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Ninth Session

CO-ORDINATION COMMITTEE

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE THIRTY-FIRST MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva
on Saturday, 16 July 1949, at 10.30 a.m.

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Present:

Chairman: Mr. PLIMSOLL

Members:

Belgium	Baron de KERCHOVE d'EXAERDE
Brazil	Mr. MACHADO
Byelorussian SSR	Mr. AGAPOV
Chile	Mr. RODRIGUEZ
China	Mr. TSAO
Denmark	Mr. FRIIS
France	Mr. de SEYNES
India	Mr. SEN
Lebanon	Mr. AZKOUL
New Zealand	Dr. SUTCH
Poland	Miss CZARKO
Turkey	Mr. MIRAS
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics	Mr. BORISOV
United Kingdom	(Mr. LEDWARD (Miss SALT
United States	(Mr. HIDE (Mr. KOTSCHNIG
Venezuela	Mr. NASS

Representatives of Specialized Agencies:

International Labour Office	Mr. JENKS
Food and Agriculture Organization	Mr. McDOUGALL
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	(Mr. de BLONAY (Mr. TERENCEZIO
International Civil Aviation Organization	Mr. MARLIN
International Bank for Reconstruction and Development	Mr. LOPEZ -HERRATE

Representatives of Specialized Agencies (Continued):

International Monetary Fund	Mr. WILLIAMS
Universal Postal Union	Mr. RADICE
World Health Organization	Dr. CALDERONE
International Refugee Organization	Mr. BLANCHARD Miss BAVERSTOCK

Secretariat

Mr. MARTIN HILL	Director of co-ordination for specialized agencies and for economic and social matters.
Mr. SZE	Secretary to the Committee

RELATIONS WITH AND CO-ORDINATION OF SPECIALIZED AGENCIES

(Item 34 of the Council's Agenda together with the reports of the Specialized Agencies, Items 35 - 42, so far as they concern questions of co-ordination) (Documents E/1340, E/1341, E/1342, E/1343, E/1347, E/1331, E/1344, E/1344/Add.1, E/1351/Rev.1, E/1317, E/1320, E/1348.) (Reports of Specialized Agencies, Documents E/1319, E/1321, E/1322, E/1334, E/1338, E/1338/Add.1, E/1349, E/1350, E/1362) (Continued).

Mr. TSAO (China) thought the Fifth Report of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (Document E/1340) showed that steady progress had been made in the various aspects of co-ordination. The Report covered not only programme and budgetary co-ordination, but also regional and national co-ordination. The Secretary-General's report on General Co-ordination (Document E/1331) was valuable in that it drew attention to three points not covered by any other document. His delegation was particularly interested in the steps being taken to consult the specialized agencies in regard to the situation of their permanent headquarters. It favoured the centralization of headquarters at Lake Success, insofar as that was practicable, although it realised that several specialized agencies had already established themselves elsewhere. His delegation also took particular interest in the Secretary-General's report on Action Taken in Pursuance of the Agreements between the United Nations and the specialized agencies (Document E/1317) which provided a valuable historical survey. He agreed in general with the conclusion that the time had not come for the revision of agreements, and that collaboration between the United Nations and the specialized agencies should be developed within the framework of existing agreements,

Mr. BORISOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said it could be concluded from a number of the statements which had been made that the situation in respect of co-ordination was not entirely satisfactory. The United Nations was expending considerable funds on co-ordination, the wide range of which was apparent from the Secretary-General's Report (Document E/1317). It was obliged to bear the cost of

sending a number of personnel to various places and the travel expense of missions; the Geneva office met the expenses of conferences held in that city, while one-third of the working time of its staff was devoted to servicing the specialized agencies; in addition, the United Nations had made large loans to specialized agencies, some of which had not been repaid. It was essential that such expenditure, which already represented a heavy burden should not be increased, but reduced.

