

tional Development Strategy and the implementation of resolutions adopted at the sixth and seventh special sessions. The work of UNCTAD was closely linked with that of the Economic and Social Council. The Council was ready, as it had already indicated, to give practical expression to its desire to support the work of UNCTAD. The Council and the General Assembly themselves were under no misapprehension about either the importance of the task facing UNCTAD following its fourth session or their own responsibilities in that field.

18. The PRESIDENT suggested that the Council should take note of the report of the Trade and Development Board on the work of its seventh special session and of the first part of its sixteenth session (A/31/15 and Corr.1) and transmit it to the General Assembly at its thirty-first session, together with the comments made thereon.

It was so decided (decision 202 (LXI)).

The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.

2038th meeting

Thursday, 9 December 1976, at 11 a.m.

President: Mr. Siméon AKE (Ivory Coast).

E/SR.2038

AGENDA ITEM 27

Restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system (A/31/34 and Add.1 and 2)

1. Mr. DADZIE (Ghana), Chairman of the *Ad Hoc* Committee on the Restructuring of the Economic and Social Sectors of the United Nations System, said that the report under consideration (A/31/34 and Add.1 and 2) was the outcome of the first phase of the restructuring process which the *Ad Hoc* Committee had been asked to set in motion with a view to achieving two objectives: to make the United Nations system more fully capable of dealing with problems of international economic co-operation and development in a comprehensive and effective manner and to make it more responsive to the requirements of the provisions of the Declaration and the Programme of Action on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order¹ as well as those of the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States.² That was an enormously broad and complex task, the more so since the restructuring process had been regarded by the General Assembly as an integral element in the establishment of the new international economic order and that both should be pursued in a fully concerted manner.

2. In discharging that mandate, the primary objective of the *Ad Hoc* Committee had been to develop an agreed set of interrelated guidelines and recommendations on the basis of which it would then prepare detailed action proposals as called for by the General Assembly. To that end, it had defined eight "problem areas" on which it had decided to focus priority attention and, after long and arduous negotiations, it had reached a very wide measure of agreement on five of those areas: the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, other United Nations forums for negotiations, structures for regional and interregional co-operation, and planning, programming, budgeting and evaluation. It had agreed, subject to directives which the General Assembly might formulate, to continue its work in 1977 on the basis of the revised version of the

consolidated text prepared by the Chairman, contained in annex I to the report. Finally, with regard to the three problem areas which had not yet been considered, it had agreed to base its work on the original version of the consolidated text, reproduced in annex II sections V, VII and VIII.

3. Some of the matters on which a consensus seemed to have emerged in the *Ad Hoc* Committee were of particular interest to the Council. For instance, members of the *Ad Hoc* Committee had on the whole felt that the revitalization of the Council was an important condition for achieving the two objectives set forth in General Assembly resolution 3362 (S-VII). To that end, there was a wide measure of agreement that the Council should concentrate on its responsibilities, under the authority of the General Assembly, to serve as the central forum for policy formulation on economic and social issues of a global or interdisciplinary nature; to oversee the implementation of the general strategies, policies and priorities established by the General Assembly in the economic, social and related fields; to ensure the over-all co-ordination of the activities of the United Nations system in those fields and, to that end, to articulate priorities, within the framework established by the General Assembly, for the system as a whole; and, lastly, to carry out comprehensive policy reviews of, and formulate appropriate recommendations regarding, operational activities throughout the system. A consensus had begun to emerge on a number of measures that would enable the Council to carry out its role: the Council should organize its work on a biennial basis and plan to hold shorter but more frequent subject-oriented sessions spread throughout the year; it should convene periodic meetings at a high policy-making level to review major issues relating to the world economic and social situation; and it should streamline its subsidiary machinery and strengthen its consultative relationships with non-governmental organizations. There were under other "problem areas" points on which a consensus had emerged which also came within the competence of the Council.

4. The importance of the results obtained by the *Ad Hoc* Committee during the year should not therefore be underestimated; nor should one minimize the large degree of consensus which it had succeeded in working out with respect to some of the fundamental issues with

¹ General Assembly resolutions 3201 (S-VI) and 3202 (S-VI).

