technical language, quotas, SDR, GSP (?) and so forth, it is aware that behind this jargon lies the undeniable fact that poverty is becoming more acute and international co-operation is decreasing.

The rich countries, however, categorically state that UNCTAD is only a table for consultation. They come to hear complaints and to state their good intentions, which never materialize. In fact, the gap between an understanding of the development problem and the political will to act is growing ever more conspicuous. When they agree on international trade problems, they immediately add that the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) is the appropriate forum for negotiation; if the problem is monetary reform, it is referred to the International Monetary Fund (IMF). No one can deny the advantages that these two organizations have secured for industrialized countries since as far back as the Bretton Woods Agreements; nevertheless the interests of the underdeveloped countries are not represented in them. It is even apparent that the poor countries have derived no major benefit from those organizations. We need only note the use of the special drawing rights (SDR). The SDR were created by the IMF at the request of the Group of Ten, "the club of the rich"; the intention was simply to increase world liquidity and to oil the trade machinery. After three allocations of SDR, 14 industrialized countries had received $6 billion and 120 underdeveloped countries $3 billion. Why two-thirds to 14 countries and one-third to 120 countries? Because the main criteria for allocating SDR are (a) the wealth of the country and (b) its participation in international trade.

It is, therefore, understandable that the problems raised at UNCTAD are referred by the rich countries to GATT and the IMF, organizations created to defend their interests and totally controlled by them.

Disunity in Group

The apparently strong unity of the Group of 77 is showing considerable cracks. Africa maintains ties with European countries that were its absolute masters 15 or 20 years ago. Political independence has not been followed by the desirable economic independence. Today's ties, like those of the colonial era, offer real advantages whose costs are not always visible and measurable.

On the other hand, Latin America, economically dependent on North America and further advanced industrially, lays stress on aspects that are of little interest to Africa. Discussion on the less-developed countries even threatened to break the unity of the Group of 77 (only one Latin American country, Haiti, was included in the list of 25 least-developed countries).

This divergence among the countries of the Group of 77 is often accentuated by the conflict between the interests of the êlite in power in the underdeveloped countries, almost always tied to the interests of the mother country, and the true needs of the second-class population of the country. For example, can a government that systematically denies the franchise to 40 per cent of the population, because it is illiterate, be expected to defend the interests of those second-class people at an international conference? Any defence of such people would be tantamount to self-accusation, and that would be political suicide.

The "rich" countries have approved a series of measures favouring the 25 least-developed countries of the world, although the establishment of a special fund for the "super poor" has been discarded. According to the Secretary-General of UNCTAD, the definition of poor countries and the co-operative measures provided for constitute the highlight of the conference.

The other relatively important gain made at the conference was the approval of a code for the conduct of shipping conferences. This agreement laid the groundwork for more equitable shipping legislation because Third World exporters are given greater power in their negotiations with Western ship-owners, who, until now, have monopolized this field.

The machinery of UNCTAD was strengthened as a result of the resolution to increase the number of members of the Trade and Development Board, which will comprise 68 members (instead of 55), as follows: 21 industrialized countries, 15 African, 14 Asian, including Mainland China, 11 Latin American and seven of the socialist bloc. There was unanimous agreement on co-operation for the development of tourism in the underdeveloped countries, and positive measures are expected in this field. However, the rich countries voted against the most important draft resolutions.

Hence, all indications are that the second development decade is off to a bad start. If the first decade could be described by the Secretary-General of UNCTAD as "the development decade without a development policy", the second runs the risk of being the decade of the credibility gap in international co-operation. One need only analyse the results of the main questions studied by the various committes of UNCTAD.

The conference did not arrive at a co-