

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. □