



COMMITTEE FOR PROGRAMME AND CO-ORDINATION

REPORT ON THE SEVENTH SESSION

9-16 September 1970

**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL
OFFICIAL RECORDS: FORTY-NINTH SESSION**

SUPPLEMENT No. 11

UNITED NATIONS



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CONTENTS

<u>Chapter</u>	<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Page</u>
I. ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSION	1 - 4	1
II. PROGRAMME BUDGETING IN THE UNITED NATIONS	5 - 25	2
III. PROPOSAL FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF SPECIAL RAPPORTEURS	26 - 30	7
IV. TENTATIVE PLAN OF WORK FOR THE EIGHTH AND NINTH SESSIONS	31	8

ANNEXES

I. AGENDA FOR THE SEVENTH SESSION	9
II. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS	10

I. ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSION

1. The Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (CPC) held its seventh session at United Nations Headquarters from 9 to 16 September 1970. There were seven meetings of the Committee during that period, the summary records of which are contained in documents E/AC.51/SR.292-298. 1/

2. The following members of the Committee were represented: Argentina, Brazil, Bulgaria, the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Denmark, France, Ghana, Guyana, India, Japan, Malta, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sierra Leone, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United Republic of Tanzania and the United States of America.

3. The following specialized agencies were represented: The International Labour Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the World Health Organization and the World Meteorological Organization. The International Atomic Energy Agency was also represented. In addition, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development were represented. The Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management, the Assistant Secretary-General for Inter-Agency Affairs and other senior officials of the United Nations Secretariat also attended. A list of participants is contained in annex II of the report.

4. The agenda for the seventh session adopted by the Committee at its 292nd meeting is reproduced in annex I of the report.

1/ The Committee held its 291st meeting at Geneva on 1 July 1970, immediately preceding the Joint Meetings of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination and the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination.

II. PROGRAMME BUDGETING IN THE UNITED NATIONS

5. The Committee devoted the major part of its seventh session to the important question of developing for the United Nations a system of programming and budgeting which would provide a rational basis for decision making. At the point of launching the Second United Nations Development Decade, the development of such a system was considered by the Committee to be of particular importance if the United Nations was to carry out more effectively its functions and make judicious use of the limited resources available for the implementation of its programmes.

6. The Committee had before it the report on programming and budgets in the United Nations family of organizations prepared by Mr. M. Bertrand (A/7822), the comments of the Secretary-General and those of the Administrator of UNDP on the report (A/7987), as well as the comments of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/8033). The Committee further benefited from the presence of Mr. Bertrand at all of its meetings, as well as from the presence of senior officials of the Secretariat, including the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management, the Assistant Secretary-General for Inter-Agency Affairs and the Director of the Budget Division.

7. In his introductory statement, Mr. Bertrand briefly analysed his views on the inadequacies of the present financial and programming system of the United Nations as well as the measures proposed by him to overcome the existing deficiencies. He also underlined the three stages called for in implementing his proposals, namely, the presentation of the United Nations budget on a programme basis, the adoption of medium-term programming, and the establishment of a programming service.

8. Mr. Bertrand's report brought out that under the existing system the possibilities for medium- and long-term planning and even budgeting were limited by the fact that an increasing proportion of the total resources devoted to activities in the economic and social fields were being derived from funds donated to UNDP which were outside the proper budget system and which under the existing system of allocation of those funds could not be properly forecast. The existing system of budget presentation in the United Nations budget puts emphasis on objects of expenditures such as salaries, travel, staff costs and supplies and not on programmes. This made it very difficult to establish clear links between the programmes in a specific field and the resources required to carry them out. Moreover, in so far as programmes could be identified, there was frequently a lack of clear definition of objectives to be obtained and the steps to be taken in reaching them.

9. The new system envisaged by Mr. Bertrand was summarized by him in six recommendations asking for: (a) reform of UNDP earmarking methods; (b) a presentation of the United Nations budget on a programme basis; (c) the general adoption of medium-term programming, (d) the establishment of an inventory of resources by country and by source of assistance, with a view to rational

apportionment of work; (e) adoption of methodology for the identification and classification of projects and programme "units"; and (f) the establishment of a programming service in the United Nations.

10. The Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs also stressed that under the existing system no satisfactory basis existed for arriving at proper decisions regarding the allocation of resources and choosing between alternative courses of action in order to obtain these objectives in the most effective way at the least possible cost. The present system simply could not provide for an accurate and complete picture of what was happening and what was intended to be done and what would be the specific costs for carrying out those programmes. Some progress had been made in the past, partly as a result of the efforts of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination, to establish closer links between programme and budget but a great deal still remained to be done in that direction.

