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- Review and reappraisal of the role and functions of the Economic and Social Council: report of the Secretary-General (continued)*
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Chairman: Mr. Moraiwid M. TELL (Jordan).

AGENDA ITEMS 52, 51 AND 43

General review of the programmes and activities in the economic, social, technical co-operation and related fields of the United Nations, the specialized agencies, the International Atomic Energy Agency, the United Nations Children's Fund and all other institutions and agencies related to the United Nations system (continued) (A/6428; A/C.2/L.877 and Add.1-4)

Review and reappraisal of the role and functions of the Economic and Social Council: report of the Secretary-General (continued) (A/6303, chap. XV; A/6432, E/4216)

Decentralization of the economic and social activities of the United Nations (continued) (A/6003, chap. X, sect. II; A/6114, A/6429, E/4075)

1. Mr. PEREZ GUERRERO (Venezuela) said his delegation shared the aims of the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.2/L.877 and Add.1-4. It agreed that the operational programmes of the United Nations should be better organized and better co-ordinated and that the resolutions which had been adopted on co-ordination should be fully implemented. It also agreed that the growth of the United Nations had not always been in the right direction and that a certain amount of duplication had occurred. It was therefore normal for the General Assembly to do everything possible to eliminate overlapping and to direct the activities of its subsidiary organs along rational lines. It was not the first time that it had tried to do so and indeed co-ordination was a problem which had to be kept constantly in mind.

2. Nevertheless, co-ordination should be left to the existing bodies and particularly to the newly constituted Committee for Programme and Co-ordination. The composition of that body had not been finally settled and could therefore be determined in the light of the functions which the sponsors wanted to vest in an *ad hoc* committee of experts. There must, of course, be close co-operation between the Secretariat, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council and it was gratifying that such co-operation had been furthered by the joint meetings of the Special Committee on Co-ordination and the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC). It would be much more appropriate if the Secretariat provided the information which the sponsors were seeking to obtain in operative paragraph 1.

3. The Council was already taking active steps to rebuild its co-ordinating machinery so as to play more effectively its central role of co-ordinator under the United Nations Charter. It was natural that the General Assembly should support the Council in those efforts. The General Assembly must respect the division of labour between itself and the Council and use the latter as the organ specifically responsible for co-ordination in economic and social matters.

4. Sir Edward WARNER (United Kingdom) agreed with the statement made by the representative of Iran, but at the same time sympathized with the feeling of the sponsors of the draft resolution that the over-complicated structure and practices of the United Nations and its agencies, with their overlapping constitutions, should be reviewed and drastically streamlined so as to reduce overheads and eliminate marginal projects, thus maximizing and concentrating the funds available for development. Yet his delegation was not convinced that another *ad hoc* committee of the General Assembly was necessary. The work the sponsors had in mind could be done by the reconstituted Committee for Programme and Coordination with the necessary time at its disposal and temporarily augmented for the purpose. He hoped that a solution would emerge after the resumed session of the Council had established the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination.

5. Turning to agenda item 51, he agreed that the enlargement of the Economic and Social Council had given it a new lease of life. As it was now widely representative, there was no longer a case for not using it for its proper purpose. He warmly endorsed the suggestion made by the representative of Ghana (1067th meeting) that the Committee should prune its own agenda and delegate more items to the Council. There was no point in duplicating discussion in the two bodies.

6. The Secretary-General's report on decentralization (E/4075) suggested that a satisfactory measure of

decentralization had been achieved. All that remained was for the Secretary-General to ensure adequate co-ordination between Headquarters and the regions. That could be left to his wise judgement without any special injunctions. Thus, item 43 could be dropped from the agenda and the Committee could merely take note of the Secretary-General's report.

