

UNITED NATIONS  
ECONOMIC AND  
SOCIAL COUNCIL  
OFFICIAL RECORDS



FIFTH YEAR, TENTH SESSION

349th MEETING

MONDAY, 13 FEBRUARY 1950, AT 3 P.M.  
LAKE SUCCESS, NEW YORK

*President:* Mr. Hernán SANTA CRUZ (Chile).

**Tentative outline programme for the remainder of the week (continued)**

1. Mr. MAKIN (Australia) said that it would be difficult for some delegations to discuss item 6 of the agenda (World economic situation) on Friday, 17 February. They would not have had sufficient time to study the documents and receive instructions from their governments. The Council could, however, begin its examination of the question of full employment on that day, even if some representatives wished to refer to the study on the world economic situation at that juncture. He urged, however, that the real discussion of the study should be deferred until the following week.

2. The PRESIDENT agreed with the Australian representative's proposal and announced that in the circumstances the Council would begin the discussion of items 7<sup>1</sup> and 8<sup>2</sup> on Friday, 17 February, provided the consideration of items 25,<sup>3</sup> 26<sup>4</sup> and 36<sup>5</sup> had been completed. During the discussion of items 7 and 8, any member of the Council who wished to do so could refer to the World Economic Survey.

*It was so decided.*

**United Nations Appeal for Children (E/1589, E/1589/Corr.1 and E/1589/Add.1)**

3. The PRESIDENT drew the Council's attention to the draft resolution submitted by the Australian delegation (E/L.9):

*"The Economic and Social Council,*

*"Having considered the final report of the Secretary-General summarizing the information received from national committees on the 1948 campaigns for the United Nations Appeal for Children (E/1589, E/1589/Corr.1 and E/1589/Add.1),*

*"Invites the Executive Board of the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund to include in its reports to the Council the substance of any further information received from 1948 national committees."*

4. Mr. MAKIN (Australia) said that the purpose of the Australian draft resolution was to stress the importance of the work accomplished and to express his Government's satisfaction at the way in which the various countries had supported that great work.

<sup>1</sup>Report of the Economic and Employment Commission (fifth session).

<sup>2</sup>Full employment.

<sup>3</sup>Report of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

5. The PRESIDENT put the Australian draft resolution to the vote.

*The draft resolution was adopted unanimously.*

**Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East — action arising out of resolutions of the fifth session of the Commission: report of the Economic Committee (E/1603)**

6. The PRESIDENT called upon the Council to take a decision on draft resolution A in the report of the Economic Committee (E/1603).

*Draft resolution A was adopted unanimously.*

7. The PRESIDENT called upon the Council to take a decision on draft resolution B.

*Draft resolution B was adopted unanimously.*

8. The PRESIDENT called upon the Council to take a decision on draft resolution C.

*Draft resolution C was adopted unanimously.*

**Economic development of under-developed countries. Third report by the Secretary-General on technical assistance for economic development under General Assembly resolution 200 (III): report of the Economic Committee (E/1604)**

9. Mr. VALENZUELA (Chile) thanked the Secretariat for its report on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 200 (III). The choice of experts had been a particularly happy one and the work they had accomplished was of a constructive nature. His country had nothing but praise for the assistance thus rendered.

10. The PRESIDENT put to the vote the draft resolution contained in the report of the Economic Committee (E/1604).

*The draft resolution was adopted unanimously.*

**Report by the Secretary-General on the United Nations Scientific Conference on the Conservation and Utilization of Resources (E/1579 and E/1579/Add.1)**

11. The PRESIDENT informed the Council that the Council Committee on Non-Governmental Organiza-

<sup>4</sup>Report of the International Monetary Fund.

<sup>5</sup>Calendar of conferences for 1950: adjustments consequent upon decisions of the General Assembly and other changes.

tions had submitted a recommendation concerning the hearing of the consultant from the World Federation of United Nations Associations, in accordance with rule 80 of the rules of procedure. That recommendation was to be found in the report of the Committee (E/1606).

