my Government has incorporated both short- and long-term plans for environmental protection, recognizing the linkages between rural poverty,

(Mr. Pibulsonggram, Thailand)

deforestation and land degradation. Environmental protection is an integral part of our social and economic development.

At the international level, Thailand remains firmly committed to the provisions in General Assembly resolution 42/182. We signed the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer last year and ratified it in July 1989. We have acceded to the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer.

With regard to the problems concerning the transport of dangerous wastes, my delegation urges all countries of origin to prohibit the transboundary movement of all hazardous wastes which has not received the consent of the importing countries. The sovereign rights of the transit countries must also be recognized. In addition, there must be adequate insurance against unexpected damage prior to the commencement of any transboundary movement of dangerous wastes.

The dumping of hazardous wastes is a serious international problem. A united international stand on this matter is of critical importance. Thai experts have actively participated in the Working Group of legal and technical experts with a mandate to prepare a global convention on the control of the transboundary movement of hazardous wastes. My Government welcomes the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal as a practical legal measure to deal with these problems.

The international community must work together to preserve our common environment. The world's population must be made aware of this long-term threat to mankind. We must devise common strategies to combat these pressing problems at the national, regional and international levels. Thailand welcomes and supports the convening of the United Nations conference on environment and development in 1992. We believe that this forum will provide a suitable opportunity for countries to exchange their views and experiences, as well as to contribute to the formation of global policies on the environment.

(Mr. Pibulsonggram, Thailand)

In this connection, my delegation supports the suggestion that the conference be held in Brazil during June 1992. We feel that the conference should last two weeks. Experts from selected countries should prepare the agenda. The conference should address the following elements: first, environmental policies and strategies relating to international development; secondly, environmental problems such as industrial pollution and the need to establish natural resources mechanisms; and, thirdly, environmental management mechanisms in areas of legislation, environmental impact assessment and environmental education.

My delegation is pleased that the environment is a matter in which the United Nations is now showing a broad interest. We must work together to preserve our common environment. Political will is urgently needed; education is the key; and action is required. This is the right time to act. The current trends in the degradation of the environment must be checked and reversed. My delegation places its hopes in the United Nations to lead the way in this common effort for all mankind in the years to come.

Mr. KAKOURIS (Cyprus): We are meeting today to continue our discussion of the planned United Nations conference on environment and development. The fact that my delegation is the 42nd to speak on this subject, with more delegations still to speak, is indicative of the importance our respective governments attach to and the increasing concern they feel about a deteriorating environment, and of the fact that urgent collective action is needed not merely to stem the rising tide of environmental degradation but to set in motion the ecological and environmental protection needed. The growing consensus emerging related to this is most welcome.

It is for this reason that a United Nations conference on environment and development is to take place in 1992 to coincide with the twentieth anniversary of the Stockholm Conference. My delegation firmly believes that, given co-operative action and careful preparation, the conference will prove to be a milestone on the way to environmental protection. United Nations resolution 43/196, together with United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Governing Council decision 15/3 presents us with valuable suggestions relating to the conference. Economic and Social Council decision 1989/87, which transmitted to this session of the General Assembly UNEP Governing Council decision 15/3, together with the views of Member States, is also most helpful. Furthermore, the report of the Secretary-General, (A/44/256 and Corr.1 and Add.1 and 2) provides us with additional useful information on the scope and objectives of the conference.

The seriousness of the problems that confront us requires us to do more than take stock of the two decades that have passed since the Stockholm Conference. Not to do so would be an injustice to us all and to future generations, for the environment is man's heritage, whose desecration requires immediate addressing and rectification. It will not suffice merely to indulge in rhetoric as to who is responsible for the damage caused to the environment or whether the existing

(Mr. Kakouris, Cyprus)

availability of knowledge allows us to deal with environmental issues. It will not be enough, either, to hypothesize on the need for preventive action and co-operative approaches to dealing with the problem. Nor will the mere recognition of the interrelationship of the environment and development ease the burden on those most acutely affected.

The international community is duty-bound to approach this conference with definitive, action-oriented plans and a clear long-term agenda on how to deal with the problems that confront us all. The seriousness of the situation does not allow of a fragmented approach but demands an integrated response. Nor does it allow of a few States assuming the responsibility for saving our planet; it requires global assessment as well as global action. Anything less would be a half measure and a lost opportunity.

The report of the World Commission on Environment and Development clearly identified and focused on the nexus between environment and development and the urgent need to embark on policies that recognize this interrelationship and the immediacy of the need to prevent further erosion of our common future. The developing countries face environmental problems directly related to the state of poverty and underdevelopment that exists. As underdevelopment is the root cause of their environmental problems and, as has been recognized by all, that environmental degradation is to a large extent the responsibility of the developed States - those States having a particular responsibility to act in this regard - the developing countries should be supported in their efforts to protect the environment with both financial and technical assistance compatible with their development aspirations. Sustainable development, as it affects all, but especially the developing countries, must maintain adequate levels of growth for attaining social and economic objectives and improving the quality of life in a healthy, safe and clean environment.

(Mr. Kakouris, Cyprus)

My delegation believes that the 1992 conference must direct its attention, inter alia, to the following issues: protection of the atmosphere, combating climatic changes and global warming; the depletion of the ozone layer and air pollution; protection of the quality and availability of drinking water; protection of the oceans and coastal areas; protection of land resources and combating desertification; preservation of biological diversity; proper environmental management of toxic and hazardous wastes; and protection of conditions conducive to human health and quality of life.

Turning to the organizational aspects of the conference, my delegation welcomes Brazil's offer to host the 1992 conference. However, we must set the ball in motion immediately and fully utilize the time between now and then in a constructive manner in order to facilitate a successful outcome of the conference.

In this regard, the cross-sectoral and global nature of the conference requires that the preparatory process have at its disposal the full participation of all competent agencies, both within and outside the United Nations system. My delegation is of the opinion that the General Assembly should establish a committee of the whole, with clear recognition of the important role of UNEP and the need to strengthen it, as well as the United Nations in general, to deal with environmental issues. Furthermore, we support the setting up of a separate secretariat, to be established by the Secretary-General. It is, my delegation believes, imperative that both the preparatory committee and the secretariat be located in a place that enables the full participation of all States Members in the preparatory process. My delegation cannot over-emphasize the importance of the preparatory process leading up to the conference. Furthermore, we envisage at least four meetings taking place before the 1992 conference date.

(Mr. Kakouris, Cyprus)

We are standing at a crossroads at which our options have never been clearer. We can either continue on the same destructive path or we can begin to lay effectively the groundwork for redressing the situation and protecting the ecological balance of our planet for the benefit of all mankind.

Let us show that the only vested interest that exists is the safeguarding of our common heritage by all, for all.

Mr. MOREL (Cuba) (interpretation from Spanish): Deterioration of the environment is undoubtedly a threat to the survival of mankind. The global nature of that threat makes a collective action by all nations essential. However, the greatest responsibility rests with the developed countries because of the leading role they have played throughout history in this process of environmental degradation. The devastation of our forests and the use of our land and oceans for the dumping of the toxic and radioactive wastes from their polluting industries, inter alia, have caused irreparable damage to the environment of the developing countries.

(Mr. Morel, Cuba)

We believe that a real, comprehensive solution to the environmental problem can be reached only if it is linked to development and if there is concerted multilateral action under the auspices of the United Nations. Hence, we support the convening of a conference on environment and development - which we hope will be held in Brazil in 1992. In our view, there must be universal participation in the conference and the preparations for it; those preparations should be entrusted to an ad hoc committee of the whole, established by the General Assembly and meeting in New York.

The ministerial meeting of the Group of 77 in Caracas and the ninth summit conference of the non-aligned countries have clearly defined our countries' views and hopes regarding the 1992 conference. We are convinced that if the conference is to succeed its work must be based on the premise that environmental protection is an integral part of the economic and social development of the developing countries; it must avoid a limited focus on environmental pollution alone.

