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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.188, A/C.5/L.189, A/C.5/L.190, A/C.5/L.191) (concluded)

[Item 62]*

1. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to a new joint draft resolution which read:

"The Fifth Committee

"1. Decides to recommend to the General Assembly the following resolution:

"The General Assembly

"Recommends to the Economic and Social Council that it adopt Spanish as a working language of the Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions.

"2. Informs the General Assembly that the amount estimated by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (\$350,000 gross) is the maximum provision necessary in 1953 to cover the expenses of adopting Spanish as a working language by the Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions.

"3. Decides to include in the budget for 1953 \$350,000 for this purpose.

"4. Requests the Rapporteur to inform the General Assembly of the debates on this subject in the Fifth Committee."

2. The text, submitted by twenty-two countries, was a consolidation of the draft resolution originally sub-

mitted by Uruguay and other Latin-American delegations (A/C.5/L.189) and the United States draft resolution (A/C.5/L.190).

3. Lord CALDECOTE (United Kingdom) said that in view of the new proposal he would withdraw his text (A/C.5/L.188) if he were given an opportunity to explain his Government's position on the consolidated draft.

4. Miss WITTEVEEN (Netherlands) thought that paragraph 4 of the joint draft resolution was unnecessary as in accordance with the Fifth Committee's customary procedure the Rapporteur would automatically give the General Assembly an account of the Committee's debate on the subject.

5. The CHAIRMAN agreed with the Netherlands representative's comments but said that the sponsors of the joint draft resolution had insisted on the inclusion of paragraph 4.

6. Mr. BRENNAN (Australia), Rapporteur, asked to be allowed to record his opinion as Rapporteur that paragraph 3 of the new joint draft resolution was subject to the same objections as the Uruguayan text (A/C.5/L.189) had been. Paragraph 3 was out of order because the only item currently before the Committee was the question of the adoption of Spanish as a working language by the Council and its functional commissions (item 62). It was not discussing the budget estimates for 1953 (item 42). The decision appearing in paragraph 3 could only be taken when the Committee was discussing item 42.

7. Mr. AGHNIDES (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) suggested that, as the Council had already given a favourable opinion on the adoption of Spanish as one of its working languages, it might be more appropriate

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

riate if paragraph 1 were amended to read: "The General Assembly concurs in the opinion of the Economic and Social Council favouring the adoption of Spanish . . ." In line with the Australian representative's remarks, he suggested that paragraph 3 might be amended to read: "Decides to recommend the inclusion in the budget for 1953 of \$350,000 for this purpose".

8. Mr. KRAJEWSKI (Poland) agreed with the Australian representative that the Fifth Committee could not decide, at that juncture, to include an appropriation in the budget for 1953 as proposed in paragraph 3 of the joint text, as the General Assembly's approval had not yet been obtained.

9. Despite the amendment to paragraph 1 proposed by the Chairman of the Advisory Committee, he still thought the text was out of order. He doubted whether the Fifth Committee could deal with the substance of the question or recommend that the General Assembly should concur in the opinion expressed by the Council. The Fifth Committee's only responsibility was to inform the General Assembly of the cost of making Spanish a working language of the Council. Within that framework it could also ask its Rapporteur to inform the General Assembly of the debates on the subject, as was proposed in paragraph 4.

10. For those reasons, he proposed that paragraphs 1 and 3 of the joint text should be deleted and that paragraph 2 of the text should be amended to read: "Informs the General Assembly that in the event of the adoption of Spanish as a working language by the Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions, the amount estimated by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (\$350,000 gross) is the maximum provision necessary in 1953 to cover the expenses". Paragraph 4 would remain unchanged.

11. Mr. HALL (United States of America) thought the Polish amendments would destroy the joint draft resolution and urged the Fifth Committee to vote against them.

12. Turning to the amendments proposed by the Chairman of the Advisory Committee, he said that paragraph 1 had been modelled on the text approved by the General Assembly when it recommended the adoption of English and French as working languages, and as the Council resolution had not been absolutely clear, reference had been made to the precedents in the annals of the General Assembly. As regards the second amendment, he wondered whether Mr. Aghnides would be satisfied if paragraph 3 were amended to read: "Decides to include in the recommended budget . . .".

13. Mr. AGHNIDES (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) thought that the case in point was slightly different from the situation which had prevailed when English and French were made working languages for at that time there had been no rules of procedure. In the case under discussion, the Economic and Social Council, acting under its own rules of procedure, had taken the initiative in suggesting that Spanish should become one of its working languages. Inasmuch as the Council was empowered to decide on such matters it would be more appropriate for the Fifth Committee

to "concur in" the Council's action. Paragraph 3 would follow logically on paragraph 1 if the Fifth Committee approved that decision. He referred his own amendment to paragraph 3 but he would not object to the United States amendment.