12. Sir Ramaswami MUDALIAR (India) proposed that the recommendation of the Council NGO Committee to the effect that the Council should give a hearing to the consultant from the World Federation of United Nations Associations should be adopted.

*The recommendation was adopted unanimously.*

13. Mr. BORBERG (Denmark) recalled that the idea of convening a conference on the conservation and utilization of natural resources had been first suggested by President Truman. The Conference had been a complete success and the United States of America should be thanked not only for its initiative but also for the hospitality it had shown to the experts from the various countries.

14. The Conference had brought together scholars and experts who did not represent their respective governments and who had not been required to adopt resolutions or draft recommendations. The experts had exchanged views, which did not, of course, mean that some of them would not communicate to their governments the information which they had been able to obtain. The results of the Conference would be embodied in eight volumes containing the reports and summary records of the meetings. The Conference would thus have been successful in stimulating research in various fields and helping to improve the lot of mankind.

15. He thanked Professor Goodrich, who had been the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee of the Conference, for the work he had accomplished.

16. The United Nations should circulate the information received and the suggestions made during the Conference. Such was the purpose of his delegation's draft resolution (E/L.7).

17. Mr. THORP (United States of America) reminded the Council that Mr. Borberg had played a leading role at the Conference itself and he therefore thought it appropriate for him to have opened the general discussion on that question.

18. The Economic and Social Council had reason to congratulate itself on the results achieved during the Conference, which had established a precedent in the sense that it was the first time there had been a meeting of experts on the development and utilization of the basic elements upon which every economy, whether large or small, agricultural or industrial, simple or complex, depended. The problems on its agenda were so far-reaching and so comprehensive that doubts might well have been felt concerning its success. Experience had shown, however, that such doubts were not justified. The Conference had made it clear that the problems concerning resources were all part of one whole and that there could not be fragmentary solutions.

19. The members of the Council could take pride in the work accomplished during the Conference; it had made a truly international contribution to the applica-

tion of science to economic development. Experts from forty-seven countries had contributed papers and participants in the Conference had represented fifty countries. The preparation of the items on the agenda of the Conference was a remarkable example of international co-operation and of co-ordination between the United Nations and the specialized agencies. Thanks to the United Nations Secretariat, the work of the Conference had been carried on very efficiently. The papers of the experts and the discussions in the working groups had made it clear that there was no monopoly of technical knowledge or competence, and that the conservation and utilization of resources was a perfect field for international co-operation.

20. Recalling the words of President Truman when he had proposed that Conference almost four years earlier, Mr. Thorp declared that it was in the expanded programme of technical assistance that the international resources of science would be applied. The United Nations Scientific Conference on the Conservation and Utilization of Resources had constituted a prologue to the expanded programme of technical assistance, presenting its problems and its possibilities.

21. The freedom enjoyed by the participants in the Conference had been one of the basic factors of its success. The experts had come, not as representatives of governments, of specialized agencies or of other organizations, but as experts prepared to benefit mutually from their knowledge and experience. They had not been hampered by terms of reference or by the necessity of reaching agreements. In those circumstances, their discussions had been more fruitful than if they had been directed towards specific measures. The Council could congratulate itself on having given the Conference that latitude.

22. The result of all that was that the records of the Conference contained innumerable suggestions for action which the United Nations, the specialized agencies, the governments and the people themselves could take to improve standards of living through the analysis, utilization and development of natural resources. Those suggestions must not be permitted to remain buried in the heavy volumes of records; the proposals made during the Conference, which, if taken up by the Council or by the specialized agencies, could contribute to the welfare of mankind, must be collated, studied and implemented.

23. The great advantages of the Conference had been the general nature of the subjects with which it had dealt, the professional qualifications of the experts who had participated and the broad geographical representation. The Conference had first made a preliminary survey of the problems concerning natural resources; that had served to attract public interest and had been a useful piece of work.