The ecological co-operation that should result from the conference must not give rise to new pre-conditions; it must respect the development objectives and priorities of the third-world countries, as well as their sovereignty over their natural resources.

We hope that the interest shown by the developed countries in co-operating for the preservation of the environment will make it possible for the Second Committee speedily to reach agreement on the 1992 conference. If it does, global action could be taken in the next decade to deal with the problem in all its magnitude and dimensions, using global machinery that would ensure true co-operation in ecological matters, hand in hand with the social and economic development of the developing countries. That is the way we shall be able to fulfil our historic commitment to future generations to solve all facets of the environmental problem.

Mr. MUTOMBO TSHITAMBE (Zaire) (interpretation from French): If we study the Secretary-General's report on the environment (A/44/256 and Corr.1 and Add.1 and 2), we find the whole range of valuable information that can guide Member States in drawing up and implementing programmes in keeping with international conventions in this field, and in taking a decision to convene a United Nations conference on the environment in 1992.

The Republic of Zaire attaches fundamental importance to environmental questions. The main thrust of our commitment in that respect was eloquently expressed on 4 October 1989 from this rostrum, during the present session of the General Assembly, by President Mobutu Sese Seko. He said:

"It is with deep sadness that we witness today the accelerated deterioration of our natural environment under the impact of multiple and repeated aggression. The indignation and protest triggered the world over by the export of toxic wastes have shown a growing awareness within the international community of the major risks for humanity posed by the deterioration of the quality of life, of which atmospheric pollution is one of the most obvious manifestations." (A/44/PV.19, p. 18)

He went on to say:

"With 47 per cent of the tropical African forests within its borders the Republic of Zaire has brought 5 per cent of its territory under national protection. Our goal is to bring that figure up to 16 per cent ... Within this area we are protecting rare species threatened by extinction. This includes the white rhinoceros, the number of which increased from 11 in 1980 to 25 in 1989." (ibid., pp. 18 and 19-20)*

* The President took the Chair.

(Mr. Mutombo Tshitambwe, Zaire)

We in Zaire sincerely hope that the international community will take specific steps to conclude a convention on the protection of the ozone layer, because its depletion is a serious threat to the survival of mankind. We express our satisfaction at the adoption of the Basel Convention on 22 March 1989, with the affirmative votes of 116 States, and we hope that its strict implementation will spare the developing countries from becoming toxic waste dumps.

Concerning the convening of a United Nations conference on the environment, my delegation supports the holding of this important conference, which should have as its main theme the protection of the environment and as its principal objectives the definition of short- and medium-term priorities for the environment, the strengthening of North-South and East-West co-operation for the world environment, the strengthening of co-operation within the United Nations system, the adoption of binding legal instruments concerning world climate change, and so forth.

We are convinced that this session of the General Assembly will take a decision to convene the conference and will set forth precise guidelines for its organization and preparation process. We shall welcome the convening of the United Nations conference on the environment, planned for 1992, and we are pleased that it will be held in a third-world country. We therefore support the proposal by the non-aligned countries to hold the conference in Brazil.

For the developing countries, the preservation of nature is a question of survival, pure and simple. We believe that this conference will provide a unique opportunity to discuss serious environmental issues as they relate to development, because for the developing countries the question of the environment is inextricably linked with the problem of development. That is why my delegation stresses here that the preparatory work for the United Nations conference on the environment must be done on the basis of balanced co-operation between the developed and the developing countries.

(Mr. Mutombo Tshitambwe, Zaire)

As the representative of Malaysia stressed on behalf of the Group of 77, the developing countries are determined to play an important role and to shoulder fully their responsibilities to help strengthen existing machinery both for conservation purposes and for a sound environment. But these countries are faced with the negative effects of an unfavourable economic situation. The debt burden, weak infrastructures and precarious financial resources are some of the many obstacles to the developing countries' struggle to protect their environment - in spite of their determination to continue that struggle.

That is why my delegation advocates integrated international co-operation between the developed and the developing countries in the spirit of Economic and Social Council resolution 1989/101, "Strengthening international co-operation on the environment: provision of additional financial resources to developing countries". This co-operation should be aimed at ensuring that the developing countries allocate the financial and technical resources they receive to environmental programmes and plans, as part of their development priorities.

My delegation believes that we should start thinking right now about strengthening the effectiveness of the institutional and juridical machinery in the field of the environment. Accordingly, my delegation fully supports the proposal to increase by 35 per cent the resources of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). UNEP, as the catalyst for efforts to manage and co-ordinate environmental problems, should be given as soon as possible the resources to make it more operational, so that it can play its proper role in the strategy we wish to establish in this struggle we are waging for the proper environment.

My delegation believes that UNEP, by its very *raison d'être*, should be the focal point for the preparatory work for the conference on the environment, although it does not necessarily have to be the secretariat for the conference. We reserve the right to return to this point in the Second Committee.

Mr. ESSY (Côte d'Ivoire) (interpretation from French): At a time when we are witnessing with a sigh of relief the fact that pockets of war are gradually disappearing in the world, a new danger, one even more threatening to our very survival is emerging. The Earth's survival - indeed, our own survival - are now threatened by serious assaults on the atmosphere.

No one can challenge the clear warnings of our scientists: our world is under attack. In recent decades we have seen a progressive global warming which, according to experts, is the result of atmospheric pollution, more precisely, the depletion of the ozone layer. Climatic or atmospheric changes - recorded or inferred - may have disastrous effects on the health and life of man and the environment generally.

While these disasters may be the result of the depletion of the ozone layer owing to chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), our environment remains under attack from other various and no less significant quarters. These phenomena vary according to region and the degree of development. Air, ground, and water pollution is almost all caused by the industrialized countries. Such pollution is being aggravated by the dumping of large quantities of radioactive waste, which has obvious consequences for the environment; and man will have to pay the price for the uncontrolled production or dumping of such wastes.

The dangers they pose to man and the environment have been compounded by the immoral acts of transferring radioactive wastes to the developing countries. The latter already have much work to do with their environment, which is also increasingly deteriorating. Environmental problems are of concern to the whole world, but particularly to the developing countries. The worsening terms of trade, the drop in commodity prices, the need to diversify our export products, debt and poverty - those are indeed the causes that have led many developing countries to

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deplete their forests. Deforestation and desertification are difficulties confronting the third-world States, particularly those in sub-Saharan Africa, that will have to be tackled in the coming decades.

While assaults against nature vary according to region, in the majority of cases the motives are nevertheless the same. It is man who, in attempting to improve his living conditions, is committing acts of aggression against the environment; and improved living conditions and development are to a large extent the main reasons behind this reckless aggression.

This contradiction underscores the relevance of our discussion on the relationship between development and environment. Today, a better policy for environmental protection cannot ignore economic problems, particularly those confronted by our States which, like all States throughout the world, are concerned by the problem of environment and must therefore contribute to finding solutions to this scourge that threatens the whole of mankind.

It has been said that

"The effects of the depletion of the ozone layer know no ideological boundary. Likewise, it could be said that these effects draw no distinction between developed and developing countries.

"A healthy environment in the process of development has become an imperative for rich and poor countries alike, because development cannot tolerate a deteriorating environment and the destruction of ecological balance."

Time is of the essence, and we must now in a spirit of solidarity seek remedies to save our Earth. The very survival of the human race is at stake. This is a global problem, and the solution can be found only at the global level. Hence, bearing in mind the nature of the dangers, the remedies we must find stem

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not only from the fundamental duty to protect the world's ecosystem but also from the right of man to enjoy, in dignity, the vast world environment and, therefore, from the duty of the community of nations to the present and future generations.

No one is entitled to shirk the duty to fight according to his means for the preservation of our atmosphere so as to provide future generations with better living standards. The measures to be taken, the means to be used to face up to this problem, the solution to which is threefold - because it is vital, urgent and world wide - must be national, regional and international.

