

2040th meeting

Wednesday, 12 January 1977, at 4.15 p.m.

President: Mr. Ladislav ŠMÍD (Czechoslovakia).

E/SR.2040

AGENDA ITEM 1

Election of the Bureau (*concluded*)

1. The PRESIDENT noted that, under rule 18 of the rules of procedure, the Council was required to elect four Vice-Presidents. He was informed that, on the basis of informal consultations among the regional groups, Mr. Rafael Rivas (Colombia), Mr. Ole Ålgård (Norway), Mr. Abdalla Mahgoub (Sudan) and Mr. Mehdi Ehsassi (Iran) had been nominated to serve as Vice-Presidents for 1977.

Mr. Rafael Rivas (Colombia), Mr. Ole Ålgård (Norway), Mr. Abdalla Mahgoub (Sudan) and Mr. Mehdi Ehsassi (Iran) were elected Vice-Presidents by acclamation.

AGENDA ITEM 5

Report on the Joint Meetings of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination and the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (E/5892)

2. The PRESIDENT recalled that the Council, in its decision 199 (LXI) of 15 November 1976, had decided to consider in depth at its organizational session for 1977 the report of the Chairman of CPC and the Chairman of ACC on the joint meetings of those committees (E/5892), taking into account the comments made thereon at the resumed sixty-first session, with a view to reaching specific conclusions which would guide the future work of CPC and ACC and of their joint meetings.

3. Mr. KJELDGAARD (Denmark), speaking also on behalf of the delegation of Norway, noted that, as reflected in paragraph 19 of the report on the joint meetings (E/5892), members of CPC took the view that a striking dispersal of efforts still characterized the work of organizations, and that conflicts of competences still occupied too great a proportion of the efforts of secretariats and of governing bodies, exploiting in some cases weaknesses in national co-ordination. The delegations of Norway and Denmark considered that remark to provide a good basis for an evaluation of the report.

4. The two delegations endorsed the conclusions set forth in paragraph 42 of the report. With regard to the joint meetings themselves, they shared the Secretary-General's view that participants had at times left the meetings with a feeling that a valuable opportunity had been missed. They therefore whole-heartedly endorsed the proposals for improving the preparation of the meetings. They continued to believe that a single well-prepared series of meetings each year at Geneva, after the session of CPC and immediately prior to the Council's summer session, would yield the best results.

5. The two delegations also felt that it was only by having a subsidiary body like CPC review the programme budget and the medium-term plan and undertake an in-depth examination of the various programmes that the Council could fulfil its responsibilities. It was with that in mind that CPC had been given its new and far-reaching mandate. CPC should now be expected not only to co-ordinate the implementation of approved programmes but to undertake a systematic effort to integrate the contributions of organizations at the planning stage and to promote concerted action at the implementation stage. For that task, CPC must have full support and co-operation from ACC, and the two Nordic delegations therefore fully subscribed to the various proposals for improving the co-operation between CPC and ACC, particularly through the attendance of the Chairman of CPC as an observer at the relevant meetings of ACC.

6. In conclusion, he emphasized that the Secretary-General, as Chairman of ACC, should fully utilize the co-ordinating function entrusted to him under the Charter of the United Nations.

7. Mr. KINSMAN (Canada) said it was the general view of the Canadian authorities that ACC should, wherever possible, explicitly describe interorganizational conflicts of which CPC and the Council should be aware, so that corrective action could be taken.

8. It was his delegation's understanding that ACC had agreed that its main tasks were to identify major problems, to advise on the best use of United Nations resources and to facilitate the co-ordination of the United Nations system. That underlined the importance of the flow of information to which the Chairman of ACC had referred at the most recent series of joint meetings.

9. The report also revealed that many Governments still harboured reservations about the closed meetings of ACC. The objectives of the Council's organizational session might well be to find means of promoting co-operation between CPC and ACC and of strengthening the Council's action.

10. ACC appeared to have placed more stress on the administrative convenience of agencies and less on some of the hard questions of management rationalization which were a major concern of the Canadian Government. He therefore fully endorsed the comments of the Chairman of CPC, particularly with regard to four main points. The first concerned the provision of a summary of the results of sessions of ACC and the attendance of the Chairman of CPC as an observer at the relevant meetings of ACC. Secondly, there should be consultations concerning the agenda of ACC, so that the latter could devote adequate attention to the priorities and programmes of the Council, as laid down by the Council itself. Thirdly, he agreed that the agencies should emphasize long-term planning and,

when possible, should use a system of evaluating alternative proposals, rather than working on the basis of available consensus. Fourthly, he agreed that the question of relations between CPC and individual agencies should be discussed in the light of the Committee's expanded mandate.