7. Mr. LOPEZ (Philippines) said most delegations agreed that after twenty years the United Nations was entitled to review its economic and social activities and to find out how well or how badly its family of organizations had followed the path of reasonableness and efficiency. Like the world's population, the United Nations had grown without the benefit of "family planning" and most delegations would admit that proliferation, duplication and overlapping had occurred. The time had come for a closer look at the problem. However, there was a divergence of opinion as to whether the general review should be made by the Council or left to the General Assembly. In the United Nations Charter the division of responsibility was clear. While the General Assembly retained supreme authority, the Council had been given the specific task of co-ordinating the economic and social activities of the United Nations family.

8. The Philippine delegation had borne that division of authority in mind when, at the forty-first session of the Council, it had proposed that a thorough and objective review and evaluation should be undertaken of the structure, functions, procedures, financing and performances of the United Nations family in the economic and social fields. The Philippine delegation had also based its proposal on the draft resolution which had been introduced by the representative of Malta at the twentieth session of the General Assembly.^{1/} In the Council there had been some opposition to the proposal, particularly from the specialized agencies whose representatives had pointed out that reconsideration of the functions and structures of the agencies lay wholly within the responsibilities of their own governing and legislative bodies. Nevertheless, in its resolution 1173 (XLI), the Council had decided to place the question on its agenda for 1967.

9. In considering the draft resolution, his delegation felt that the Economic and Social Council should be given a chance to finish the work it had begun, particularly as its membership had been increased. If the Council failed to do so in a period of, say, two years, then the General Assembly itself could act. But the Assembly should not use its supreme authority until it was certain that co-ordination could not be effected in any other way. He suggested therefore that the sponsors should leave the general review to the Council because otherwise they would themselves be causing the duplication they sought to avoid.

10. Mr. FERNANDINI (Peru) said it was natural that delegations should be seeking a clear and comprehensive picture of the economic and social activities of the United Nations family because over the last twenty years those activities had proliferated in such a way that it was almost impossible for delegations, both large and small, to fulfil their functions properly. It was absolutely necessary to secure an inventory of

the tools of economic and social development in order to determine the best way of using them. Obviously, too, changes in existing activities, procedures and administrative arrangements should be recommended. However, that was a function of the Economic and Social Council and it should not be delegated to an ad hoc committee of experts.

11. A suitable compromise might be worked out, as several representatives had suggested, by having the work done by the reconstituted Committee for Programme and Co-ordination, if necessary giving it additional powers and representation. It could begin by tackling the task indicated in operative paragraph 1 of the draft resolution and then return to its own review of the United Nations work programme in the economic, social and human rights fields. If a new ad hoc committee were to be established, the sponsors would be adding to, instead of reducing, the proliferation. He hoped therefore that they could meet the objections to the draft resolution and, by a compromise along the lines he had suggested, draft a text that could be adopted unanimously.

Mr. Boiko (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

12. Mr. ABE (Japan) said that his delegation, while fully sympathizing with the aims of the draft resolution, shared the belief that the proposed review could best be carried out with the existing machinery rather than by establishing a new committee. United Nations economic and social activities were already under review, by both the Council and the General Assembly. The Council had already taken a number of steps to improve co-ordination, and had decided to reconstitute the Special Committee on Co-ordination in accordance with the recommendations of the report of the Ad Hoc Committee of Experts to Examine the Finances of the United Nations and the Specialized Agencies (A/6343, para. 90 (g)). The new Committee for Programme and Co-ordination could conveniently undertake the studies proposed in the draft resolution.

13. The items referred to in section I of operative paragraph 1 could be left to the Secretariat except for the assessment of the extent to which each type of activity had achieved its objectives, and the account of criteria used by the United Nations family in according assistance. In that connexion, he recalled that the Council was already evaluating United Nations technical co-operation programmes and had endorsed, in its resolution 1151 (XLI), the establishment of an interagency study group by ACC to propose practical steps for rendering more effective the operation of technical co-operation programmes. There was a need for more rational and coherent criteria in according assistance to developing countries, but that was a matter for the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme. With respect to section II of operative paragraph 1, the basic approach of the co-sponsors to look at the problems exclusively from the point of view of economic development might bring about an unexpected confusion.