Côte d'Ivoire, whose economy is based on agriculture, understands full well the importance of forests. That is why, faced with the grave consequences that might be caused by a breakdown in the ecosystem owing to a significant reduction of the forest cover, my country took decisive action at the national level.

One part of this national strategy is a programme of reafforestation consisting in a campaign of consciousness-raising started in 1987 and implemented in 1988, the Year of the Côte d'Ivoire Forest, to encourage villagers to set up their own tree nurseries and plant useful species of trees that they will be all the more likely to tend since they will be deriving direct benefit from them, such as firewood, timber, and so on - all products that can be used for their own needs or sold in markets.

Since it is increasingly clear that drought and accelerated desertification in the Sahel are a direct consequence of excessive deforestation of coastal countries, Côte d'Ivoire is actively involved at the regional level in the struggle waged by the countries of West and North Africa against desertification. It was this same common concern which led my delegation five years ago to introduce into the resolution adopted on the item of desertification and drought a request to study the effects of the interaction between deforestation and the process of accelerated

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desertification. This request led to a conference organized by the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office (UNSO) in 1985 in Côte d'Ivoire. The results of that conference confirmed the causal link between deforestation and accelerated desertification of inland regions.

More recently a subregional seminar was held in Abidjan on the joint initiative of the Ministry of Defence of the Côte d'Ivoire and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), to study the methods used to combat effectively the problem of floating vegetable matter which is increasingly proliferating in rivers and lakes in the subregion.

Finally, at the international level, Côte d'Ivoire is placing great hope on increased multilateral action as recommended by the Brundtland report.

As regards the preservation of the environment, in order to guarantee better prospects for the future, for our children and grandchildren, Côte d'Ivoire cannot but welcome the increased interest shown by the international community in these problems that are directly or indirectly tied to the environment. The United Nations conference on environment and development set for 1992 will be an opportunity for an in-depth debate on this question to make us even more aware of our national and collective responsibilities with regard to the environment. Accordingly, Côte d'Ivoire participated at the highest level in March 1989 in The Hague Conference on the Environment and signed the declaration that resulted from it.

We also welcome the new proposals made by the two nuclear super-Powers for disarmament, which may redound on the environment.

My country is pleased to see that the environment will be an important topic in negotiations under way for the next co-operation agreement, Lomé IV, particularly since there will be measures on tropical forests and dangerous wastes.

(Mr. Essy, Côte d'Ivoire)

My delegation once again calls on those States in particular whose factories produce dangerous wastes to ratify the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal, adopted on 22 March 1989.

Côte d'Ivoire co-operates very closely with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) within the framework of the plan of action on tropical forests, which is financed by the World Bank, the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, the World Resources Institute, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and many other organizations, all of which are co-ordinated by FAO. This plan provides assistance, inter alia, in efforts to preserve tropical ecosystems.

More generally, our national effort to rehabilitate our forests is supported by the many multilateral organizations. We hope that this circle can be further expanded because environmental challenges are enormous. For example, the preservation of the Taï forest, classed as a heritage of mankind, cannot be the responsibility of my country alone; it should be a matter for the international community.

The developing countries, already heavily in debt, cannot, despite their good intentions, carry out by themselves at the national level effective policies to protect the environment because the technical means are often beyond their reach.

The developed countries should, therefore, by means of machinery still to be considered, make it easier for the developing countries to gain access to new technology that is not too damaging to the environment. In this connection, the proposal of the Prime Minister of India at the ninth summit Conference of Non-Aligned Countries, in Belgrade, for the establishment of a world fund to reduce the cost of acquiring such technology deserves much greater attention from the international community.

(Mr. Essy, Côte d'Ivoire)

The struggle to protect our planet - because this is the main point - is the struggle for international solidarity; human solidarity; solidarity between developed countries and developing countries; solidarity between those already affected by various manifestations of this danger and those who will be affected unless precautions are taken.

According to Michel Rocard, the French Prime Minister, the responsibility of developed countries is great, because they are the most gross polluters. They therefore have an obligation to assist the developing countries, the less responsible, which will be very severely affected by changes in the atmosphere.

The Secretary-General has emphasized that co-operation at the national and international levels is indispensable to the attainment of the goal of development

"that met the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs and did not in any way imply encroachment upon national sovereignty ... It implied progress towards national and international equity, including assistance to developing countries in accordance with their national development plans, priorities and objectives. It implied, further, the existence of a supportive international economic environment that would result in sustained economic growth and development in all developing countries, which was of major importance for sound management of the environment. (A/44/350, para. 19)

The human and international solidarity required by this struggle should enable us to seek together, especially those of us who are lagging behind, the means to attain progress without that progress, which should be in the service of mankind, becoming progress that kills.

It is a difficult challenge but we must not be distracted by problems of sovereignty or even political sensitivities.

(Mr. Essy, Côte d'Ivoire)

Although these are real and indeed insurmountable, they should give way to reason and protection against a scourge, whose gravity may be ill perceived but is undeniably real.

This is surely one of those rare occasions on which man is asked to set aside pride and self-esteem in the higher interest of his own species.

Mr. INSANALLY (Guyana): There was a time when environmental issues were regarded as peripheral to our existence. That is certainly not the case now, as nations have become acutely aware of the dangers inherent in the improper use and general neglect of the environment. As our understanding of the problems has grown and our awareness of the consequences of inaction increased, the issue has moved from virtual obscurity to the centre stage of our deliberations.

There is thus today an acute realization that the problems associated with the environment are life-threatening and therefore can no longer be safely postponed. However, we are aware that if we were to postpone our response to the threat we would in all likelihood be committing an unforgiveable injustice to future generations. For, despite our innate capacity for adapting to change, the reality is that our present conduct in matters relating to the environment can result in a reduced quality of life for succeeding generations and possibly the very extinction of the human species.

In order to avoid such a catastrophe, it is important for us to recognize that the issue is one of common concern. Each country has a role to play in the protection and preservation of the environment. However, if due care is not taken, our individual efforts could be at cross purposes and consequently prove to be futile in the end. There is thus a need for collective and concerted action in dealing with the problem. Its causes are many and varied and can be traced to such factors as industrial pollution, the unsafe disposal of toxic wastes, the burning

(Mr. Insanally, Guyana)

of fossil fuels, nuclear testing, and non-sustainable practices in agriculture, fishery and forestry. Our responses and solutions must therefore be both ample and co-ordinated.

We believe that the 1992 conference, which by general agreement is to be held in Brazil, will provide an opportunity to devise new strategies to deal with our many environmental concerns. Coming as it does almost two decades after the Stockholm Conference, it will allow States to review past experience and on that basis develop international co-operative approaches for the year 2000 and beyond. To do so, however, the conference must be properly structured, with an agenda that truly reflects the concerns of all countries, both developed and developing. Equally important, it must be informed by certain clear perceptions of the issues involved.

It must be seen, for example, that poverty creates a definite link between environment and sustainable development. As a consequence of falling living standards in many developing countries, poverty has been constantly on the rise. The primeval desire for survival inevitably increases pressure on the environment for sustainability. The very poor, we must realize, can be concerned only with their own livelihood, and in this sense poverty is as much a pollutant as progress, because in the struggle for existence there can be scant concern for the environment. The problem of poverty must therefore be frontally addressed.

There must also be recognition that protecting and preserving the environment requires a comprehensive effort to remove the underlying problem factors. In addition to conservation measures, steps have therefore to be taken to achieve growth and sustainable development. Achieving sustainable development requires removing the inequity that currently characterizes the relationship between developed and developing countries.

(Mr. Insanally, Guyana)

In this regard, to address adequately the problems of poverty and the declining living standards of developing countries, appropriate solutions to the interrelated problems of debt, trade, commodities, and money and finance will have to be found. Sustainable development also implies the incorporation of environmental concerns in economic planning and policies. For such efforts to be meaningful, however, environmental concerns should not constitute new forms of restriction to aid and development finance or new barriers to trade.

