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OFFICIAL RECORDS

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*President:* Mr. PÉREZ GUERRERO (Venezuela).

## Opening of the session

1. The PRESIDENT declared open the forty-fifth session of the Economic and Social Council.

## AGENDA ITEM 1

## Adoption of the agenda (E/4500 and Corr.1 and Add.1)

*The provisional agenda (E/4500 and Corr.1 and Add.1) was adopted.*

## Organization of work (E/L.1202/Rev.1)

2. Mr. GREGH (France) said that there were a number of differences between the original and revised versions of the Secretary-General's note on the organization of work (E/L.1202/Rev.1). For example, it had originally been suggested that the development and utilization of human resources (agenda item 9) and the outflow of trained personnel from developing countries (agenda item 10) should be discussed in the Co-ordination Committee, while according to the revised document they were to be discussed in the Economic Committee. It appeared that the distinction between the two committees was fast becoming blurred.

3. In any case, some important documents relating to those two items were not yet available in French. It would therefore be impossible for his delegation to discuss them in the first week of the session. He proposed that they should be postponed until the second or even third week.

4. With respect to item 13, "The sea", he had been surprised to see that the two sub-items, "Resources of the sea" and "Marine science and technology", were to be considered in different committees. That arrangement broke the unity of the subject and was all the more surprising in that a debate on one of the topics in question had already been begun in New York and had been adjourned so that the subject could be discussed as a whole.

5. Mr. KASSUM (Secretary of the Council) said that it had originally been intended that the whole of item 13 should be considered in plenary. A delegation, however, had proposed that the item should be split.

6. The delay in distributing the documents for items 9 and 10 was not entirely the fault of the Secretariat, which had had to wait for replies from Member States, some of which had arrived very late. The French versions of the documents were being sent from New York by the next pouch.

7. Mr. FORTHOMME (Belgium) said that he too would be unable to discuss item 9 unless the French texts of the documents arrived in time for him to study them in advance. As for sub-items 13 (a) and 13 (b), his delegation considered that they should both be allocated to the Economic Committee.

8. Mr. GREGH (France) said that the Secretary's reply concerning the French documentation was not entirely satisfactory. It was not only that a delegation needed to have the relevant documents before it when considering a given item; it also needed to receive them in time to study them with care and obtain the opinions of the government departments concerned. It would be impossible for his delegation to reach a decision upon any item without going through that process. In the circumstances, he would still propose that consideration of items 9 and 10 should be postponed until the third week of the session and that their place in the timetable should be taken by another suitable item, such as external financing of economic development of the developing countries (agenda item 7).

9. Mr. ROUAMBA (Upper Volta) said he supported the French proposal, the more so as there was no particular need to deal with items 9 and 10 so early in the session.

10. His delegation, however, could not see any great difficulty in discussing the two sub-items concerning "The sea" in different Committees provided that they were not discussed simultaneously so that the same specialists would be able to attend both debates.

11. Mr. GOLDSCHMIDT (United States of America) said his delegation agreed with the view that the whole of item 13 should be considered by a single committee and thought that the Co-ordination Committee would be the more suitable of the two. That would give the Economic Committee a little extra time. Items 9 and 10 might then be postponed to the time reserved in the Economic Committee for item 13 (a).

12. The PRESIDENT said that there appeared to be no objection to the postponement of the debate on items 9 and 10 until later in the session. It had been suggested that they should be replaced in the timetable by item 7.

13. As far as item 13 was concerned, the majority of members seemed to prefer that the two sub-items should be discussed together in the Co-ordination Committee.

14. Mr. ROUAMBA (Upper Volta) said that he still considered that the two sub-items should be debated in separate committees. It was not by pure chance that they had been separated, but in order to help balance the work of the two committees. In any case, there was very little connexion between resources of the sea and marine science and technology. Nevertheless, rather than break the Council's unanimity, he would withdraw his suggestion.

15. Mr. VERCELES (Philippines) said that his delegation was in favour of combining the sub-items but had no particular preference as to which Committee should deal with them.

16. Mr. FORTHOMME (Belgium) said that the Council should not act too hastily. The important thing was that the appropriate experts should be present at the discussion of both sub-items. He could not support the French suggestion that items 9 and 10 should be replaced in the timetable by item 7 since the latter required the presence of experts and his own delegation's expert was not due to arrive until the third week of the session. Whatever item was chosen to replace items 9 and 10 in the timetable should require the same specialists as those items.