14. Mr. ZARUBIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) thought it was not the Fifth Committee's responsibility to decide which should be the working languages of the Economic and Social Council nor should it prejudge the inclusion of provision in the budget without instructions from the General Assembly. The Polish amendments, therefore, were more appropriate than the joint draft resolution. As the Australian representative had said, paragraph 3 of the joint resolution was clearly out of order. Paragraphs 1 and 3 should therefore be deleted as the Polish representative had proposed. The Fifth Committee should then adopt paragraph 2, as amended, and paragraph 4. He would accordingly support the Polish amendments.

15. Miss WITTEVEEN (Netherlands) called for a vote paragraph by paragraph on the Polish amendments as well as on the joint draft resolution.

16. In reply to the United Kingdom representative, Mr. HALL (United States of America) said that in accordance with the Chairman's ruling all decisions taken at that stage were merely first reading decisions. If the draft resolution was adopted, that item would be on an equal footing with the other items the Fifth Committee had already approved in the first reading. He added that the phrase "on first reading" in the original United States text (A/C.5/L.190) had been omitted from the joint draft resolution as the sponsors did not wish to give the item any special status. Regardless of whether the General Assembly adopted paragraph 1 of the text, the Fifth Committee's decision would still remain a first reading decision.

17. Mr. NASS (Venezuela) thought there might be grounds for taking a different view of the matter in the light of the special position of Spanish, and he felt the Fifth Committee could take a final decision forthwith on the inclusion of an item in the "recommended budget". He therefore asked for the Chair's opinion in the matter.

18. The CHAIRMAN said that in conformity with his original ruling, the decisions taken by the Fifth Committee on the joint draft resolution would be first reading decisions.

19. Mr. TOV (Israel) thought the Polish amendments would destroy the joint draft resolution. Moreover, the question before the Fifth Committee related not to the hypothetical adoption of Spanish as a working language but to the financial implications of the Council's resolution on the subject.

20. Mr. JOUBLANC RIVAS (Mexico) asked whether the sponsors of the joint draft resolution had accepted the amendment to paragraph 1 suggested by the Chairman of the Advisory Committee, and if so, whether the new text would not meet the Polish representative's objections to the original paragraph 1.

21. Mr. ZULUETA (Philippines) requested the Chairman to read out the amendments one by one before the vote was taken, if the texts could not be circulated in writing.

22. Mr. FENAUX (Belgium) endorsed the Chairman's ruling as he felt that a clear distinction should be made between paragraph 1 of the joint draft resolution, which dealt with the action taken by the Economic and Social Council, and paragraph 3 which was purely a budgetary matter. Accordingly, the Fifth Committee's decision at that stage on paragraph 3 was merely a first reading decision.

23. Mr. RODRIGUEZ FABREGAT (Uruguay) accepted the amendment to paragraph 1 suggested by the Chairman of the Advisory Committee which was in keeping with the intentions of the authors of the joint draft resolution. As regards paragraph 3, he said he would favour an affirmative approach to the question which would reflect the spirit of the Council's resolution on the subject.

24. Mr. HALL (United States of America) suggested that the amendment proposed by the Chairman of the Advisory Committee to paragraph 1 of the joint draft resolution might be expressed more positively perhaps by the following words: "endorses the opinion of the Economic and Social Council favouring the adoption . . ."

The United States amendment was adopted.

25. Mr. KRAJEWSKI (Poland) could not accept paragraph 1 of the joint draft resolution as amended, and asked the Chairman to put his amendments to the vote.

26. The CHAIRMAN put to the vote the Polish representative's amendment to delete paragraph 1 of the joint draft resolution.

The first Polish amendment was rejected by 42 votes to 10, with 2 abstentions.

27. The CHAIRMAN put to the vote the Polish representative's amendment to redraft paragraph 2 of the joint draft resolution to read:

"In the event of the adoption of Spanish as a working language by the Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions, the amount estimated by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (\$350,000 gross) is the maximum provision necessary in 1953 to cover expenses."

The second Polish amendment was rejected by 38 votes to 9, with 7 abstentions.

28. The CHAIRMAN put to the vote the Polish representative's amendment to delete paragraph 3 of the joint draft resolution.

The third Polish amendment was rejected by 37 votes to 12, with 6 abstentions.

29. Lord CALDECOTE (United Kingdom) said that his delegation considered that the joint draft resolution covered two stages of the Committee's work; paragraph 1, in which the Committee supported the proposal to adopt Spanish as a working language of the Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions, constituted a decision on the substance of the question, while paragraph 2, if adopted, would constitute a budgetary decision in first reading to allocate the necessary funds to implement the proposal in the event of its approval by the General Assembly.