² General Assembly resolution 3281 (XXIX).

which it had had to deal. Indeed, some aspects of that consensus had already been taken up in other forums. Furthermore, even when members had not been able to reach agreement, they had attained a fuller appreciation both of the points of divergence and of the political and other considerations involved.

5. The *Ad Hoc* Committee was, however, still far from achieving the objective which had been set, namely, the formulation of detailed action proposals. Admittedly, it had encountered many difficulties which, in part, stemmed from the extremely heavy pressure of commitments during the General Assembly period. Disappointment, however, must be tempered by another consideration: important as it was, structural change could not replace, but must proceed *pari passu* with, the elaboration of policies, priorities and measures aimed at establishing the new international economic order. It could be claimed that considerable progress had been made on those issues.

6. The *Ad Hoc* Committee recommended that the General Assembly should extend its mandate for another year, thus registering its conviction that it was capable of fulfilling the mandate entrusted to it and its firm determination to complete that task before the next session of the General Assembly.

7. Mr. CORDOVEZ (Secretary of the Council) said that, at its sixtieth session (decision 153 (LX)), the Council had decided to consider at its resumed sixty-first session, in the context of its consideration of the report of the *Ad Hoc* Committee, the terms of the report on the rationalization of the work of the Council requested by the General Assembly in resolution 3341 (XXIX). At that time, it had been thought that the *Ad Hoc* Committee would have finished its work probably in September and the Council would therefore have time to submit the report requested to the General Assembly in December. Obviously, that would not be possible and the General Assembly should therefore now be informed either that the report requested would not be submitted or that the Council wished to be authorized to submit it the following year.

8. Mr. MARSHALL (United Kingdom) agreed that it was not possible for the Council to submit to the General Assembly, at its current session, the report which it had requested. Furthermore, it was not at the moment in a position to give due consideration to the question; nor could it merely decide not to submit a report the following year. It would have to revert to the matter at an appropriate time, for example, at its organizational session in January 1977. Consequently, he suggested that the Council explain to the General Assembly that it would not submit the report requested until it had before it and had considered the report of the *Ad Hoc* Committee and that at its organizational session it would consider the question of the form which the report would take.

9. Mr. MYERSON (United States of America), referring to the mandate of the *Ad Hoc* Committee as set forth in General Assembly resolution 3362 (S-VII), said that his delegation had reservations about the part of that mandate which dealt with the establishment of the new international economic order. In his view, in order to carry out the restructuring process, all ideological and political differences which might exist would have to be set aside for the time being.

10. As the Chairman of the *Ad Hoc* Committee had pointed out, that body had encountered many practical difficulties and his delegation intended in 1977 to con-

tinue its active participation in the work of the Committee because it had not given up the hope of seeing it lead to concrete results before the end of the coming year.

11. His delegation supported the proposal made by the representative of the United Kingdom regarding the report of the Council to the General Assembly.

12. Mr. VOLOSHIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) noted that, despite some positive results, the *Ad Hoc* Committee had not yet achieved the objective which had been set for it. As his delegation had already pointed out on several occasions, the work of the *Ad Hoc* Committee could not continue indefinitely and the Council should therefore state clearly that the final report of the *Ad Hoc* Committee would be submitted to the General Assembly at its thirty-second session.

13. Mr. NAKAMURA (Japan) hoped that, in view of the importance of the restructuring process, the work of the *Ad Hoc* Committee would be as fruitful in 1977 as it had been in 1976 if its mandate was extended. For its part, his delegation would make the most constructive contribution it could.

14. Mr. VON RUCKTESCHELL (Federal Republic of Germany) said he was convinced that the work of the *Ad Hoc* Committee would continue in the same spirit of constructive co-operation.

15. The PRESIDENT proposed that the Council take note of the report of the *Ad Hoc* Committee on the Restructuring of the Economic and Social Sectors of the United Nations System and transmit it to the General Assembly, at its thirty-first session, together with the comments that had been made thereon. The Council could also state that the report on the rationalization of its own work would be submitted to the General Assembly after it had considered the definitive conclusions of the *Ad Hoc* Committee.

It was so decided (decision 203 (LXI)).

