



ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Forty-eighth Session

OFFICIAL RECORDS

Wednesday, 14 January 1970,
at 10.55 a.m.

NEW YORK

President: Mr. J. B. P. MARAMIS (Indonesia).

AGENDA ITEM 9

Basic programme of work of the Council in 1970 and consideration of the provisional agenda for the forty-eighth session (continued) (E/L.1293, E/L.1296)

1. Mr. KASSUM (Secretary of the Council) said that the six-week rule might have to be taken into account in considering some of the suggestions made by the representative of the United Kingdom at the previous meeting. However, documentation in respect of a number of the items which were already on the agenda would not be provided sufficiently in advance to comply with that rule, and if suggestions made by members of the Council for changes in the agenda were found helpful from the point of view of timing, the rule would in any case have to be waived in many instances.

2. The aim in dividing the items between the forty-eighth and resumed forty-eighth session had been to keep the agenda of each within manageable proportions, while maintaining so far as possible the distinction between social and economic items. Document E/AC.24/366, on the basis of which the General Assembly had approved the Council's schedule, indicated that at the forty-eighth session in March/April reports not emanating from subsidiary bodies and reports of subsidiary bodies meeting early in the fall of 1970 would be considered. However, for reasons of logistics, the reports of two of those bodies, dealing with cartography and with science and technology, could not be considered by the Council in March. If the Council insisted that there should be a clear-cut division of work between the forty-eighth and the resumed forty-eighth session, the agenda for the session in March/April would be very light, while that for the resumed session would be extremely heavy and consideration of some items might have to be postponed to the forty-ninth session. What was necessary was not to shift items from one part of a session, or from one session, to another, but to decide in each case whether the item should be discussed.

3. The PRESIDENT reminded the Council that the elections of members to the International Narcotics Control Board had been postponed to the resumed forty-eighth session.

4. Mr. ARVESEN (Norway) said that in view of the great importance world opinion now attached to problems of the environment and to the preparatory work for the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, and since the problems of the environment involved more than merely questions of science and technology, his delegation proposed that item 15 (d) of the forty-ninth session should

be changed from a sub-item to a separate item entitled "United Nations Conference on the Human Environment".

5. Mr. DUBEY (India) said that in general his delegation found the agendas contained in the draft programme (E/L.1293) acceptable. It shared the view of the French delegation (1653rd meeting) that it would be more convenient if for the forty-eighth and the resumed sessions a clear-cut distinction had been made between economic items and social items, but it was prepared to accept the Secretary's explanation in that respect. However, he wished to suggest that item 8 of the forty-eighth session should be transferred to the resumed session, since the report of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations would probably not be available in time for it to be considered earlier, and it was in any case desirable that an item normally dealt with by representatives concerned with social matters should be discussed at meetings mainly devoted to social items. With that change, his delegation could accept the agenda as outlined.

6. With regard to the suggestions made by other delegations, he felt that consideration of agenda item 2 (a) of the forty-eighth session need not be postponed, since the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (CPC) had already given its views on the subject in a different context, and those views had not yet been considered by the Council. Items 3 (a) and 3 (b) should also be maintained in the provisional agenda of the forty-eighth session in March/April; although the International Tourist Year had been celebrated in 1967 and the Conference on International Travel and Tourism had taken place in 1963, the mere fact of the passage of time by no means signified that the Council need not now discuss the items, especially since the Council had been unable to discuss them earlier because of its concentration on the institutional aspects of tourism, although the relevant reports had been available for some time. The suggestion that item 3 (c) of the forty-eighth session should be merged with item 19 of the forty-ninth session was not acceptable, since the latter dealt with a specific institutional issue, whereas the former was concerned with a more general substantive matter, discussion of which had likewise been postponed because of the Council's preoccupation with institutional aspects.

7. It had also been suggested that item 7 of the resumed forty-eighth session should be merged with item 3 of the forty-ninth session, since the role of the co-operative movement was one aspect of the general strategy for development. He was opposed to that suggestion, for if it was carried to its logical conclusion many other items, such as item 5 of the forty-ninth session, would also have to be merged with item 3.

8. The suggestion that item 8 (a) of the resumed forty-eighth session should be postponed until 1971 in order to

enable CPC to consider the documentation also seemed unwise; according to the statement on page 21 of the draft programme, CPC would, in fact, have discussed the report on major transport problems of developing countries before the resumed session. It should also be remembered that transport questions were now being discussed every two years, and it would not be desirable to allow a gap of three years to elapse at a time when revolutionary changes in transport technology were taking place.

