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SECOND COMMITTEE
2nd meeting
held on
Wednesday, 25 September 1985
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 2nd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. BIRIDO (Sudan)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.45 p.m.

EXPRESSION OF SYMPATHY IN CONNECTION WITH THE RECENT EARTHQUAKE IN MEXICO

1. The CHAIRMAN, on behalf of the Committee, expressed sympathy at the recent earthquake in Mexico.
2. Mr. HUERTA (Mexico), on behalf of his delegation and the Mexican people, thanked the Chairman for his words of solidarity.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

3. The CHAIRMAN informed the Committee that, as a result of informal consultations, the candidatures of Ms. Inga Eriksson (Sweden) and Mr. Soemadi D. M. Brotodiningrat (Indonesia) had been proposed for the two offices of Vice-Chairman, and that of Mr. Jorge Lago-Silva (Cuba) had been proposed for the office of Rapporteur.
4. Ms. Eriksson (Sweden) and Mr. Brotodiningrat (Indonesia) were elected Vice-Chairmen by acclamation.
5. Mr. Lago-Silva (Cuba) was elected Rapporteur by acclamation.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK (A/C.2/40/1; A/C.2/40/L.1 and Add.1)

6. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to the recent adoption by consensus of the agreed conclusions of the Committee on the Review and Appraisal of the Implementation of the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade. It was his hope that delegations would build on that consensus and broaden it to cover other difficult areas in more detail, particularly in the interrelated areas of money, finance, trade and debt.
7. With regard to the organization of the Committee's work, he felt that there was a need to reflect on the content and format of the general debate; in particular, its relationship to the general debate in plenary session, on the one hand, and to the discussion of specific issues in the Committee on the other, should be further clarified. He suggested that the Committee should focus on a limited number of items on a priority basis, and that the members should make a brief statement in the general debate and more specific remarks during the consideration of individual items. He expressed the hope that more efforts would be made to comply with the biennial programme of work (General Assembly resolution 39/217, annex II) and to reach the widest possible degree of consensus on draft resolutions. In that context, wherever possible, resolutions of a similar nature should be grouped together, and a serious effort should be made to reduce their length and avoid repetition.
8. He drew the Committee's attention to the letter dated 20 September 1985 (A/C.2/40/1) from the President of the General Assembly to the Chairman of the Second Committee concerning the allocation of items to the Committee. He also drew attention to the proposed agenda and its addendum (A/C.2/40/L.1 and Add.1). He recalled that the Assembly had endorsed, in its decision 38/429, the

(The Chairman)

recommendations of Economic and Social Council decision 1983/164 concerning the structure of the Committee's deliberations and various aspects of the organization of its work. Pursuant to those decisions, the Committee's general debate should focus on specific major issues of international economic co-operation and development; the deliberations of the Committee should be organized around clusters of related issues and should be as brief as possible; it should identify issues which would require lengthy informal consultations and should, as far as possible, spread the consideration of those issues evenly throughout the session; the deadline for the submission of draft proposals should be established when the Committee approved its organization of work; and efforts should be made to keep to a minimum the number of draft proposals under each item.

9. By its resolution 39/217, the General Assembly had decided that all requests for Secretariat reports to be submitted to the Committee should conform to the biennial programme of work. The Assembly had also endorsed the recommendation of the Economic and Social Council that statements on behalf of organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system should be made in the context of the deliberations on specific reports and should be circulated in advance. Executive heads should then either elaborate on or give the highlights of the text of those statements. Unless he heard any views to the contrary, he would take it that the Committee confirmed his interpretation of the intent of the decision taken by the Assembly in that respect.

10. He noted that Friday, 29 November was the deadline for the submission to the Fifth Committee of all draft resolutions with financial implications. The deadline given in document A/C.2/40/L.1 for the submission of draft proposals under item 86 should be revised to read 20 November, so that the results of the 1985 United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities, which would cover pledges to the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, could be taken into account.

11. Mr. LEE (Canada) said that the Chairman's constructive, positive and dynamic statement would have the support of his delegation. He expressed the hope that the Committee would deal with the question under item 12 concerning food and agricultural problems quickly, in the positive spirit which had characterized the informal discussions, in view of the fact that it did not fall within the purview of the items specifically allocated to the Second Committee.