17. Mr. ASTROM (Sweden) said that his Government attached particular importance to the promotion of exports from the developing countries. Although some measures to co-ordinate such promotion had taken place at the inter-secretariat level, he thought that the subject should also be considered in depth at the inter-governmental level. His delegation had contemplated proposing a special agenda item, but had refrained from doing so in the hope that it would be possible to make a comprehensive review of the situation under existing agenda items. It appeared that the most suitable item for such a discussion was item 14, "Reports of the regional economic commissions", and he would suggest that representatives wishing to speak on the subject should, as far as possible, do so under that item.

18. The PRESIDENT said that, if there were no objections, it would be agreed that the question of export promotion would be considered mainly under item 14.

19. With respect to the proposals that had been made to change the organization of work, he thought the best procedure would be to approve document E/L.1202/Rev.1 and ask the Committees to take the Belgian representative's remarks into consideration when preparing their own work programmes.

20. Mr. FORTHOMME (Belgium) said he was still not clear which changes in the organization of work had been approved. He was firm in his opposition to the replacement of items 9 and 10 in the timetable by item 7. If that change were approved, his delegation would be unable to take any part in the discussion of item 7, owing to the absence of the necessary expert. It would surely be possible to find some other item to replace items 9 and 10.

21. Mr. GREGH (France) said that he had not formally proposed that item 7 should be inserted in the timetable in place of items 9 and 10. It had simply been a suggestion. Possibly item 5, "Population and its relation to economic and social development", might meet the case, or some other item.

22. If the decision on the organization of work was left until the next meeting, it might be even more difficult to reach agreement.

23. With respect to item 13, the suggestion by the representative of Upper Volta was unacceptable, since if the two sub-items were allocated to different committees with the provision that they must be discussed at different times, it would materially hamper the Chairmen of those committees in organizing their work. He still thought, therefore, that the two sub-items should be considered together in a single committee.

24. The PRESIDENT said that it had already been agreed that consideration of items 9 and 10 would be postponed until later in the session. No decision had been reached on which item should replace them in the timetable. The Secretariat would submit proposals concerning their replacement in due course, bearing in mind the comments made in the discussion.

25. In the case of item 13, it seemed to be the wish of the majority that the two sub-items should be considered together and allocated to a single committee. The allocation of items to the plenary and the committees was more important than the exact timetable, and he would therefore suggest that the organization of work should be approved, subject to the changes he had mentioned, and that it should be left to the plenary and the committees to rearrange their own timetables.

*It was so decided.*

26. The PRESIDENT asked all non-governmental organizations in categories A and B wishing to be consulted on agenda items in accordance with rule 85 of the rules of procedure to submit their requests to the Secretariat in writing within forty-eight hours.

#### AGENDA ITEM 2

General discussion of international economic and social policy (E/4454, E/4467/Rev.1, E/4486/Add.1, E/4488 and Add.1-5, E/4496, E/4511 (Summary), E/4515, E/4525, E/4551; E/CN.5/417 and Corr.1 and Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1 and Add.2 and Summary; E/CN.11/825; E/CN.12/806, E/CN.12/808 and Add.1; E/CN.14/409; E/ECE/703)

27. The PRESIDENT invited the Secretary-General to open the general discussion.

28. The SECRETARY-GENERAL said that, looking back some fifteen to twenty years to the time when the concept of collective responsibility for economic development had begun to take root in international life and to find its way into the national policies of Governments, there was good reason to ask whether there had not been a retreat from the high ideals of the post-war years.

Those ideals had been strongly expressed in the rapid emergence of a complex institutional system, the acceptance of international aid as a durable factor in the functioning of the world economy and the spontaneous and spectacular growth of public capital transfers during the 1950s. At the beginning of the 1960s, targets had been set for the transfer of resources to poor countries and for the annual rate of growth of those countries. There was also justification for asking, five years after the decision to re-examine the basic structure of trade relations among nations, which had led to the first session of UNCTAD, whether that decision had been a mere ritual concession, made in the knowledge that no international conference or new elaborate machinery could alter the balance of forces and bring about the adoption of new policies against the will of those countries which wielded economic power. The growth of international aid had then already begun to falter and, by the time of the second session of UNCTAD, there was talk of "a decade of frustration".

