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UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON PERMANENT SOVEREIGNTY OVER NATURAL RESOURCES

STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN ON THE PROGRAMME AND ORGANIZATION OF THE WORK OF THE COMMISSION

1. I mentioned yesterday that I would try to sum up the points on which there seems to be some measure of agreement among the members of the Commission with regard to the three questions that should be settled by the Commission at this session, namely

- (1) the study to be made by the Secretariat;
- (2) the inquiries to be sent to Governments and possibly to specialized agencies and regional economic commissions; and
- (3) the time of the next session of the Commission.

2. With respect to the first point, I believe it is generally agreed that the Secretariat should prepare a study on the lines proposed in document A/AC.97/3 with regard to the ownership and exploitation of natural resources by foreign nationals. Some members of the Commission have suggested that this study should include not only a summary of legal provisions but also other relevant factual data pertaining to the status of sovereignty over natural resources in various countries. Reference has been made to the availability of such material in economic studies made by the United Nations Secretariat and in reports and documentation of the United Nations in other fields. There appears to be agreement that such material should also be included or incorporated by reference, taking into account the views expressed by the members at this session.

3. It has also been suggested that Governments of Member States may be requested to supply pertinent data for this study. There appears to be no objection to this, and I take it therefore that it is desired that the Secretariat address an inquiry of this kind to Member Governments.

4. Similarly, it has been suggested that the specialized agencies and the regional economic commissions be requested to furnish such information and co-operate in any other appropriate manner with the Commission in its task. If this is agreed to, the Secretariat would communicate with the agencies and commissions as suggested.
5. It was generally agreed that the Secretariat survey should cover a broad representation of geographical areas and of different economic and legal systems. Some delegates suggested that emphasis should be placed on the less developed areas and the Non-Self-Governing Territories. I would suggest that the Secretariat be asked to exercise its discretion in regard to the matter of emphasis, giving due regard to the views expressed here and the availability of material from official published sources.
6. I believe that if Governments are asked to furnish relevant data pertaining to the status of permanent sovereignty over natural resources within their respective jurisdictions, their replies could not be expected for at least three or four months in view of the scope and complexity of the subject. The Secretariat would then require some time to summarize and incorporate this material in its study. That would mean that it could not have this study ready for distribution until sometime in November or perhaps December.
7. In view of this time schedule, the Commission might wish to hold its next session in February of 1960. That would give the members an adequate opportunity to study the report and prepare themselves for the session. The Commission would then have the task of preparing its report for the twenty-ninth session of the Economic and Social Council which is scheduled to meet in April 1960. I do not believe that we need to speculate now as to whether it will be possible for the Commission to conclude its work in time for that session of the Council. That question, I think, should be left open until the February meeting.