12. He noted that since the Committee had last considered the item 84 (i), the Nairobi World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women had taken place and that a consensus document had been adopted containing forward-looking strategies of implementation for the advancement of women. He wished to have the Secretariat's assurance that the document would be made available prior to the discussion of the item in the General Assembly.

13. The CHAIRMAN said that, in the informal discussion on the draft resolution on food and agricultural problems, the general feeling had been that the course of action proposed by the representative of Canada should be followed. The Secretariat had assured him that the document concerning forward-looking strategies would be made available in time for the general debate.

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14. Mr. DIECKMANN (Federal Republic of Germany) said that, although debate was an essential part of the deliberative function of the United Nations, what took place in the Committee in the "general debate" was often not a debate in the true sense of the word: instead, lengthy, well-prepared statements were read with no reaction to what earlier speakers had said. In plenary, many important comments on international economic questions would be made. It would improve the Committee's method of work if no lengthy statements were read, but a debate based on what was said in the plenary was held, followed by a more detailed discussion under the specific items allocated to the Committee.

15. Mr. MALIK (India) in reference to the statement by Mr. Dieckmann agreed that important statements on international economic co-operation were made in the General Assembly and should be taken into account when the Committee considered economic issues. However, there should also be a real exchange of views in the Committee, not limited to the points made in the General Assembly, but expanding on or adding to them as appropriate. Moreover, as the Chairman had said, the Committee's debate should have a specific focus. It would in his view be appropriate for that focus to be, as it had been in the Economic and Social Council, the issues relating to money, finance, debt and trade to be dealt with in the report by the Secretary-General called for in General Assembly resolution 39/218, and at present proposed, in a footnote to document A/C.2/40/L.1, for consideration under part II of the cluster of sub-items of item 84. They would also have inputs from the Secretary-General's report.

16. He also supported the point made by the representative of Canada with respect to item 84 (i).

17. Mr. GAJENTAAN (Netherlands) agreed that the general debate in the Committee should be related to general debates elsewhere. Many members of the Committee would be involved in the debate in plenary on the critical economic situation in Africa, and it would be useful to know when that debate was to take place.

18. He asked whether the documentation for agenda item 84 (j), "Implementation of the Substantial New Programme of Action for the 1980s for the Least Developed Countries", particularly the report of the mid-term review meeting in Geneva, would be ready in time for discussion at the beginning of November.

19. The CHAIRMAN said that the General Assembly had not yet decided on the timing of its debate on the economic situation in Africa.

20. Mr. CHOWDHURY (Bangladesh) said that with respect to agenda item 84 (j), the mid-term review meeting was to be held from 30 September to 11 October. He understood from the UNCTAD secretariat that the report of the meeting would be made available to the General Assembly by the third week of October, at the latest. It might be useful for the Chairman or the Secretariat to inform the UNCTAD secretariat of the Committee's timetable, so that it could make the report available as soon as possible.

21. Mr. AVEZDIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that a reasonably objective approach must be maintained. Admittedly, lengthy repetition should be avoided, but the concern expressed by some delegations about prepared statements seemed excessive. There was no reason why reading prepared statements should detract from urgent matters raised by other speakers: indeed, when interesting or important questions were raised, there was an immediate reaction from other participants. Each delegation represented a sovereign Government, and had the right to make that Government's views known.
22. On the matter of consensus, there was a new trend in the United Nations as a whole and in the Second Committee to arrive at decisions which took into account the interests of all groups of countries. However, the pursuit of consensus should not lead to any divergence from such major documents adopted in the Committee, and then endorsed by the General Assembly, as the Programme of Action on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order and the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States. His delegation favoured flexibility and a reasonable approach in the work of the Committee, making use of all the available options.
23. Mr. PAPADATOS (Greece) welcomed the winds of innovation that were blowing in the Committee at the very outset of its work. Further reflection needed to be given to the suggestions that had been made.
24. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to adopt the programme of work set out in document A/C.2/40/L.1, as orally revised.
25. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 4.43 p.m.