

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”.

Ziauddin Sardar

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-



board for enquiries about British technology.

However on the two main issues which are likely to dominate negotiations during UNCSTD — the Group of 77's proposal for a new international financing system for science and technology, and for a new co-ordinating body within the UN — the British response was lukewarm at best, reflecting the position of other EEC countries.

Nor did the British show any keenness to discuss the heated topic of technology transfer or the conduct of multinational companies, and area where encouragement and support of existing channels and procedures is preferred to greater regulation and control.

"Experience shows the advisability of making progress through continuing change based on tested practices and procedures, rather than embarking on abrupt changes of direction. We have serious doubts about the value of any new financial mechanisms or the separation of funds for science and technology for development", Mr Marten said.

"Given that aid budgets are limited, the separation of funds is likely to drain off the resources available for development into different pockets. This would make it difficult for individual recipient governments to set their own priorities clearly and would lead to inflexible and inefficient programmes." □

## Danes urge the need for compromise

In one of the most direct statements made on the opening afternoon of the conference, the head of the Danish delegation said that it was "imperative" that a compromise be reached on various proposals for financial resources to support greater scientific and technological efforts in developing countries, if the conference was to be made a success.

"My country is definitely prepared to carry its fair and proportionate share of the financing of science and technology" the Danish representative, Mme Lise Ostergaard told the conference, an indirect reference to proposals for a new fund largely financed by the developed countries.

● A further pledge for additional financial support came from the Swedish delegation. Pointing out that Sweden is already one of the few countries which contributes more than the 0.7% of its gross national product to international development previously agreed as a global target, the head of the Swedish delegation said that agreement had already been reached on a number of recommendations which, for their implementation, demanded increased financial resources.

Sweden was prepared "together with other countries and on the basis of a fair burden-sharing formula, to make a substantial increase of our contributions in support of international cooperation in the field of science and technology.

## US supports 'reasonable ventures'

Speaking on the opening afternoon of UNCSTD, the chairman of the US delegation announced that the US was prepared to join "reasonable ventures" to strengthen worldwide scientific and technological cooperation.

This theme was echoed in a message from President Carter to the conference, in which he said that the US was willing to support "all practical endeavours" to help overcome problems such as food scarcity, the energy crisis, and the population explosion.

Although no direct comment was made in either pronouncement, the choice of words was partly a response to some of the proposals contained in the draft plan of action submitted to the conference by the Group of 77 — such as the setting up of a new international financing mechanism totalling \$2 billion by 1985 and \$2 billion by 1990 — which has previously been characterised by US negotiators as being "unrealistic".

US officials have not made it clear what they would support as a more "practical" alternative. However they indicate that the executive branch would be prepared to look favourably in the order of \$1.50 million over the next two years, although pointing out that no firm commitment to such a contribution can be made without the support of Congress.

In his speech to the conference plenary session, Father Theodore Hesburg, president of Notre Dame University and chairman of the US delegation, said that the global economy was not working as well as it should for either the poor or the rich countries, and that the patterns of worldwide technology generation, diffusion and utilisation lacked the cohesion that would incorporate and benefit the majority of people. "We have not yet found the right mix between scientific excellence and needed technologies" he said.

It was an imperfect global economic order that did not fully benefit from the

"robust and dynamic role" of international business and industry, and had not yet found "the right balance between the interests of private enterprise and of the developing countries" he said — an implicit recognition of the need to negotiate on issues such as the conditions for the international transfer of technology.

"The task of this conference is not one of restating the errors of the past but of weaving science and technology into the fabric of the future, the fabric of development. We need collaboration, not confrontation", Father Hessburgh said.

Among the specific proposals were that the US would take the initiative to bring together the operators of remote sensing satellites as systems. In addition, it was necessary for developing countries to have access to the leverage provided by scientific and technological information, if more just and equitable patterns of scientific and technological cooperation were to be achieved.

Referring to President Carter's description of science and technology for development as a "joint venture", Father Hessburgh said that the challenges faced by developed and developing countries alike made such a joint venture a global imperative. "The US notes, therefore, with pleasure the declaration of Bucharest (see page 620) in which the developing countries reaffirmed their willingness to work with a sense of urgency to assure the success of this conference", he said.

Science and technology should be used to help bring forth a threefold harvest: in the realm of reason, the realm of reality and the realm of rights. Efforts made in the real of reason were not a zero-sum game, in which the gains of those who seek equality and parity would automatically register as a loss for those who possess more. "In this realm we can prove the mutual benefits thesis — that advances in any part of the world are for the benefit of all", he said.

David Dickson

## Canada pledges increase in joint projects

The Canadian government has agreed substantially to increase the budget of the International Development Research Center (IDRC) to allow it to support a joint projects between scientists in Canada and research groups in developing countries.

Addressing the UNCSTD plenary session on Tuesday, M. Martial Asselin, recently-appointed secretary of state for the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), said that although the precise amount of funds allocated to this purpose is yet to be decided, it would be in the order of the one-third of IDRC's current budget — ie about \$12 to \$14 million, an amount equivalent to 1% of Canada's total foreign aid.

Although under its initial terms of reference, IDRC is permitted to fund joint ventures of this nature — which from the Canadian side could involve university research groups or scientists from federal or provincial laboratories — the vast majority of the center's current funds are spent solely on research efforts in the developing countries.

The new commitment will, according to the Canadian Government, provide a direct way of linking up the needs of developing countries with Canada's own scientific and technological capacities. It has yet to be decided whether there will be an expansion Canada's foreign aid budget new year. □