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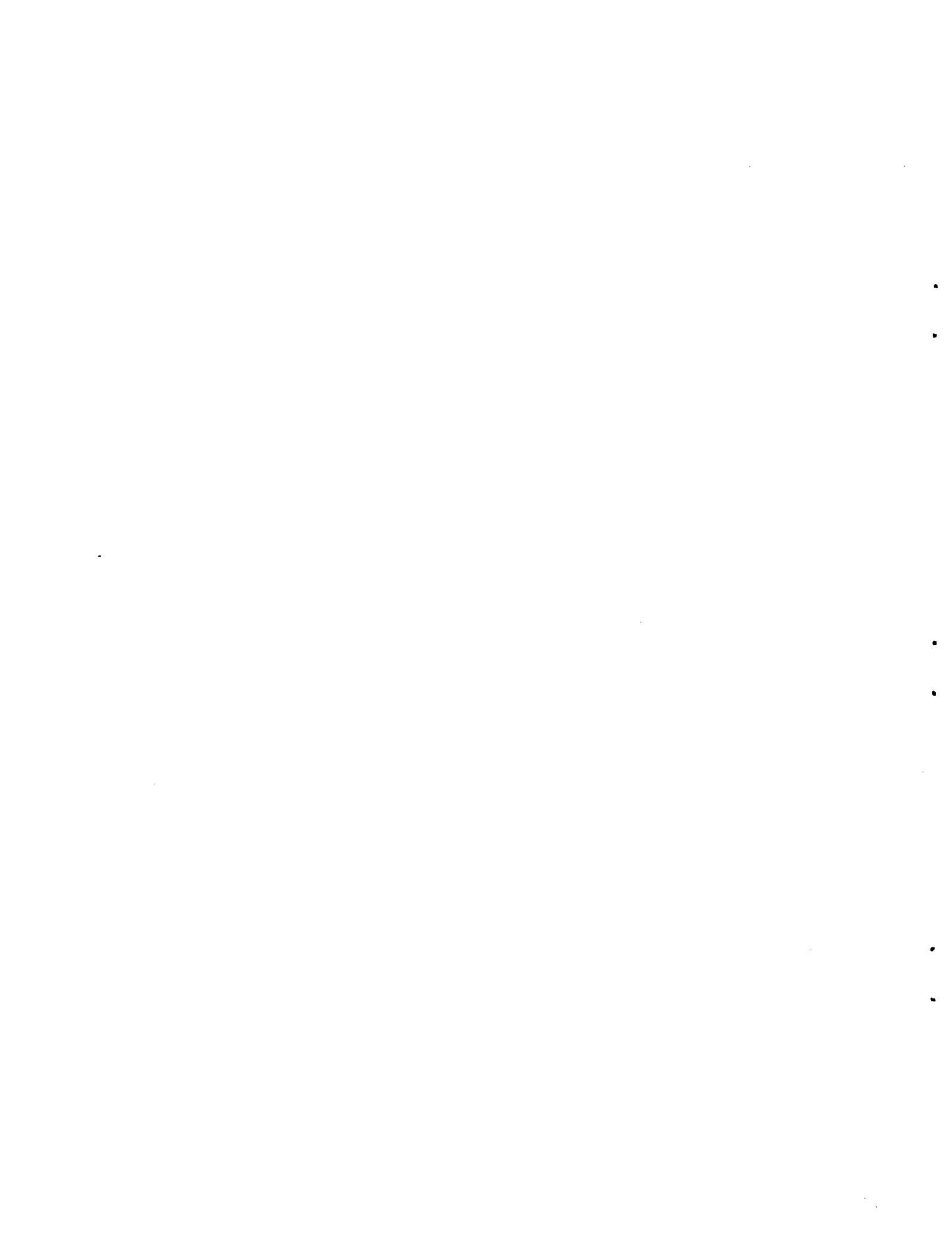


ACTION TAKEN ON CDCC RESOLUTIONS AND THOSE
OF ECLAC AND OTHER UNITED NATIONS BODIES



UNITED NATIONS

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Given the sheer volume of documentation put out by the United Nations system, and mindful of the fact that a number of CDCC member countries operate small missions and/or Ministries of Foreign Affairs while others are not represented at the United Nations, the secretariat takes the opportunity to bring to the attention of Member States any resolution, document or statement emanating from the United Nations system that may have some effect both on the implementation of its work programme and on the development efforts of Member States.