Also, given the need for an adequate and timely response to the problems of the environment, my delegation is pleased to see the importance being attached to the preparation of the next world conference. In a relatively short period we have seen a number of reports produced on various aspects of the environment, and attention given to it at all levels, including that of Heads of Government. Most recently, in Malaysia, the Heads of Government of the Commonwealth issued the Langkawi Declaration on the environment. That Declaration can be seen as an important contribution to the ongoing efforts to tackle in a sensible and co-ordinated manner the problems of the environment. While it may not contain all the answers, it represents an agreement to act in our common interest. Moreover, since it is the product of a North-South effort, it also represents a substantial contribution to global co-operation in this area.

(Mr. Insanally, Guyana)

We should build on this and similar initiatives. Our actions, however, must be well-informed. I make this point because those anxious to become gurus on the environment may sometimes do more harm than good. For example, it was recently stated in the popular press that the exploitation of the greenheart wood in Guyana was harmful to the environment because it depleted our forests. It may be pointed out here, however, that for every greenheart tree that is felled, five saplings immediately would grow. This self-regeneration, I venture to say, is much more environmentally sound than anything else that can be prescribed by the so-called experts.

In keeping with our desire to contribute to good management of the environment, we will at all times ensure the proper use of our forests. It was with this in mind that my President at the meeting of the Commonwealth Heads of Government in Malaysia indicated that Guyana was willing, in collaboration with the Commonwealth countries, to establish a model on how the international community could approach the question of the tropical rain forests and the environment in general.

In its simplest form, Guyana would set aside, on an experimental basis, a part of its tropical rain forest in which research could be pursued jointly. The results could then be utilized in a way that was free from current constraints of the rules affecting intellectual property. In other words, the benefit - whether patented or otherwise - could be jointly owned by Guyana and the other participating countries. The objective of our proposal is to achieve sustainable development through conservation, while at the same time allowing the fruits of research to be equitably shared.

Against this background of our own national perceptions and efforts, we expect that the preparations for the 1992 conference will seek to build on the efforts already made in various forums, including the Governing Council of the United

(Mr. Insanally, Guyana)

Nations Environment Programme, to safeguard the environment. In deciding on our preparatory arrangements, we should first and foremost seek to maximize the use of all resources available in the United Nations system. There is expertise in Nairobi, Europe and New York that should be combined effectively to ensure that environmental protection and sustainable development become an achievable objective.

At the same time, we must guarantee that, for a conference of such universal importance as this one obviously is, suitable arrangements are made to facilitate the participation of all the States Members of the Organization at each and every stage. The restrictions which financial and human resource constraints impose on the developing countries are self-evident and, therefore, due consideration must be given to eliminating these handicaps. Several other organizational questions remain to be settled, but with the prevailing spirit of shared commitment and responsibility I dare say that general agreement will not be hard to find.

After participating in the extensive discussion in this forum, we are convinced that the 1992 conference on environment and development can make a historic contribution to preserve planet Earth from the ultimate disaster of total degradation. There now exists, from all appearances here, a common determination to act in a timely and responsible manner to save our vanishing environment. We cannot fail to grasp this opportunity for further global co-operation since to do so may be to seal forever the fate of mankind.

Mr. AYALA LASSO (Ecuador) (interpretation from Spanish): The world is pleased to note that fresh winds are effecting changes in international relations. Little by little - although with spectacular results compared with the negativism of recent years - common sense is also emerging, thereby facilitating global constructive dialogue, with the dual effect of contributing to the resolution of existing problems and opening up possibilities for co-operation among States.

(Mr. Ayala Lasso, Ecuador)

We note with deep satisfaction that the United Nations has been able to find appropriate ways to work at this juncture towards promoting détente and agreement. Similarly, the world's attention is now turned also towards areas where co-operation can develop on a broader basis and with greater effectiveness. In my view, this explains, at least in part, the importance we all attach to co-ordinated and harmonious approaches to problems such as the struggle against drugs, the protection of the environment and the eradication of poverty. I believe that all of us agree that, having overcome wars, we must now work to ensure a more just, healthier and promising world for all.

That is why the delegation of Ecuador believes that it is indispensable for our collective efforts on the environment to be carried out in such a way as to achieve the desired results, which are necessary for the very survival of mankind on Earth.

We cannot allow ourselves the luxury of making mistakes in this endeavour. Hence, we must proceed with objectivity, leaving aside exclusively national interest or interests linked to traditional differences between North and South. The environment is a matter of interest and concern to all of us equally.

Consequently, we must acknowledge the global nature of the problem and define the causes that have led to environmental deterioration - which we all deplore - rectify the errors we have made and adjust our general policies and production and consumption patterns to environmental requirements. It is therefore unacceptable and erroneous to talk about the environment and think that the problems will be resolved, for example, by merely requiring that a study be carried out on the most significant oxygen-producing sources - as in the case of tropical rain forests - and that very strict rules be established to protect them. Rather, we must study each and every one of the factors that has an impact on the environment.

(Mr. Ayala Lasso, Ecuador)

We have listened with deep respect and keen attention to the various delegations that have indicated that the extensive use of fossil fuels is perhaps the main cause of pollution. We are also aware that the production of certain gases is linked to the depletion of the ozone layer. We also know that acid rain and the pollution of rivers, lakes and seas are linked to the industrial patterns designed and used in the developed world to achieve the living standards they currently enjoy.

In other words, if we really want to solve environmental problems we shall have to begin by objectively recognizing what have been and continue to be the major causes for such deterioration. In this way we can avoid getting into the football match mentioned by the Permanent Representative of Barbados, Dame Nita Barrow, a game during the first 75 minutes of which the rules are slanted in favour of the developed world, but for the last 15 minutes of which it is sought to change those rules to make the developing world foot the bill.

(Mr. Ayala Lasso, Ecuador)

This does not mean that the legitimate aspirations of the developing countries have to be subjugated to environmental protection. Rather, it means that we must study development problems in order to find suitable solutions to them; at the same time, we must ensure that the aspirations and rights of developing countries can be fully met without requiring those countries to make greater sacrifices than they have been making for decades.

Development and ecological conservation are complementary concepts. That is why multilateral agencies for co-operation should draw up research and technology-transfer programmes that will benefit the developing countries. Those countries must also be given the financial resources that will enable them to achieve their environment-protection and development goals. The participation of the developed countries in this financial machinery, as well as the support of the private sectors, with their modern technology, will be indispensable.

The present international economic order is characterized by crises aggravated by the external-debt burden borne by most of the developing countries, the deterioration in the terms of trade, and the pressures exerted by economic protectionism on the management of natural resources. All of that is directly related to the destruction of the environment in the developing countries.

The responsibility for the policies that have caused the deterioration of the environment, which we all regret, must be clearly established. Those with the major responsibility must undertake the major obligation to provide the support necessary to arrest and counteract this negative trend. It is encouraging that many developed countries have acknowledged that the destruction of the environment is primarily a result of decades of what has been called the irrational exploitation of nature by the industrialized world. There must be a change in the destructive policies and practices. But these policies and practices continue,

(Mr. Ayala Lasso, Ecuador)

in spite of all the declarations. Even now we hear that ships carrying polluting wastes produced in the industrialized countries are criss-crossing the seas of the world, particularly of the developing countries, in search of places where they can dispose of their lethal cargoes. This conduct flies in the face of the principle that a healthy planet is in everyone's interest. The production of these polluting wastes has not been stopped. Moreover, the conduct is based on the notion that the health of the developing world is less important to mankind.

Our discussion of environmental problems should prompt some self-criticism regarding the quality of the civilization that man has created and regarding the models for industrialization and consumption.