29. Nevertheless, he thought it would be wrong to focus attention solely on the more negative aspects, as that was no longer likely to impress on reluctant Governments the urgency of the development problem. To inspire new courage it was at least as necessary to highlight some of the more encouraging trends. He was inclined to agree with the statement recently made by Mr. George Woods, the former President of IBRD, that development was possible but required exceptional efforts. All had not been a failure in those years of admittedly disappointing results and the current (1967) *World Economic Survey* (part I, E/4488 and Add.1-5) showed that progress was taking place, that the foundations for future improvement were being laid and that the capacity for development was now considerably greater than at the beginning of the decade. Industrial countries had learned something of the art of economic management. They had adopted the habit of far closer consultations with one another, and had thus been able to guard successfully against the transmission of deflationary tendencies in spite of a precarious international monetary system. They had made great strides in liberalizing international trade between themselves, and had shown more readiness to take into account the impact of their domestic policies on the rest of the world. The majority of the developing countries, for their part, had raised their savings ratios, expanded their infrastructure—at times, perhaps excessively—strengthened their education and health services and begun to lay the foundations of good economic management and planning and to adapt their administrative structure to its requirements. All in all, it was by no means sure that progress in the 1960s had been slower than in the 1950s, as was frequently claimed.

30. The fact that growth had not been as fast as it could have been seemed to be due mainly to lack of adequate international action. As so much hope in that respect had been placed in UNCTAD, the Council's annual exercise in self-examination should begin with a study of the results of the New Delhi Conference. In his address to that Conference he had stated that the world was entitled to expect a clearer definition of the longer-term objectives

of economic development and an indication of the practical steps that each country and group intended to take to realize those objectives. In neither case had there been a full and satisfactory response. The report of the Secretary-General of UNCTAD on the Conference<sup>1</sup> was not encouraging. It stated that the very limited positive results obtained were not commensurate with the dimensions and urgency of the development problem. The Council might well reflect on that situation as it affected not only UNCTAD but the Council's own work and the whole pattern of relationships between Members of the United Nations. By indefinitely deferring action to implement their own decisions in the vitally important field of trade and development, member countries were undermining belief in the possibility of solving international problems peacefully by consultation, negotiation and concerted action. Both at the national and international levels, the poor were increasingly aware of the gap separating them from the rich, and increasingly impatient at the denial of adequate assistance to bridge that gap. Failure to act was an invitation to violence. The outcome of the second session of UNCTAD was therefore a matter for grave concern.

31. What had gone wrong at New Delhi? The Conference had been most carefully prepared. Since the first session in 1964, considerable progress had been made in defining the problems and indicating the way to agreement between Governments on concerted and integrated efforts to solve them. Valuable documents had been prepared by the secretariat of UNCTAD, in co-operation with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the secretariats of the regional economic commissions and other agencies. Governments had worked conscientiously at Algiers and in OECD to pave the way for fruitful negotiation. The second session had therefore been widely expected to inject a new sense of purpose into the first United Nations Development Decade, and the preparations for the second one, and to revive faith in the possibilities offered by the United Nations for joint planning and action in the common cause of mutual prosperity.

32. Although relatively few, the positive achievements were by no means negligible. Agreement on the principle of a system of tariff preferences to benefit the exports of developing countries, although the elements of the scheme had yet to be agreed upon, was a noteworthy step forward, as was the acceptance by developed countries of a higher assistance target, which increased by some 25 per cent the potential resources they were urged to transfer to developing countries. The declaration on trade expansion and economic integration among developing countries, the decisions on trade with socialist countries, on shipping matters, and on the least-developed and land-locked countries also, to varying degrees, gave grounds for satisfaction.

