



ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL
Forty-fourth Session
OFFICIAL RECORDS

Monday, 20 May 1968,
 at 3.25 p.m.

NEW YORK

C O N T E N T S

| | Page |
|---|------|
| <i>Agenda item 18:</i> | |
| <i>Non-governmental organizations</i> | 3 |

President: Mr. Manuel PEREZ GUERRERO
 (Venezuela).

AGENDA ITEM 18

Non-governmental organizations (E/4476 and Corr.1,
 E/4485, E/L.1204, E/L.1205)

1. The PRESIDENT said that, in the absence of any comments, he would take it that the Council agreed to the recommendations of its Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations regarding the organizations to be heard at the forty-fourth session (see E/L.1204, E/L.1205).

It was so decided.

2. The PRESIDENT said that the Council now had before it the report of its Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations on its review of arrangements for consultation with those organizations (E/4485) and the report of the Secretary-General on co-operation between the Office of Public Information and non-governmental organizations (E/4476 and Corr.1). He suggested that the Council first take up the report on arrangements for consultation with non-governmental organizations.

It was so decided.

3. Mr. FORSHELL (Sweden), speaking as Chairman of the Council Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, recalled the Committee's terms of reference, set out in operative paragraph 1 of Council resolution 1225 (XLII) of 6 June 1967.

4. The Council Committee's report (E/4485) was the result of team work. Some of the proposals put forward in the draft resolution submitted by the Council Committee (see E/4485, annex) were rather complicated but he saw no need to amend it. It represented a compromise and was intended to be applied in a reasonable and intelligent manner. He hoped that it would be discussed by the Council in the same way. On 17 May 1968, the Committee had heard the views on the draft resolution of a number of non-governmental organizations in category B;^{1/} he would describe those views briefly in connexion with the paragraphs to which they referred. In general, he would mention at the present stage only those paragraphs which constituted substantial departures from Council resolution 288 B (X) of 27 February 1950.

5. Paragraph 1 of part I, in referring to scientific and technological matters, reflected the evolution which

had taken place since the drafting of the Charter of the United Nations. The first paragraph in which any major change appeared was paragraph 4. The non-governmental organizations consulted had commented on the second sentence, and he had replied on behalf of the Committee that the joint committees were to be formed for the purpose of defending common interests in subjects discussed by the Council; it was not necessary to form them in order that the organizations should obtain consultative status. The second sentence of paragraph 5 was more explicit than in the former resolution, but constituted no major departure from it, while paragraph 6 contained nothing new. In the second sentence of paragraph 7, the phrase following the word "arrangements" had been added for the sake of clarity and to resolve the difficulty which had been found in drawing a clear line between non-governmental and inter-governmental organizations. Paragraph 8 was entirely new; the representatives of the non-governmental organizations had said that the reporting duty laid on them in that paragraph would sometimes be impossible to fulfil. However, the second sentence should be interpreted to mean that the Committee required, not a list of each individual contribution and donor, but a general indication of the source of voluntary funds and an explanation of any exceptionally large contributions. Paragraph 9 was taken from the previous resolution, but the last sentence had been added in the light of past experience, in order to make it possible for national organizations from developing countries to participate. Paragraphs 10 and 11 were based on the former text but they also covered the question as to whether or not an organization could be admitted when it had a consultative arrangement with a specialized agency.

6. In part II of the draft resolution, the only addition was the last sentence of paragraph 14.

7. In drafting paragraph 16 of part III of the draft resolution, the Committee had preferred to institute two completely new categories: general consultative status and special consultative status. They were meant to be on a par with each other, thus avoiding the impression of a qualitative judgement created by the former categories A and B. The definitions contained in sub-paragraphs (a) and (b) of paragraph 16 were self-explanatory. With regard to paragraph 17, a number of non-governmental organizations had said that the two sentences it contained appeared somewhat contradictory. It should be borne in mind that the text represented a compromise; its provisions should prove workable if implemented in a reasonable and intelligent manner. Paragraph 18, providing for the admission to consultative status of organizations whose aim was to promote the objectives and purposes of the United Nations, was intended to counterbalance the tendency for most organizations accorded such status to be of a specialized nature. Paragraph 19 indicated that what had formerly been known as the Register

^{1/} See document E/C. 2SR. 248

would henceforth be known as the Roster; the last sentence stated explicitly that inclusion on the Roster should not "in itself be regarded as a qualification for general or specialized consultative status".