11. An important point raised in the Committee was whether the new system outlined by Mr. Bertrand would have an effect on the over-all level of resources that Governments of Member States were prepared to make available for United Nations activities. Mr. Bertrand, as well as the representatives of the Secretary-General, categorically stated that what was involved was the adoption of a new technique for programming and budgeting United Nations activities, particularly in the economic and social fields. The technique must be considered a completely neutral tool having no connexion with the question of what would be the appropriate level of the total resources that Governments of Member States might be prepared to make available to the United Nations. The question of the proper procedures and methods was a technical one and entirely separate from the political question of the total level of resources made available to the Secretary-General.

12. There was general agreement that Mr. Bertrand had provided in his report a most lucid and penetrating analysis of the defects of the present system of programming and budgeting and the Committee was most appreciative of this. Reference was made to the experiences of the specialized agencies and the Committee benefited greatly from the information provided by several of their representatives regarding their systems of programming and budgeting. There was agreement that the United Nations and the specialized agencies have differing responsibilities. The range of responsibilities of the United Nations was much wider than those of the specialized agencies. In the United Nations there exists a large number of programmes in quite different fields which makes the task of the establishment of priorities between these programmes more difficult than is the case with the much more homogeneous activities carried out by certain specialized agencies.

13. While some members felt that the establishment of a system along the lines proposed by Mr. Bertrand would provide for a more rational basis for decision making and was essential if medium- and long-term planning should be adopted on a systematic basis for activities in the economic and social fields, there were others who expressed concern that some of Mr. Bertrand's proposals, if fully implemented, might adversely affect the sovereign right of Governments of Member States to decide freely priorities in the intergovernmental organs concerned and within the context of their own national development plans. They might also give the Secretariat a much more dominant role in such matters than was currently envisaged and desired by the Member States.

14. Mr. Bertrand as well as the representatives of the Secretary-General pointed out that that was not at all the intention since it was desired to improve the existing machinery with a view to being able to assist the legislative organs more effectively than in the past in arriving at their decisions. For example, these organs could be provided with the Secretary-General's own suggestions for priority areas for the United Nations in order to help them decide which programmes might need strengthening and which could be slowed down.

15. There was some discussion on whether the system envisaged by Mr. Bertrand had as its ultimate aim what was generally called a planning-programming-budgeting system (PPBS), the implementation of which appeared to require a high degree of sophistication since it involved the consideration of programmes cutting across organizational lines and a built-in system of choosing between alternative courses of action for reaching a given objective or whether what was proposed by him was a much more limited system generally understood as performance budgeting. Under the latter system the major emphasis would be on assurance of efficiency or management control, while under the first system the emphasis would be on medium- and long-term planning, cost-benefit analysis as well as cost-effectiveness analysis. Mr. Bertrand indicated that although the ultimate aim of his proposals was eventually the establishment of a full-fledged PPBS system, it would under the present conditions be neither practicable nor desirable to embark immediately on the establishment of such a system and all its ramifications but that the necessary changes would need to be carried out step by step and phased over a period of time. That seemed to him the only way of approaching the problem. While some members recognized the need to proceed by stages, the adaptability of performance budgeting to full PPBS was questioned.

16. The Committee appreciated the initiative taken by the report as well as the constructive and pragmatic approach expressed in the Secretary-General's comments on it and also greatly appreciated ACABQ's comments and the possible course of action charted in them. The Committee expressed itself in principle in favour of the general thrust of the action envisaged in the Secretary-General's report and was looking forward with keen interest to the more specific and detailed proposals which the Secretary-General was intending to submit to the General Assembly at its twenty-fifth session. The Committee expected that the proposed report would clear up several issues which were of concern to the members of the Committee. The Committee is generally of the view that a forward movement in the direction of programme budgeting is desirable. In arriving at this position the Committee had in mind the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee of Experts to Examine the Finances of the United Nations and the Specialized Agencies as contained in its second report (A/6343), which were unanimously approved by the General Assembly at its twenty-first session (resolution 2150 (XXI)). However, the degree of support by members of the Committee varied with regard to the specific proposals as contained in Mr. Bertrand's report and there was agreement that in this very complex and difficult matter it would be essential to proceed with caution. The Committee recommends that in preparing his reports to be submitted to the General Assembly at its twenty-fifth session, the Secretary-General pay due regard to the views expressed in the discussion of the item in the Committee at its seventh session.

