

population amounted to 17 million; today the population is believed to number almost 80 million and by the turn of the century it could amount to 110 million. Brazil's population is projected to rise from 130 million today to 180 million by the year 2000. The situation in some African countries is especially disturbing. Some countries, including Kenya and Tanzania, have population growth rates of over 4 per cent, which means a doubling of the population within 17 years. Even more alarming are the projections of population growth in the large cities of some developing countries. While countries with rapid population growth may double their populace in a single generation, their cities are likely to quadruple in size during the same period. Mexico City's 1980 population of 15 million is projected to rise to over 26 million by the year 2000 and that of Sao Paulo, Brazil, from 13 million to 24 million in the same period.

The Committee took note of the difficulty for any country of maintaining sustained per capita growth if the level of population expands faster than economic development.

Low-income Debtor Countries

The debt problems of low-income debtor countries, especially those in Africa, differ substantially from those of the larger, middle-income debtors whose attitudes were well reflected by the Cartagena Consensus. The heads of African governments, focussing mainly on their official debt obligations, put forth a list of specific recommendations on debt to the 1986 UN Special Session on Africa. Among other measures of relief, they urged: multi-year rescheduling with a minimum 15-year repayment period and a minimum five-year grace period with interest rates held to at least current levels; the adjustment of past ODA bilateral loans to the "softer" terms of currently prevailing loans; and total or partial forgiveness of past ODA debt by converting them to grants.

As has been described earlier, on a per capita basis, the debt of the low-income African countries is higher than that of Latin American debtors, their debt has grown faster and their debt service burden is as heavy or heavier. For many of the poorer debtor countries the outlook for the next ten years is bleak, and nowhere is it bleaker than in low-income Africa where even under optimistic assumptions, per capita incomes are projected to decline. In these countries, there is a pressing need for domestic economic policy reforms, yet many of them lack even the most basic infrastructure, as well as the cadre of trained personnel at almost every level in the government, industrial and financial sectors to put it in place.

There are, nonetheless, some actions these poorer debtor countries can take to try gradually to improve their situation. First, if emphasis were placed on agricultural production, not only would this reduce the need for certain food imports, but it would result in the most direct assistance to the majority of the population. In the past, numerous low-income developing countries have jumped too fast into poorly designed and inappropriate industrial developments at the expense of their farmers. Projects mounted by the International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD) have demonstrated surprisingly fruitful results in agricultural production at the most basic level with minimal resources.

Second, these countries will have to be careful about how they administer the funds they receive. Examples abound of the wasteful use of development