9. His delegation also wished to make a general point with regard to the submission of items to the Council through CPC. Nowhere was it stated that all the reports of the functional and economic commissions and other subsidiary organs must be submitted to CPC, and he believed that the practice should be followed only for reports which had a definite programme content and not for those which dealt with policy matters or economic and social trends. In general, it would be regrettable if the Council followed a policy of drawing up its agenda in the light of CPC's activities; the Committee, as a subsidiary body, should be guided by the Council rather than vice versa.

10. Mr. VIAUD (France) said his delegation recognized that major criteria for the allocation of an item to a given session were that it should be ready for consideration and that the necessary documentation should be available. However, there was a further aspect which was of importance to delegations: the discussion of some items required the presence of experts, and it was therefore desirable to group items, to the extent possible, under the social or economic classifications in order to reduce the frequency and level of expenses on transportation. Since the Council had accepted the principle that the forty-eighth session was to be concerned mainly with economic questions and the resumed forty-eighth session mainly with social questions, it seemed desirable to shift a number of items in order to adhere as closely as possible to those classifications. For example, his delegation would be in a better position to discuss items 5 and 6 of the forty-eighth session at the resumed session. The same was also true, to a lesser extent, of item 4, but since population problems had both economic and social aspects, he would not insist on that point. A further point in favour of transferring items 5 and 6, however, was that the Commission on Human Rights would be meeting until 27 March 1970 and would therefore overlap with the forty-eighth session of the Council; such an overlap might create problems if items of a social nature were being discussed by the Council at that time. His delegation would also welcome the transfer of item 9 of the resumed forty-eighth session to the forty-ninth session, since it would otherwise be necessary to send an expert on geography to New York for one or two days, whereas competent experts would be available at Geneva during July.

11. He agreed with the representative of India that the activities of CPC should be organized in the light of the Council's activities, rather than vice versa.

12. Mr. OLDS (United States of America) said that his delegation supported the suggestions made by the representative of the United Kingdom (1653rd meeting) concerning the distribution of items among the various sessions and also shared the view of the French representative that it

would be desirable to group economic and social items separately in order to facilitate their discussion by experts. It was true, as the Secretary of the Council had said, that if such a division was strictly adhered to in the current year the forty-eighth session would have an extremely light agenda and the resumed session a very heavy one, but the principle should be borne in mind and every effort should be made to move towards it.

13. With regard to the agenda of the forty-ninth session, he believed that it would be both more logical and more efficient to organize it around the appropriate central theme of resources for the Second Development Decade, which could be divided into three categories, i.e. human resources, covering the present items 9-11, 15-17 and 22; natural resources, covering items 3-6, 8, 12-14 and 18; and organizational resources, covering items 7, 8 (a) and 26-28. Such a procedure would place due emphasis on the Second Development Decade and avoid the diffusion of effort and loss of time which would result from the individual discussion of related items. Moreover, he agreed with the Norwegian representative that the importance of the United Nations Conference on Human Environment was sufficient to warrant its discussion as a separate item. He also shared the view of the Indian representative that the activities of CPC should be co-ordinated with the Council's programme, rather than vice versa.

14. Mr. FRANZI (Italy) agreed that consideration of items 5 and 6 of the agenda for the forty-eighth session should be postponed until the resumed session. Item 8 of the agenda for the resumed forty-eighth session should be taken up at the forty-eighth session in March/April. Consideration of item 9 of the agenda for the resumed forty-eighth session should be postponed until the forty-ninth session.

15. Mr. DRISS (Tunisia) said that the Council should take a decision with regard to the matter of devoting the forty-eighth session to economic matters and the resumed forty-eighth session to social matters. Once a decision was taken, the Secretariat could be requested to prepare a concise agenda in the light of the views expressed during the organizational meetings.

16. Mr. ALLEN (United Kingdom) recalled that CPC had recommended that all reports of the functional and regional economic commissions and other subsidiary bodies of the Council should, where the schedule of the meetings of those bodies and the Committees permitted, be submitted to CPC before they were referred to the Council. He agreed with the representative of India that CPC should not examine every aspect of such reports; however, it should discuss any new proposals they might contain before the reports were examined by the Council.

17. Mr. LOBANOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) endorsed the Norwegian representative's suggestion that item 15 (d) of the agenda for the forty-ninth session should be taken up as a separate item. He also agreed that consideration of item 9 of the agenda for the resumed forty-eighth session should be deferred until the forty-ninth session. However, if that proved difficult because of the heavy agenda for the latter session, he would not press the point. He agreed with the representative of India that item 7 of the agenda for the resumed forty-eighth session

merited thorough consideration and should be considered as a separate item.