Too many organs were concerned with co-ordination and their number was increasing, which made the problem more complex and more costly; moreover, the co-ordination achieved was usually only theoretical and formal, and yielded no practical results. The complicated system which had thus come into being gave rise to confusion between the functions of the United Nations and those of the specialized agencies. His delegation wished to draw the attention of the Council to the fact that co-ordination was primarily the task of the United Nations; it was for the United Nations to co-ordinate the work of the specialized agencies. The Soviet Union delegation firmly upheld the principle that the United Nations budget must remain distinct from those of the specialized agencies, and was opposed to any unified budget or to any system of joint auditing. It therefore attached particular importance to implementation of General Assembly Resolution 210 (III), which drew the attention of the Economic and Social Council to the necessity of reducing to a minimum the number of organs having responsibilities in the field of co-ordination. It was therefore presenting a draft resolution (Document E/AC.24/W.17) which requested the Secretary-General to study the question of such reduction in the light of Resolution 210 (III) and to report on the matter to the tenth session of the Council. His delegation felt strongly that such a reduction would not only eliminate much unnecessary expenditure but would also improve co-ordination. He hoped the committee would support his thesis, the object of which was to improve and revitalize the process of

co-ordination, and to translate it from the theoretical to the practical plane.

Baron de KERCHOVE d'EXAERDE (Belgium) said he would confine himself to a few general remarks. Frequent reference had been made to duplication and overlapping, but what had struck him most was the lack of general principles relating to the methods to be followed and the procedures to be adopted. It seemed to him that co-ordination should be considered from three different aspects. First, co-ordination of programmes and action should be established; secondly, co-ordination at the local level should be envisaged. In other words, it should not be possible, for example, for the national committee of the Food and Agriculture Organization in any country to function on lines different from those of other specialized agencies; thirdly, a study should be made of the problem of co-ordination between the specialized agencies themselves.

If the Committee considered co-ordination from those three aspects, the delegations which had expressed doubts on the subject would probably be reassured.

He had been struck by the diversity of opinions expressed in the Committee. With regard to the meeting place of the specialized agencies and their subsidiary bodies, the Belgian delegation was of the opinion that as a general rule meetings should be held in New York or at Geneva, in order to reduce expenses. The representative of France had, it was true, stressed the principle of universality. One was entitled to ask, however, whether the general public in countries where meetings of the specialized agencies were held was very much affected by the discussions which took place in them. For that reason, the Belgian delegation would prefer that, as far as possible, meetings be convened in one of the two United Nations centres.

The representative of France had also raised the problem of documentation. He agreed with him that the reports submitted to the Council were much too voluminous. In his opinion, the Secretariat should condense the exposition of the various problems to be studied by the Council. He did not, however, share the view of the French representative that the Secretariat should summarise the resolutions adopted by the various United Nations bodies or the specialized agencies. Everybody was familiar with the difficulties attached to the drafting of a resolution and, that being so, it would be dangerous to leave to the Secretariat the responsibility of summarising the recommendations adopted at a meeting.

Replying to the representative of Belgium, Mr. de SKYNES (France) pointed out that he had never asked that the Secretariat should be responsible for synthesizing or summarising the resolutions adopted by the organs of the United Nations or the specialized agencies. It was the style commonly used by those bodies that he had criticised. Once they had been adopted, resolutions must, of course, be given in full in the report submitted to the Economic and Social Council.

Mr. AGAPOV (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republics) said that, though a large number of organs were concerned with co-ordination, the results as assessed by various speakers and, especially by the representative of Brazil, had been considered relatively ineffectual. It was difficult from the reports before the meeting to judge what was being done, because the field covered by the Reports was so wide. Simplification would certainly be of benefit to the United Nations, which at the moment found itself bearing an unjustified expenditure. Means of effecting economies should also be found. The reduction of the number of organs concerned with co-ordination was the most important problem before the Committee.

Mr. AZKOUL (Lebanon) felt that the question was of great importance for the Economic and Social Council, and was glad to see that it was at last being studied seriously.

The Soviet Union representative had referred to the relations between the Economic and Social Council and the specialized agencies and to the part which the Council should play in the matter. That problem had to be solved. The Lebanese delegation considered that the Council's task was to co-ordinate the activities of the specialized agencies, the functional Commissions and its own subsidiary organs. That was not merely its main, but practically its only, task. It should devote almost the whole of its time to examining the reports of the specialized agencies and its own Commissions, and to making recommendations to those bodies, and even to Governments, asking the latter to give all possible assistance to the specialized agencies.