17. The Committee expressed the hope that its report would be useful not only to the Economic and Social Council but also to members of the Fifth Committee and the General Assembly in making decisions regarding Mr. Bertrand's proposals. The

report is of necessity brief and could not possibly cover all the interesting issues and problems raised during the very active debates which took place in the Committee. For this reason, the Committee has decided to submit to the Economic and Social Council, together with its report, the summary records of its seventh session. The Committee further recommends that its report as well as the summary records on this item be placed before the Fifth Committee at the twenty-fifth session of the General Assembly. Finally, the Committee took note of a statement by the representative of the Office of the Controller that an immediate solution of all aspects of this complex problem was not practicable.

18. The position of the Committee on each of the major specific proposals contained in Mr. Bertrand's report was as follows:

Reform of UNDP earmarking method

19. The members of the Committee noted with interest the arguments put forward by Mr. Bertrand for a basic change in the method of earmarking UNDP funds in order to permit the harmonization of forecasts of all funds made available to the United Nations family for economic and social development. They also noted the steps already taken and under consideration by the Governing Council of UNDP on that matter. There was general agreement that even under the existing arrangements significant progress could be made to forecast on an indicative basis those activities of the United Nations which are financed from these funds.

Presentation of the United Nations budget by programme

20. With regard to this proposal, the Committee felt that a beginning should be made along the lines proposed by Mr. Bertrand and welcomed the Secretary-General's intention to submit to the General Assembly at its twenty-fifth session outline proposals on a form of presentation based to the fullest possible extent on the suggestions and recommendations made in Mr. Bertrand's report.

21. The Secretary-General indicated that any move in that direction might call for reconsideration of the budget cycle. Some members believed that the suggested biennial budget cycle was desirable. However, most members of the Committee felt that, at this stage, they were unable to take a firm position for or against the adoption of a two-year budget cycle. They agreed with the Secretary-General that the question should be studied further.

General adoption of medium-term programming

22. This proposal appears to be generally acceptable although precise steps to be taken would need to take into account the development regarding the earmarking method for UNDP funds and their allocation to executing agencies. Before a final decision is taken, more information would be required with regard to the treatment of changes in costs, such as salaries and supplies. In this connexion, it was noted that the United Nations as well as some specialized agencies are making increasing use of the so-called "full budgeting" method.

Establishment of an inventory of resources by country and by source of assistance, with a view to rational apportionment of work

23. Concern was expressed by some members of the Committee that the establishment of such an inventory might infringe the sovereignty of a nation. Others indicated that it might impose an unnecessary and heavy burden on the Secretariat. In general, the proposal did not find support among members of the Committee.

Adoption of a methodology for the identification and classification of projects and programme units

24. This proposal had the support of the Committee.

Establishment of a programming service in the United Nations

25. Many members of the Committee were in favour of the principle of strengthening the programming function in the United Nations. However, the Committee expressed the hope that in his report to the General Assembly a full clarification will be given by the Secretary-General as to how he intends to implement this proposal. Other members expressed concern that the tasks entrusted to the programming service, as described in Mr. Bertrand's report, were too ambitious and might eventually require relatively large additional resources. Although some members agreed with Mr. Bertrand that such a service could enhance the ability of legislative organs to choose between alternative ways of achieving objectives and determining priorities, serious reservations were expressed by other members of the Committee that such a programming service might encroach on functions that were properly those of legislative organs. Pending further information to be provided by the Secretary-General regarding more specific terms of reference of the programming service, its size, location and method of work, the Committee was unable to take a final position on the matter at this stage.

III. PROPOSAL FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF SPECIAL RAPORTEURS

26. The Committee resumed its consideration of the suggestion 2/ by the delegation of Denmark that special rapporteurs should be appointed (a) to prepare a survey of reports and studies projected and carried out in the United Nations (and if feasible, in the specialized agencies) in the economic and social field and (b) to consider the problem of an integrated schedule of meetings of United Nations bodies in the economic, social and human rights fields. At its sixth session the Committee had decided that some details of the suggestion needed fuller examination and expressed the hope that informal consultations would be undertaken.

27. In the course of the discussion, there was general agreement in principle to the appointment of special rapporteurs, which had been provided for by the Economic and Social Council in resolution 1472 (XLVIII), although some hesitation was expressed by two delegations. It was agreed that special rapporteurs should be appointed on an experimental basis. The special rapporteurs would be authorized initially to undertake the survey of reports and studies on the basis of paragraph 6 of annex V of the Committee's report on its sixth session, 2/ paying due regard to the views expressed in the Committee at its seventh session.

