

United Nations
ECONOMIC
AND
SOCIAL COUNCIL

Nations Unies
CONSEIL
ECONOMIQUE
ET SOCIAL

UNRESTRICTED
E/C.3/4
27 April 1948
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

PROPOSED AMENDMENT OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE
OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

SUBMITTED BY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF FRANCE

The President of the Economic and Social Council has the honour to communicate to the members of the Council the following letter from the representative of France on the proposed amendment of the rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Council:

FRENCH REPUBLIC

12 March 1948

Mr. Charles MALIK
President of the Sixth Session of the
Economic and Social Council
of the United Nations

Dear Sir,

The French delegation has had distributed to the members of the Economic and Social Council a proposal for the revision of its rules of procedure. The proposal includes various provisions regarding the preparation of the agenda for the Council's sessions and the functions of the Agenda Committee. As you are aware, the French delegation suggests that the Agenda Committee be given a more important status and that the number of its members be accordingly increased.

These proposals will not be discussed until the next session of the Council, but the French delegation feels that there is objection to the Agenda Committee functioning on the lines suggested in the French proposal at the Council's next session. There is nothing in the present rules of procedure to prevent this; and the French delegation would accordingly ask you to study the suggestion and, should you think it a good one, to bring it before the Agenda Committee when it meets on the eve of the Seventh Session.

The Agenda Committee, of which you are Chairman, would thus be able to propose to the Council at its first meeting how to organize its work so as to ensure that it will be transacted more expeditiously

/and under

and under more favourable conditions. The Committee might, for instance, place the questions submitted for inclusion in the agenda in a number of categories:

- Matters to be dealt with in accordance with previous procedure. These are, mainly, important questions of political interest requiring preliminary discussion in the Council.
- Matters to be referred directly to the various committees without preliminary discussion in the Council so as to gain time and reduce the number of plenary meetings of the Council and the resultant expenses.
- Matters which, without preliminary discussion in the Council, could simply be referred to a specialized agency which would be required to report on them to the Council.
- Matters which are of no particular urgency and could be postponed.

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The Council has on several occasions ruled that the only questions which should be included in the agenda of a session are questions of which members have been notified six weeks in advance of the first meeting.

This rule is particularly important for allowing Governments to study questions submitted to the Council. In certain cases exceptions to this rule have been allowed which were not justified by considerations of proven urgency.

The French delegation is particularly desirous that the Agenda Committee should in this respect be governed by the rule laid down by the Council. As it is already clear that the agenda for the Seventh Session will be very heavy, it is particularly necessary that an effort should be made to avoid including on it questions the examination of which by the Council could conveniently be deferred.

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If the Agenda Committee agreed to this procedure, and these proposals were approved by the Council at its first meeting, the result would be, in the view of the French delegation, a great improvement in our methods; and we should be able, in the time at our disposal, to deal with the very heavy agenda for the Seventh

/Session.

Session.

(signed) T. de Clermont Tonnerre
for Pierre Mendes-France