24. The size and scope of the Conference made it obvious that it would not have to be convened frequently on such a scale. On the contrary, regional conferences could be organized in co-operation with the specialized agencies to deal with specific problems. Regional experts and administrators together with eminent specialists from other areas of the world could participate in such conferences. Their purpose, like that of the Con-

ference convened by the United Nations, would not be to determine a line of conduct in the political sense of the term, but, by defining the problems and needs, to supply technical advice on the scope and the carrying out of programmes for the conservation and utilization of resources.

25. Reference was made frequently in the records of the Conference to the fact that national and international programmes on the development and conservation of resources suffered from a lack of information on resources. Essential data such as the size and location of reserves, the state of their development and other similar factors which were indispensable to the preparation of an inventory of resources were lacking in many areas and for most resources. Considerable work would have to be done in order to come to an agreement upon terminology, units of measures and other data essential for the production of maps and the preparation of inventories of resources.

26. The FAO had begun to compile such an inventory in its survey of the forestry resources of the world. Surveys should be initiated and inventories compiled with regard to soils and water and mineral resources, and should be kept constantly up to date. The idea had been put forward that the United Nations Secretariat and the specialized agencies could act as a clearing house for such data and could promote such surveys.

27. The participants in the Conference had made a number of practical suggestions. A United Nations cartographic programme had been proposed, to stimulate the development of cartographic services and to hasten the preparation of maps for those areas of the world which were still inadequately mapped. The preparation of maps indicating the potential productivity of the soils for various crops and utilizing various systems of cultivation had also been suggested; such maps would make it possible to institute combined development programmes. That work would complement the studies in the field of agriculture upon which the FAO was engaged.

28. The need for inventories of water resources on a regional scale had been stressed. Studies of river systems based on the possibilities for developing river basins were the essential first steps in the preparation of programmes of economic development. That, however, was an integral part of national programmes of measurement of water resources, in the implementation of which account should, preferably, be taken of international standards.

29. It had been proposed that inventories of mineral resources should be made, showing the situation and the size of the deposits and giving an economic appraisal of their potentialities from the point of view of both the cost of development and the potential yield. The implementation of the various proposals was obviously not an impossibility.

30. Even during the Conference, the fisheries experts had prepared a rough map of the areas of the world which were under-exploited.

31. The various suggestions made during the Conference showed the constructive work which had to be

carried out in the field of the conservation, utilization and development of resources. That work must be accomplished by specialists working with organizations which were able to ensure their prompt and effective execution. The assistance of the United Nations Secretariat, the governments of Member States, the specialized agencies, the scientific and technical non-governmental organizations, and other institutions was indispensable if the various proposals which had been made were to be implemented.

32. That type of work required the closest co-operation between the various programmes of the United Nations and of the specialized agencies, as well as between their programmes and those of other research groups. As in the case of technical assistance, the Economic and Social Council was responsible for ensuring the initiation and co-ordination of those programmes and for seeing that the people of the world benefited from the scientific knowledge thus accumulated.

33. The Secretary-General was right in striving to extend the usefulness of the Conference. Mr. Thorp thought it would be better, however, for the Secretary-General to be asked to study the proceedings of the Conference and to prepare a detailed programme for the use of the Council. In that connexion he should work in collaboration with the specialized agencies and, if he thought necessary, should obtain the views of some of the participants in the Conference.

34. The Secretary-General should have complete freedom to suggest any measures which, in his opinion, might transform the work of the Conference into substantive programmes. That would enable the Council to study those suggestions at its eleventh or twelfth session for example. The members of the Council should make it possible for the entire world to receive the full benefits which that unique experiment in international co-operation might bring forth.

35. In conclusion, he stated that he would vote for the Danish draft resolution.

36. Mr. KAYSER (France) also wished to congratulate Mr. Borberg and to stress that the Conference had been one of the most important ever held. He hoped that the general public everywhere would hear of the various results achieved.

37. He regretted the fact that the experts of a certain number of countries, Members as well as non-members of the United Nations, had not participated in that Conference, which should have been world-wide.

