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2 November 1975

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

ROUND TABLE MINISTERIAL MEETING ^{1/}

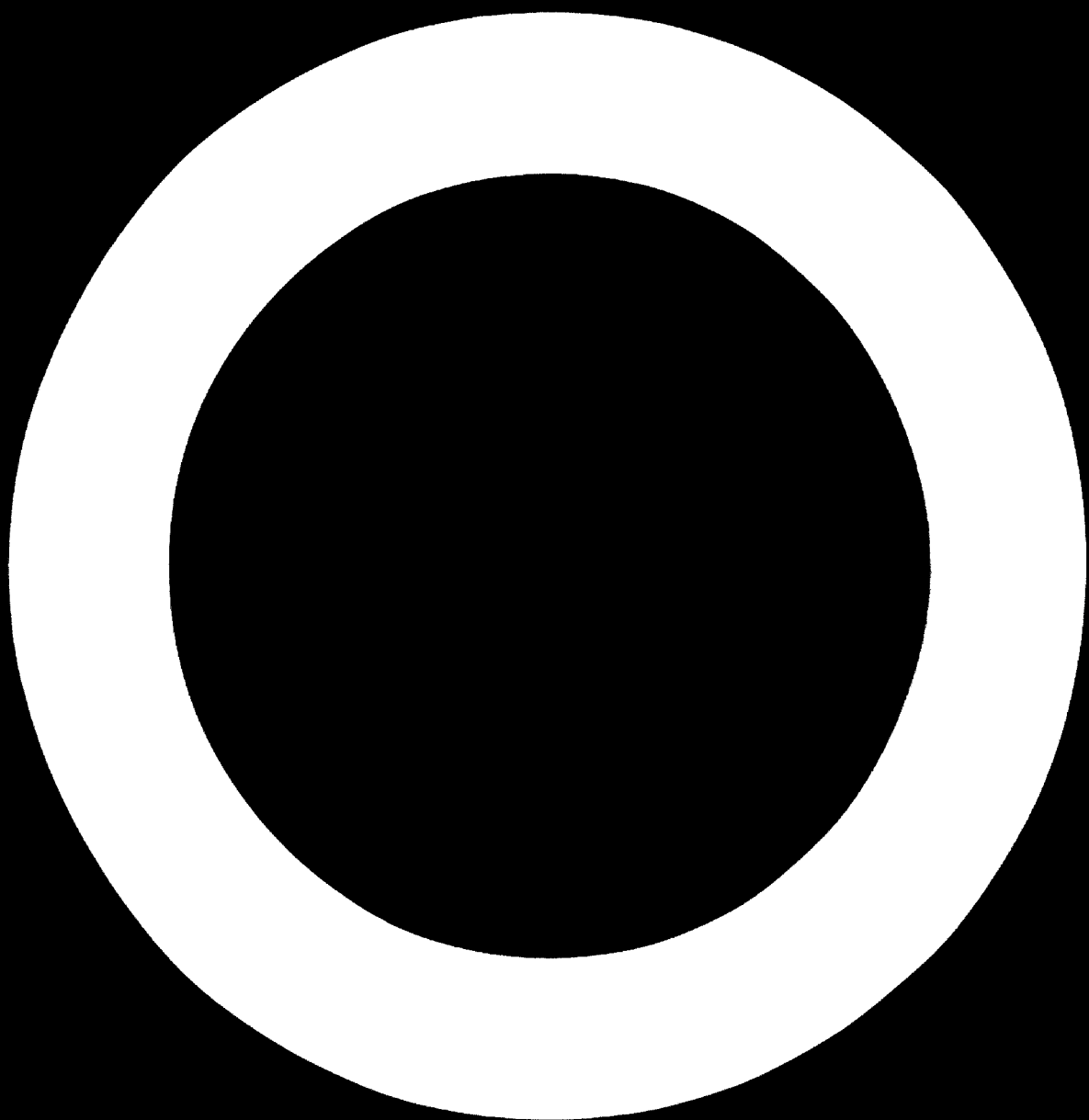
Sofia, Bulgaria

27 October - 1 November 1975

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Introduction

The Lima Declaration and the Plan of Action on Industrial Development and Co-operation adopted by the Second General Conference of UNIDO emphasized the need for strengthening co-operation between developing and developed countries and among the developing countries themselves. The Plan of Action stated that UNIDO should be a forum for such co-operation.

At the Second General Conference of UNIDO and on other occasions exchange of experience, joint discussions and consultations among countries with different socio-economic systems have been recommended. The Lima Declaration and the Plan of Action further emphasized, inter alia, the need to develop basic industries such as steel, engineering, chemicals, petrochemicals and agro-based or agro-related industries in the developing countries.