At the preceding meeting, the Brazilian representative had raised that question, in connection with the competence of the various organs of the Council and the specialized agencies. But the question of competence could only be solved when it had been decided what meaning should be attached to the word "co-ordination". It had even been argued that the choice of headquarters for a specialized agency was a question of co-ordination; and there had been talk of staff recruitment on a uniform basis. Those questions, and many others, had of course to do with co-ordination, but they did not actually constitute co-ordination; nor indeed did the prevention of over-lapping or duplication. The latter point was important from the financial angle, but was hardly constructive. The Lebanese delegation would like to see the Economic and Social Council draw up a working plan and an order of priority in the social, cultural and humanitarian fields, which were essential, not only for itself but

also for its organs and the specialized agencies. By so doing it would be "co-ordinating" in the proper sense of the term. Such a procedure, incidentally, would obviate over-lapping and duplication, though in practice it was frequently found that a question was more thoroughly examined, and hence more easily solved, if dealt with simultaneously by more than one body.

Leaving aside the negative aspect of the problem of co-ordination, he proposed to discuss its positive aspect; in other words, to fill in the gaps in the Council's present field of activities. It must be admitted that at the moment there were certain subjects which were not being dealt with by any Council body or specialized agency. The Council should step in in such cases and instruct its own organs and the specialized agencies to carry out the appropriate investigations. When a question concerned both the Council and other bodies, the Council should entrust to the various agencies the particular aspects of the problem falling within their competence.

His delegation regarded co-ordination mainly as the establishment of an order of priority in the programme of each organ. The Council should make suggestions and recommendations to the specialized agencies to modify where necessary the order of priority of questions to be examined by them, in the light of an agreed overall plan. The Council might also decide that over a given period the programme of one agency should enjoy priority over that of another.

At the same time, the financial implications of the Council's decisions must not be overlooked. It would be unwise to refer all budgetary questions to the Fifth Committee of the Assembly, without giving that Committee the benefit of the Council's views; and the Council should also indicate which bodies could most effectively help it to accomplish its task.

He then proceeded to review the organs at present concerned with co-ordination. The Fifth Committee of the General Assembly unintentionally operated in the field of co-ordination; for example, by fixing the number of meetings to be held by a particular Commission of the Council, or by cancelling a session of a Commission. Unfortunately, that co-ordination was based on purely financial considerations. To date, the Council had never informed the Fifth Committee of the degree of importance it attached to the meetings of any of its commissions.

In addition, the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination had submitted a number of interesting reports. But that Committee by itself could never solve the problem of co-ordination, if the Council accepted his interpretation of that term. It had neither the competence nor the authority to make recommendations to the specialized agencies. It had to confine itself to establishing contacts between the specialized agencies and the Secretary-General, and to taking administrative measures.

The Council's Co-ordination Committee was, in his opinion, the only body capable of examining the problem as a whole and of solving it satisfactorily. Unfortunately, he did not know whether the Committee would be set up on a permanent basis; and, in view of the fact that the reports of the specialized agencies had not been referred to it for study in all their aspects, he doubted whether it would. Yet it was in fact that Co-ordination Committee which should be required to examine the reports. After laying down certain principles and adopting certain methods of co-ordination the Committee could perfectly well deal with the task of co-ordination, and submit appropriate recommendations to the Council.

In addition, the Secretary-General should give more active assistance to the Economic and Social Council in certain fields. It was true that, in accordance with a resolution adopted by the Council, the Secretary-General was required to submit to it any appropriate suggestions on co-ordination;

but the Secretary-General appeared to have interpreted that resolution very loosely. The Secretary-General alone was in a position to take an overall view of all the problems within the competence of the Economic and Social Council, its subsidiary organs and the specialized agencies, and consequently he alone was capable of drawing the Council's attention to the most important aspects of those problems. In view of the form which documentation had now assumed it was impossible for any member of the Council to be acquainted with the activities of all the specialized agencies, and the Economic and Social Council itself could not decide which were the most important questions.

Finally, if the Committee recognized that before any genuine co-ordination could be achieved principles and a method of work must be laid down, he would have concrete proposals to make on the subject.

Mr. NASS (Venezuela) said he would confine himself to some brief general remarks. He congratulated the Brazilian representative on his plain speaking, but thought the charge that there were no signs of any real desire for co-ordination unjustified. The documents before the meeting showed that the Secretariat had endeavoured to facilitate co-ordination. There were however a number of defects in that field. It was, for instance, deplorable that nothing more concrete had been done in regard to budgetary co-ordination.