I have said that protection of the environment is a responsibility that falls on the shoulders of all. Ecuador wants to make whatever contribution it can to the attainment of this common goal. Ecuador is not a developed country, and it does not have major industries that cause environmental pollution. Even so, it has taken pains to adopt whatever measures it can to protect its environment. It has sought to achieve a balance between, on the one hand, protection and preservation of the environment and, on the other, socio-economic development policies based upon rational utilization of its resources for the benefit of present and future generations. Our experience in this area has led us to the conclusion that international co-operation in the transfer of suitable modern technology is indispensable, as is financial assistance on favourable terms.

Ecuador has signed the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. In order to comply with the provisions of the latter, as they relate to substitutes for chlorofluorocarbons, Ecuador supports the establishment of an international fund to provide technical and financial assistance to enable developing countries to adopt the necessary measures.

(Mr. Ayala Lasso, Ecuador)

Among the environmental programmes that my country has been implementing for several years, I should like to emphasize the binational programme it has carried out together with Colombia; the restoration of the vegetal layer in various Andean provinces, a programme supported by the Food and Agriculture Organization; the protection of the national parks in the Amazon area; regulations governing the exploration and exploitation of hydrocarbons, in order to protect, monitor and restore the environment; the law for the protection of natural forests and wildlife; and the law to prevent and control environmental pollution.

Ecuador has noted with interest that the declaration adopted by the seven major industrial countries in Paris recently acknowledged the link between economic growth and environmental protection and stressed that thought should be given to the interests of the developing countries. Ecuador hopes that this declaration will be translated into practical policies and measures during the 1992 conference.

Regarding that conference, my country thinks that, for the reasons I have given, its agenda should include the many matters relating to environment and development that are of global interest so that its resolutions may make a valid, multifaceted contribution to solving the problems we face.

The driving force of the conference must be to make sure that there is collective action to stop the deterioration of the environment caused by the actions of the developed world and the inability of the developing countries to do anything about it. The developed countries must change their production and consumption models. The developing countries must be given the financial and technical means for the development that will enable them to become effective protectors of the environment.

(Mr. Ayala Lasso, Ecuador)

We believe that membership of the preparatory committee of the conference should be open to all States interested in this vital question. In other words, it should be a committee of the whole. Its venue should be chosen with a view to making it easiest for countries, particularly those with fewest resources, to attend. We think that United Nations Headquarters in New York would be the best place. The secretariat of the conference, to be established by the Secretary-General, would also function best in this city. It could maintain links with all the specialized agencies and non-governmental organizations, in order to give the committee the input necessary for its work.

(Mr. Ayala Lasso, Ecuador)

We have thanked Brazil for its offer to host the conference and have supported acceptance of that offer. We believe that countries should be represented at the conference at the highest possible technical and political level.

If the conference has a global orientation, if it is objective in its analyses, if there is solidarity in its proposals, and if there is dynamism in the measures it decides to adopt, we shall be able to say that we have met our obligation to ensure for future generations a healthy world in which they can live.

The PRESIDENT: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on the proposed 1992 United Nations conference on environment and development. Action on this aspect of sub-item (f) of item 82 will be taken by the Second Committee, as decided by the Assembly at its 3rd meeting.

TENTATIVE PROGRAMME OF WORK

The PRESIDENT: I should like to give members an outline of the tentative programme of plenary meetings to the end of November.

First, I have to draw attention to some changes in the schedule for Wednesday 1 November. In the morning, the Assembly will consider sub-item 17 (i), "Confirmation of the appointment of the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme"; item 13, "Report of the International Court of Justice"; item 21, "Achievements of the International Year of Peace"; and item 157, "Special session of the General Assembly to consider the question of international co-operation against illicit production, supply, demand, trafficking and distribution of narcotic drugs, with a view to expanding the scope and increasing the effectiveness of such co-operation".

The same day, in the afternoon, the Assembly will take up item 27, "Co-operation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity", and sub-item 15 (b), "Election of eighteen members of the Economic and Social Council".

(The President)

As far as the new programme is concerned, on the morning of Monday 13 November the Assembly will hear an address by the President of the Republic of Tunisia, His Excellency Mr. Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, and will take up item 149, "United Nations decade of international law".

In the afternoon of Monday 13 November the Assembly will take up item 155, "African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programmes for Socio-Economic Recovery and Transformation".

On Tuesday 14 November, in the morning, the Assembly, under sub-item 82 (b), will hold a commemorative meeting for the observance of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

On Tuesday 14 November, in the afternoon, the Assembly will take up item 33, "Zone of peace and co-operation of the South Atlantic". At the same meeting, the Assembly, under item 38, "Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations", will consider the report on the United Nations intergovernmental structure and functions in the economic and social field.

On Wednesday 15 November the Assembly will consider item 31, "The situation in Kampuchea".

On Thursday 16 November, in the morning, the Assembly will continue its consideration of item 31, "The situation in Kampuchea".

On Monday 20 November, in the morning, the Assembly will consider the report of the Third Committee on item 108, "Adoption of a convention on the rights of the child". It will also begin consideration of item 30, "Law of the sea".

On Monday 27 and Tuesday 28 November the Assembly will consider item 37, "The situation in the Middle East".

(The President)

On Wednesday 29 November, in the morning, the Assembly will take up item 26, "Judgment of the International Court of Justice of 27 June 1986 concerning military and paramilitary activities in and against Nicaragua: need for immediate compliance".

On Wednesday 29 November, in the afternoon, the Assembly will begin its consideration of item 39, "Question of Palestine".

On Thursday 30 November and Friday 1 December the Assembly will continue its consideration of item 39, "Question of Palestine".

I should like to reiterate that, as I have said earlier, every attempt is being made to curtail the duration of the session so that the Assembly may conclude its work by Monday 11 December, in order that the special session on apartheid and its destructive consequences in southern Africa may take place from 12 to 14 December.

Further, I have to inform members that the announcement of voluntary contributions to the 1990 programmes of the Office of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East will take place on Thursday 16 November, in the morning, and that the announcement of voluntary contributions to the 1990 programmes of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees will take place on Monday 20 November, in the morning.

It is of course understood that the reports of the Main Committees will be considered as they become available.

The tentative schedule that I have just announced will appear in the verbatim record of the meeting as well as in the Journal summary. In the meantime, if there are any changes I shall keep the Assembly informed.

The list of speakers for all these items will open this afternoon at 3 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 14

REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY

- (a) NOTE BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL TRANSMITTING THE REPORT OF THE AGENCY (A/44/450)
- (b) DRAFT RESOLUTION (A/44/L.18)

The PRESIDENT: I should like to propose that the list of speakers in the debate on this item be closed at 4 p.m. today.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: I therefore request those representatives who wish to speak to put their names on the list as soon as possible.

I call on Mr. Hans Blix, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, to present his report.

Mr. BLIX (International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)): It is a privilege for me to report to the General Assembly on the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency, supplementing the Agency's annual report, which is before the Assembly.*

This year we are celebrating the two-hundredth anniversary of the discovery of uranium and the fiftieth anniversary of the discovery of nuclear fission. Those two scientific conquests have dramatically changed our world. With some 50,000 nuclear warheads stockpiled, mankind has been forced to live in the uneasy calm of the balance of terror and with the risk that nuclear weapons might spread to further countries. The some 430 electricity-generating nuclear power stations, too, are looked upon with anguish by some people, who consider them more as potential producers than as actual reducers of pollution.

* Mr. Sallah (Gambia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Blix, IAEA)

Whether we like it or not, the discoveries are irreversible. We cannot unlearn what we have learnt. The capability to build bombs will remain, and so will our ability to harness valuable energy from fission. What we must do is control our capacity for self-destruction and reduce to a minimum the risks connected with the use of nuclear power. In my view, we have reasons today to be optimistic about our ability to do both these things.

(Mr. Blix, IAEA)

In the new international political climate which is emerging, nuclear disarmament no longer seems such a theoretical goal, and it seems possible that a more satisfactory basis for peace may be found than the concept of mutually assured destruction.