In that context, the secretariat would like to draw the attention of Member States to the following resolutions of both CDCC with respect to action taken during the year and those of the United Nations system on which some action is needed.

A PROGRAMME OF ACTION IN SUPPORT OF
SMALL ISLAND STATES

At the eleventh session of the Caribbean Development and Co-operation Committee (CDCC), the Committee adopted an Action Plan for Small Island Developing Countries (Document LC/CAR/G.259/Rev.1). This document has been circulated to agencies with an interest in assisting to small island developing countries and comments have been received on it.

Additionally, as suggested by the Committee, the document was sent to UNCTAD to form part of the preparatory document for the proposed meeting on this subject to be held in 1990.

The secretariat collaborated with CARICOM last year in preparing a document on the question of small island developing countries and represented the ECLAC system at a meeting held in Malta under the auspices of UNCTAD. The Commonwealth Secretariat, too has undertaken much work and held a number of meetings on the question in past years.

With the added impetus and interest in this topic and prompted by the CARICOM proposals, the General Assembly of the United Nations has agreed to hold a Conference of High-Level Experts on the subject, again under the auspices of UNCTAD, in May 1990 in New York.

This high level meeting will address and analyze the disabilities of island developing countries and should present proposals for national and international measures to reduce the economic difficulties.

While there have been many papers presented on and studies made of the problems, vulnerability and viability of small island States, the arguments have not been presented in a manner which shows that these disadvantages and difficulties are peculiar and particular to island developing States. Efforts must, therefore, be pursued to convince the international community that these States are deserving of special attention, since their problems are of a greater magnitude than those of other developing countries, even including those classified as "Least Developed".

It would seem necessary, then, that research be undertaken to develop a series of arguments and criteria that can be used effectively to show the difference between the situation of small island developing countries and that of developing countries in general, when the case is being presented for special consideration and attention by the international community and donor countries.

Additionally, since ECLAC/CDCC, along with ESCAP, represents the Commission with the largest concentration of small island developing member countries, the issue should figure continuously on the CDCC agenda and ECLAC/CDCC should take a leading role in the promoting development projects and programmes, in conjunction with other agencies of the United Nations system and other regional and international organizations, in order to address the special problems of small island developing countries.

CDCC should, therefore, work along with the regional organizations, such as CARICOM and OECS, to assist Member States in preparing for the proposed meeting in May 1990 and for further action at the General Assembly of the United Nations to ensure implementation of any plan of action or assistance agreed to at the special session.

The Committee may wish to direct the secretariat as to the specific activities it may undertake within that context.

RESOLUTION 23 (XI): POLICIES ON HARMFUL WASTES
IN THE ENVIRONMENT

By resolution 23(XI) regarding "Policies on Harmful Wastes in the Environment", the Committee requested the secretariat to present, in co-ordination with UNEP, a report on damage caused by the disposal of polluting substances and the use of toxic substances by enterprises of some developed countries in several CDCC Member States.

Following this resolution, the secretariat, within the context of its existing Memorandum of Understanding with UNEP's Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (ROLAC) in Mexico, secured the co-operation of UNEP through ROLAC. To avoid duplication of efforts, the secretariat also sought the co-operation of PAHO and the CARICOM Secretariat.

Subsequent to the resolution, the CARICOM Ministers with responsibility for environmental matters identified solid and liquid waste management; management of toxic and hazardous substances, including the control of agri-chemical residues; and the dumping of extraregional, hazardous and toxic wastes in the region as priority issues and problems (see the Port-of-Spain Accord on the Management and Conservation of the Caribbean Environment).

