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President: Mr. Juan I. COOKE (Argentina).

Present:

The representatives of the following countries: Argentina, Australia, Belgium, China, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Ecuador, Egypt, France, India, Norway, Pakistan, Turkey, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Venezuela, Yugoslavia.

Observers from the following countries: Brazil, Chile, Indonesia, Netherlands, Philippines, Poland, Uruguay and from the League of Arab States.

The representatives of the following specialized agencies: International Labour Organisation, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, International Monetary Fund.

Opening of the session

1. Mr. GEORGES-PICOT (Assistant Secretary-General), after having read a letter from Mr. Scheyven, the outgoing President, expressing the latter's regret that he was unable to attend the meeting, declared the seventeenth session of the Economic and Social Council open.
2. He welcomed the representatives of the Council's new members, Czechoslovakia, Ecuador, Norway and Pakistan.

Point of order by the representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics concerning the representation of China on the Council

3. Mr. TSARAPKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), speaking on a point of order, drew the Council's attention to the fact that it was quite improper for the People's Republic of China not to be represented in the United Nations and particularly in the Economic and Social Council. The absence of the legitimate representative of the People's Republic of China, which had a population of over 500 millions, was a serious hindrance to the Council's work. The Kuomintang member illegally occupying a seat in the Council was not qualified to represent China in the Economic and Social Council or in other United Nations organs because the only lawful representative of China would be one appointed

by the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China.

4. Mr. HSIA (China) said that the National Government of China was the country's only legal government.

5. It was recognized by the great majority of the Members of the United Nations. The régime to which the Soviet representative had just referred had been imposed on China and it was a proved fact that the Chinese people would repudiate it if it had the opportunity to do so.

6. Mr. NOSEK (Czechoslovakia) associated himself with the remarks of the USSR representative. It was illogical that the People's Republic of China, which occupied an increasingly important place not only in the Far East but in the world as a whole, through its economic and commercial development, should be excluded from the work of the Economic and Social Council, and that the seat to which it was entitled should be illegally occupied by a private person who represented nobody and was absolutely unqualified to speak on behalf of the Chinese people and the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China.

7. Mr. HOTCHKIS (United States of America) felt that to admit a government like that of Communist China, which believed in the use of war as an instrument of national policy, would be to stultify the whole underlying purpose of the United Nations.

Election of the President and Vice-Presidents for 1954

ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT

8. Mr. FENAUX (Belgium) nominated Mr. Cooke (Argentina) for the Presidency of the Council. He recalled the traditional ties of friendship between his country and the Argentina Republic. He also mentioned the contribution which Argentina had made to the study of international economic problems and expressed his delegation's gratitude for the assistance rendered by the Argentine delegation to Mr. Scheyven during the latter's term of office as President of the Council during the fifteenth and sixteenth sessions. Mr. Cooke was one of the most distinguished Argentine statesmen of the day. He had been a member of his country's parliament and had subsequently held the offices of Minister of Foreign Affairs and Ambassador to Brazil. He was therefore most admirably fitted by his personal qualifications to discharge the duties of President of the Economic and Social Council.

9. Mr. HOTCHKIS (United States of America) supported the nomination of Mr. Cooke. Mr. Cooke had been chairman of the Argentine delegation of the first session of the Latin-American Union in 1951, and to the fifth session of the Economic Commission for Latin America, had a thorough knowledge of diplomatic affairs and possessed all the necessary qualities to direct the work of the Council.

10. Mr. RIBAS (Cuba) likewise supported the nomination.

Mr. Cooke (Argentina) was elected President by acclamation.

Mr. Cooke (Argentina) took the Chair.

11. The PRESIDENT wished first of all to express his thanks, in particular to the Belgian representative for the great honour he had done him and his country by nominating him for the Presidency of the Economic and Social Council. He also thanked the United States and Cuban representatives for having so warmly supported the nomination. He was not unmindful of the great responsibility he was assuming in accepting the office, and he assured all the members of the Council that he would spare no effort to prove himself equal to his task.

12. He welcomed all the representatives who had come to take part in the work of the Council's seventeenth session, and especially the newly elected members, Czechoslovakia, Ecuador, Norway and Pakistan.

13. He recalled that, by setting up the United Nations, the Allies, victors of the Second World War, had wished to provide an international body capable of maintaining peace among the nations. That purpose could only be achieved if the Allied Powers remained united and continued to maintain friendly relations among themselves. It was manifest that the countries of the world were dividing to an increasing extent into two rival camps with opposite interests and ideologies, and that justice, whether in the field of law or in the economic and social sphere, was far from prevailing.

14. War was still raging in some regions of the world. It would not do, however, to give way to despair. On the contrary, it was the duty of the peoples, and above all of the Governments, to persevere in their efforts to establish peace among the nations and to ensure the triumph of justice over force.

15. He had no intention of making a detailed analysis of the reasons why efforts to that end had so far failed. He would confine himself to stressing the mournful truth that wars were becoming increasingly destructive and that the peoples were living in a state of perpetual anxiety that led them even to despair of progress. In his view, the causes of international antagonisms and disagreements were primarily economic and social, and secondarily moral, and it would be very difficult to ensure international peace so long as the economic and social problems remained unsolved.