Preparatory Committee for the World Conference to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination

16. The PRESIDENT said that he would have liked to be able to submit to the Council the names of members of the Preparatory Committee for the World Conference to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination. Under Council resolution 1990 (LX), it was for the President of the Council to appoint the members in consultation with the regional groups. He had made great efforts to discharge that task; however, the group of Western European and other States was waiting until the General Assembly had considered the report of the Third Committee before submitting the list of its candidates.

17. He therefore protested against the rumours that were circulating which placed the responsibility for the delay in the appointment of the members of the Preparatory Committee on him.

Closure of the session

18. The PRESIDENT said that 1976 was ending in an atmosphere that was far from fulfilling the hopes raised by the seventh special session and the thirtieth regular session of the General Assembly, since the essential concerns of the developing countries had not yet found in the developed countries all the satisfaction they were entitled to expect. The problems of develop-

ment, which required urgent decisions because the very survival of many countries was at stake, were always postponed from meeting to meeting, and it was sufficient to cite the Paris Conference on International Economic Co-operation as an example. Without wishing to pinpoint responsibilities, one had to admit that that Conference had not really obtained the results anticipated. It appeared that not all the partners in those negotiations were willing to make the effort necessary for them to progress, whereas such a conference obviously demanded flexibility of positions as a prelude to sincere negotiations so as to reach compromise which would be acceptable to all because it took full account of the interests of the various parties involved.

19. While the developed countries should show more understanding of the claims of the developing countries, the latter should also take into account the concerns of the developed countries. Understanding on the part of one of the two groups concerned would assuredly be answered in kind by the other, since it was accepted that the economies of the world's countries were interdependent. The political will of each Government to contribute to the establishment of a new international economic order was being put to the test not only in the Paris talks but also in the negotiations taking place elsewhere, and only specific results would show whether Governments were determined to build a more just world in which economic progress would no longer be the prerogative of a privileged few.

20. At its resumed sixty-first session, the Council had had to examine the reports of some of its most important subsidiary organs. The brevity of the debates on each of those reports raised the question whether the Council was assuming its full responsibilities. Naturally, late submission of those reports and their simultaneous consideration by the Second Committee had made it impossible for the Council to study them in depth. Nevertheless, those circumstances were regrettable and discouraging, since in certain respects the Council was becoming a kind of "rubber-stamping" machinery, whereas it should be the central organ for formulating, co-ordinating and monitoring the economic and social policies of the United Nations. The members of the Council should be aware of that fact and take care not to give the impression of dealing lightly with certain problems of great

importance for the establishment of the new international economic order.

21. Participation in the Council's debates was not as complete as might be hoped for, and only a few delegations took part in its discussions. That was partly explained, first, by the fact that some delegations relied on a spokesman to present their common viewpoint. Nevertheless, despite the advantages of that method, it was sometimes difficult to distinguish the personal views of the spokesman from the official position of the group. Secondly, certain members had very small delegations that did not always include specialists in the problems being considered and that fact necessarily limited their effective participation in the work. Those circumstances did a disservice to the Council and serious consideration should be given to that question, since greater participation in the debates would make the Council's meetings more lively and the fruitful exchange of ideas could produce solutions or suggestions enriched by the contributions of all delegations.

22. Recalling the great value of the statements made at that part of the sixty-first session held at Abidjan at the ministerial level, he expressed the hope that ministers would participate more often in the Council's sessions in the future, since their participation, in addition to emphasizing the importance which Governments attached to the Council's work, made it possible for useful contacts to take place that facilitated the adoption of important decisions and also helped to enhance the Council's prestige. Sessions at the ministerial level could therefore be held from time to time to consider certain important problems or topics and make useful recommendations to the General Assembly. The Council would thus prove that it was capable of playing an important role in the framework of the new international economic order. If it had not done so until now, that had been the fault not of the Council but of the member Governments. Government representatives bore a serious responsibility in that respect; they could, by making appropriate recommendations and suggestions, prompt instructions that would make it possible to give the Council the impetus it needed to live up to its responsibilities.

After the customary exchange of courtesies, the President declared the session closed.

The meeting rose at 12 noon.