18. His delegation also endorsed the observation of the Indian representative concerning the co-ordination of the activities of the Council and CPC. However, it could not agree with the United States representative's suggestion that all the items of the agenda for the forty-ninth session should be encompassed under three broad headings. Such a procedure would be detrimental to the Council's work. He supported the suggestion made by the representative of Tunisia.

19. Mr. KASSUM (Secretary of the Council) said that in preparing the calendar of meetings in 1970, the informal working group of the Co-ordination Committee had considered such questions as the timing of the meetings of the Council's subsidiary bodies, the requirement that documents should be available six weeks prior to consideration, and whether certain matters should be channeled through CPC. The Secretary-General had felt that the Council could carry out its work most effectively by following the recommendations contained in the draft programme. The calendar reflected the Council's recommendations, the views of the General Assembly on the Council's programme of work and the availability of reports of the Council's subsidiary bodies. The working group had suggested that the resumed forty-eighth session should deal primarily with reports on social development, human rights, narcotic drugs and the status of women.

20. He wished to comment on remarks made in the course of the current discussion. With regard to the agenda items for the forty-eighth session, he said that the report constituting item 2(a) would not be available in time for CPC to consider it in January and it therefore would go directly to the Council. The Secretary-General felt that it would be confusing if item 3(c) was considered together with item 19 of the agenda for the forty-ninth session. CPC could consider items 4 and 5, provided that sufficient documentation was available in time for its January session. If the Council decided to postpone items 4, 5 and 6 until the resumed forty-eighth session, it would have to reconsider the amount of time allocated for each part of the session. Postponement of the question of non-governmental organizations to the resumed session might in turn lead to its being postponed still further. Although the report on the subject would not be available six weeks in advance, it would be ready in time for the Council to consider the recommendations which it contained.

21. With regard to the items for the resumed forty-eighth session, there would be no difficulty in channeling the reports prepared in connexion with items 1 to 4 through CPC before they reached the Council. However, the Council would not have them six weeks prior to the resumed session. While the report of the International Narcotics Control Board (item 5(b)) would be available in time for consideration at the forty-eighth session in March/April, the Council would not be in a position to consider the other report mentioned in item 5 at that time. It would be unwise to divide the item between the two parts of the session. The report of the Committee on Candidatures would be available on 20 March; the Council would therefore do well to consider the entire item during the resumed forty-eighth

session. It was unlikely that Government replies in respect of item 6 of the agenda for the resumed forty-eighth session could be compiled in time for consideration of the item during that session in March/April. The discussion of item 8(b) could be advanced to March/April, but documentation on item 8(a) would not be ready in time for consideration by CPC or the Council, and the documentation relating to item 8(c) would not be ready six weeks in advance. The Council must decide whether to consider item 9 at its resumed forty-eighth or its forty-ninth session. It must bear in mind the heavy agenda for the forty-ninth session and the fact that experts from Headquarters would be required to travel to Geneva if the item was postponed.

22. Turning to the agenda for the forty-ninth session, he said that item 11 had already been postponed, and he felt that it was for the Guatemalan, Japanese and United States delegations, as the sponsors of that item (E/AC.24/L.359/Rev.1), to decide whether it should be retained or dropped as an item no longer necessary in the light of *A Study of the Capacity of the United Nations Development System*.¹ The Secretary-General saw no difficulty in combining consideration of matters of technical co-operation with those of problems of the human environment, as had been suggested; indeed, it had originally been considered appropriate to propose a combination of the two topics, although it was realized that the Council might decide otherwise.

23. Mr. BLAU (United States of America), referring to item 11 of the agenda of the forty-ninth session, suggested that the topic in question, which had been the subject of a draft resolution sponsored by Guatemala, Japan and the United States, could be discussed under item 25 if his delegation decided to go ahead with it. His delegation would agree to the deletion of item 11 on the understanding that it could be reinstated, if necessary, in the light of the capacity study.

24. Members of the Council should bear in mind that 1970 would necessarily be a year of transition; there were bound to be inconveniences, and he therefore hoped that they would be as accommodating and understanding as possible in regard to the programme of work and not insist on too many changes in the agendas.