16. There had been much discussion of the relative importance of economic, social and moral factors in the organization of peace. In the provisions of the Charter concerning the establishment of the Economic and Social Council, however, the United Nations had recognized the overriding importance of the economic factor. It was obvious that social justice could not exist in a country whose economic development did not ensure its inhabitants a proper standard of living. A lasting solution to the great problems that existed would not be found unless the economic problems were first solved. Therein lay importance of the Economic and Social Council.

17. In the first years of the Council's existence the various countries had had greatly divergent opinions on the manner in which economic and social problems should be approached and solved. He had been happy to note, however, that those divergences had become less

marked, especially during the Council's last two sessions. Although Council members were not yet entirely agreed as to the methods to be adopted, they were unanimous in recognizing that the most urgent and important problem was that of economic and technical assistance to the under-developed countries. Programmes of assistance of that kind were not acts of international charity; they were also necessary to the attainment of the Organization's purposes and in the mutual interest of the nations. Only by intelligent, dynamic and sometimes bold action would it be possible to prevent a worsening of the evils which beset the peoples of the under-developed countries from leading them to desperate acts from which the rest of the world would suffer.

18. There was as yet no agreement on the means of ensuring effective economic co-operation on the international plane. Certain measures had been taken, however, and they constituted a starting-point. The decision to set up a special fund under the auspices and control of the United Nations should first be mentioned, and then the proposal, submitted by the United States at the eighth session of the General Assembly, to consider the possibility of taking other measures to promote and accelerate the economic development of under-developed countries, in particular measures to stabilize the prices of the raw materials which those countries produced and to eliminate customs restrictions. Mention should also be made of the decision taken the previous year by the Soviet Union, the Byelorussian SSR, the Ukrainian SSR, Czechoslovakia and Poland, to participate in the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance.

19. It was in the interest of all countries that such projects and proposals should become tangible realities as quickly as possible. That desire should animate the Economic and Social Council in 1954, so that the world might make further progress and help "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war".

20. The best way to ensure that the principles of social justice were applied and developed in the under-developed countries for the good of all nations was to encourage the economic development of those countries. Only in that way could human rights be given a universal application and meaning. Social justice depended, in the last analysis, on the possibility of meeting those economic needs, the satisfaction of which formed the physical and biological basis of life.

21. The Economic and Social Council's mission was to harmonize and co-ordinate the action taken in all States Members of the United Nations to advance the rate of economic and social progress through objective studies and reports and practical recommendations; from the start the Council had borne heavy responsibilities of a technical rather than political character. In spite of inevitable hesitations and withdrawals it had been able to achieve positive results and, particularly in the last few years, had won general recognition and esteem.

22. At the opening of a new session it would doubtless be useful to view some of the problems which the Council was to study in perspective and to consider what action was open to it.

23. In face of the mounting rhythm of scientific and technical progress, the world was becoming more complex every day. Simple but purely theoretical formulae and partial solutions were no longer adequate; the present was too different from the past for the lessons of experience to retain a value commensurate with the

changes which had come about. The Council should therefore endeavour to grasp the meaning of present-day realities, determine the true relationships between cause and effect and make an objective appraisal of the various problems submitted to it.

24. From that point of view, the most important economic and social question was that of the living conditions of the majority of mankind, whose standard of living was in danger of falling below the minimum subsistence level. Despite the laudable action in the field of technical assistance already undertaken internationally, regionally and through bilateral agreements, the existing structure of the world tended to widen the gulf between the under-developed and the advanced countries. The co-operative spirit behind such efforts deserved praise; but the conclusion was unavoidable that the results so far obtained made it possible to satisfy only a fraction of the need. At best, economic development was a long and delicate process, which would not bring about a complete economic and social levelling between nations of different traditions, customs and religious beliefs. It was thus necessary to seek, by dint of economic development, to put the resources of the under-developed countries to the fullest use as a means of assisting them to raise the standard of living of their populations, while respecting the way of life which they had chosen and intended to maintain.

25. It appeared to be a matter of general recognition today that the development of the economically least developed regions was one of the essential conditions of world economic stability. The advanced countries, however, were not yet giving that interdependence sufficient weight in the formation of their economic policy: doubtless their attention was engaged with other, more pressing internal or international problems. The impetus needed to overcome the prevailing inertia was lacking.

26. Accordingly there was a need to emphasize again the close and increasing economic interdependence of all nations on earth. That interdependence meant different things to different States. To the most vulnerable among them it might manifest itself as a threat to the very stability of their economy; the most advanced countries, on the other hand, usually found it a source of increased influence. Therefore, when the powerful nations shaped their economic policy, they would in future have to consider not only their own interests but also the possible effects of their actions upon the rest of the world. The weaker nations, in their turn, were in duty bound to do all they could progressively to reduce the dependence of their economy on external factors. That implied the most extensive possible co-operation between nations and an orderly arrangement of world economy, which could not be left at the mercy of existing economic forces. The experience gained in the past few years, particularly in Europe and Latin America, showed that regional action offered the best chance of a successful co-ordination of the world economy.

