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**C O N T E N T S**

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Question of the adoption by the Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions of Spanish as a working language (A/2179, A/2242, A/C.5/501, A/C.5/L.186, A/C.5/L.188, A/C.5/L.190) (*continued*)... 111

*Chairman: Brigadier-General Carlos P. ROMULO (Philippines).*

**Question of the adoption by the Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions of Spanish as a working language (A/2179, A/2242, A/C.5/501, A/C.5/L.186, A/C.5/L.188, A/C.5/L.190) (*continued*)**

[Item 62]\*

1. Mr. BRENNAN (Australia) stated that his delegation would support the adoption of Spanish as a working language of the Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions. His delegation had been concerned by the serious financial implications of the proposal and he had sought the co-operation of interested delegations, to achieve offsetting economies in other sections of the budget. There was reason to believe that these would be achieved and accordingly the Australian delegation found itself in a position similar to that of the United Kingdom.

2. It should be pointed out, however, that the project in question differed from others in so far as its financial implications were concerned. Most United Nations projects benefited all Member nations and their costs were shared by all members. But the benefits of the adoption of Spanish would accrue predominantly to a section of the Members only, although its expenses would be shared by all. He thought that the most substantial argument in favour of the adoption of Spanish was the convenience it would mean for a large section of the Organization's membership; and that the benefits for other Members would be indirect and not nearly so great as some delegations had suggested. He did not agree that the question was whether certain documents should or should not be available in Spanish. The question was whether they should be translated by and at the expense of the Spanish-speaking delegations through their own services or whether they should be made available in Spanish through the language facilities of the United Nations and at the expense of all member nations.

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3. The CHAIRMAN drew the Committee's attention to the USSR and United Kingdom draft resolutions, documents A/C.5/L.186 and A/C.5/L.188 respectively.

4. Mr. RODRIGUEZ FABREGAT (Uruguay) submitted a draft resolution on behalf of all the Latin-American delegations (A/C.5/L.189). The Latin-American States were proposing that the Committee should approve the necessary provision for the adoption by the Council and its functional commissions of Spanish as a working language and that the Rapporteur should be empowered to inform the General Assembly of the debates on the subject in the Fifth Committee.

5. Referring to the USSR proposal (A/C.5/L.186), he observed that while the normal procedure had been followed in consideration of the question of the adoption of Spanish as a working language by the Economic and Social Council, that had not been the case in respect of Russian. It rested with the USSR delegation to raise the question of the adoption of the Russian language in the Council. The new proposal would doubtless figure in a Council resolution, since the Council decided its own rules of procedure in accordance with the Charter. The resolution would be placed on the agenda of the General Assembly which would refer the question to the Committee. After all those formalities had been carried out, the Committee would examine the new proposal with the greatest attention. The Uruguayan delegation, for its part, was well aware of the value of the Russian language and of its contribution to the development of human ideas.

6. The Committee could not agree to linking that question to the adoption of Spanish. It was not competent to consider it.

7. Mr. ZARUBIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) did not agree with the argument adduced

\* Indicates the item number on the agenda of the General Assembly.

by the Uruguayan representative. He pointed out that the Council had not taken any decision on the substance of the question of the adoption of Spanish. The Council, in its resolution 456 C (XIV), confined itself to transmitting the question, with a favourable opinion, to the General Assembly. Hence, if it rested with the Committee to discuss the substance of the matter, then the USSR proposal was not inadmissible. If that were so, the Uruguayan proposal would also be inadmissible.

8. Mr. RODRIGUEZ FABREGAT (Uruguay) wished to emphasize that he was not raising any objection to the adoption by the Council of Russian as a working language. He merely asked that the question should be subjected to the same procedure as the question of Spanish.

9. Mr. DURON (Honduras) approved that clarification of the position.

10. Mr. TOUS (Ecuador) observed that the question of whether the USSR proposal was admissible depended on the interpretation given to Article 72 of the Charter. The Committee had recognized that it rested with the Council to amend its rules of procedure and that the Council could not delegate its powers to any other body. Hence, if the Committee were to amend the Council's rules of procedure, that action would constitute a breach of the Charter.