30. His delegation would vote for the joint draft resolution on the firm understanding that the Rapporteur would make it clear to the General Assembly that the Fifth Committee would not take a final decision on the appropriation required for 1953 until it had reviewed the over-all budgetary situation on a second reading of the budget estimates. As he had already informed the Committee, his delegation would not feel able to vote for the proposal in second reading unless sufficient economies had been achieved in the budget as a whole in response to the resolution proposing a reduction in the total appropriation for 1953 (A/C.5/L.184), which the Committee had adopted at its 355th meeting.

31. The CHAIRMAN put the amended joint draft resolution to the vote, paragraph by paragraph.¹

Paragraph 1 was adopted by 42 votes to 9, with 3 abstentions.

Paragraph 2 was adopted by 47 votes to none, with 5 abstentions.

Paragraph 3 was adopted by 39 votes to 11, with 4 abstentions.

Paragraph 4 was adopted by 46 votes to none, with 8 abstentions.

32. The CHAIRMAN put to the vote the amended joint draft resolution as a whole.

At the request of the representative of Argentina, the vote was taken by roll-call.

Luxembourg, having been drawn by lot by the Chairman, was called upon to vote first.

In favour: Mexico, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Thailand, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Burma, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, France, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Lebanon, Liberia.

Against: Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Sweden, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of South Africa, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Czechoslovakia, Denmark.

Abstaining: China

The amended joint draft resolution was adopted by 43 votes to 11, with one abstention.

33. Miss WITTEVEEN (Netherlands) said, in explanation of her vote, an explanation which was also applicable to her vote on the Polish amendments, that she had abstained from voting on the first paragraph of the joint draft resolution because she considered that a decision on the substance of the proposal should first be taken by the General Assembly and that the Fifth Committee should not prejudge that decision. Once the decision had been taken, the Fifth Committee could properly consider in first and second reading whether to include an appropriation in the budget.

34. She had no objection to paragraph 2 of the joint draft resolution and had voted for it.

¹ The amended text was subsequently issued as A/C.5/L.191.

35. She had been compelled to vote against paragraph 3, since in her view it was not yet in order for the Committee to recommend the inclusion of any appropriation in the 1953 budget; the Committee should be governed by rule 152 of the rules of procedure, as it always had been in the past.

36. She had abstained from voting on paragraph 4, as she regarded it as redundant.

37. As a result of her vote on the individual paragraphs of the joint draft resolution, she had been obliged to vote against the joint draft resolution as a whole.

38. Her delegation had come to the same conclusion in regard to the proposal to make Spanish one of the Council's working languages as it had in 1948 in regard to the proposal to adopt Spanish as a working language of the General Assembly and for the same reasons, reasons which were even more cogent at the present time, when the total budget might reach a much higher figure. The Committee's attention had been drawn to administrative complications, while it was aware that considerable additional expenditure might be involved.

39. In passing she would like to state her opinion that the Advisory Committee could hardly have submitted recommendations other than those contained in its sixth report to the General Assembly (A/2242) nor could the Secretary-General be criticized for submitting to the Fifth Committee a report which dealt exclusively with administrative and financial matters.

40. She could assure the Spanish-speaking delegations that there was no lack of appreciation of the qualities of their language on her part; those qualities were not in doubt. As a representative of one of the twenty-seven Member States whose language was neither an official nor a working language, but which nevertheless bore their full share of language costs and participated in the activities of United Nations bodies to the best of their ability, she was fully aware of the advantages the Spanish-speaking delegations would derive from the adoption of Spanish as a working language of the Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions. She was glad, however, that, even if Spanish were not adopted as a working language, those delegations had facilities for using Spanish in the Council and for obtaining a not inconsiderable volume of documents in that language.

41. Her delegation would state its attitude on the substance of the question in the General Assembly. Where the financial and administrative aspects of the proposal were concerned—and those aspects alone governed her delegation's attitude in the Fifth Committee—her delegation would not adopt a rigid stand. If at some future date the budget should become smaller and better balanced and if her delegation considered such action justified, it might be prepared to reconsider its attitude. It would be happy if it were able to go some way towards meeting the wishes of the Spanish-speaking delegations.

42. Mr. FRIIS (Denmark) felt compelled to explain his delegation's vote in view of the doubts which the representative of Ecuador had cast at the previous meeting on the motives of delegations who were op-

posing the immediate adoption of Spanish as a working language.

43. His delegation's vote had been based exclusively on financial and administrative grounds; it had been governed by no hidden motives, political or otherwise. Neither the representative of Ecuador nor any of his Spanish-speaking colleagues had refuted the arguments which he had advanced; he had therefore felt obliged to maintain his stand and to vote against the joint draft resolution.

