

their strength. This strength lies in unity".

What the Arab group did not discuss is the financing of a development fund to help scientific and technological activities in the developing countries. Whether Saudi Arabia and other oil-rich Arab states will back such a fund to the tune of \$65 million a year for the first two years of the fund, as some suggested, they did not decide — though there is some indication that Saudi Arabia will give in to the US pressure. The Saudi aid to developing countries granted through the Saudi Development Fund, far exceeds this sum in an average year. The Saudi decision to support the fund, if it is forthcoming, will therefore be in line with their aid policies.

In addition to national efforts in such countries, international cooperation can and should play an important part, the statement says. "For this global and fundamental structural changes are required in the existing distribution of scientific and technological capacities in the world, in order to ensure increase participation by the developing countries in the quest for scientific and technological knowledge."

Ziauddin Sardar

'In everyone's interest' to transfer technology

The transfer of technology is not an issue of necessary conflict between developed and the developing countries, according to Crown Prince Hassan of Jordan, who shoulders the responsibility for social and economic planning in Jordan. Speaking during the general debate of the second plenary meeting at UNCSTD, Prince Hassan said that "despite short term disagreements and apparent disparities, in the long term, technology transfer is in everybody's interest". He warned, however, that technology "is not a commodity which can be copied to exaction. The transferred technology has to be appropriate to the needs of the recipient country".

Many developing countries, said the Prince, lack the basic conditions for the establishment of agencies that promote and enhance technology. Furthermore, technology in the developed countries is based on a particular concept of entrepreneurship — that motivated by economic and commercial considerations. The Prince questioned the desirability of the developing countries adopting such a concept and argued for a "spirit of resourcefulness" or "appropriate entrepreneurship".

The Prince pointed out that at present much aid is channelled towards the poorest members of the Third World, the decisions for granting aid being made on the basis of gross national product (GNP). But there is hardly any relationship, argued the prince, between GNP per capita and the levels of development.

Waldheim attacks 'wasteful consumerism'

A major task of UNCSTD is to help generate universal acceptance of the need to direct the use of humanity's scientific and technological potential to constructive ends, Dr Kurt Waldheim, Secretary General of the United Nations, told the opening session of the conference on Monday morning.

In a speech which reflected many of the ideas put forward by the conference secretariat during the preparatory process, Dr Kurt Waldheim singled out three areas in which he claimed much of human ingenuity and innovative ability had been misdirected into areas not beneficial for mankind: military technology; a type of economic growth which ignored damage to the environment or the social and cultural fabric; and the support of "wasteful consumerism in a world where famine and malnutrition are tragically present".

Another motivating factor behind the conference was the enormous imbalance in research and development being undertaken internationally, he said, resulting in developing countries having to depend excessively on imported technology. This hampered the growth of indigenous skills more harmonious with local conditions and social or economic needs.

"This becomes a self-generating process and breeds over-all dependence. The starting point for breaking this circle is to enable the developing countries to gather and share the scientific knowledge so as to enhance their technological capabilities and accelerate their development", he said.

Talking of the brain drain, the Prince emphasised that the human dimensions of the problem, "which have a direct bearing on technological and scientific development in both labour-exporting and labour-importing countries", are often overlooked.

Crown Prince Hassan suggested that the labour exporting countries should turn the situation to their advantage through policies that aim to utilise the experience of their nationals working abroad. "These should take the form of annual feedback programmes, where highly trained scientists and technologists working abroad would come back to their countries for varying lengths of time".

Making an obvious reference to the proposed global development fund, the prince said that "we have to be careful before we decide to create yet another international agency providing yet another variation on the existing manner of solving an already identified problem".

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Three elements were crucial in designing a successful programme of action: a conscious political will, increased funding for science and technology at the national and international levels, and the institution of an efficient mechanism for this purpose. Finally, directly echoing words used on many occasions by conference Secretary-General Mr Frank da Costa, Dr Waldheim said that the real divisions in the world were not between the north and south or east and west, but between those in favour of a passive continuation of the status quo, "which is prejudicial to all" and those in favour of dynamism, changes and innovation. "Let this conference signal the fact that science and technology can unite the developed and the developing countries in the common cause of the world's future as a whole", Dr Waldheim said. □



Britain opposes creation of new mechanisms

A greater proportion of national and international aid budgets should be devoted to scientific and technological aspects of development, but there is no need at present for new financing mechanisms or institutional arrangements to do this. Such was the main message of the British delegation's contribution to the UNCSTD plenary debate on Wednesday morning.

Mr Neil Marten, UK Minister for Overseas Development, told the assembled delegates that, if developing countries so wished, Britain would be prepared to devote an increasing share of its bilateral aid programme to scientific and technological activities in the Third World. He also announced that Britain is considering plans to set up a technology transfer centre to act as a general switch-