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AND
SOCIAL COUNCIL



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AD HOC COMMITTEE ON THE ORGANIZATION AND OPERATION OF THE COUNCIL,
AND ITS COMMISSIONS

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE TWELFTH MEETING

Held at Lake Success, New York,
on Wednesday, 18 April 1951, at 10.30 a.m.

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Appointment of Working Group to study Council resolution concerning
the co-ordination of the activities of the United Nations and UNESCO
relating to freedom of information (E/1953)

Chairman:

Mr. SANTA CRUZ

President of the Economic and
Social Council

Members:

Mr. BRENNAN

Australia

Mr. ALMEIDA

Brazil

Mr. CHANG

China

Mr. de SEYNES

France

Mr. SAKSENA

India

Members (continued):

Mr. CHERNYSHEV

Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

Mr. CORLEY SMITH

United Kingdom of Great Britain and
Northern Ireland

Mr. LUBIN

United States of America

Also present:

Mr. DUSSAUT

Argentina

Observer:

Miss WITTEVEEN

Netherlands

Representative of a Specialized Agency:

Mr. DAWSON

International Labour Organisation (ILO)

Representative of a non-governmental organization Category B:

Mr. PENCE

World Alliance of Young Men's
Christian Associations

Secretariat:

Mr. OWEN

Assistant Secretary-General in
charge of the Department of
Economic Affairs

Mr. YATES

Secretary of the Economic and Social
Council

ORGANIZATION AND OPERATION OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (Conference Room
Papers No. 1, No. 1/Corr.1, No. 3, No. 4, No. 8, No. 8/Add.1) (continued)

The CHAIRMAN said that a representative of the Argentine delegation had asked to be given permission to make a statement to the Committee.

Mr. Dussaut (Argentina) took a seat at the Committee's table.

Mr. DUSSAUT (Argentina) said that his Government had followed closely the Committee's efforts to improve the quality of the work done by the Council. He recalled that Argentina had put forward proposals for reforms which had been adopted by the General Assembly, at its fifth session, in resolution 109 (V). That resolution showed the advantage that would be gained by increasing the number of Member States participating directly in the work of the Council and its subsidiary organs. He was glad to say that the resolution had received the support of a large number of Member States. He emphasized, however, that fifteen States were still not represented and asked the Committee to take that state of affairs into consideration.

/The CHAIRMAN

The CHAIRMAN, before calling for a vote on the various proposals before the Committee concerning the organization and operation of the Economic and Social Council, recalled that the Committee must choose between three proposals: one submitted by the USSR, to the effect that the Council should hold only one session a year, lasting approximately four weeks; another submitted by the United Kingdom and the United States of America (Conference Room Paper No. 3); and lastly, a proposal submitted by France and India (Conference Room Paper No. 5).

Mr. de SEYNES (France) thought that it was perhaps unnecessary to take a vote on the various proposals. The General Assembly resolution had instructed the Ad Hoc Committee to formulate concrete recommendations but not to formulate only one set of recommendations. It would therefore be possible to submit a brief report to the Council containing in an annex the various proposals, which were short and few in number, thus enabling the Council to choose between several solutions. In any event, the French delegation wished to reserve full freedom to recapitulate before the Economic and Social Council certain proposals which it had made in the Committee, should they not be accepted.

The CHAIRMAN asserted that in appointing an Ad Hoc Committee with a small number of members, the Council's wish had been to obtain the opinion of the majority of the members of the Committee; it would therefore seem logical and normal to convey the opinion of that majority to the Council. On the other hand, it would be advisable to refer in the report to the other proposals which had received support from the minority in the Ad Hoc Committee.

Mr. CORLEY SMITH (United Kingdom) associated himself with the Chairman's remarks. There would have been no need to set up an Ad Hoc Committee had its terms of reference merely been to convey to the Council the views of its various members. The Committee should therefore express the opinion of the majority of its members and, in so doing, endeavour to reconcile divergencies of views as far as possible. It would appear that two sharply different arguments were confronted and, in order to clarify the situation, he therefore suggested that the USSR proposal should be put to the vote first.

Mr. SAKSENA (India) also supported the Chairman's remarks. It was, however, important that the report should include the various proposals made to the Committee, even if they were not adopted.

Mr. de SEYNES (France) saw no objection to such a course; but, above all, it was essential that the Council should be informed of any differences of opinion which might exist in the Committee.

Mr. CHERNYSHEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the proposals in question were clear and specific and should be put to the vote at once. As for the report to the Council, the preparation of which would be the Committee's second task, it must reflect all the opinions expressed.