14. Because of the diversity of interests among Member States, it was extremely difficult to establish priorities in United Nations economic and social programmes. While everything should be done to help developing countries, it would be difficult to assess

^{1/} See Official Records of the General Assembly, Twentieth Session, Annexes, agenda item 100, document A/6201, para. 3.

the relative importance of, say, industrial development as against the control of narcotic drugs. The Japanese delegation therefore believed that the work proposed in section II of operative paragraph 1 required very careful reflection.

Mr. Tell (Jordan) resumed the Chair.

15. Mr. LAI (Malaysia) said that, in view of the limited financial resources available, it was only natural that both donor and recipient countries should want to ensure that the maximum benefit was derived from assistance programmes. That was the purpose of operative paragraph 1 of the draft resolution, of which his delegation was a sponsor.

16. Some delegations had referred to the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee of Experts to Examine the Finances of the United Nations and the Specialized Agencies, but it had been set up primarily to deal with peace-keeping operations rather than economic development. It was true that, in the course of its work, that Committee had made certain recommendations regarding co-ordination, but such co-ordination would be incomplete without the study and recommendations proposed in the draft resolution. It had also been argued that the draft resolution would lead to duplication with the work of the new Committee for Programme and Co-ordination. Although the Malaysian delegation would prefer the establishment of new and high-powered machinery, it was prepared to give serious consideration to the proposal that the study should be carried out by the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination, if its membership were increased and its terms of reference strengthened.

17. Mr. POLIT (Ecuador) said that the activities of the United Nations had grown so complex that it was almost impossible for any delegation to grasp them. As a co-sponsor of the draft resolution and in support of what the representative of Malta had said at the previous meeting, he would therefore stress the need, brought out in operative paragraph 1, for a clear and comprehensive picture of existing operational and research activities in the economic and social fields. None of the speakers had so far been able to show that the draft resolution was not relevant or timely. At the 1066th meeting, the representative of Australia had pointed out the defects which the developing countries noted in the operations of the United Nations and the specialized agencies. Such criticisms were not directed against the United Nations itself, the Secretariat or any of the specialized agencies but were designed to improve the existing organization through democratic discussion.

18. It was true that many efforts had been made to answer such criticisms but, as the representative of Malta had said, the various bodies concerned did not really have the time for proper co-ordination and the Second Committee had not issued a clear mandate that would encourage the Members of the United Nations to improve their co-ordination. It was also true that delegations themselves should improve their co-ordination at the national level. However, since everyone appeared to agree about the general aims of the draft resolution, he was certain that, with the necessary modifications, it would receive general approval.

19. Mr. VIAUD (France) said that there seemed to be agreement that improved co-ordination was necessary, but that the proposals contained in the draft resolution might involve a vast and time-consuming operation. The French delegation, too, was against the establishment of a new committee which might indeed lead to duplication and an unfortunate clash of competence between the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. It recognized the supremacy of the Assembly and its interest in co-ordination in economic and social matters.

20. To enable the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council to work together to that end, the Committee could either ask the Assembly to note the desire for a clear and comprehensive picture of existing operational and research activities and to instruct the Council to take an inventory, or ask the Assembly to inform the Council in more specific terms how a review should be carried out—for example, through the reconstituted and strengthened Committee for Programme and Co-ordination. The French delegation had no particular preference as to which alternative was adopted, but any other action by the Committee would involve a serious risk of duplication.

21. Mr. WILMOT (Ghana), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, recalled that the representative of Malta had stated that some delegations, including that of Ghana, felt that the draft resolution gave the impression that the Economic and Social Council had so far been unable to carry out its co-ordinating function properly. In fact, in its statement of 11 November (1067th meeting), the Ghanaian delegation had welcomed the measures adopted by the enlarged Council to streamline its working procedures, but had pointed out that further improvements were necessary. It had also expressed the view that the study proposed in the draft resolution should be undertaken by the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination, particularly if its membership was increased to twenty, and that the Committee should deal exclusively with that question for the whole of 1967.