33. Had the requests of the developing countries been so extreme as to deserve the largely negative response they had encountered? He did not think it was too much to ask of the developed countries that as they grew richer and their consumption increased, they should reserve a

<sup>1</sup> UNCTAD document TD/96.

proportion of that increase for the export of developing countries, that having lowered trade barriers between themselves in the Kennedy Round, they should do something similar for the products of developing countries, or that they should give aid on a less strictly tied basis and on easier terms. However, he did not consider that the blame lay solely with the developed countries. Developing countries often showed a lack of far-sightedness in their policies and the positions they adopted vis-à-vis the developed countries. They sometimes tended to follow policies of self-delusion, in which long-term benefits were sacrificed to short-term expediency and national interest was considered as ending at the frontier.

34. Since the Conference had dealt with international problems and policies, however, he was forced to the conclusion that the main ingredient of success lacking at New Delhi had been the readiness of industrial countries to enter into trade and aid commitments, which, if they were to have the desired effect, would have to be matched by commitments by the developing countries. That absence of political will could not be blamed on short-sighted governments, since a government was merely the instrument of the will of its country's people. As the Secretary-General of UNCTAD stated in chapter I of his report, it seemed that prosperity, in people as well as in nations, tended to form an attitude of detachment, if not indifference, to the well-being of others. He himself had recently spoken of the danger of "prosperous provincialism" in international life. One of the most important lessons to be learned from the second session was the need to persuade people in the developed countries that their future prosperity and security, and that of their descendants, was inextricably linked with the well-being of people in the developing countries. With the new claims on resources revealed by the present unrest in many of the richer countries, it was more important than ever to try to create that receptivity to United Nations objectives and policies which was still so seriously lacking. In that connexion he attached particular importance to the establishment of a centre for economic and social information within the framework of the Office of Public Information and hoped that Governments, as well as non-governmental organizations, would give it every assistance.

35. The fact that joint planning during the first Development Decade had not justified all the hopes placed in it did not mean that it should be abandoned. Although events had cast doubt on the adequacy of the targets set for the Decade and their impact had varied considerably from country to country, there could be little doubt that their total effect had been stimulating. Member countries firmly believed that the approach was valid and were seeking ways of improving it. The averages or aggregates used clearly failed to do justice to the essential diversity. It might now be wise to pay more attention to appropriate sub-regional groupings and to decide what information was needed to evaluate progress and detect the early symptoms of disequilibrium or faulty development strategy. Those questions were relevant as attention was now being given to preparations for the next Development Decade. Development strategy, the interaction of national and international policies and the desirability of establish-

ing policy objectives and quantitative targets would be discussed when the findings of the Committee on Development Planning were presented in the following year. However, there was no reason why the matter should not be given early consideration in as many bodies as possible. The next Development Decade, its aims and character, some aspects of the preparation involved, some of the problems it posed and the conditions needed for its success had in fact been discussed at the recent joint meetings of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC), the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (CPC) and the Officers of the Council at Bucharest. Those discussions, on which the Chairman of CPC and he would shortly be submitting a report,<sup>2</sup> would facilitate the Council's task and help to strengthen co-operation between ACC and the Council.

36. With the increasing emphasis on "global strategy", it was important to make a realistic assessment of the opposition to be overcome, to identify areas of least resistance and, while persevering with the more recalcitrant problems, to intensify action in the more promising directions. International agreement on such complicated matters as preferential tariffs or the conditions of international aid was not easily reached in a body with 124 participants. While continuing and strengthening the attack on those fronts, it would be wise to apply renewed efforts to other types of co-operation which did not encounter the same obstacles.

37. One of the most significant developments in recent years had been the growing awareness of the population factor. The yearly increase of 54 million people gave rise to formidable structural problems, while the changes in specific age groups created new requirements which the economies of the developing regions had to meet. The probable population increase in the 1970s would exceed that of the 1960s by one-third and there would be a rapid increase in the lower age groups. The second Development Decade must therefore emphasize the critical relationship between population and resources and begin to deal with the resultant problems.

38. Of all the world's population problems, population growth had emerged as the most critical and urgent, and it was more and more being linked to fundamental human rights and the quality of life. Thanks to technological developments and to certain changes in attitudes, the belief was spreading that population growth could be influenced even before a country had reached the appropriate level of development, education and urbanization. Already in twenty developing countries, active policies were being pursued to moderate population growth. National family planning programmes were tending to become an integral part of national economic plans. Economic and social policies, together with population policies, were viewed as mutually supporting.

39. It had to be recognized, however, that such programmes were not as yet satisfactory. There was a lack of information about the possibilities for limitation of the family size and there were not enough personnel to organize and carry out family planning programmes.