Bearing in mind the above, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the Government of the People's Republic of Bulgaria sponsored and financed jointly a Round Table Ministerial Meeting for ministers of industry from 13 developing countries from Asia, Africa and the Middle East. The preparations for the meeting were started as early as April 1975. The Round Table Meeting was held in Sofia from 27 October to 1 November 1975.

The main objective of the Round Table Meeting was to study the experience of Bulgaria in the application of its industrial strategies and policies, to examine achievements and problems in industrialization on a comparative basis with the experience of the developing countries represented at this Meeting. Another objective of the Meeting was to benefit from the Bulgarian experience in industrialization by identifying and discussing potential areas of co-operation between Bulgaria and interested developing countries. A third objective of the Meeting was to examine the role of the technical assistance provided by the United Nations in the development of some branches of the Bulgarian industry and possibilities for eventually establishing joint United Nations/Bulgarian activities for the transfer of technology and training of national cadres in developing countries.

The Round Table Meeting was designed and prepared as an informal business-like discussion on how to speed-up industrialization without producing prior to or after the meeting excessive documentation. Informality, frankness, professional level discussions and a spirit of mutual co-operation were among the basic features of the Meeting. Because of these characteristics and other positive achievements of the Meeting the participating ministers called it a new type of UNIDO meeting.

I. Organization of the Round Table Meeting

Agenda

The Round Table Ministerial Meeting was officially opened at 9.00 on 27 October 1975 in the conference area of the Park Hotel Moskva, Sofia. The Meeting was opened by Mr. Tano Zolov, First Deputy Prime Minister. Opening statements were made on behalf of the host country by Mr. S. Todorov, Chairman of the Council of Ministers, and on behalf of UNIDO by Mr. S. Quijano-Caballero, Director, Technical Co-operation Division, as personal representative of the Executive Director of UNIDO. Mr. K. Gabrowski, Deputy Chairman, State Planning Committee of Bulgaria, was selected as Chairman of the Round Table Meeting.

The programme of the Meeting comprised sessions held every day Monday through Thursday, visits to industrial establishments and an agro-industrial complex in Sofia and near Varna, meetings with Bulgarian ministers and other senior officials as desired by the ministers from the developing countries represented at the Meeting. All participants were received by Mr. Todor Zhivkov, President of the State Council, who made a short presentation on some global aspects of the socio-economic development of Bulgaria in the course of the coming years. A farewell reception was given by Mr. S. Todorov, Chairman of the Council of Ministers.

The working languages of the Round Table Meeting were English, French, Spanish and Bulgarian. All working documents as well as simultaneous interpretation were available in these languages.

Ample publicity was provided by the Bulgarian information media to the proceedings of the Round Table Ministerial Meeting. The Meeting was also covered by the information media of many developing countries as well as of some developed countries.

Participants

The Round Table Meeting was designed for ministers of industry from developing countries in Asia, Africa and the Middle East. The following ministers attended the meetings:

1. Afghanistan Mr. Abdul Samadsalah, Vice-Minister of Industry and Mines
2. Algeria Mr. Kactel Murad, Secretary General of the Ministry for Industry and Energy
3. Bangladesh Mr. Nurul Islam Chowdhury, Minister of State for Industries
4. Egypt Mr. Eissa Abdelhamid Shahin, Minister of Industry and Mining
5. India Mr. T. A. Pai, Minister of Industry and Civil Supplies
6. Iran Mr. Farrokh Najanabadi, Minister of Industry and Mines
7. Iraq Mr. Hikmet Al-Azani, Minister of Economy
8. Mozambique Mr. Mario Machango, Minister of Industry and Commerce
9. Nigeria Mr. M. I. Wushishi, Federal Commissioner for Industries
10. Somalia Mr. Abdikassim Salad Hassan, Secretary of State for Industry
11. Sri Lanka Mr. S. K. Suriyanrachi, Minister of Food Co-operatives and Small Industries
12. Syria Mr. Mohammed Immady, Minister of Economy and Foreign Trade
13. Tanzania Mr. Amir H. Jamal, Minister of Commerce and Industries

Almost all ministers were accompanied by advisers - high-ranking officials from ministries, industrial development organizations, general managers of factories. In addition to the ministers, 30 advisers-members of delegations took part in the Round Table Meeting.