22. Mr. OLUMIDE (Nigeria), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that his delegation did not believe, as the representative of Malta had asserted, that all would be well if the decisions adopted by the Economic and Social Council at its forty-first session were implemented. The Nigerian representative had merely stated (1068th meeting) that those decisions should be allowed to take root and be assessed before the need for a new co-ordinating body was discussed.

23. He reaffirmed the whole-hearted support of the Nigerian delegation for the aims of the draft resolution.

24. Mr. GALLARDO MORENO (Mexico), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the comments of the Maltese representative might appear to imply that his delegation did not support the objectives of the draft resolution. Any such impression was erroneous: the Mexican delegation fully supported the aim of improved co-ordination and had referred in its statement (1067th meeting) to the steps taken by the Council and to the possibility of requesting the Secretary-General, in consultation with the heads of specialized agencies, to prepare an inventory of existing operational and research activities.

25. Mr. LOBANOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), replying to the comments of the representative of Malta, said that his delegation's reservations had related to the procedures suggested in the draft resolution rather than to its aims. He reaffirmed his delegation's view that the proposed study would lead to still more documentation and to duplication with the work of the Special Committee on Co-ordination, which would be continued by the new Committee for Programme and Co-ordination.

26. The objections which had been raised regarding the lack of time and inadequate representation of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination could easily be met by increasing the number of its meetings and strengthening its membership. In that connexion, it was important that the membership of the enlarged Committee should be homogeneous and not divided into two or more parts designated by different bodies.

27. Mr. Donald MACDONALD (Canada) said that his informal discussions with other delegations had led him to believe that suggestions he was about to make would command wide support.

28. His delegation suggested that the Committee should deal with the item on the decentralization of the economic and social activities of the United Nations by taking note of the Secretary-General's report on the subject (E/4075), and that the very full discussion on the item concerning the review and reappraisal of the role of the Council should be concluded by having the following passage included in the Committee's report on agenda item 51:

"The Second Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following decision:

"The General Assembly welcomed the progress recorded by the Economic and Social Council in its review and reappraisal of its role and functions, and the improvements in its working methods and procedures, and indicated that it would follow with interest the implementation of the various decisions taken by the Council to improve its functioning and working methods, as well as the implementation of relevant recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee of Experts to Examine the Finances of the United Nations and the Specialized Agencies."

It was so decided.

29. Mr. AITKEN (Jamaica) said that, as one of the sponsors of the draft resolution, his delegation was most appreciative of the useful and constructive comments made. A revised text to be submitted to the Committee shortly would show that the suggestions made had been considered and acted upon wherever possible.

30. The amendments to be made would make it clear that the sponsors fully recognized the primary responsibility of the Economic and Social Council for co-ordination and that the purpose of proposing that a committee should be appointed to handle what was admittedly a serious problem was, in fact, to leave the Council free to concentrate on its heavy co-ordination responsibilities. The statements made in the Committee had demonstrated a gratifying degree of support for the essential aim of the draft resolu-

tion, which was to simplify the methods of giving and receiving economic assistance. It was the sponsors' hope that the measures they proposed would culminate in the publication of a series of handbooks which would set out in adequate detail the ideas and information which the draft resolution sought to elicit; if the handbooks were forthcoming within a reasonable time, they would be of inestimable value to the developing countries.

31. Mrs. SOLOMON (Trinidad and Tobago) introducing, on behalf of the sponsors, the revised draft resolution (A/C.2/L.877/Rev.1), said that the modifications to the draft resolution had been made in response to many helpful suggestions. Three points had been stressed: that the proposals contained in the draft resolution might amount to a further instance of the duplication they sought to eliminate; that the central co-ordinating role of the Economic and Social Council should not be overlooked; and that the provisions relating to the work to be done in the first phase of the general review should be more specific.