<sup>2</sup> Subsequently issued as document E/4557.



Technology had not yet reached the level of highest efficiency and channels of communication between the programme organizers and the wide range of persons concerned were inadequate.

40. From all the quarters directly interested in the problem, there was a call for United Nations leadership. In view of the fact that certain inhibitions had finally been lost, it was up to the United Nations to establish the necessary programming machinery in order to help Governments prepare projects, including the establishment of pilot-projects, in family planning. The financial requirements involved were not so considerable that they should be invoked against more widespread and effective efforts. That was a field where moderate resources well utilized should produce important results. He himself had requested some moderate increases in the 1969 budget and had announced the constitution of a voluntary United Nations Trust Fund. He also knew that some Governments were willing to earmark additional resources for action projects and hoped that there was sufficient moral support so that the United Nations could face the challenge without too many financial constraints.

41. The fear of an absolute food shortage in the face of an exploding population—the Malthusian dilemma—had receded. The current tendency was to believe that the world productive capacity would continue to be large enough to meet foreseeable needs and that, if necessary, it could be activated with sufficient rapidity to prevent famine. Nevertheless, the problem of food and agriculture continued to loom very large. The widespread droughts of 1965/66 and 1966/67 had shown how vulnerable many developing countries continued to be to the vagaries of the weather and how vulnerable the whole economy tended to be to a declining agriculture. The current food situation seemed brighter. Some of the afflicted areas were reaping near record harvests and potentially more important was the news of the technical breakthrough in cereal cultivation. The genetic experiments undertaken over many years were beginning to bear fruit. In particular, the new varieties of hybrid maize and short-stemmed wheat and rice held promise of a dramatic rise in the productivity of the agriculture sector in many countries. Whether that promise could be fulfilled depended on the ability of the countries concerned to mobilize complementary resources and pursue appropriate economic policies. The new varieties required more careful cultivation than the traditional seeds and the need for the correct application of water and fertilizer imposed a major challenge on the organizational capacities of developing countries and their farmers. But if the challenge was met, the results would go beyond a mere increase in productivity; they might produce a revolution in attitudes and habits which would mark a major step in the process of modernization. A great deal of additional investment would be required for handling, storing, transporting, processing and distributing the increased output. The international community, and particularly the aid-giving countries and institutions, were therefore also faced with a challenge. The importance currently attached to progress in agriculture did not indicate a lack of interest in industrialization. Progress in agriculture not only provided renewed stimulus to

industrial activities but also required a large measure of industrial projects oriented towards the rural market. Given that interdependence, a lag in one sector might slow down the whole development process.

42. While a concerted attack was being mounted on the problem of food production, the world would have to stand by with sufficient reserves to ensure against early disappointments and occasional crop failures. It should also be borne in mind that even the rapid spread of more efficient cereals production would leave unsolved the tremendous problem of malnutrition. The shortage of proteins was more widespread than that of calorie sources and it would take a prolonged effort on many fronts to overcome it.

43. The achievements of the United Nations system of agencies, with the financial support of UNDP, in the development of physical resources such as minerals, water and energy, was an indication of the direction in which the Organization could safely and more forcefully push ahead with reasonable chances of success. In a number of newly independent countries, the development of mineral resources had offered the prospect of rapid growth within a comparatively short period. United Nations efforts had recently been responsible for the identification of a number of minerals or sources of energy of considerable economic significance, such as copper in Argentina, Iran, Sabah, Mexico and Panama, the discovery of additional gold resources in Tanzania, iron ore in Chile, bauxite, thorium and uranium in Somalia and geothermal sources in Turkey and El Salvador. The Organization had been able to develop administrative and technical capacities to carry out operational activities on a large scale. That was particularly useful for the newly independent countries where, with the severance of colonial ties and the establishment of new political structures the Governments were shouldering the responsibilities for resource development which had previously been borne by private enterprises and public services operating from a metropolitan base. In that respect, the United Nations system had been filling a vacuum particularly in regard to the first stages of mineral, water and energy resources development.