Based on information available at the secretariat as well as information received from UNEP and other regional and international organizations and NGOs, a preliminary, initial assessment indicates that:

(a) Although many waste importation schemes have been proposed to Caribbean governments, most have been rejected. While not strictly illegal in the sense that some form of agreement was attempted with governments, none of the proposed schemes would have satisfied Article 4 of the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, which does not allow the export of hazardous wastes to countries where there are reasons to believe that such wastes would not be managed in an environmentally sound manner.

(b) As a consequence of its illegality, there is little or no documented information on dumping (i.e. importation without prior government consent) of hazardous wastes in the region.

(c) Wastes are specific by industry or sector and there is so far no evidence that a transnational corporation active in a particular sector generates more hazardous wastes or uses more toxic substances than national companies engaged in similar activities.

(d) Within the region the concern about hazardous wastes is not limited to their importation, but increasingly includes all aspects of hazardous waste management.

(e) There is little information on the importation, generation and management of hazardous wastes in the region and there is no consistency in the information available from many government and private sector agencies. In an effort to overcome the information constraints, the secretariat and UNEP, with inputs from PAHO, CEHI and the Trinidad and Tobago Institute of Marine Affairs, designed a questionnaire which attempts to answer three questions:

(a) Which are the types and volumes of hazardous wastes in the region and which activities generate them?

(b) How are hazardous wastes being managed? and

(c) How significant is the legal and illegal trade in hazardous wastes in the region?

The questionnaire was sent to all governments but to date the response has been somewhat disappointing, as completed questionnaires have been received only from Barbados, Grenada, Jamaica, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and the Turks and Caicos Islands. This was too low a rate of response to enable the secretariat to complete a meaningful report on the issue.

The secretariat, therefore, urges those governments which have not already done so to submit completed questionnaires. Following these submissions the secretariat, in conjunction with UNEP, will prepare a report. This report would focus not only on damage caused by international trade in hazardous wastes to the region, but also - and primarily - on mechanisms to guide national authorities in the establishment of effective management strategies and sound waste-handling and treatment practices.

FOURTH UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT DECADE
AND THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

United Nations Resolution 43/182

By resolution 43/182, the General Assembly agreed to the adoption of an International Development Strategy (IDS) within the context of the Fourth United Nations Development Decade and the convening in 1990 of a special session of the General Assembly devoted to international economic co-operation and the reactivation of growth and development.

A Meeting of Government Experts was held in Washington D.C. from 7-8 September 1989 to discuss both these issues. The document entitled "Some Reflection on the Special Session of the General Assembly and the International Development Strategy" resulting from that meeting has been reproduced as ECLAC document LC/L.518 (Sem.51/2) for the information of Member States and to provide some background to the two issues.

Additionally, document A/AC 232/3 of 30 May 1989, entitled "Report of the Secretary General on preparation of an International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development - (1991-2000)" and document LC/G.1569 (CEG.16/2) of 28 June 1989 entitled "Report of the Sixteenth Session of the Committee of High-Level Government Experts (CEGAN)" which contains some basic guidelines of the Latin American and Caribbean countries for formulation of IDS are also brought to the attention of CDCC member countries.

In the IDS document on the Third United Nations Development Decade, a specific reference to small island developing countries was inserted, through the initiative of a number of Caribbean countries.

Every effort should be made to ensure that such reference, if not expanded, should at least be retained in the new IDS document.

A. INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AT THE END OF THE 1980S

In 1989, the OECD economies are registering their seventh year of steady growth, whereas great areas of the developing world - including the great majority of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean - are suffering from long-standing stagnation or even setbacks in their standard of living. At least part of the unfavourable evolution of these latter countries is attributable to the forms of interaction between their economies and the rest of the world. The developing countries are therefore seeking various forums for examining the forms and consequences of this interaction and defining new directions for international economic co-operation.