28. Work on the second study, regarding the calendar of conferences in the economic, social and human rights fields, should be considered only after the General Assembly had completed its consideration at its twenty-fifth session of the Secretary-General's report on the over-all question of the calendar of conferences to be submitted under General Assembly resolution 2609 (XXIV) and the members of the Economic and Social Council had completed their consultations regarding the improvement of the Council's methods of work.

29. It was agreed that the work of the special rapporteurs should not result in additional expenditures, except for the reproduction and translation of their report. The latter would, it was expected, be short and would be distributed only to members of the Committee so that any costs involved would be of manageable proportions.

30. The Committee accordingly agreed to appoint Mr. Ranjit Gupta of India and Mr. Bernard Prague of France as special rapporteurs. The special rapporteurs would present a report on the survey of reports and studies in the economic and social field to the Committee at its ninth session and, if they considered it necessary, on the calendar of conferences in the economic, social and human rights fields at the same session.

2/ Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Forty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 10, annex V.

IV. TENTATIVE PLAN OF WORK FOR THE EIGHTH AND NINTH SESSIONS

(22 March-7 April and 24 May-11 June 1971)

31. The Committee held a preliminary discussion of the tentative plan of work for the eighth and ninth sessions on the basis of an informal list of possible topics submitted by the Secretariat. The views and suggestions of members of the Committee on the informal list are contained in the summary record of the 298th meeting. It was agreed that the Secretariat, in consultation with the members of the bureau of the Committee, should prepare a provisional list of items to be included in the agenda for the eighth and ninth sessions for circulation to members of the Committee well in advance of the eighth session.

ANNEXES

Annex I

AGENDA FOR THE SEVENTH SESSION

1. Adoption of the agenda

2. The report on programming and budgets in the United Nations family of organizations by Mr. M. Bertrand of the Joint Inspection Unit

At its fifth session, the Committee decided to continue its examination of the report of Mr. M. Bertrand when the comments of the Secretary-General and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions were available (E/4846/Add.11, para.31). The report of Mr. Bertrand and its summary are contained in documents A/7822 and A/7987, and the report of ACABQ has been issued as document A/8033. The report on budget presentation in the United Nations system (A/7821) by Mr. W. F. McCandless will also be available.

At the same session, the Committee proposed, "in view of the importance of the Bertrand report for the United Nations system as a whole", that consideration should be given to the possibility of holding a joint ACC/CPC meeting at United Nations Headquarters some time in October to discuss the report (E/4846/Add.11, para. 31).

The Committee, at its sixth session, decided to consider the report of Mr. Bertrand at the current session (E/4877, para. 83).

3. Proposal for the appointment of special rapporteurs

The proposal by the delegation of Denmark for the appointment by the Committee of special rapporteurs is reproduced in annex V of the report of the Committee on its sixth session (E/4877). At that session the Committee took the view that some details would require fuller examination and that it would be advisable to undertake informal consultations before the end of July (E/4877, para. 85).

4. Tentative plan of work for the eighth and ninth sessions

The eighth session of the Committee is scheduled to be held at United Nations Headquarters from 22 March to 7 April 1971 and the ninth session from 24 May to 11 June 1971.

5. Report of the seventh session

ANNEX II

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Members

Argentina

Mr. Ernesto Luis Enrique de la Guardia, Minister Plenipotentiary, Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Permanent Mission of Argentina to the United Nations

Mr. Eduardo Bradley, Minister Plenipotentiary, Permanent Mission of Argentina to the United Nations

Mr. Carlos H. Bunge, Second Secretary (Economic Affairs), Permanent Mission of Argentina to the United Nations

Brazil

Mr. Bernardo de Azevedo Brito, First Secretary of Embassy, Permanent Mission of Brazil to the United Nations

Bulgaria

Mr. Stefan Todorov, First Secretary, Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of Bulgaria to the United Nations

Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic

Mr. Oleg N. Pashkevish, Senior Counsellor, Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Permanent Mission of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic to the United Nations

Denmark

Mr. Mogens K. Isaksen, Counsellor of Embassy, Permanent Mission of Denmark to the United Nations

Mr. Peter Hansen, Attaché, Permanent Mission of Denmark to the United Nations

France

Mr. Maurice Viaud, Minister Plenipotentiary, Adviser, Economic and Social Council Affairs, Permanent Mission of France to the United Nations

Mr. Bernard Prague, Commercial Attaché, Permanent Mission of France to the United Nations

Ghana

Mr. Emmanuel Sam, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Ghana to the United Nations

Mr. K. Sekyiamah, First Secretary, Permanent Mission of Ghana to the United Nations