On the question of the location of conferences, the representative of France had maintained that budgetary considerations were less important than questions of general principle. He could not agree with that view. When the rules of procedure of the Council had been discussed, the desirability of varying the location of conferences had been urged as a means of educating the delegations concerned. It would however be sufficient for that purpose to establish that conferences might be held either in New York or in Geneva, the latter being within easy reach of

other European capitals; while specialized agencies with headquarters in other cities would naturally hold most of their meetings at such headquarters.

He agreed with the French representative that the relationship between the delegations and the Secretariat should be made more direct and less subject to circumlocution. The documentation provided for conferences could also be simplified and made clearer. A grave defect in all conferences was the tendency of representatives to talk too much; some self-discipline on the part of representatives was essential in that connection, in order to reduce the length of meetings.

A recommendation might usefully be adopted on the basis of the valuable suggestion made by the New Zealand representative, that governments should set up co-ordination committees to ensure that their delegations to the United Nations and permanent delegates to the specialized agencies received uniform instructions.

He agreed with the Lebanese representative that the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly should be given the assistance necessary to enable it to consider questions not only from a budgetary point of view but also as an administrative body. Finally, the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination should help the Council in making its decisions and recommendations regarding priorities and, generally, on all matters connected with programme co-ordination. Such procedure was all the more necessary in view of the possibility of differences of opinion between the various specialized agencies.

Mr. KOTSCHNIG (United States of America) wondered how the Economic and Social Council could be expected to make any progress in discharging its co-ordination function as long as the Council itself was unco-ordinated and discussed the reports of the specialized agencies not in one place but in different committees as well as in the plenary.

He recommended strongly that the Committee should request the Agenda Committee and the Council to provide at the tenth session that all reports from specialized agencies should be referred to and discussed in the Co-ordination Committee.

Mr. MACHADO (Brazil) supported the United States proposal. The preliminary question was, who should carry out co-ordination? In his opinion the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination should not decide, but merely implement, policy; policy should be laid down by the Co-ordination Committee.

Mr. AZKOUL (Lebanon) wished to comment briefly on the United States representative's observations. It was true that in his previous speech he had stated that the reports of the specialized agencies should be studied by the Co-ordination Committee; but it was no less true that at present those reports were submitted to the Committee only in so far as they concerned matters of co-ordination. In those circumstances the Committee's present task was to adopt methods which would enable the specialized agencies to co-ordinate their activities. The Committee ought also to consider whether the reports might be drafted in a different form, which would make it easier for the Committee to study them. He hoped that the idea that the reports would never be studied by the Committee would not be accepted there and then, but trusted, on the contrary, that once a method of work had been adopted they would be referred to the Committee for study.

Mr. MARTIN HILL, Director of Co-ordination for specialized agencies and for economic and social matters, replying to the point raised by the Indian representative, said that under the terms of General Assembly Resolution 125 (II), the specialized agencies had been asked to submit

their budgets by the 1 July each year. All had done so for 1949 except the International Telecommunications Union, the Food and Agriculture Organization and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, which held their conferences in the second half of the year. Those organizations however would submit advance draft budgets for 1950.

Referring to the question of the diversity of salary scales raised by the Brazilian representative, he said that most of the agencies had agreed to the general principle of a uniform scale of basic salaries, subject to cost-of-living differentials and other allowances and local variations. Several had by the middle of 1948 adopted salary scales approximating to or modelled on those of the United Nations. A small expert Committee had been set up by instruction of the General Assembly to examine the whole system of salaries, allowances and leave systems of the United Nations, and further progress was to be expected in that department of co-ordination.

Considerable simplification had been achieved in the past year in the matter of budgetary nomenclature and structure, which would be reflected in the form of the 1950 budgets which would be before the General Assembly.

Criticism had also been made of the two conferences held at Rome and at Annecy, on the ground that they should have been held at Geneva. The World Health Organization, before deciding on Rome, had asked if facilities would be available at Geneva about the middle of June, and had only selected Rome when informed that they would not. That was also the reason why the GATT conference had been held at Annecy; in any case the latter conference was based largely on Geneva as regards technical services such as translation and distribution.