From the point of view of the developing nations, navigating the turbulent waters of the international economy has become a much more complex and risky venture than in the past. The economic situation of the 1980s has been characterized by high real interest rates, instability of the exchange rates of the main currencies, severe difficulties in obtaining fresh capital and obstacles in gaining access to the markets of the developed nations, all because of the public policies applied by the latter countries. The developing countries have also been adversely affected by the sharp drop in the export prices of most basic commodities and raw materials; and by the internationalization of the capital markets, which, far from providing them with greater resources, have tended to become poles of attraction for absorbing changes which are affecting the whole system of comparative advantages in world trade. There has even been a tendency towards the disappearance of some of the measures adopted in previous decades by the industrialized nations in order to alleviate the disadvantages suffered by the developing countries within the context of the negative phenomena described above. Examples of such now-imperilled measures of assistance are the various preferential tariff systems and international agreements for defending the prices of basic commodities (sugar, cocoa and coffee, among others).¹ The overall effects of these phenomena are expressed in quantitative terms by the considerable mass of financial resources which the developing world in general, and the Caribbean in particular, has transferred to the developed world since 1982.

There is also a great gulf between the different ways of perceiving the causes of this situation. The developed world tends to assign most of the responsibility to the "unsuitable" or "mistaken" economic policies of the developing countries

¹ Although the Caribbean Basin Initiative of the United States of America, which is covered by the "Caribbean Basin Recovery Act", represents a limited exception to this rule.

themselves, whereas in the latter it is considered that the negative factors originating in the international economy represent the main obstacle to reactivation. These widely different perceptions have undoubtedly made the dialogue more difficult. The statements of the developing countries necessarily tend to sound like denunciations: their proposals are aimed at obtaining greater even-handedness in international economic relations and they put the emphasis on the measures that should be taken by the countries with the greatest weight in the international economy, that is to say, the developed countries. In contrast, the statements of the developed nations, which in recent years have even taken on a markedly doctrinaire tone, criticize most of the developing countries for alleged shortcomings in the way they handle their economic policy and consequently they place the emphasis on domestic measures that they claim the latter should adopt in order to take advantage of the potential offered by a rapidly expanding international economy.

In recent times, a matter of deep concern for the developing countries has been the fact that the whole concept of their development seems to have lost priority among the governments and public opinion of the industrialized countries. This is partly because there are other topics which have acquired greater stature on the international agenda of the latter countries: peace, the economic relations among the main developed countries, defence of the environment, the struggle against terrorism and measures to deal with drug trafficking. It is also partly due to the fact that the climate of idealism which existed in some countries in previous decades has given way to what some observers call greater "realism".² It is noteworthy, for example, that at the recent summit meeting of the seven main developed economies, held in Paris in mid-July, the Heads of State generally seemed to be satisfied with the world economic situation and their references to development of the Third World were relatively low-key.³

In short, the growing disparities mentioned above - both at the level of concrete facts and at that of perceptions - are added to the urgent need to restore economic development as one of the great objectives of the international community and taken together,

² Arthur Schlesinger Jr., The Cycles of American History, Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1986.

³ The Economic Declaration issued at the so-called "Summit of the Arch" has 56 points, of which only four are devoted to the general problems of development, another four to the situation of the poorest countries and three others to the debt strategy of the highly indebted countries. It is at least admitted, however, that among the three main challenges facing the world economy is the problem of how to secure a better incorporation of the developing countries into the distribution of world economic benefits.

they amply justify the resumption of a constructive dialogue between the countries of the North and the South, or, if you prefer, between the developed and developing countries. It may be added that in recent times, actions at the multilateral level in the sphere of development have been markedly weakened. The main developed powers tend to explore their mutual economic relations within the framework of restricted forums such as the Group of Five and the Group of Seven and to give preference to bilateral means in their negotiations with the developing countries. When they do resort to multilateral agencies, they show a marked preference for those where they have the highest degree of control: the forums of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in the financial field and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) in the field of trade.⁴ To put the matter in plain language, there are more than enough reasons for resuming the North-South dialogue, but for one of the sides involved, this dialogue is apparently not of any great interest, at least within the framework of the United Nations General Assembly.