The Work Programme

Selected key presentations on industrial development were made by Bulgarian ministers:

1. The experience of Bulgaria over the past 30 years in industrialization with special reference to strategy, planning, programming and implementation, by Mr. K. Zarev, Deputy Prime Minister, Chairman of the State Planning Committee;
2. Development of light industries as a part of the industrialization programme of Bulgaria, by Mr. S. Zhulev, Minister of Light Industries;
3. Development of Engineering industries and their role in industrialization, by Mr. T. Chakarov, Minister of Metallurgy and Engineering;
4. Development of chemical/petrochemical industries and their role in the national industrial complex, by Mr. G. Pankov, Minister of Chemical Industries;
5. Development of agriculture and food industries as an essential component of the industrialization programme, by Mr. G. Krastev, Minister of Agriculture and Food Industries;
6. Cadre training - major factor for industrialization, by Mr. N. Papazov, Chairman of the State Committee on Science, Technology and Higher Education.

Documentation on each of these subjects was prepared prior to the Meeting and handed over to the participants.

As seen above, the presentation of the different aspects of the Bulgarian experience in industrialization was made at the highest possible level, i.e. by the functional or branch minister responsible for the respective industrial branch or type of activities. The fact that the ministers in this country are usually high level professionals - engineers, economists - was an essential prerequisite for the highly competent presentations, discussions and exchange of experience on different subjects of industrialization.

The programme of the Round Table Ministerial Meeting also comprised visits to industrial establishments, among them projects set up with UNDP/UNIDO assistance:

- a. in Sofia: Factory for Ready-to-Wear Clothing "Vitosha"; Plant for Metal-working Machines, Elektronika Plant, Instruments Design Institute;
- b. in Varna: Industrial Zone "Devnja"; Agro-Industrial Complex "Varna".

The tours in the factories were led by deputy ministers from the respective ministries and the general managers of the establishment.

Among the most interesting topics on the Bulgarian experience discussed at the Round Table Meeting were the following:

1. Development of a strategy for industrialization. The role of the state as an organizer and promoter of the industrialization process;
2. Basic socio-economic prerequisites for establishment of a national industrial complex and its components (the industrial branches);
3. Goals, approach and problems of industrialization: priority industries; development of agro-based and agro-related industries; mobilization of all domestic and foreign resources for industrialization; international division of labour - the Bulgarian industrialization and the role of the co-operation with the CMEA member countries; industrialization and balanced development of the different regions of the country - economic and social considerations;
4. Training of cadres - major factor for industrialization: system of training qualified workers and regular upgrading of their skill; training of highly skilled specialists and the role of national universities; system of training and upgrading the skill of top managerial cadres;
5. Main results of industrialization and prospects for the forthcoming 10-15 years;

6. Lessons to be learned from the Bulgarian experience in industrialization;
7. Co-operation between Bulgaria and developing countries in the process of industrialization - past experience, potential areas for future co-operation.

II. Evaluation and Follow-up

1. Throughout the discussions and particularly during the special session for general debate the ministers expressed their very high appraisal of the Round Table Meeting. They strongly recommended that UNIDO expand its activities in promoting co-operation among developing countries. The exchange of information, experience and ideas as it was done in Sofia is crucial for establishing such co-operation on a bilateral or multilateral basis. This will gradually lead to identification of potential areas of co-operation. These will be areas where different developing countries are mutually complementary. This along with other important prerequisites will make it possible to establish a suitable spirit of confidence, mutual understanding and a solid mechanism for regional and interregional industrial co-operation aiming further at economic integration. In this respect the ministers were repeatedly referring to the impressive experience of Bulgaria as a member of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance.

2. The ministers considered the Round Table Meeting in Sofia a new style of UNIDO activities as a follow-up of the Lima Declaration and the Plan of Action. The meeting was highly praised as a forum for discussion and exchange of experience based on the actual experience in industrialization with its achievements and problems in a country which - in the not too distant past - was a developing country and at present possesses many of the features of a developed country. On this occasion in Sofia it was possible to examine the actual experience of a country which has over a period of 30 years undergone a major effort towards industrialization and has reached today a level of development of great interest to developing countries. The UNIDO/Bulgarian Government initiative was also highly appreciated because

this meeting was one in which policy-makers and experts could hold discussions across the round table on topics of mutual interest on industrial development without being burdened by extensive documentation and the obligation to arrive at specific decisions. This type of meeting is very beneficial to filling the gap between international meetings of an exclusively technical nature and those organized to arrive at major policy decisions. A brief summary of the proceedings of the Round Table Meeting will be published by UNIDO in a special booklet.

The ministers urged UNIDO to continue to organize meetings of this type for policy-makers from developing countries. Some of the ministers declared the willingness of their governments to host such meetings starting from as early as the first half of 1976.