Mr. M.C.K. Hamenoo, Second Secretary, Permanent Mission of Ghana to the United Nations

Guyana

Mr. Duke E. Pollard, First Secretary, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Guyana to the United Nations

Mr. Miles Stoby, Second Secretary, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Guyana to the United Nations

India

H.E. Mr. Samar Sen, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations (Chairman)

Mr. M. Dubey, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations

Mr. Ranjit Gupta, Second Secretary, Head of Chancery, Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations

Japan

Mr. Takeshi Naito, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations

Mr. Makato Taniguchi, Secretary, Economic Affairs Division, United Nations Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Tadayuki Nonoyama, Second Secretary, Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations

Malta

H.E. Mr. Arvid Pardo, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Permanent Mission of Malta to the United Nations

Mr. S.J. Stellini, Second Secretary, Permanent Mission of Malta to the United Nations

Pakistan

H.E. Mr. Agha Shahi, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Pakistan Mission to the United Nations

Mr. Sayid A. Karim, Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations,
Pakistan Mission to the United Nations

Mr. Reaz Rahman, Second Secretary, Pakistan Mission to the United Nations

Mr. Mohammad Farooq, Third Secretary, Pakistan Mission to the United Nations

Mr. Munir Akram, Third Secretary, Pakistan Mission to the United Nations

Philippines

H.E. Mr. Privado G. Jimenez, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary,
Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Philippine Mission
to the United Nations

Mr. Leandro I. Verceles, First Secretary, Philippine Mission to the United
Nations

Mr. Ernesto C. Garrido, Third Secretary, Philippine Mission to the United Nations

Sierra Leone

Mr. Matthew Benedict Ganda, Second Secretary, Permanent Mission of Sierra Leone
to the United Nations

Trinidad and Tobago

Mrs. Sheila Solomon, Foreign Service Officer III, Ministry of External Affairs,
Trinidad and Tobago

Mr. Babooram Rambissoon, First Secretary, Permanent Mission of Trinidad and
Tobago to the United Nations

Uganda

Mr. Francis G. Okelo, Third Secretary, Permanent Mission of Uganda to the
United Nations

Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

H.E. Mr. Aledsei V. Zakharov, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Permanent Mission of
the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to the United Nations

Mr. Gennady P. Lissov, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of the Union of Soviet
Socialist Republics to the United Nations

Mr. Vladimir A. Anissimov, Third Secretary, Permanent Mission of the Union of
Soviet Socialist Republics to the United Nations

Mr. Oleg N. Briouchkov, Attaché, Permanent Mission of the Union of Soviet
Socialist Republics to the United Nations

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Mr. J.I.M. Rhodes, Minister, Treasury Adviser, Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom to the United Nations

Mr. D.F. Milton, First Secretary, Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom to the United Nations

United Republic of Tanzania

Mr. C.S.M. Mselle, First Secretary, Permanent Mission of the United Republic of Tanzania to the United Nations (Rapporteur)

Mr. Ismat A. Steiner, Second Secretary, Permanent Mission of the United Republic of Tanzania to the United Nations

United States of America

H.E. Mr. Glenn A. Olds, Ambassador, Representative on the Economic and Social Council, United States Mission to the United Nations

Mr. Paxton T. Dunn, Adviser, Economic and Social Affairs, United States Mission to the United Nations

Members of the United Nations represented by an observer

Austria

Mr. Gregor Woschnagg, Secretary of Legation, Permanent Mission of Austria to the United Nations

Italy

Mr. Agostino Mathis, First Secretary, Permanent Mission of Italy to the United Nations

United Nations bodies

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

Mr. Michael Tobin, UNCTAD Liaison Office with the United Nations in New York

Specialized agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency

International Labour Organisation

Mr. C.M. Von Stedingh, Director, Liaison Office with the United Nations

Mr. V. Chivers, Administrative Officer, Liaison Office with the United Nations

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Mr. Morris A. Greene, Assistant Director, FAO Liaison Office with the United Nations

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Mr. Alfonso de Silva, Director, UNESCO Bureau of Relations with the United Nations in New York

Mr. Victor Nikolsky, Senior Liaison Officer, UNESCO Bureau of Relations with the United Nations in New York

World Health Organization

Dr. Radolphe L. Coigney, Director, WHO Liaison Office with the United Nations

Mrs. S. Meagher, Liaison Officer, WHO Liaison Office with the United Nations

Mrs. Vera Kalm, Liaison Officer, WHO Liaison Office with the United Nations

International Atomic Energy Agency

Mr. R. Najar, Deputy Director, IAEA Liaison Office with the United Nations