11. While he agreed with the conclusions of the joint meetings, he felt that they could have gone further by including recommendations for following up, if the Council so wished, some of the ideas raised at the joint meetings. On two occasions, CPC had considered informal proposals made by the *Ad Hoc* Committee on the Restructuring of the Economic and Social Sectors of the United Nations System and had proceeded with the relevant reforms. His delegation hoped that such progress towards rationalization augured well for the future of co-ordination within the system.

12. Mr. VAN BUUREN (Netherlands) said that his delegation agreed with the conclusions set forth in the report on the joint meetings (E/5892), except for the suggestion in paragraph 42 (d). Commenting in general on the report, he noted that co-ordination of the activities of the United Nations system meant close co-operation in both the preparatory and the implementation stages. The effectiveness of the operations of each organization would be hampered if any one organization tried to attain certain goals entirely on its own. That co-operation should, on the other hand, in no way imply a mixing of responsibilities and tasks of the different bodies.

13. Those two basic elements of co-ordination, namely, co-operation and separate responsibilities, were also very valid for the work of ACC and CPC. His delegation therefore shared the view that the Chairman of CPC should participate in the spring sessions of ACC in order to prepare the joint meetings. However, such participation should be limited to those preparatory activities and should not include participation in the discussion of other items on the agenda of ACC. Similarly, his delegation did not favour the participation of members of CPC in meetings of ACC, nor visits by members of CPC to the headquarters of specialized agencies or other United Nations bodies.

14. He noted that the report under discussion reflected some disappointment at the results of ACC meetings. That was understandable, but his delegation was convinced that a proper functioning of the Council and of CPC would give a stimulus to the strengthening of ACC. A further involvement of the agencies in the preparatory process of decision-making of the Council and, through the Council, of the General Assembly could therefore be an appropriate way of strengthening ACC. Referring to paragraph 25 of the report, he emphasized that secretariats should make full use of their prerogatives in order to be able to fulfil their responsibilities.

15. His delegation favoured a reporting system for ACC open to all organizations within the United Nations. Such a system might lead to a better understanding, and even to greater effectiveness, of co-ordination activities under the auspices of ACC.

16. Mr. MYERSON (United States of America) said that he shared many of the views of previous speakers. The

report contained useful information on efforts to improve co-ordination and co-operation between ACC and CPC.

17. It was perhaps encouraging that the joint meetings seemed to be moving a little beyond the stage of abstract discussions of the need for co-ordination to the discussion of suggested methods of improving co-ordination. Prospects would be vastly improved if discussions were focused on the pragmatic need for information rather than on prerogatives and rights. CPC was still experimenting with improvements, and certainly needed the full support of all members of ACC.

18. In general, his delegation endorsed the conclusions set forth in the report. Like other delegations, however, it had doubts concerning paragraph 42 (d). While it did not oppose further consideration of that proposal, it felt that the practical problems could be formidable.

19. He hoped that the next series of joint meetings would be prepared well in advance, so that time was not wasted in discussing how to make the meetings productive.

20. Mr. WARSAMA (Somalia) expressed the view that the conclusions set forth in the report (E/5892) were the minimum that could be expected. He was rather encouraged to note from paragraph 20 of the report that members of ACC agreed that co-ordination in both the planning and the implementation stages was not yet at the required level. He also endorsed the hope expressed by the Secretary-General that ACC and CPC would co-operate more closely than in the past. ACC should be closely involved with the activities of the agencies at both the implementation and the programming and policy stages, since it was clear from the report that there was overlapping within the United Nations system.

21. On the other hand, his delegation was fully aware that most Member States did not know precisely what was taking place at the ACC level. It was therefore important that members of CPC should be involved with the work of ACC at all stages and should be thoroughly acquainted with the activities of the various organizations, which should provide CPC with analytical reports and other information on their activities.

22. Mr. QADRUD-DIN (Pakistan) felt that the strengthening of the role of CPC and the question of its relationship with ACC should be viewed in the context of the desire of developing countries to ensure that the decisions of the various legislative bodies were given the interpretation intended.

23. With regard to the joint meetings, the improvements suggested in document E/5892 should enable CPC to play a more effective role and to remain fully informed of the work of ACC; they were a step in the right direction. If the attendance of the Chairman of CPC at meetings of ACC proved successful, as was likely, then further measures should be considered.