Fears that nuclear weapons would spread to many countries have fortunately not come true. Next year the 137 States that have pledged, under the non-proliferation Treaty, to forgo nuclear weapons will meet again to review the operation of the Treaty. The IAEA will report that it verifies the exclusively peaceful use of 95 per cent of all nuclear facilities in non-nuclear-weapon States and, I trust, that it has found no diversion of any fissionable material under safeguards. Though encouraging, this finding is hardly surprising. Countries do not accept full-scope safeguards with the intention of diverting nuclear materials. They accept safeguards to create confidence in their commitment to peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Nevertheless, to be credible, safeguards must be thorough and systematic. Operating the safeguards system is a great responsibility for the International Atomic Energy Agency. Even after some 25 years of experience, new challenges arise. Complicated installations are built that handle large quantities of fissionable material which have to be safeguarded. Verification techniques that were once satisfactory become obsolete. Today the discussion of disarmament on many fronts has opened up a much greater general readiness to accept verification than that which existed at the time when safeguards were the first swallows in the air. IAEA safeguards will benefit both in cost efficiency and in credibility if they are allowed to keep up with the advances made in other verification schemes.

The financing of safeguards remains a problem. Some \$50 million may seem a modest sum for the control of 95 per cent of all fissionable material outside nuclear-weapon States. Consensus is hard to attain, however, on any increase in

(Mr. Blix, IAEA)

this budget even when there are more material and more installations that must be inspected. Few things seem harder for sovereign States than agreeing on the sharing of joint expenses. Because of a lack of resources, the expanded IAEA safeguards inspection of peaceful nuclear installations in nuclear-weapon States that was urged by the Third Review Conference of the parties to the non-proliferation Treaty has not been possible.

It has often been said that confidence ends where safeguards end. It is understandable, therefore, that attention is being devoted to the further expansion of Agency safeguards coverage. Recently an agreement was reached on the safeguarding of all fissionable material in Viet Nam, following that country's adherence to the non-proliferation Treaty. A similar agreement has been under negotiation for some time with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. South Africa has recently confirmed that it views the possibility of accession to the Treaty in a serious manner. And the General Conference of the IAEA has requested me to hold consultations on the application of Agency safeguards to all nuclear installations in the Middle East. This task parallels the study of measures to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region which the Secretary-General has been requested to undertake.

I should mention that China has concluded an agreement with the Agency, inviting it to safeguard some of China's peaceful nuclear installations. A list of the installations which are open to inspection has also been transmitted by the Chinese Government. With this agreement the IAEA will be able to perform inspections in all five nuclear-weapon States - an ability which, as I said, is used only sparingly owing to a lack of resources. I have noted that in his statement before the General Assembly the Soviet Foreign Minister, Mr. Shevardnadze, suggested that the vast IAEA experience in applying safeguards could be useful in verifying compliance with an agreement on the cessation and

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prohibition of the production of fissionable material for weapons purposes. A reduction in the production of such material for weapons purposes would, I am sure, be very broadly welcomed. I am also confident that given adequate resources the IAEA would have the ability to verify that no use for weapons purposes was made of any nuclear facility or fissionable material submitted to its safeguards.

The advent of nuclear power was first greeted with unbounded optimism, and the expansion has been rapid. Today there are some 100 nuclear power plants under construction, in addition to the some 430 operating ones which now provide the world with almost as much electricity as is generated by hydropower. However, that expansion has levelled off, and several cross-currents are now visible. In some countries there are legal or de facto moratoriums on the construction of nuclear power plants. In others, expansion continues. Some segments of the public continue vehemently to oppose the utilization of nuclear fission, while others see, or begin to see, in nuclear power a clean source of energy which helps to alleviate environmental problems, notably those linked to emissions of sulphur dioxide, nitrogen oxides and carbon dioxide - namely, acid rain, dying forests and global warming. Increasingly the energy sector is identified as crucial for the environment.

The World Commission on Environment and Development rightly devoted much of its attention to the role of energy. It accepted the need for continued growth and the need for energy to achieve growth. At the same time, it noted the severe damage inflicted on the environment by the present level and ways of using fossil fuels. It did not endorse the use of nuclear power. Quite the contrary: concerned about the questions of nuclear waste, nuclear accidents and proliferation, the Commission came close to suggesting that the use of nuclear power cannot at present be justified.

(Mr. Blix, IAEA)

It must be realized, however, that if it is a formidable task to level off, let alone reduce, the burning of fossil fuels while promoting development, it will be even more difficult to succeed in this ambition if nuclear power is rejected as an alternative.

Realizing the environmental dangers of using fossil fuels at present levels and not willing to accept increased reliance on nuclear power, the World Commission, like many environmental groups, sought a way out through energy saving and the development of renewable sources of energy.

It is very easy to agree with the energy-saving slogan that "no energy pollutes less than the one you don't use". But the energy saving that occurs not through increased energy efficiency but through less reliance on energy use may have a social cost. We might do well to remember the famous phrase of the Indian scientist, Homi Bhaba, who said, with experience from the developing world, "No energy is more expensive than no energy."

The World Commission on Environment, which unequivocally supports development, accepts an increasing per capita use of energy by developing countries, but it suggests optimistically that substantial growth can be secured everywhere while the per capita primary energy consumption in industrialized countries is cut in half. This optimism about energy saving is not shared by many energy experts. In its report to the General Assembly on the IAEA's contribution to sustainable development - that report is contained in document A/44/339/Add.11, which I understand is available here - the Agency whole-heartedly supports the concept of sustainable development and describes the many ways in which it seeks to promote such development. The Agency holds, further, that conservation, meaning both a more efficient and a more discriminate use of energy, is important and significant.

(Mr. Blix, IAEA)

However, the greatest gains in energy efficiency come from technology change, and this is a slow process. More important still, all the indications are that development, especially in the developing countries, will call for a much increased use of energy. A new World Energy Conference study points to an increase of 50 per cent to 75 per cent in world primary energy consumption between 1985 and 2020.

Conservation will offset some of the increasing global demand for energy, but just how much is an open question. Car engines will become more efficient, yes, but there will be more cars. Over the past 15 years primary energy consumption in the world has in fact increased by 2.4 per cent per year, and in the developing countries the increase has been over double that. Demand for electricity is expected to rise at a higher rate still. At the World Energy Conference held last month in Montreal it was concluded as regards conservation that

"It is necessary to be realistic about it in as much as few subjects have been or are the object of as much wishful thinking."

The World Energy Conference - the body that is most representative of the world's energy communities - also urged realism in the assessment of what alternative and renewable commercial sources of energy can contribute. Aside from hydro-power, these sources today provide less than 0.3 per cent of the world's energy and most of it is not the much advertised wind power, solar power or biomass, but geothermal. Mrs. Steeg, of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the head of the International Energy Agency has offered the estimate that these sources might contribute at the most 5 per cent of the world energy supply by the year 2010. The World Energy Conference suggests an even lower figure: 3 per cent by the year 2020. There is absolutely no reason to be against these sources of energy, but there is every reason to be realistic about them. It

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is also necessary to bring about a discussion of these matters not only among environmental constituencies or energy constituencies but in the political constituencies. Such discussion, fortunately, is under way and there seem to be some conclusions which have very broad support. These are: first, that further scientific work is urgently needed in order that more may be learned about the greenhouse effect; secondly, that even in the absence of full knowledge measures to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases, such as the chlorofluorocarbons, methane and carbon dioxide, must be taken; and thirdly, that present levels of carbon dioxide, which are believed to contribute about 50 per cent of the greenhouse effect, must be reduced, and that this calls for a reduction in the burning of fossil fuels, a reduction in the clearing of forests and an increase in afforestation.