8. Generally speaking, parts IV and V repeated the provisions of Council resolution 288 B (X). A number of non-governmental organizations had stated, with reference to paragraphs 20 and 26 of the draft resolution, that paragraph 19 of part IV of the previous resolution had specified that the agenda should be communicated to organizations in consultative status at the same time as it was sent to Member Governments. In the absence of such a statement in the present text, a reasonable approach would again be necessary, and he hoped that in fact the agenda would always be communicated as early as practicable.

9. Parts VI and VII of the draft resolution contained nothing new; part VIII (suspension and withdrawal of consultative status), on the other hand, was almost all new. In part VIII of Council resolution 288 B (X), paragraphs 35 (b) and (c) were implicitly relevant to the question of suspension and withdrawal, so that it might be said that part VIII spelt out in detail provisions which in practice had already existed. A number of non-governmental organizations had stated that there was no specific provision for the hearing of a non-governmental organization concerned in a case of suspension and withdrawal. The Committee had felt that the provisions would be interpreted in a reasonable manner and that due process of law would be observed; it was inconceivable that suspension or withdrawal would be recommended without the non-governmental organization concerned being given an opportunity to state its case.

10. Part IX of the draft resolution contained little new material. The articles in the Council's rules of procedure that referred to its Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations had been rewritten in 1966, and its general duties were derived from the preceding paragraphs of the draft resolution. However, paragraph 40 (b) was new, in particular the implication that an examination of the reports submitted by non-governmental organizations might lead in some cases to the recommendation of action under part VIII. Part X contained practically the same wording as the relevant section of Council resolution 288 B (X).

11. The proposals in the draft resolution covered only part of the Committee's mandate under Council resolution 1225 (XLII). The remainder of its task consisted in reviewing the organizations now in consultative status with a view to fitting them into the new system. It seemed likely that proposals in that regard could be submitted to the Council at its spring session in 1969. Until that was done, he assumed that the classification and regulations specified in Council resolution 288 B (X) would continue to apply.

12. Mr. JHA (India) said that paragraph 36 (c) of the draft resolution referred to the three years preceding the date on which the organizations's activities were reviewed and not the three years preceding the date of adoption of the resolution. The word "last" should therefore be replaced by the word "previous".

13. Mr. COX (Sierra Leone) said he did not see the need for that change but would agree to it, if it were supported by the majority.

14. Mr. NASINOVSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) requested that the Russian text of the draft resolution be brought into line with the English text.

15. Mr. GREGH (France) said that the French text of the draft resolution also required revision; some passages which in English were identical to those in Council resolution 288 B (X) were worded differently in the French version.

16. His delegation would have preferred paragraph 1 of Council resolution 288 B (X) to have been retained in the new text. Paragraph 46 (b) should be amended to grant non-governmental organizations access to the press documentation service at the United Nations Office at Geneva and at the headquarters of the regional economic commissions, as well as at United Nations Headquarters.

17. His delegation would like to know the administrative and financial implications of the plan of the Office of Public Information to attach liaison officers dealing with non-governmental organizations to the major regional offices of the United Nations (see E/4476 and Corr.1, para. 37).

18. The criteria for the admission of non-governmental organizations to consultative status were extremely important. In his delegation's view, the guiding principles should be the structure of the organizations, their representative character, their independence from governmental sources of financing and their international standing. It was because those principles had not always been respected that the Council had asked for a review of the arrangements for consultation with non-governmental organizations.

19. Although it was true that the draft resolution had been adopted unanimously in the Council Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, reservations had been expressed and many compromise solutions had been accepted. The French delegation regarded the new text as an improvement in some respects but still had certain reservations. In particular, it considered that paragraph 9 was in contradiction with paragraph 17 and might lead to abuses.

20. In order for the Council's work to be as effective as possible, constructive relations should be established with non-governmental organizations. The arrangements should not, however, place an undue burden on the Council. The provisions in the draft resolution would be satisfactory, provided that certain precautions were taken. The Council should not become a forum for the confrontation of interests which were not those of the United Nations.

21. Mr. FORSHELL (Sweden), speaking as Chairman of the Council Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, said he would consult the other members of the Committee about the points raised by the representatives of India and France.

The meeting rose at 4.40 p.m.