24. Mr. MAKEYEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said it was appropriate that the Economic and Social Council should begin its work for 1977 by considering ways of strengthening consultation between CPC and ACC,

especially in the light of Council resolution 2008 (LX), which defined the new terms of reference of CPC. It was clear from Council resolution 1643 (LI) that the relationship between CPC and ACC should be changed to enable ACC to assist the Council in improving co-ordination.

25. The discussions at the joint meetings had shown that not all representatives of specialized agencies were ready to engage in increased co-operation. They seemed to overlook the fact that ACC had an auxiliary function in relation to intergovernmental bodies, which were the policy-making organs of the system. Members of CPC had frequently pointed out that the functions of ACC were not clearly defined and that, in addition, ACC continued to concern itself too much with substantive policy questions, thus encroaching on the functions of intergovernmental bodies.

26. Over the past five years great improvements had been made in the reporting system used by ACC, and Member States were now better informed with regard to its agenda. Those improvements should, however, be viewed only as a first step towards the full implementation of Council resolution 1643 (LI).

27. Members of CPC had frequently noted with regret that they continued to be prevented from participating in the meetings of ACC and its subsidiary bodies. The opponents of such participation adduced the most varied arguments to justify their position. For example, they suggested that the presence of representatives of Governments might hinder the frank exchange of views among members of ACC, especially with regard to such matters as the co-ordination of plans, budgets and programmes of work. Those arguments were unfounded. Access to meetings of ACC on the part of interested members of CPC could not but enhance the authority of ACC and foster closer co-operation between the two bodies.

28. His delegation viewed with great interest the suggestion that the Chairman of CPC should be invited to attend meetings of ACC. Such a step would enhance mutual trust and the exchange of news between the two bodies, particularly for those members of CPC who were not in any way represented in ACC.

29. Mrs. DERRE (France) recalled that her delegation had frequently expressed its great interest in the joint meetings. On the whole, it agreed with the views expressed by the Chairman of CPC in his introductory statement; it shared his regret that representatives attending the joint meetings at times felt somewhat frustrated, and hoped that in future a climate of greater mutual confidence would prevail. Everyone must make an effort to that end. Since it was difficult to deal with all the problems at the traditionally short series of joint meetings, consideration should be given to lengthening them. Her delegation could accept all the conclusions in paragraph 42 of the report except the one in subparagraph (d). It did not see any practical value in visits by representatives of CPC to agency headquarters, since CPC could always request information from ACC on specific points at the joint meetings themselves. It would be sufficient if the Chairman of CPC, in consultation with the other members, selected topics to be dealt with at the joint meetings.

30. Mr. YORK (Federal Republic of Germany) said that, although his Government was not a member of CPC, it attached great importance to co-ordination, especially since that was one of the main elements of the restructuring exercise. His delegation felt that the joint meetings had been useful and should be continued. It therefore supported the conclusions in document E/5892. The joint meetings should be designed to bring about greater mutual understanding and better co-ordination and should not lead to the establishment of further co-ordination machinery. He shared the doubts expressed by some delegations with regard to paragraph 42 (d). Greater care should be taken in formulating the agenda of the joint meetings, and in-depth consideration should be given to carefully selected programme areas in order to eliminate overlapping, for example in the scope and terms of reference of world conferences. His delegation also agreed that CPC and ACC should jointly consider selected areas where they could do useful work at the programming, implementation and evaluation stages.

31. Mr. ACEMAH (Uganda) said he felt that the members, or at least the Chairman, of CPC should be able to attend ACC meetings as observers, just as members of ACC attended CPC meetings.

32. The purposes of the joint meetings needed to be defined more explicitly and, as stated in paragraph 42 of the report, there was a need for better preparation and a careful formulation of the agenda of the meetings if their role was to be strengthened. The joint meetings should not be used as a forum for the heads of agencies to report in detail on agency activities, as had been the case to some extent at the last series of meetings. Appropriate forums already existed for the heads of agencies to give annual reports on their work.

33. He supported the conclusions in paragraph 42 and hoped that the next series of joint meetings would further contribute towards carrying out the original mandate of the meetings as outlined in Council resolution 1090 G (XXXIX).