The CHAIRMAN put to the vote the USSR proposal recommending that the Council should hold only one session a year, lasting approximately four weeks.

The proposal was rejected by 6 votes to 1, with 1 abstention.

The CHAIRMAN said that he would put to the vote the operative part of the proposal by the United Kingdom and the United States (Conference Room Paper No. 3) and that the vote would be taken paragraph by paragraph.

Mr. CHANG (China), speaking on a point of order, recalled that the representatives of the United Kingdom and the United States had accepted two amendments which he had submitted, one suggesting the addition of the words "in 1952 and 1953" at the end of the first sentence of sub-paragraph (v), the other suggesting that the terms of reference of Part I of Session III should run as follows: "Consideration of problems relating to co-ordination and priorities, including the examination of the reports of specialized agencies and subordinate bodies".

Mr. CORLEY SMITH (United Kingdom) proposed that the words "less concentrated" in sub-paragraph (i) of paragraph 2 of the recommendation should be replaced by the words "more specialized".

Mr. LUBIN

Mr. LUBIN (United States of America) accepted that amendment.

The CHAIRMAN put to the vote sub-paragraph (i), as amended, of paragraph 2 of the recommendation submitted by the United Kingdom and the United States.

A vote was taken.

The votes were equally divided: 4 in favour and 4 against.

The CHAIRMAN felt that the recommendation, which was moreover only experimental, seemed likely to improve the quality of the Council's work. Therefore, on the basis of the provisions of paragraph 3 of section B of resolution 295 (XI) of the Economic and Social Council, he used his casting vote on behalf of the adoption of the recommendation.

Sub-paragraph (i) was adopted by 5 votes to 4.

The CHAIRMAN put sub-paragraph (ii) to the vote.

Sub-paragraph (ii) was adopted by 7 votes to none, with 1 abstention.

Sub-paragraph (iii) was adopted by 5 votes to 3.

Sub-paragraph (iv) was adopted by 6 votes to none, with 2 abstentions.

Mr. de SEYNES (France) said he had abstained from the last vote because it seemed to him that sub-paragraph 4 derived from sub-paragraph 3 to which he had not assented.

Mr. BRENNAN (Australia) felt that, if the Council held three sessions a year, there would be no point in dividing each of the sessions into two distinct parts. The main point was that the various questions should be considered at the dates fixed for them in advance. Moreover, were each session to be divided into two parts, there would always be a risk of their being held in different places, which would be extremely awkward, especially for the small delegations. As to the first session, he wanted to ensure that the substance of the questions was studied at a date fixed in advance. He was therefore submitting the amendment contained in Conference Room Paper No. 4.

Mr. LUBIN (United States of America) had no objection to the Australian amendment. The second sentence of paragraph 1 seemed, however, to be useless, as the discussion of current business must necessarily be interrupted to allow the discussion of substantive questions to begin at the fixed date, unless the majority of the Council decided to change that date.

/Mr. BRENNAN

Mr. BRENNAN (Australia) agreed to the deletion of the second sentence of paragraph 1 of his amendment.

Mr. CORLEY SMITH (United Kingdom) said there was nothing permanent about the form in which the United Kingdom-United States resolution had been submitted and that the order of the two parts of the first session could be inverted without inconvenience.

Mr. BRENNAN (Australia) agreed with the United Kingdom representative and proposed that the words "and/or followed" should be inserted after the word "preceded" in the second sentence of paragraph 1 of his amendment.

Mr. CORLEY SMITH (United Kingdom) proposed that the word "should" should be substituted for the ^{word} "could" in the second sentence of paragraph 2 of the first Australian proposal.

Mr. BRENNAN (Australia) accepted that amendment.

Mr. CHANG (China) was anxious that the division of sessions should be retained so that the part devoted to current business could be held at Headquarters, even if the meetings devoted to specific questions were held elsewhere. He would otherwise be compelled to vote against the amendment. His view was dictated by a desire for economy and by the principles of sound administration.

Mr. BRENNAN (Australia) considered that the majority of sessions should be held at Headquarters and that it would be most undesirable for part of a session to be held at Headquarters and part elsewhere.

The CHAIRMAN reminded the Committee that the debate was closed. He requested details of the amendments which some members wished to submit to the recommendation regarding Session II and of the amendments which the Chinese representative intended to submit to the recommendation regarding Session III.

/Mr. LUBIN

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Mr. LUBIN (United States of America) thought that the recommendations regarding Sessions I and II should be included under the same heading. In his view, the substantive questions considered at Session II should be exclusively economic, except in cases of emergency.