⁴ By way of illustration, it may be recalled that the same summit meeting referred to in the preceding paragraph rejected the idea of a new meeting between Heads of State of the North and the South, designed to resume the dialogue which has been interrupted ever since the meeting held in Cancun, Mexico, in 1981.

B. THE SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY: MEANS FOR BRINGING BACK THE TOPIC OF DEVELOPMENT IN A MULTILATERAL CONTEXT

In their efforts to restore and revivify the topic of development in multilateral forums, the developing countries proposed two initiatives to the General Assembly at its forty-third session and the Assembly decided to give its backing to these efforts, which are interrelated from the formal, political and substantive points of view. The first of these measures is reflected in the General Assembly's intention to adopt an International Development Strategy (IDS) for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade.⁵ The second measure is reflected in the decision to hold a special General Assembly session in 1990, devoted to international economic co-operation and the reactivation of growth and development.⁶

There is as yet no consensus about the content or the precise scope of either of these exercises, or about the linkages that should exist between them. Progress is being made in this direction, however. With regard to the International Development Strategy, an Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole, has been set up to prepare it. This Committee has already met on two occasions, under the chairmanship of Mr Gamani Corea (Sri Lanka). In the case of the special session, an intergovernmental preparatory committee has been set up under the chairmanship of Ambassador Constantine Zepos (Greece). The views of the United Nations Secretariat on these two exercises are set forth in two corresponding notes.⁷ The

⁵ Resolution 43/182

⁶ Decision 43/460

⁷ See Preparation of an International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade (1991-2000). Report of the Secretary-General (A/AC.232/3), New York, 30 May 1989 and Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to International Economic Co-operation and in Particular to the Revitalization of the Economic Growth and Development of the Developing Countries. Preliminary Outline by the Secretary-General, New York, 12 May 1989.

delegations of Latin America and the Caribbean, for their part, have also prepared a reference document containing the region's views on the IDS,⁸ although no such action has yet been taken with regard to the special session.

An institutional forum has thus been proposed for a new round of consultations, dialogues, negotiations and agreements on the future evolution of international economic relations and the role of international economic co-operation. The two exercises in question are aimed at reactivating the growth of the economically underdeveloped countries and both of them seek to strengthen the United Nations as an international co-operation forum. The preparatory work which is in progress will not only provide guidelines on the content and scope of the special session and the IDS for the Fourth Development Decade, but will also lead to a reappraisal of the role of the United Nations in the economic and social sphere and, possibly, to guidelines for the redefinition of the respective responsibilities of the developed and developing countries in an increasingly complex world economy.

The initial reactions of the developed countries to these two initiatives show some differences. One of the main countries participating in the Group of Seven has displayed some resistance to these proposals. This fact, together with the various reservations expressed by other developed countries, makes one wonder whether the developing countries will be able to convince the industrialized countries that the exercises in progress would be potentially beneficial for all the parties involved in the negotiations. What has been happening in the political sphere in the United Nations in recent years shows that this multilateral forum is of unquestionable value when the main actors on the international scene participate fully in it and endow it with the necessary powers. There is no reason why this highly positive experience should not be repeated in the economic and social sphere, provided the main member countries show the political will which is essential for this. In view of the obvious climate of resistance in certain developed countries, however, one must harbour some doubts as to this possibility. The traditional arguments in favour of international co-operation (ethical and humanitarian considerations; the mutual benefits available to both developed and developing countries if the latter achieve faster

⁸ See ECLAC, Report of the Sixteenth Session of the Committee of High-Level Government Experts (CEGAN), LC/G.1569 (CEG.16/2), Santiago, Chile, 28 June 1989 and especially Part Two "Basic Guidelines of the Latin American and Caribbean Countries for the Process of Formulation of the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade".

economic growth; geopolitical and national security considerations) seem to have lost their force in the eyes of the public opinion and government authorities of the industrialized countries, especially in periods of fiscal difficulties.⁹