44. New technology required that previous exploration, and evaluation made under less advanced conditions, be assessed and re-evaluated as soon as possible. That was the basic concept which had motivated the proposal he had made two years previously for an intensive programme of surveys. Difficulties had prevented the full-scale launching of such a programme, but those difficulties were relatively minor and involved sums which, given the total of the Organization's expenditures, were modest. There was little excuse to delay the type of systematic action which was required if the Organization wanted to capitalize fully on the capacities which it had acquired.

45. It was against the background of all those challenges that the Council would have to examine the usefulness and functioning of the Organization's institutional system, which could still be improved. New efforts should be made to streamline its machinery, procedures and, perhaps, some of its activities. Many questions were still asked, many doubts nurtured about the Organiza-

tion's young international bureaucracy. Soul-searching examination of possible improvements was therefore the order of the day. In that respect, the proposal of the Director-General of FAO to integrate the regional activities of FAO with those of the regional economic commissions through an institutional link between the heads of the commissions and himself was welcome. In the first place, the proposal took fully into account the importance attached to the regional approach in problems of development and, secondly, it recognized the considerable trust Governments had for many years placed in the regional commissions in economic and social matters. Consultations were taking place on that proposal which, it was hoped, would be but the initial step in a new effort at strengthening the regional activities of most of the agencies and linking them with those of the regional commissions. The decision to undertake a study of the capacity of the United Nations system to carry out an expanded development programme was also welcome. That was the sort of collective initiative which would help to convince Governments that the United Nations system was constantly re-assessing its past performance, that it took nothing for granted and was ready to abandon habits which were no longer valid.

46. Within the United Nations proper there had been some delay in implementing the recommendations of the *ad hoc* Committee of Experts to Examine the Finances of the United Nations and the Specialized Agencies (Committee of Fourteen), particularly as regards the budget and programming procedures. In the context of the requirements for the second Development Decade, the need for a better integrated system of budget and programming was assuming major significance. Owing to the constraints of an overcrowded timetable, the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions were not in a position to co-operate effectively in the reconciliation of budgetary and programme requirements. Different arrangements, perhaps through the expansion of the period of budget preparation, might substantially improve the situation. A more active role by the Secretary-General in the formulation of the programmes seemed also to be desired by Governments. Under existing practices, the role of the Secretary-General was largely one of translating the decisions of legislative organs into budget estimates. Little discretion was given to him other than the indications which a particular organ might have provided regarding the priority of its requests. The trend of the deliberations of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination and the implications of recent

General Assembly resolutions, particularly those concerning a budget target, seemed to indicate, however, that the Secretary-General should prepare his own proposal for the work to be carried out in a given year, in the light of actions taken by programme-formulating bodies and of such medium-term planning as might have been developed. He should also have some leeway to suggest rearrangements and alterations consonant with the spirit of the decision of the legislative bodies. He should, in fact, submit a plan of action indicating the total resources considered essential. On that basis, the Council could readily determine in what way the planning targets submitted by the Secretary-General would meet their requirements or to what extent they should be further modified. If such an approach were adopted, the existing legislative and institutional arrangements would have to be examined to determine what changes should be introduced to make the existing system respond better to a more active role of the Secretary-General. He made those remarks because he was conscious of the hope placed in the Organization, of the influence it was able to exert on the course of events and of the need to provide it with the means to grow stronger. The activities of the system had developed in an impressive manner. A total expenditure of some \$600 million had presented extremely complex problems of finance and administration and the burden would continue to grow. He was grateful, therefore, to the representative of Canada who in the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination had stated that, in the perspective of the next Development Decade, the Organization should begin to think in terms of \$800 million to \$1,000 million. Without such magnitudes in mind, the Organization would be dangerously overtaken by events.

47. The International Human Rights Year was unfolding, having culminated in the Teheran Conference (International Conference on Human Rights) celebrating the boldest innovation of the United Nations Charter—the unconditional and universal obligation in regard to human rights and fundamental freedoms. In the Proclamation of Teheran, unanimously adopted at its twenty-seventh plenary meeting, the Conference had pointed out that there could be no international order which was not based on a minimum sense of justice and that economic imbalances prevented the enjoyment of fundamental rights. The inadequacies of the United Nations institutions were apparent, but the richness of their message and the need to give them the strength to fulfil the tasks they alone could undertake should be recognized.

The meeting rose at 5.25 p.m.