38. The principle of a meeting of experts had been strictly observed. That principle no doubt had its advantages, but it was not without its shortcomings for it was difficult to draw up a synthesis of the work accomplished as well as of the political conclusions reached. The experts had, however, explicitly or otherwise, asked themselves a question with political implications, namely what was the present world situation in the realm of resources. Their work showed that although the present situation was not such as to give rise to anxiety, access to resources would become more and more difficult and costly. The idea of an approaching era of abundance at low prices had therefore to be discarded unless energy were to bring about a miracle.

39. Another conclusion to be drawn from the Conference was the fact that natural riches were badly distributed. The greater part of the world's mineral production was consumed by a very small fraction of humanity: 18 per cent of the world population used 77.4 per cent of the coal production.

40. Some very important ideas had been brought into prominence during the Conference and it would be useful to bring them to the attention of world public opinion. The Danish draft resolution called for studies to be made to follow up the Conference, but it contained no provision for the dissemination to a wide public of the general ideas arising out of its work.

41. The Secretary-General's report provided for the publication of the work of the experts and of the records of the meetings. In that connexion, Mr. Kayser had a few questions to ask: in what order and how soon were the records and reports to be published, and in what language would they be printed? He urged that there should be equality of treatment in the use of French and English.

42. He stressed the importance of the work of popularization to be accomplished and added that the Conference must be regarded as a point of departure. The same path would have to be followed, but perhaps the same methods should not be used. At the practical level, liaison should be established between the Secretariat of the United Nations and the specialized agencies. Some officials of the Secretariat should be given the task, within the framework of their usual duties, of following closely the work instituted as a result of the Conference. Finally, it would be useful to maintain contact between the technicians of the various countries. The Secretariat of the United Nations and those of the specialized agencies were excellent intermediaries in that connexion. He was glad to note that the Food and Agriculture Organization had taken account of the results of the Conference by arranging for a conference on tropical and sub-tropical vegetation to be held in Ceylon in 1950, and by deciding to study, at its fifth session, certain problems concerning the conservation of resources which had been touched upon by the United Nations Scientific Conference on the Conservation and Utilization of Resources.

43. In conclusion, he stated that the observations he had made had not been intended to minimize the importance of the work accomplished by the Conference; rather had he made them with the idea of ensuring the best utilization of the results achieved at the Conference.

44. Mr. EUDES (Canada) stated that his delegation was greatly interested in the work undertaken by the United Nations scientific Conference. The Conference had shown the public the importance of the problem of the conservation and utilization of resources; it had led to personal contacts among experts and had thus made possible a deeper understanding of the problems of the various countries; finally, the dissemination of the information contained in the various papers submitted to the Conference would be most useful to many scholars who had not been present at the meetings and to institutions which had not been represented.

45. Canada had acquired much experience in the exploitation of resources and it was therefore most interested in the problems that had been studied in the Conference. Naturally it would take time before the ideas expressed during the Conference could be applied in any way. Some of these ideas could, however, be borne in mind as the work programmes of the United Nations and of the specialized agencies developed. That was particularly true with respect to the technical assistance programme. If the suggestions submitted during the United Nations scientific Conference could be made to contribute to the future improvement of mankind's material existence, the work of the Conference would have been of tremendous value.

46. Mr. CHANG (China) felt that the fundamental problem which emerged from the Conference was that of the practical utilization of the eight volumes of records, which contained a considerable amount of theoretical and practical knowledge.

47. The Secretary-General should therefore endeavour primarily to determine what material among the wealth of information warranted world-wide dissemination, and he should then arrange for that dissemination.

48. Mr. Chang also thought that the final results obtained during the Conference should be disseminated in particular in the language which had undergone the fewest changes in the course of the centuries, namely Chinese.

*At the invitation of the President, Mr. Ennals, representative of the World Federation of United Nations Associations, took his place at the Council table.*

49. Mr. ENNALS (World Federation of United Nations Associations) thanked the members of the Council for allowing the organization which he represented to state its views on the results achieved by the Conference. The WFUNA had studied the question in great detail during the past year and had discussed it at its session held in Rome in September 1949.