Since energy is the lifeblood of our societies and fossil energies form much the largest part of the sources which the world uses, it is understandable that these conclusions are received with alarm. While the International Panel on Climate Change, established by UNEP and the World Meteorological Organization, is wrestling with the causes and consequences of global warming and responses to it, suggestions at the political level have so far been chiefly in the institutional realm. It has been suggested, from the rostrum of the General Assembly, that an international environmental protection council should be created with power to take decisions binding on all States, for instance on responses to the threat of global warming. Another suggestion, which enjoys broad support, is that a framework convention on global warming should be concluded. It is not my task to comment on these proposals except to say that both a council and a convention are but instruments through which joint practical measures can be decided upon and declared. There remains the formidable task of defining and agreeing on these measures, most of which lie in the field of energy policies.

(Mr. Blix, IAEA)

The report on sustainable development which the IAEA has transmitted to the United Nations and which is distributed in document A/44/339/Add.11 claims not that a continued or even expanded use of nuclear power would be a panacea for global warming, but rather that it offers a significant contribution to the world's energy balance almost entirely free of gases causing acid rain and climate change. It suggests that nuclear power needs to be used in combination with energy saving and renewable sources to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases. If the electricity generated by nuclear power last year had been generated by coal, 1,800 million tons of carbon dioxide would have been added to the some 20,000 million tons that are already emitted by the burning of fossil fuels. It is evident, then, what a phasing out of nuclear power would mean in the greenhouse context, and it is evident, too, what an expanded use of nuclear power could do. The conclusion of the World Energy Conference last month offers strong confirmation of this view.

It is gratifying that in the declaration concluding the Paris summit this summer the leaders of Canada, the Federal Republic of Germany, France, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States, and the President of the Commission of European Communities, stated:

"We are committed to maintaining the highest safety standards for nuclear power plants and to strengthening international co-operation in the safe operation of power plants and waste management, and we recognize that nuclear power also plays an important role in limiting output of greenhouse gases."

It is also of interest to note that President Gorbachev, in an interview in July, said the following:

"An opinion has grown in the world, and I share this opinion, that one cannot do without nuclear energy. What place it is to take in our overall electricity production is another question. And, naturally, safety should be guaranteed. But we will not survive without nuclear power."

(Mr. Blix, IAEA)

A vivid illustration of the statement of the Paris summit can be seen in a recent brochure about global warming issued by the French Government. Emissions of carbon dioxide in France for 1973 are given as 450 million tons. In 1985 they were down to 325 million tons, with 110 million tons indicated as having been avoided through energy savings and 140 million tons avoided through the use of nuclear power.

The over-capacity which existed in electricity generation in many industrialized countries is now becoming a thing of the past and decisions on new generating capacity are urgently needed in several countries. It is telling that, despite universal governmental support for conservation and for renewable sources of energy, natural gas and coal appear as the major alternatives to nuclear power in industrialized countries. Owing to insufficient infrastructures, limited electric grids or insufficient personnel resources, most developing countries have no other significant choices than fossil fuels, and hydro-power where available. It should be noted, however, that they have a considerable interest in industrialized countries' relying more on nuclear power, as otherwise an increased demand by these countries for coal, oil and gas is likely to contribute to raising the prices of fossil fuels.

It is not suggested that the increasing concerns about the environmental consequences of the present level of use of fossil fuels make nuclear power more attractive per se. However, they may perhaps alert the public to the reality that all energy options have some problems and that a narrow focusing on problems connected with nuclear power must give way to an examination of all available options from a variety of viewpoints, notably those of safety, health, environment and cost.

(Mr. Blix, IAEA)

The United Nations system does not have any agency which covers all energy systems and whose task it would be to examine them side by side. The Agency is therefore joining forces with a number of other international organizations, including UNEP, the World Health Organization, the World Meteorological Organization, the World Bank, OECD and the World Energy Conference, to arrange a symposium in which senior experts will examine the consequences to life, health and environment of different ways of generating electricity. Naturally, the whole cycle will be examined: mining, construction, transportation, use of the energy and waste handling. There will also be discussion of how environmental and health issues can be incorporated in planning and decision-making for electricity generation.

(Mr. Blix, IAEA)

Gas explosions, coal-mining accidents, dam failures and global warming do not eliminate the problems associated with the use of nuclear fission, but merely put them in perspective. It is to the reduction or elimination of these problems that the IAEA is devoting a major part of its efforts: to the safe operation of nuclear power plants, the safe disposal of radioactive waste, and non-proliferation. As I have already discussed the Agency's safeguards efforts, I can limit my remarks at this point to the questions of nuclear safety and nuclear waste, which loom large in the public mind. It is realized today that these issues are now international. The physical fall-out from a nuclear accident may be local or regional; the psychological fall-out is global. This has led to much stronger international co-operation to achieve uniformly high standards and general knowledge about best available techniques.

The IAEA nuclear safety standards, the so-called NUSS standards, have been updated and a study has been undertaken of how member countries actually apply them. The Agency's International Nuclear Safety Advisory Group, comprising some of the world's foremost experts in nuclear safety, has issued a set of basic safety principles for nuclear power plants, establishing comprehensive and exacting but realistic safety targets for existing and future plants. These targets, which are more demanding than current regulatory standards, have been well received by the nuclear communities around the world and will undoubtedly exert influence on operators, designers and regulators.

The Agency has continued to assist Governments at their request by sending international expert teams to examine the operational safety of nuclear power plants, called Operational Safety Review Team (OSART). These teams have been invited to practically all States which operate nuclear power and they ensure that managers and operators at visited plants learn about best available procedures and

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methods. In this context I should also mention that all nuclear power plant operators in the world have jointly set up the World Association of Nuclear Operators - or WANO - with the express aim of ensuring that all operators share with each other the rich experience they have and thereby further enhance safety. The IAEA has welcomed this initiative and co-operates with WANO.

Naturally much attention is focused on operational safety, to ensure the good functioning of the nuclear power plants that are at present in operation around the world and the plants that will soon come into operation. Considerable thought and discussion are also devoted, however, to the development of nuclear technology - both that which can be hackfitted into existing plants and that which will give the world new types of nuclear power plants. At the IAEA's General Conference, which took place a few weeks ago, two days of discussion were devoted to the new generation of nuclear power. Several things emerged from this discussion.

First, the vast experience that has been gained from existing reactor types allows for an evolution of these types, simplifying design and operation, enhancing safety, reducing size and allowing standardization. Building as they do on proved and tested technology, these reactors can be available in the first half of the 1990s. They should be competitive with coal-burning power plants and have a construction time of some four years.

Secondly, a number of new reactor designs exist or are emerging which differ considerably from the currently used types. All of them are smaller, some are modular and, rather than requiring computer-steered or human action for safety in anomalous situations, they often rely on natural forces such as gravity. Since the technology of these reactors has often not been tested, they may in many cases have to be built first as prototypes, from which experience can be gained. A way of

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reducing the cost of development would be for several countries and industrial suppliers to share the expenses of designing and building a prototype. Whether such internationalization would be possible for a technology development that may have a very early commercial use is as yet an open question. In the work towards a fusion reactor, internationalization has been highly successful in the first conceptual design phase of the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor - or ITER - project carried out under IAEA auspices. Here, however, commercial use is a number of decades away. Around the turn of the century the new types of fission reactors might be available for standardized production. It is very likely that some of these types may also suit the smaller grids and weaker infrastructures of developing countries.

The third conclusion from the IAEA discussion was that the institutional framework surrounding nuclear technology is as important as, if not more important than, the technology itself. The licensing process must be predictable and reliable, the rate setting for electricity must be such that investment may be profitable, and the social climate must be such that fuel can be transported, spent fuel stored and waste safely disposed of. In other words, not only the hardware of nuclear power but also the software surrounding it must be right for a revival to occur.