44. Mr. ZARUBIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) hoped that the Spanish-speaking delegations would not interpret his vote to mean that he was opposed to the adoption of Spanish as a working language of the Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions. He had already assured them on several occasions that that was not the case. His delegation had voted against the joint draft resolution because it considered that paragraphs 1 and 3 were out of order. It had supported the Polish delegation's amendments and had therefore been unable to vote in favour of the joint draft resolution.

45. Mr. PSCOLKA (Czechoslovakia) recalled that his delegation had proposed that a policy decision should be taken on the question of adopting additional languages as working languages of the Council and its functional commissions. It considered, however, that such a decision could be taken only by the General Assembly and that it should not give preference to one language at the expense of another. His delegation had therefore voted against the joint draft resolution and in favour of the Polish delegation's amendments.

46. Mr. BRENNAN (Australia) explained that he had voted against paragraph 3 of the joint draft resolution because, as he had mentioned before, the budgetary decision involved could not properly be taken in connexion with agenda item 62, but should be taken in connexion with agenda item 42.

47. Baron VON OTTER (Sweden) felt it was hardly necessary to emphasize that his delegation's vote had been governed exclusively by administrative, financial and technical considerations. He was in complete agreement with the remarks of the representative of Denmark.

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations: report of the Committee on Contributions (A/2161, A/C.5/508)

[Item 46]*

48. Miss WITTEVEEN (Chairman of the Committee on Contributions) introduced the Committee's report on the scale of assessments and various other questions considered by the Committee at its session in August 1952 (A/2161).

49. The sixth session of the General Assembly had given the Committee on Contributions additional directives regarding the review of the scale of assessments to be made in 1952, requesting the Committee to take into account the views expressed by Member States during that session and to pay particular attention to countries with low *per capita* income (resolution 582 (VI)).

50. In 1951 the Committee on Contributions began a systematic revision of assessments with the object of removing maladjustments and facilitating the adoption of a more permanent scale within a few years. The Committee now felt that, in the absence of any new disturbing factors, it should be possible to remove the remaining major divergencies and to propose a more permanent scale of assessments for 1954.

51. Continuing the revision of the scale of assessments, the Committee had again recommended a number of changes towards the removal of maladjustments due to over-assessment or under-assessment on the basis of the relative capacity to pay. It had also taken a further step towards the implementation of the ceiling and *per capita* principles. As would be seen from paragraph 19 of the report before the Fifth Committee, some members of the Committee on Contributions had expressed doubts on the interpretation of General Assembly resolution 238 A (III). In accordance with General Assembly directives, special consideration had been given to countries with low *per capita* income, as would be seen from paragraphs 11 and 12 of the report.

52. At its 1952 session the Committee had for the first time used averages of national income estimates for two years instead of estimates for a single year only. The Committee considered that the time was approaching when the transition to a more permanent scale of assessments could be envisaged and that method would therefore be more appropriate as it would tend to reduce the effect of short-term fluctuations and economic conditions. In the case of each country the Committee had carefully examined all the data at its disposal before making a recommendation. The method followed by the Committee and the various factors and considerations taken into account were fully explained in chapter IV of its report. The general principle followed had been to reduce the apparent divergencies in the assessments by approximately one-half. The scale of assessments recommended was adopted by the Committee with one member dissenting, and his views were recorded in paragraph 24 of the report. The Committee recommended that the scale of assessments should be adopted for one year only and that it should again be reviewed in 1953.

53. As in previous years, the Committee on Contributions had made recommendations as to the rate at which Switzerland and the Principality of Liechtenstein should contribute towards the expenses of the International Court of Justice. The rates recommended, which were subject to consultation between the Secretary-General and the governments concerned, had been accepted by the latter.

54. The Committee had also established rates at which non-member States of the United Nations which were signatories of international instruments relating to the control of narcotic drugs might be called upon to contribute towards the expenses arising out of the obligations placed on the United Nations by such instruments. Those rates were also subject to consultation with the governments concerned, and she understood that such consultations had not yet been completed.

55. As regards the collection of contributions, a statement had been distributed (A/C.5/508) which showed the status of collection at the moment.

56. In view of the continuing currency difficulties referred to in paragraph 14 of its report, the Committee on Contributions had recommended that the Secretary-General should again be authorized to accept as large a proportion as was practicable of the 1953 contributions in currencies other than United States dollars, as that would to some extent facilitate the payment of contributions.

57. After paying a tribute to her colleagues, she emphasized that the Committee's recommendations had been made after very careful consideration. The Committee's very difficult and highly responsible work had been greatly facilitated by the excellent preparatory work done by the Secretariat of the United Nations and by the Committee's Secretariat.

58. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the discussion should be adjourned until the following meeting as there were no more speakers on his list.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.