The Brazilian and French representatives had asked for information about the Secretariat policy on the sending of representatives from the United Nations to conferences and meetings of the specialized agencies. The problem was not merely budgetary, although that aspect was important; it was not easy to divert officials from other important work, and thus some improvisation was inevitable. The problem was naturally less difficult if the meeting was held in or near Lake Success or Geneva. The purpose of sending representatives was to present such items as had been referred to the agencies concerned, to explain action taken on points of view, to provide the Secretary-General with information on significant action taken by the agency or on trends of thought, and, finally, to afford opportunities at both directional and technical level for personal contacts and consultations between the staff of the United Nations and specialized agencies working on the same problems. The factors varied in importance and the policy varied accordingly. In the past year responsibility for the policy had been transferred to the Executive Office of the Secretary-General at Lake Success, and much time and thought had been given to it. Certain principles and procedures had become well-established; the representatives chosen were fully briefed, their powers defined, two-way contact maintained with headquarters, and full reports submitted.

It had been suggested that the cost of such representation was high, and the number of overseas trips excessive. The exact figures had not been received from Lake Success in time for the present meeting, but roughly \$60,000 was being spent in 1949 on travel connected with representation and co-ordination generally. Although more meetings had been held in 1949 than in 1948, there had been no substantial increase in expenditure. Finally, the centralised control of representation

had made considerable economies possible, by reducing the size of delegations. Also, the closer co-operation between the United Nations and specialized agencies, and the advance consultation that had now been instituted between them, was tending to diminish the range and complexity of tasks which United Nations representatives to agency meetings were called upon to perform.

Dr. CALDERONE (World Health Organization), speaking at the invitation of the Chairman, said that his organization, although young, had perhaps made more effort to co-operate than had many other agencies. Its administrative and financial regulations were largely modelled on those of the United Nations. Although it had twelve or more members who were not States Members of the United Nations, there had been no difficulty in co-ordinating its activities with other specialized agencies or with the United Nations.

Difficulties of co-ordination were to some extent the result of the individual approach by governments in various agencies. Nevertheless, co-ordination was a living reality, manifested by such matters as the joint planning programmes of his organization with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization and the International Children's Emergency Fund. The present machinery of co-ordination was adequate, but his organization was always prepared to help improve it.

Mr. MACHADO (Brazil) while welcoming the remarks of the representative of the World Health Organization, maintained that that organization had, despite agreement, increased the salaries of its staff without prior consultation with the United Nations.

He was not convinced that the United Nations needed to be represented at all of specialized agencies meetings. The impression given to him by the representative of the Secretary-General was one of a general atmosphere of improvisation in respect of the selection of representatives; if someone happened to be going on home leave he would be sent as a United Nations representative or observer to some convenient meeting. Some people had done the equivalent of two round trips of the world in the name of co-ordination; he was not sure what precisely they were doing. He was convinced that much more could and should be done to improve the existing state of affairs, and he thought that the Council should specifically define the policy that the Secretary-General should adopt.

In reply to points raised by the United States and New Zealand representatives, the CHAIRMAN said that the basic papers for consideration would be Document E/1340, and its Annexes, and Document E/1331; they would be discussed chapter by chapter, or, if necessary, paragraph by paragraph. The general questions raised by the United States, Brazilian and Soviet Union representatives would be taken with Part I of Document E/1340.

Mr. BORISOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) suggested that Monday, 18 July, should be the latest day for the submission of resolutions and amendments. That would give the delegations an opportunity of studying them, and would make it possible to organize on a sound basis the work facing the Committee.

Mr. HYDE (United States of America), while sympathising with the Soviet Union representative's point of view, suggested that as the subject was very complicated, something might arise in the course of

discussion upon which it might be necessary to vote. He suggested therefore that the Soviet Union proposal should be followed in the spirit but not in the letter.

He added that his delegation's silence on such questions as the location of meetings merely meant that it reserved its position until they came up for detailed discussion.

Miss SALT (United Kingdom) pointed out that last year the Committee had agreed to proceed to as great an extent as possible by discussion, incorporating the results of the discussions in the Committee's final report, rather than by drafting resolutions and taking votes on the various points. It had then been considered that that procedure had given good results; and it might therefore be adopted for the present series of meetings.

The CHAIRMAN said that any resolutions and amendments should be submitted as soon as possible. The reports of the specialized agencies should be kept generally on the agenda for discussion either in substance, or by way of illustration during the general progress of the debate.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.