Mr. CHANG (China) proposed that the terms of reference of the first part of Session III should read as follows: "Consideration of problems relating to co-ordination and priorities, including the examination of the reports of specialized agencies and subordinate bodies of the Economic and Social Council".

The CHAIRMAN thought it would be useful to suspend the meeting to permit the drafting of a final text for paragraph 2 (v) of the United Kingdom-United States proposal.

The meeting was suspended at 12 noon and resumed at 12.20 p.m.

The CHAIRMAN submitted the revised text of paragraph 2 (v) of the joint United Kingdom-United States proposal (Conference Room Paper No. 8 and 8/Add.1). The first sentence of that paragraph had not been amended and was to be found in Conference Room Paper No. 3.

Mr. CHANG (China) considered that the revised text was inferior to the original (Conference Room Paper No. 3). It would be preferable to deal with Session I and Session II separately and to include the approximate date of each session in the text. The words "the regular session of" should also be inserted after the word "before" in the first paragraph of Conference Room Paper No. 8/Add.1.

Mr. LUBIN (United States of America) and Mr. CORLEY SMITH (United Kingdom) accepted the amendments proposed by the representative of China.

Mr. CORLEY SMITH (United Kingdom) proposed that the words "if necessary" should be inserted after the word "could" in the final paragraph of Conference Room Paper No. 8.

Mr. LUBIN

Mr. LUBIN (United States of America) accepted that amendment. He also proposed that the word "substantive" preceding the word "discussions" in the second and fourth paragraphs of Conference Room Paper No. 8 should be deleted and replaced by the word "those".

Mr. CORLEY SMITH (United Kingdom) accepted that amendment.

The CHAIRMAN put to the vote the text of paragraph 2(v) of the joint United Kingdom-United States proposal, as amended (Conference Room Papers No. 8 and No. 8/Add.1).

The text was adopted by 5 votes to 3.

Mr. CHANG (China) explained that he had voted for the joint United Kingdom-United States proposal in its revised form in a spirit of co-operation. The original text of that proposal (Conference Room Paper No. 3) had been clearer and more precise and he therefore reserved the right to propose certain amendments when the question came up for consideration in the Economic and Social Council.

Mr. BRENNAN (Australia) had voted against paragraph 2 (i) of the joint United Kingdom-United States proposal (Conference Room Paper No. 3). The proposed increase in the number of Council sessions, which would undoubtedly have had a number of advantages, particularly where the preparation of documents was concerned, but which would also have had disadvantages for small delegations, would only be justified if the reorganization of the commissions of the Council required it. That did not appear to be the case. In the circumstances, his delegation would have preferred the adoption of a solution based on the joint proposals of France and India (Conference Room Paper No. 5).

The CHAIRMAN put to the vote paragraph 2 of the joint United Kingdom-United States proposal as amended (Conference Room Papers No. 3, No. 8 and No. 8/Add.1).

The paragraph was adopted by 5 votes to 3.

/Mr. CHERNYSHEV

Mr. CHERNYSHEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) reserved the right to explain his vote when the Ad Hoc Committee had taken a decision on the proposals relating to the functional commissions of the Council.

The CHAIRMAN put to the vote the text of the preamble of the joint United Kingdom-United States proposal (paragraph 1 of Conference Room Paper No. 3).

The text was adopted by 5 votes to 1, with 2 abstentions.

APPOINTMENT OF WORKING GROUP TO ~~STUDY COUNCIL~~ RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE CO-ORDINATION OF THE ACTIVITIES ~~OF THE UNITED NATIONS~~ AND UNESCO RELATING TO FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (E/1953)

The CHAIRMAN recalled that at the previous meeting the Committee had decided to request him to appoint a small working group from among the members of the Committee to study the resolution concerning the co-ordination of the activities of the United Nations and UNESCO relating to freedom of information (E/1953). He accordingly proposed to appoint the representatives of Brazil, the United Kingdom and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics as members of that group.

Mr. CHERNYSHEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) did not think that the decisions the Council had taken at its previous meeting had been confirmed by a vote. In his opinion, there was no need to set up a working group to study the resolution in question; the Committee could undertake that task itself at its next session.

The CHAIRMAN pointed out that, according to the summary record of the previous meeting, at which he had not himself been present, a decision to that effect had been taken by the Committee, which was thus faced with an accomplished fact.

/In reply

In reply to a question by the representative of the USSR, he stated that the Secretary-General would fix the date of meeting in consultation with the members of the working group and with UNESCO and with due regard to the need to report to the Committee at its next session.

If there was no objection on the part of the delegations he had named, his proposal regarding the composition of the working group should be regarded as adopted.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.