34. Mr. MARSHALL (United Kingdom) said that, since his delegation had already expressed its views on the substance of the report at the resumed sixty-first session, it would now confine itself to suggesting how the Council might take note of the report. Paragraph 42 provided the basis for a decision by the Council, even though some reservations had been expressed with regard to individual subparagraphs. Subparagraph (a) could be made more specific by including a reference to the fact that the joint meetings should be held before the Council's summer session. A further look would also have to be taken at subparagraph (d), which did not fully convey the exact proposal that had been discussed at the joint meetings; as he understood it, the original idea had been that members of CPC might be able to hold discussions with agency officials. Since the Council would be able to consider the report again at its sixty-third session, it might wish to note for the record that it would be devoting particular attention to the report at that time.

35. Mr. CARANICAS (Greece) said that, in his opinion, not too much should be expected of the joint meetings, at

which there was only time for a rather perfunctory consideration of documents. He agreed that the meetings should be held immediately before the Council's summer session. However, if there was an absence of dialogue not only at the joint meetings but throughout the year, it would be unrealistic to expect much progress. As to paragraph 42 (d), he did not understand why it had been proposed that representatives of CPC should travel to agency headquarters, rather than having the agency representatives attend CPC meetings. He wondered whether the representative of WHO could explain why such an expensive procedure had been proposed.

36. Mrs. KALM (World Health Organization) said that paragraph 35 of the report indicated the context in which the Director-General of WHO had made his proposal. That proposal had been intended not to replace the traditional procedure, but to provide an additional avenue of communication. She had noted the comments made in the Council, and she assured members that WHO was ready to co-operate in any way it could.

37. Mr. CARANICAS (Greece) said that he doubted whether visits to the agencies could be carried out in a way that would produce results, and he wondered which representatives would be authorized to visit the agencies. Furthermore, other agencies should be consulted with regard to the proposal. He had doubts as to its practicality.

38. The PRESIDENT suggested that the Council should approve the conclusions in document E/5892, paragraph 42, taking fully into account the comments made during the debate on the item.

39. Mr. MARSHALL (United Kingdom) felt that the Council should do more than that and should produce a text to be made available to the members of CPC and ACC conveying its comments on the subject.

40. Mr. CARANICAS (Greece) requested the Under-Secretary-General for Inter-Agency Affairs and Co-ordination to give the Council some guidance on the decision it should take.

41. Mr. NARASIMHAN (Under-Secretary-General for Inter-Agency Affairs and Co-ordination) said that the comments which had been made at the current meeting provided sufficient guidance with regard to the approach that should be taken to the joint meetings. The next series would consist of three meetings, and the members would therefore be less rushed than at the last series. The meetings would be held on 4 and 5 July, immediately before the Council's summer session, and the agenda would be drafted in close co-operation with the Chairman of CPC.

42. Mr. MAKEYEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that, if the Council merely took note of the conclusions in document E/5892, his delegation would have no difficulty. If, however, it decided to approve them, his delegation would wish to place on record that it did not agree with all the conclusions. In particular, it wished to make a reservation with regard to paragraph 42 (d), which would involve an excessively complicated and costly procedure. Account must be taken of the financial implications of the conclusions.

43. The PRESIDENT suggested that the Council should take note of the conclusions contained in the report of the Chairman of CPC and the Chairman of ACC on the joint meetings of those committees (E/5892), taking fully into account the comments made thereon.

It was so decided (decision 208 (ORG-77)).

44. The PRESIDENT declared that the Council had thus concluded its consideration of agenda item 5.

The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.

2041st meeting

Thursday, 13 January 1977, at 11.15 a.m.

President: Mr. Ladislav ŠMÍD (Czechoslovakia).

E/SR.2041

AGENDA ITEM 4

Report of the Committee on Natural Resources on its second special session (E/L.1742)

1. Mr. CORDOVEZ (Secretary of the Council), speaking on behalf of the Secretary-General of the United Nations Water Conference, introduced the extract from the report of the Committee on Natural Resources on its second special session (E/L.1742) and drew the Council's attention to three recommendations of the Committee which were set forth in paragraph 1, subparagraphs (a) to (c), and other arrangements called for in subparagraph (d). After reading

out a correction to the text of subparagraph (d), which consisted in deleting the words "the third progress report of the Secretary-General (E/C.7/61) and", he noted that the Committee also wished to bring to the attention of the Council certain matters set forth in paragraph 2 of the report.

2. Mr. ROUGE (France) said that his delegation wished to make some general comments on the preparations for the Water Conference, especially the work of the Committee on Natural Resources as the preparatory committee for the Conference, and to see what lessons could be drawn from the experience gained in preparing the Conference. The