50. At a time when the world watched its population increase every year by some twenty million, it witnessed simultaneously a constant decrease of its non-renewable resources. Consequently, the problem of the conservation and wise utilization of resources was one of the most serious which the United Nations had to solve. He thought that it was as important, for the future of mankind, to solve that problem within the framework of the United Nations as it was to solve the great political problems already on its agenda.

51. In the circumstances, WFUNA had applauded the convocation of the United Nations Scientific Conference on the Conservation and Utilization of Resources and it wished to express its satisfaction at the results so far obtained by the Conference, so vividly described in the Secretary-General's report.

52. Obviously, the first action to be taken towards the solution of such a problem was to gather experts so that they could submit their studies and exchange ideas; but in spite of repeated warnings, the peoples of the world were not yet aware of the danger presented by the unchecked exploitation of the resources of the planet, and he would emphasize the necessity of mobilizing public opinion for a solution of the problems of

conservation and utilization of resources in accordance with the suggestions submitted by the experts who had participated in the Conference.

53. He noted from paragraph 79 of the Secretary-General's report (E/1579) that the discussions in the Conference had received wide publicity from Press and radio. He thought, however, that there must be a continued effort to make good use of the educational benefits to be derived from the results obtained.

54. Replies to a questionnaire the Federation had sent to United Nations Associations in various parts of the world showed that while wastage of natural resources was a problem in which almost every country was involved, it seemed that in comparatively few countries was there an organized campaign for conscious conservation.

55. The fact that the Conference had been called was evidence that the problem was world-wide, but the reduction of waste could only be achieved by regional and national programmes. Unfortunately, there was very limited educational material available for use in the various regions of the world where public opinion was still apathetic. Perhaps the regional economic Commissions and UNESCO could be of assistance in that field.

56. He would like to draw the attention of members of the Council to that educational aspect of the problem, which had been considered during the preparatory phase of the Conference, but which did not emerge from the otherwise excellent report of the Secretary-General.

57. He hoped that the educational aspect would not be forgotten when plans were made to implement the proposals made during the Conference. At a recent meeting in Geneva the Federation had decided that it would be glad, together with other interested non-governmental organizations, to give all possible help in the distribution, to schools and non-governmental organization groups in Latin America, Asia, Africa, Europe and Australasia, of any educational material the United Nations Secretariat and UNESCO might be able to provide.

58. Sir Terence SHONE (United Kingdom) associated himself with the tributes to Mr. Borberg and to the Secretariat and thanked the United States Government for having launched the idea of the Conference.

59. He agreed with Mr. Thorp that there was not enough information on the world's natural resources. That lack of adequate data was hampering development in many parts of the world, for instance in Africa. It should be recognized, however, that since the war a real effort had been made by the often maligned colonial Powers to improve the collection of survey data. Sir Terence supported the proposal to collate and publish the results achieved during the Conference. In that connexion, he observed that, for the moment at least, the function of the United Nations should be to see that proposals were passed on and acted upon by existing specialist organizations rather than to create new and possibly overlapping organizations of its own. In short, the functions of the United Nations in that field were rather those of co-ordination than of execution.

60. The United Kingdom delegation also supported the Danish draft resolution (E/L.7).

61. Mr. VALENZUELA (Chile) agreed with the preceding speakers that the results achieved by the Conference had been very interesting. Like the representative of France, he regretted that some countries had not thought it worth while to send experts. The Conference had shown once more how much the various regions of the world depended on one another and that the need for conservation of resources was recognized throughout the world.

62. The Conference had also demonstrated that technical measures could not be taken without political factors being introduced; there was no ivory tower for science or for technical knowledge.

63. He especially approved of the remarks in paragraph 24 of the Secretary-General's report (E/1579) about the application of modern techniques to under-developed areas.

64. Mr. ALI (Pakistan) also congratulated Mr. Borberg. He thought the results of the Conference were very useful and in his opinion it had been right to focus public attention on such essential questions as the conservation of resources of fuel and energy. He agreed with Mr. Thorp that natural resources should be used for the good of all mankind.