11. Miss WITTEVEEN (Netherlands) recalled that the Committee had to answer to the General Assembly in respect of item 62 of the agenda, under rule 152 of the rules of procedure. The Committee had to examine the financial implications of that one item and indicate the amount of the funds needed to carry out the resolution, and might be well advised, in case its conclusion was that the carrying out should be delayed for financial reasons, to express that view forthwith in its report. Document A/C.5/L.186 concerned an entirely different question, that the USSR delegation would have to raise in the General Assembly. It might, however, be mentioned in the report, with no figures or other comments.

12. Regarding the question of the powers vested in the Council by Article 72 of the Charter, she pointed out that the Council had limited itself to transmitting the question to the General Assembly with a favourable opinion.

13. Mr. FENAUX (Belgium) did not think that the USSR proposal gave rise to any question of competence or admissibility, but rather of timeliness. The Committee was not in a position to consider the proposal because it had no recommendation from the Council for the adoption of Russian as a working language. It was not fitting to anticipate the Council's wishes.

14. The Belgian delegation was sorry that it could not accept the substantive parts of the United Kingdom draft resolution (A/C.5/L.188). It was not "in principle" that the Committee should decide to make such a recommendation to the General Assembly, as was stated in paragraph 1; the decision of principle lay with the Council. As regards paragraph 2, the statement of the Uruguayan representative should be borne in mind. Lastly, paragraph 3 seemed pointless; it concerned the Committee's general guiding rules, which should not be alluded to in a draft resolution.

15. Mr. BARTOL (Argentina), considering that no question of competence arose, proposed that the USSR draft should be put to the vote. The Argentine delegation would vote against the draft because of the form in which the proposal had been made.

*The USSR draft resolution (A/C.5/L.186) was rejected by 31 votes to 9, with 12 abstentions.*

16. Mr. MENDS-COLE (Liberia) stated that his vote against the USSR draft resolution did not arise from objection to the adoption by the Council of Russian as a working language; it was solely on account of the question of procedure involved.

*The meeting was suspended at 12.10 p.m. and resumed at 12.45 p.m.*

17. Baron VON OTTER (Sweden) asked whether all the Spanish-speaking delegations had joined in submitting the Uruguayan draft resolution (A/C.5/L.189). He pointed out that the Advisory Committee had not in fact recommended, in its report (A/2242), an appropriation of \$350,000. Did the authors of the proposal want the provision to be included in the budget now or approval to be deferred?

18. The CHAIRMAN stated that all the Spanish-speaking delegations had endorsed the draft resolution submitted by the Uruguayan delegation.

19. Mr. AGHNIDES (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) recalled that the recommendation set out in the Advisory Committee's report (A/2242) at the end of paragraph 12 was based on the consideration stated in paragraph 11 of the report.

20. Baron VON OTTER (Sweden) noted that the wording of the Uruguayan draft resolution did not correspond exactly with the Advisory Committee's recommendation which was, in fact, not to make the necessary provision forthwith. The word "recommended" should therefore be replaced by the word "estimated" in the draft resolution.

21. Mr. RODRIGUEZ FABREGAT (Uruguay) disagreed with the Swedish representative's interpretation of his draft resolution. There was no question of reverting to the Advisory Committee's recommendations but, once the question of principle had been settled, of adopting the estimate recommended by the Advisory Committee instead of the excessive figure given by the Secretary-General in his report.

22. Mr. BRENNAN (Australia) asked whether the intention of the Uruguayan proposal was that its adoption would mean that the Committee was deciding to include \$350,000 in the budget. If so, he thought the proposal was out of order.

23. Mr. RODRIGUEZ FABREGAT (Uruguay) explained that his proposal dealt solely with the budgetary aspects of the question. Just as was the case when the Fifth Committee studied the budget estimates proper, it now had before it a report by the Secretary-General on the financial implications of the Council's decision and a report prepared by the Advisory Committee on the basis of the Secretary-General's memorandum. Moreover, the two things were inseparable. He thought his proposal was quite in order.

24. Mr. ZARUBIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) thought the Uruguayan proposal was inadmissible, for the Fifth Committee could not decide to approve the inclusion in the budget of the amount recommended by the Advisory Committee so long as the General Assembly had not taken a decision in principle on the substance of the matter, namely the adoption of Spanish as a working language by the Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions. He emphasized that the objection he had just raised related solely to the procedural and not to the substantive aspects of the issue.