25. Mr. CARANICAS (Greece) said that he too felt that members should agree to exercise restraint and avoid trying to make too many changes. In his view, the Council should adhere to its decision taken during the previous year to group items according to whether they were economic or social. The Social Committee should not sit during the forty-eighth session in March/April for it would be better to deal with all social questions at the resumed session. It had been said that time was all-important, but the question of principle was equally important. The question of categories should have priority; the allocation of time should then be made accordingly. Members evidently had different views with regard to the implementation of the six-week rule. In his own view, it should not be regarded as binding when it conflicted with the principle of the separation of economic and social items.

26. He agreed with the United Kingdom representative that item 2(a) of the agenda for the forty-eighth session

¹ United Nations publication, Sales No.: E.70.I.10.

should be deferred, since the report of the *Ad Hoc* Committee on the Survey Programme for the Development of Natural Resources would not be available before February. With regard to item 3 (a), the Council had been informed that the report on the observance of International Tourist Year would not be ready in time. In that connexion, he himself had no strong views on whether the six-week rule should be applied; however, in regard to items 3 (b) and 3 (c) there was a conflict of time and principle. Although some members felt that the topic dealt with under item 3 (b) was outdated, he agreed with the Indian representative that it merited consideration by the Council. With regard to item 3 (c), his delegation supported the United Kingdom representative's proposal that it should be combined with item 19 of the agenda for the forty-ninth session.

27. He thought that items 7 and 8 of the resumed forty-eighth session should be postponed until the forty-ninth session. The Secretary of the Council had raised the question whether item 8 (a) should be treated as a separate item; in that connexion, he himself had no strong opinion and would await the views of other Council members.

28. With regard to the agenda for the forty-ninth session, he said that he did not think item 2 as a specific item should be dispensed with. He hoped that the expected note by the Secretariat would present the matter in a sufficiently flexible way to allow the Council to decide on the retention of the item, which could perhaps be either divided into two parts, dealing respectively with economic policy and development strategy for the Second Development Decade, or related to the Second Development Decade, with particular emphasis on international development strategy.

29. He thought that the United States representative's proposal that item 11 of the forty-ninth session should be deleted was sound.

30. He would reserve any further observations until he had heard the views of other members of the Council.

31. Mr. NAITO (Japan) agreed with the Norwegian representative that the question of the human environment was far more than a matter of science and technology; he therefore shared the view that item 15 (d) of the agenda for the forty-ninth session should be dealt with as a separate item.

32. As one of the sponsors of the draft resolution to which item 11 of that agenda referred, his delegation had no objection to the deletion of the item.

33. Mr. KASSUM (Secretary of the Council), referring to the Greek representative's remarks on the agenda items for the forty-eighth and resumed session, pointed out that only

one sessional committee of the Council met at a time; therefore, when the Economic Committee was meeting social questions would be dealt with by the Council in its plenary meetings, and when the Social Committee was meeting the Council would deal with economic questions in its plenary meetings. During the forty-ninth session, of course, the Co-ordination Committee as well as the Economic Committee would meet.

34. In order to study the possibility of postponing some agenda items from the forty-eighth to the resumed forty-eighth session, he would have to discuss with the Office of Conference Services whether extra meeting time in May could be secured.

35. Mr. ARAUJO CASTRO (Brazil), referring to the Greek representative's remarks on the agenda for the forty-ninth session, suggested as a compromise that the Second United Nations Development Decade could be inscribed as item 2 and the general discussion of international economic and social policy as item 3. The presence of Ministers of cabinet rank at meetings of the forty-ninth session at Geneva would emphasize the importance of the Second United Nations Development Decade without minimizing that of international economic and social policy. There would inevitably be some duplication, of course, if the latter topic was to be discussed also. In any event, his delegation felt strongly that the Second Development Decade should be stressed.

36. The PRESIDENT said that, if there was no objection, he would take it that the Council decided to delete item 11 from the agenda for the forty-ninth session and to inscribe the present item 15 (d) of that agenda as a separate item entitled "United Nations Conference on the Human Environment".

It was so decided.

37. The PRESIDENT, referring to the Brazilian and Greek representatives' remarks, said that, since it had been decided at the previous meeting to discuss the question of certain items at the meetings of the forty-eighth session in March/April on the basis of a note by the Secretary-General, discussion of the order of agenda items for the forty-ninth session could be deferred until then.

38. If there was no objection, he would take it that the Council decided to agree on the action recommended in section II A, paragraphs 1, 2, 3 4 and 5, of the draft programme prepared by the Secretary-General, paragraphs 6 and 7 having already been decided upon.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.