I mentioned that the safe disposal of radioactive waste is one of the matters to which the IAEA devotes major attention. The physical and technical aspects of waste disposal have long been the subject of international co-operation and there is no uncertainty in the nuclear communities about the technological ability to achieve safe disposal of all radioactive waste, including high-level waste. By "safe disposal" is meant methods that will expose neither present nor future generations to any significant additional radiation. What makes it possible technically and economically to handle safely and dispose of all waste that arises

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from the nuclear power industry is the limited quantity of this waste. All the electricity generated by nuclear power last year gave rise to only some 7,000 tons of spent nuclear fuel. If the same amount of electricity had been generated instead by the combustion of coal, the released heavy toxic metals alone - including arsenic, cadmium, lead and vanadium - would have amounted to about 100,000 tons. In addition, there would of course have been 1,800 million tons of carbon dioxide and tens of millions of tons of sulphur dioxides and nitrogen oxides even with the best flue gas cleaning equipment available.

The uncertainty that the nuclear power industry faces about waste disposal relates not to waste packages or the existence of geologically suitable disposal sites, but rather to the ability of societies to reach decisions in these matters. The Chairman of the IAEA's International Nuclear Safety Advisory Group succinctly expressed this thought in the following way:

"The 'unsolved' problem of radioactive waste is more political than technical and will require more guts than brains to solve".

If the technical side of the safe disposal of radioactive waste no longer calls for any major international effort, it is nevertheless desirable to reach international consensus on the criteria for such safe disposal. As regards low- and intermediate-level radioactive waste, such criteria have existed for some time already in the IAEA, and I am pleased to report that in September of this year the IAEA Board of Governors unanimously approved international criteria also for the safe disposal of high-level radioactive wastes. Before I leave the subject of nuclear waste I should mention also that, although no case has been found of dumping of nuclear waste in a developing country, a working group in the IAEA can be expected to present within the next year a code of practice that will set stringent conditions for the export of any nuclear wastes.

(Mr. Blix, IAEA)

The IAEA's report to the United Nations on the Agency's activities in support of sustainable development, which I mentioned a while ago, and its annual report which is submitted to the General Assembly demonstrates the considerable extent to which the Agency's activities relating to agriculture, hydrology, veterinary science and industry are in the service of sustainable development. These are also the subject areas which are of interest to the majority of our developing member States and in which most of the Agency's resources for technical assistance are spent.

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Let me mention only two specific examples of current interest. The first is a major project with Brazil in which nuclear techniques play a key role in the investigation of the current impacts on ecology and climate in the Brazilian Amazon. The second example is in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, where the New World screw-worm was recently discovered for the first time outside the American continents. If allowed to spread it could become a devastating pest in Africa. The IAEA will co-operate with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in the use of the sterile insect technique in an effort to eradicate the screw-worm from North Africa. This technique relies on mass releases of radiation-sterilized male flies and has been successful in eradicating the screw-worm from the United States of America and most of Mexico.

I have earlier reported to the General Assembly about the successful regional co-operation programmes which the IAEA has promoted in South Asia, the Far East and Latin America. It is particularly welcome that the climate of South-South co-operation has been prominent in these programmes. We expect that a similar regional co-operation programme for Africa will soon follow.

I cannot conclude this report without calling the attention of the General Assembly to the continuous deterioration in the conditions of employment of staff in the professional and higher categories. Let me give the Assembly but one example. The take-home pay of P-4, step V, staff in Vienna has decreased by about 7.4 per cent over the period 1984-1989. Taking into account inflation, the loss of purchasing power is as high as 17 per cent. It would indeed be very regrettable if the effectiveness of the international civil service could not be preserved at a time when the scope for international co-operation is rapidly widening and growing demands are being placed on the members of secretariats. A comprehensive solution must be found. May I add that the morale and integrity of staff are not boosted by reports about such practices by member States as making supplementary payments to

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their own nationals. May I also add that our inability to maintain salaries and related entitlements at competitive levels is already creating recruitment difficulties in an agency such as the IAEA where excellent engineers and scientists are needed.

The international climate has improved very much in the last few years.

Within the framework of the IAEA, member States are intensifying their co-operation on a broad front: the safe operation of nuclear power and safe handling of nuclear waste; the use of nuclear techniques in the service of sustainable development and the expansion; and further improvement of the Agency's safeguards to verify the exclusively peaceful use of nuclear installations. Let me end by expressing the hope that there will be more such peaceful installations to safeguard and fewer military nuclear installations. The Agency's double function is to promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and to contribute to the efforts to prevent the further spread of nuclear weapons. In both regards, I am pleased to tell the Assembly, there is full employment of the Agency's capacity.

Let me conclude with special thanks to the Government of Austria, which is a most helpful host to the IAEA and to several other organizations of the United Nations family.

The PRESIDENT: I call on the representative of Japan to introduce draft resolution A/44/L.18.

Mr. KAGAMI (Japan): It is a great pleasure for me to open the debate on the Agency's report by thanking the Director General, Mr. Hans Blix, for his statement, in which he ably introduced the report and clearly illustrated the tasks and priorities of the Agency. There is no doubt that the Agency has successfully fulfilled its significant mission, over a period of more than 30 years, as a technical and universal organization to promote the peaceful uses of nuclear

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energy, while contributing to nuclear non-proliferation. Aware of the Agency's important role, my delegation wishes to confirm again Japan's continued support for the Agency and its various programmes and activities in the development of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Noting the twentieth anniversary of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) last year and the upcoming Fourth Review Conference of the NPT next year, my delegation wishes to take this opportunity to emphasize the central importance of the Treaty in preventing nuclear proliferation. Japan strongly hopes that the universality of the NPT régime will be further expanded and that the effective implementation of safeguards will be secured. In this regard, China's accession to the Agency's voluntary submission Treaty is an important step; it means that now all the nuclear-weapon States have accepted the Agency's safeguards system. Moreover, my delegation is pleased to learn that Viet Nam has recently concluded a safeguards agreement with the Agency; we believe this to be a significant development for the enhancement of the credibility of the Agency's safeguards system.

With regard to developments at the recent IAEA General Conference, my delegation appreciates the broad support that was expressed for the Agency's programmes and the adoption of resolutions pertaining to key areas of the global development of nuclear energy, particularly in matters related to nuclear safety, waste management and advanced power plants.

Global environment problems were taken up in various forums, such as the Ministerial Board Conference of the International Energy Agency (IEA) held in May this year, and the summit meeting in July of the seven industrialized countries. The importance of nuclear energy as an energy source which does not result in carbon-dioxide emissions was reaffirmed, especially in connection with the

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greenhouse effect. Japan favours the Agency's ongoing activities in matters related to the environment, specifically in the areas of nuclear safety, radiological protection and nuclear-waste management.

In order to promote more smoothly the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, it is imperative to gain the understanding and co-operation of the public. To this end, and in the hope that the Agency will carry out comprehensive activities to deepen public understanding of the necessity for and safety of nuclear energy, Japan has decided to make a special contribution for such activities this year.

As Japan has assumed the chairmanship of the Agency's Board of Governors in Vienna, I have the honour, on behalf of Venezuela and Czechoslovakia, the other members of the Bureau, and of Japan, of introducing draft resolution A/44/L.18, entitled "Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency". The draft resolution is the product of close consultations among interested member countries in both Vienna and New York and follows to a large extent the format and text of earlier resolutions adopted by the General Assembly under this item, with some additions in the preambular part reflecting recent IAEA nuclear safety activities.

In operative paragraphs 1 and 2, of the draft resolution the General Assembly takes note of the report of the Agency and affirms its confidence in the role of the application of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

In operative paragraph 3 of the draft resolution, the Assembly

"Urges all States to strive for effective and harmonious international co-operation in carrying out the work of the Agency, pursuant to its statute; in promoting the use of nuclear energy and the application of the necessary measures to strengthen further the safety of nuclear installations and to minimize risks to life, health and the environment; in strengthening technical assistance and co-operation for developing countries; and in ensuring the effectiveness and efficiency of the Agency's safeguards system".

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In operative paragraph 4, the Secretary-General is requested to transmit to the Director-General of the Agency the records of the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly relating to the Agency's activities.

We are confident that, in keeping with tradition and in view of the importance of the matters contained in this draft resolution, the General Assembly will adopt it by consensus.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.