25. Miss WITTEVEEN (Netherlands) shared the Swedish representative's misgivings, but she thought that the difficulty could be overcome by rewording the first paragraph of the Uruguayan proposal as follows: "Decides that the amount recommended by the Advisory Committee (\$350,000 gross) to cover the expenses . . . should be included in the budget". Moreover, she agreed with the USSR representative in the matter of procedure. The Fifth Committee was considering the item on its agenda under rule 152 of the rules of procedure.

26. Mr. BRENNAN (Australia) said that the Committee was dealing with item 62 of the General Assembly's agenda. A decision to include appropriations in the budget could be made only when the Committee had the budget estimates (item 42) before it. Like the Netherlands representative, he thought that the Fifth Committee should confine itself to informing the General Assembly of the financial implications of the Council's decision as was required by rule 152 of the rules of procedure.

27. In reply to the Australian representative, Mr. AGHNIDES (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the wording of the Uruguayan proposal was not exactly in accordance with existing precedents. It would be well to avoid prejudging the General Assembly's decision.

28. Mr. TOUS (Ecuador) thought that the difficulty could be solved by providing that the necessary allocation should be included in the budget estimates rather than in the budget. Every provision of rule 152 of the rules of procedure had been scrupulously compiled with and the sole purpose of the decision which the Fifth Committee was being asked to take was to inform the General Assembly of the financial implications of the Council's decision.

29. Lord CALDECOTE (United Kingdom) felt that the Ecuadorean representative's arguments supported the United Kingdom draft resolution. Like the representatives of the Netherlands, the USSR and Australia, he too thought the Uruguayan draft resolution was inadmissible. As for his own delegation's draft resolution (A/C.5/L.188), he would agree to the deletion of paragraph 3.

30. Mr. HALL (United States of America) thought that there was no difference in substance between the Uruguayan and the United Kingdom proposals. The Fifth Committee had to make a recommendation to

the General Assembly on item 62 of the agenda. It could propose that the General Assembly should endorse the favourable opinion of the Council regarding the adoption of Spanish as a working language. Moreover, in accordance with rule 152 of the rules of procedure, the Fifth Committee was obliged to inform the General Assembly of the funds which would be necessary to carry out the project. Lastly, it had to take a decision on the budget estimates in the first reading. It could provisionally approve the inclusion of the amount of \$350,000 which the Advisory Committee considered necessary.

31. Taking those facts into account, he had prepared a new text combining the Uruguayan proposal and the United Kingdom text. He read out his proposal (A/C.5/L.190).

32. Mr. ROMANACCE CHALAS (Dominican Republic) was disturbed at the turn the debate was taking. He feared that some delegations might be merely resorting to obstruction. The question before the Fifth Committee was perfectly clear. The item had been debated at length and it was time to proceed to the vote.

33. Mr. HSIA (China) thought that rule 152 of the rules of procedure did not apply to the case in hand for under Article 72 of the Charter the Council was fully competent to establish and, if necessary, to amend its rules of procedure. If that premise was accepted there was no decision properly so-called for the General Assembly to take on the issue and thus the Uruguayan proposal which dealt solely with the financial implications of the Council's decision was admissible.

34. Mr. RODRIGUEZ FABREGAT (Uruguay) thought his delegation's proposal was perfectly in order. He objected to the United States proposal, paragraph 2 of which might be considered as an objection to the adoption of Spanish as a working language. He would agree to the substitution of the words "in the budget estimates" for the phrase "in the budget" in the Uruguayan proposal, but on the other hand he could not agree to substitute the word "estimated" for the word "recommended". He could not understand how Mr. Aghnides could come to the conclusion that the Uruguayan proposal was out of order.

35. Mr. SANSON TERAN (Nicaragua) requested a roll-call vote on the Uruguayan proposal.

36. Mr. FENAUX (Belgium) vigorously protested that he had not indulged in obstructionist tactics as one member had given the Fifth Committee to understand. Nevertheless, he thought the Uruguayan proposal was drafted unsatisfactorily. Moreover, after his intervention to explain his delegation's views on the United Kingdom proposal, a number of amendments had improved the text. He repeated that he supported the substance of the Council's decision to adopt Spanish as a working language but he felt that it would be well to revise the wording of the Uruguayan proposal. In view of the late hour, however, he proposed that further debate should be postponed until the following meeting.

*The motion to adjourn the meeting was adopted.*

The meeting rose at 1.30 p.m.