27. The great economic problems which the Council was to study in 1954 could for the most part be considered under two main headings: the world economic situation from the point of view of stability and full employment, and economic development. Social questions of the greatest importance were also before the Council. As the two groups of problems were inter-related, and the ultimate aim was to harmonize economic progress and social welfare, the Council should give its

closest attention in equal measure to the most important questions arising in each of the two fields. That consideration would certainly be borne in mind when the question of the organization and operation of the Council and its functional Commissions and the reorganization of the Department of Economic Affairs and the Department of Social Affairs were before the Council for study.

28. Between the two extremes of scepticism and Utopian idealism, the wise course was to attempt to deal with the realities of the situation: the Council should shape its action accordingly, in the clear knowledge that, while there was no panacea for the ills of the universe, co-operative effort was the best means of bringing common aspirations to fruition. Therefore the best wish that could be expressed at the opening of that session was that all members of the Council should be imbued with a determination to take constructive action in concert. For his part, he would endeavour to justify the confidence the members of the Council had placed in him.

ELECTION OF THE FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT

29. Mr. PEREZ PEROZO (Venezuela) proposed Sir Douglas COPLAND (Australia) as First Vice-President. Sir Douglas was an eminent diplomat and a specialist in economic questions. He had represented his country at the first and eighth sessions of the General Assembly, at which he had taken part in the debates of the Fifth and Fourth Committees.

30. Sir Pierson DIXON (United Kingdom) supported the Venezuelan proposal.

Sir Douglas Copland (Australia) was elected First Vice-President by acclamation.

ELECTION OF THE SECOND VICE-PRESIDENT

31. Mr. AZMI (Egypt) proposed Mr. NOSEK (Czechoslovakia) as Second Vice-President. Mr. Nosek, having been Chairman of the Second Committee of the General Assembly in 1952, Second Vice-President of the Council in 1951 and First Vice-President of the Council in 1952, had great experience of Economic and Social Council questions.

32. Mr. TSARAPKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) supported the Egyptian proposal.

Mr. Nosek (Czechoslovakia) was elected Second Vice-President by acclamation.

Admission to Headquarters of representatives of non-governmental organizations

33. Mr. LODGE (United States of America) stated that false propaganda had been spread to the effect that the United States Government had a policy of preventing the attendance at United Nations Headquarters of the representatives of certain non-governmental organizations that supported ideologies with which the United States differed. Although the organizations in question were erroneously called "non-governmental" organizations, since in practice they were dominated by the Government of the Soviet Union, he wished to state in refutation of such accusations that his Government had nevertheless granted visas to representatives of the Women's International Democratic Federation, the World Federation of Democratic Youth and the World Federation of Trade Unions. The record of the United States regarding the admission of those with which it differed was far more generous than would be that of

the USSR if the situation were reversed. For example, the USSR had failed to issue visas to an official body established by the Economic and Social Council in 1947 to assess war damages in the USSR for the purpose of aiding in reconstruction.

34. The United States had refused on grounds of national security to issue a visa to Mr. Iradj Eskandary, another representative of the World Federation of Trade Unions. Mr. Eskandary had been sentenced to death in his country for participation in a conspiracy to murder the Shah and had been expelled from France, and no government could expect the United States to permit him to come to New York. Clearly the Headquarters Agreement and the supplementary agreement with the Secretary-General had not contemplated the admission of such people.

35. In reply to questions from Mr. NOSEK (Czechoslovakia), Mr. LODGE (United States of America) said that the visa requested for Mr. Jean Dessau, the representative of the World Federation of Trade Unions, had been granted that very morning. The procedure followed in the matter had been perfectly normal. Any delay in granting the visa should be ascribed to the caution which the competent authorities had found it necessary to exercise, since they were in no doubt as to the real reasons for Mr. Dessau's visit.

36. Mr. TSARAPKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) noted that the representative of the United States of America had once again implicated the Soviet

Union: the question was a serious one, to which he reserved the right to refer again when he had learned all the details of the matter. For the moment he would confine himself to pointing out that Mr. Lodge, who extolled the virtues of patience and tolerance, had not hesitated, at the very first meeting, to disturb the atmosphere of understanding which should prevail at Council meetings.

Adoption of the sessional agenda (E/2525 and Add.1 and 2, E/2549, E/L.575, E/L.576, E/L.577)

[Agenda item 2]

37. The SECRETARY-GENERAL, with reference to item 21 on the provisional agenda, called the attention of the members of the Council to his memoranda on the organization and operation of the Council and its commissions (E/2541) and on the question of documentation (E/2542), and informed them of the character of the comprehensive review of the organization and work of the Secretariat which he was undertaking in virtue of General Assembly resolution 784 (VIII). He stated that certain conclusions from that review bearing upon economic and social programmes would be placed before the Council at its eighteenth session.¹

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.

¹The text of the Secretary-General's statement is contained in document E/L.578, which was issued at the request of the representative of Argentina.