32. The adoption of General Assembly resolution 2150 (XXI), which approved the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee of Experts to Examine the Finances of the United Nations and the Specialized Agencies on, inter alia, the strengthening of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (A/6343, para. 90 (g) and (h)), had encouraged the sponsors to propose, in operative paragraph 1 of the revised text, that the members of the latter Committee, together with nine additional experts from Member States, should form the ad hoc committee to undertake the proposed general review. The danger of duplicating the work of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination would thus be avoided. The need to avoid duplication of documentation was stressed in the revised operative paragraph 5.

33. The primary responsibility of the Council for co-ordinating the economic and social activities of the United Nations system and the steps it had taken to improve its effectiveness in that respect were specifically acknowledged in the third, fourth and eighth preambular paragraphs; the central role of the Council was, of course, implicitly recognized in the proposal to give its Committee for Programme and Co-ordination special responsibility in the general review.

34. Operative paragraph 5, as revised, contained an extremely detailed listing of the specific information which the first phase of the general review was designed to elicit. Like other parts of the draft resolution, that paragraph was not necessarily in its final form and the sponsors would welcome further comments and suggestions.

35. In conclusion, she pointed out that the second preambular paragraph had been added to the revised text in order to emphasize the convictions of many delegations that the Council's co-ordination efforts would continue to be frustrated unless the General Assembly exercised its responsibility to make Member States aware of the consequences of voting for unrelated and overlapping programmes.

36. Mr. CARANICAS (Greece) said that the Economic and Social Council's responsibility for co-ordination

was twofold: it periodically reviewed the activities of all United Nations bodies in order to discover and correct instances of duplication; and it tried to ensure that the planning of the future programmes of those bodies followed a common policy and approach, while preserving the special competence of each agency concerned. The somewhat loose association between the virtually autonomous bodies which reported to the Council made its task difficult; the main obstacle was, however, the lack of co-ordination within Governments themselves, as the Ad Hoc Committee of Experts had pointed out (A/6343, para. 91). It was admittedly impossible, as several speakers had observed, for smaller nations to provide for proper representation at the multitude of meetings of United Nations bodies and their difficulties were made more acute by the manner in which certain new organs had been established. At least part of the remedy was to eliminate competition among agencies. The record of the previous twenty years showed that the older specialized agencies had achieved a high degree of success in that respect, with the valuable help and advice of ACC.

37. His delegation believed that much of the information which the revised draft resolution was intended to produce could be made accessible to Governments by strengthening the functions of the resident representatives. The burden placed on Governments by the proliferation of documents would not, in any event, be reduced, but rather increased, by operative paragraph 5; indeed, the work of sifting and drawing conclusions from all the information to be supplied in accordance with that paragraph could not be under-

taken by Government experts from Member States, and if the work had to be done, his delegation believed that experts who were not in Government service should be recruited for the purpose.

38. Mr. HILL (Secretariat) said that he wished to correct certain misapprehensions which appeared to have arisen about arrangements made by the Secretariat for meetings of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination during 1967. As was stated in paragraph 28 of the memorandum of the Secretary-General on the calendar of conferences for 1967^{2/}, provision had been made for that Committee to meet not only during the sessions from 1 to 5 May and from 5 to 16 June 1967, but throughout the four-week spring session of the Council.

39. The representative of Malta had referred to a possible lack of co-operation between the specialized agencies and the Committee in question. The Committee had, in fact, enjoyed a very special degree of co-operation with the specialized agencies, the International Atomic Energy Agency and ACC. The statement by the representative of the International Labour Organisation to the Special Committee on Co-ordination^{3/} was consistent with that attitude, since it indicated that the ILO, although it was uncertain of the type of report required by the Committee, had done its utmost to provide the information requested.

The meeting rose at 6.40 p.m.

^{2/} Document E/4269 and Corr.1.

^{3/} See E/AC.51/SR.30.