65. Mr. FENAUX (Belgium) was favourably impressed by the Secretary-General's report on the Conference. He felt that that first meeting of individual experts, free from political prejudices, had been a happy experience and should be repeated. In his opinion it was useful to bring together the views of specialists on such basic problems.

66. The Belgian delegation would vote in favour of the draft resolution which noted the obvious success of the Conference.

67. Sir Ramaswami MUDALIAR (India) thought that paragraph 18 of the Secretary-General's report gave a definitive reply to baseless theories about limitation of the growth of populations. In his opinion the problem of increase in the world's population could be solved by science. It was absurd to conserve natural resources by forbidding the use of them: the solution lay in finding new resources, new techniques and new products. Improvement in techniques would make a profitable exploitation of hitherto unused resources possible.

68. It sometimes happened that a scientific discovery was not made known or used because it would make certain equipment or manufacturing methods obsolete and would revolutionize the production of certain food-stuffs or other products. That tendency must be avoided and every scientific discovery must be used to the maximum.

69. He hoped that a way would be found to exploit the resources of under-developed regions for the benefit of the indigenous populations and of the world as a whole. The inhabitants of the territories in question should be the first to benefit from the development of those resources. In that connexion it was important to allay the fear often felt by native populations that the resources of their territory would be exploited without their

deriving any benefit from it. To that extent the political and economic aspects of the question were closely linked.

70. In certain countries, such as the United Kingdom, which had for years been regarded as thoroughly surveyed, new discoveries had been made very recently. In view of such experiences, it was evident that the prospects for future discoveries were very good in a world where considerable areas were still largely unsurveyed.

71. Mr. MUNIZ (Brazil) shared the views of the previous speakers. He emphasized two points: the importance of co-operation under the auspices of the United Nations, and the need to make every possible effort to disseminate the results of the Conference in all countries.

72. The Brazilian delegation suggested that the Council should invite Member States to organize national conferences like the United Nations scientific Conference for the purpose of studying the particular aspects of the problem which were of most interest to themselves. The United Nations Secretariat would contribute its aid to the success of such conferences.

73. Mr. OWEN (Assistant Secretary-General in charge of the Department of Economic Affairs) thanked the members of the Council for their remarks, especially Mr. Borberg and Mr. Santa Cruz and Mr. Thorn, President of the Council during 1949, who had taken part in the Conference discussions. He also thanked the members of the Preparatory Committee and especially the representatives of the United States Department of the Interior.

74. The records of the plenary meetings would be published in English within a week and would be followed by the records of discussions of the section meetings dealing with specific types of resources. A French translation would be published later.

75. Mr. KAYSER (France) said he was not entirely satisfied with Mr. Owen's reply. He asked whether it

was not possible to distribute forthwith the studies originally submitted in French.

76. Mr. OWEN (Assistant Secretary-General in charge of the Department of Economic Affairs) said that he would consider the French representative's suggestion.

77. Mr. BORBERG (Denmark) thanked the members of the Council for their compliments.

78. He wondered if the draft resolution he had submitted could be put to the vote without the Council first having a report from the Secretary-General on its financial implications.

79. Mr. OWEN (Assistant Secretary-General in charge of the Department of Economic Affairs) said that the financial implications of the Danish draft resolution were the same as those of the Secretary-General's draft resolution (E/1579): in either case the additional expense could be covered without asking for additional credits.

80. The PRESIDENT put the Danish draft resolution (E/L.7) to the vote.

*The draft resolution was adopted unanimously.*

81. The PRESIDENT congratulated the Secretariat on its preparation and organization of the Conference, and thanked Mr. Van Tassel, the Executive Secretary of the Conference.

**Hearings of non-governmental organizations under rules 79, 80 and 81 of the rules of procedure: report of the Council Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations (E/1606 and E/1606/Corr.1)**

82. The PRESIDENT submitted the NGO Committee's report (E/1606) and proposed that it should be adopted.

*The report was adopted unanimously.*

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.