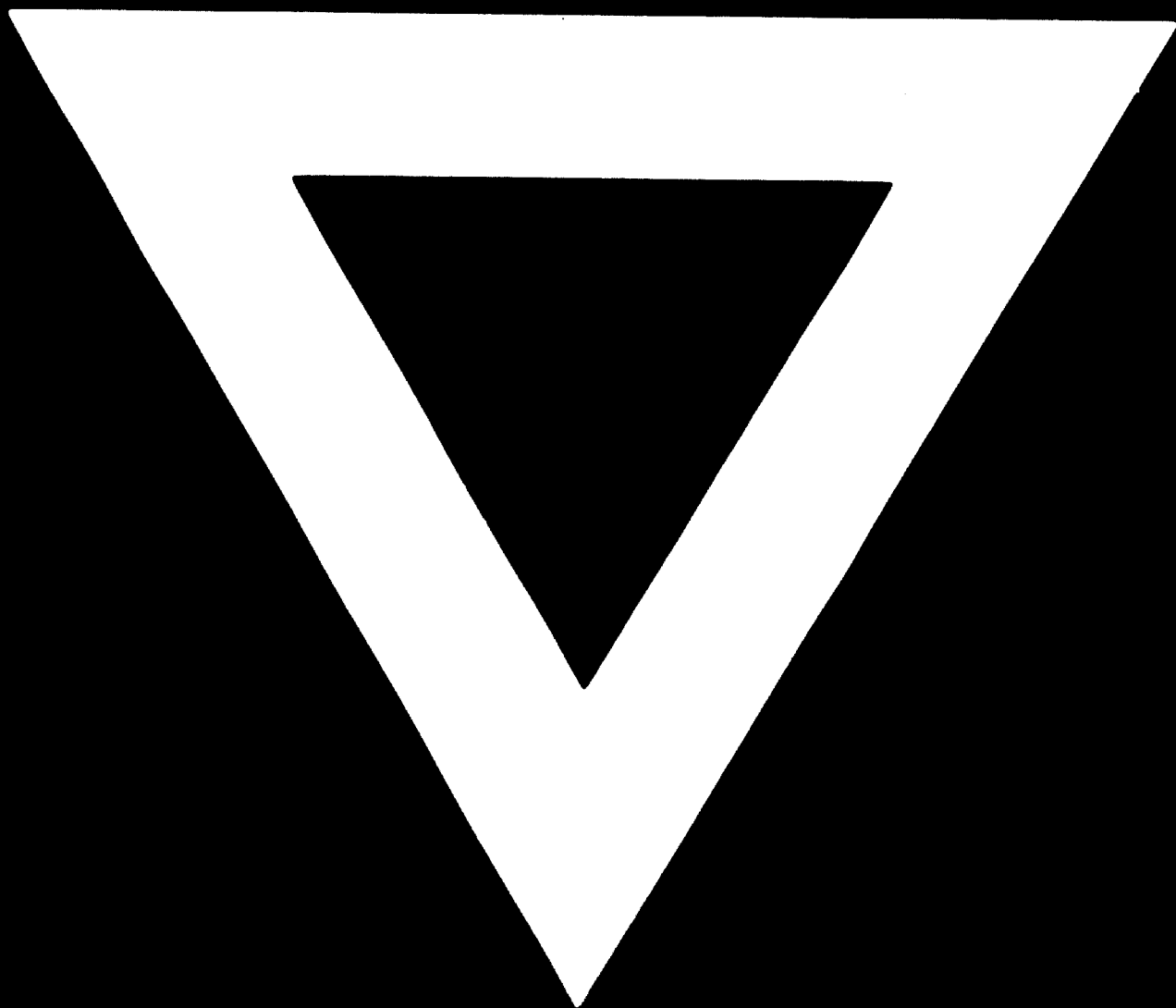
3. In response to the above the Bulgarian Government declared its readiness to host a Second Round Table Ministerial Meeting in 1976 on Industrialization of Agriculture. As a follow-up to the Lima Declaration and the Plan of Action, it is suggested to study the Bulgarian experience in the role of industry in modernization of agriculture and hold joint consultations on the application of the Lima Declaration concerning redeployment of certain agro-related industries from Bulgaria to interested developing countries with direct technical assistance provided by relevant Bulgarian institutions. FAO should also be invited to co-operate and contribute to this meeting.

The holding of this Second Round Table Meeting will have practically no additional financial implications since \$43,800 were already approved by the Executive Director for a meeting in Bulgaria on the same subject for lower level participants from developing countries.

4. In line with its policy of close co-operation with developing countries, the Bulgarian Government - after consultations with the representative of the Executive Director of UNIDO to the Round Table Ministerial Meeting - declared its readiness to provide free of charge in co-operation with UNIDO a pilot industrial plant in one of the least

developed countries represented at the Sofia meeting. The country where the project will be established, the type and size of the project and all other matters related to preinvestment studies, designing, construction, commissioning, man power, training, etc., will be discussed and finalized through joint consultations between UNIDO, the Bulgarian Government and the government of the country concerned.





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