In the face of this problem, the countries of the Group of 77 seem to be opting for a more flexible strategy. Firstly, the structural correction of the trade, financial, monetary and technological systems at the international level with a view to sharing the benefits of the expansion of the world economy more evenly among the countries, seems to be becoming a longer-term aspiration, tending to be concentrated, in the short and medium term, in demands of partial scope in a limited number of key sectors of the international economy. Secondly, the developing countries would be willing to include on the agenda some topics of special interest for the developed countries, such as environmental considerations, for example. Thirdly, it is recognized that the jurisdiction of other specialized multilateral organs makes it essential to emphasize the interdependence between the negotiating forums of the United Nations, on the one hand, and those corresponding to GATT and the multilateral finance agencies on the other. This interdependence therefore means that decisions should not be concentrated in the General Assembly if this involves the removal of specialized topics from their natural institutional setting.

With regard to the topics which must needs form part of a renewed North-South dialogue - and should therefore be dealt with both in the IDS and in the special session - many different ideas have been put forward.¹⁰ On the one hand, there are some unavoidable aspects connected with international trade and finance: avoiding practices that restrict international trade, ensuring the access of the non-traditional products of the developing countries to the markets of the developed nations, securing special treatment for trade in basic commodities, proposing lasting solutions for the problem of the external indebtedness of the developing countries with the heaviest debt burden and increasing the flow of official

⁹ In this respect, it may be noted that a new phenomenon which appeared at the above-mentioned Paris summit meeting is the emergence of an East-West economic co-operation axis which is competing with the traditional North-South axis for the scant resources available for this purpose. This fact is compounded by the smaller geopolitical threat that the OECD countries now appear to perceive in the underdevelopment of the South.

¹⁰ See the items mentioned in paragraph 2 above.

finance to the developing countries. Among the specific topics of strategic importance which have been frequently mentioned are those of the reduction of poverty, forms of development which are sustainable from the environmental point of view, food security and the integration of women into the development process.¹¹

Finally, it is necessary to clarify the linkages between the special session to be held in April 1990 and the arrangement for the preparation of the IDS, which is expected to come into force as from 1 January 1991. Both these initiatives share a common subject-area, of course, although one or the other might place emphasis on different themes. It has also been suggested that the special session might give priority to short-term problems, while the IDS would deal rather with medium and long-term matters. Another possibility is that the special session might serve as the preparatory stage for the work of the IDS and might therefore provide not only a general background (a consensus regarding the "diagnosis" of the world economy), but also policy guidelines for a new Strategy for the Fourth Development Decade. Yet another option - which however does not rule out the foregoing - is that the special session might reach agreement on the implementation of institutional mechanisms which, together, would propose to the General Assembly substantive changes in the organization of the world economy, while the Strategy would define a few objectives considered to be of decisive importance for resuming the process of development in the short and medium term.

¹¹ See ECLAC, Preparation of a Third International Development Strategy. Note by the Secretariat (LC/L.494(PLN.20/4)), Santiago, Chile, 30 January 1989, p.6.

RESOLUTION 26(XI) ROLE AND FUNCTIONING OF CDCC

In operative paragraph 1 of this resolution, the Committee agreed that the proposals of the Minister of External Affairs and International Trade of Trinidad and Tobago should form the basis of an on-going review of the programmes and functioning of CDCC and in para 2. requests the Monitoring Committee to meet and report to Member States before the twelfth session of CDCC.

The Monitoring Committee met on two occasions to discuss the issues and its reports are presented in document LC/CAR/G.271 and LC/CAR/G.277.

During this period also, the Chairman of CDCC has been in communication with the Executive Secretary of ECLAC. The text of the latter's reply appears as an appendix to the Report of the Second Meeting of the Monitoring Committee.

In addition, it would be instructive to look again at Resolution 13(VII) - Functioning of the CDCC secretariat - adopted at the seventh session of CDCC, at which a number of similar and other proposals were made, to ascertain how these have been dealt with and their effects on the present situation.

It is hoped that with the documents mentioned above as background, a meaningful discussion can be had on this issue and some concrete decisions taken in order to facilitate the Committee in the fulfilment of its mandates and objectives.

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