



ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Thirty-fifth Session

OFFICIAL RECORDS

Wednesday, 3 April 1963,
at 10.55 a.m.

NEW YORK

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International co-operation in cartography . . . 3

President: Mr. Alfonso PATIÑO (Colombia).

Present:

Representatives of the following States: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Colombia, Czechoslovakia, El Salvador, Ethiopia, France, India, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Senegal, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Yugoslavia.

Observer for the following Member State: Philippines.

Representatives of the following specialized agencies: International Labour Organisation; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; World Health Organization; International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

The representative of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

AGENDA ITEM 8

International co-operation in cartography (E/3713 and Add.1, E/3715 and Add.1, E/3718 and Add.1-8, E/L.982, E/L.983, E/L.984)

1. Mr. MAKEEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the Secretary-General's report on the United Nations Technical Conference on the International Map of the World on the Millionth Scale (E/3715) contained insufficient information to enable delegations, particularly those of countries which had not participated in the Conference, to give adequate consideration to that part of the item under discussion. The document containing the specifications of the International Map (E/3715/Add.1) had only recently been issued, and other documents containing essential information were still being prepared. He therefore requested that discussion of the report should be deferred at least until the resumed thirty-sixth session and, in any event, until the Secretariat had submitted adequate information on the work of the Conference for the information of members of the Council and interested organizations.

2. Mr. BHADKAMKAR (India) remarked that his delegation was prepared to discuss the report on the Conference at the current session, but it would have no objection to the postponement requested by the Soviet Union representative.

3. Mr. FRANZI (Italy) said that he, too, had no objection to a postponement; he felt, however, that the matter should be deferred simply until the thirty-

sixth session, at which time the Council could decide whether to take up the matter or to postpone it further until the resumed session.

4. Mr. MAKEEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) agreed to that suggestion.

5. Mr. KOTSCHNIG (United States of America) said that he would not oppose deferment until the thirty-sixth session but would be reluctant to see it postponed until the resumed session, the essential purpose of which was to prepare the Council's work for the following year on the basis of what had been done by the General Assembly at its regular session. He asked when the official records of the Conference would be published.

6. Mr. DE BREUVERY (Secretariat) replied that it was unlikely that the technical work of preparing and reproducing the projection tables could be completed before the end of 1963.

7. Mr. KOTSCHNIG (United States of America) asked whether the Soviet Union representative would agree to postponement until the summer session of the Council.

8. Mr. MAKEEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that he had no objection, on the understanding that the Secretariat would in the meantime make available adequate documentation concerning the results of the Conference, but not necessarily the official records of the Conference.

It was decided to defer consideration of the Secretary-General's report (E/3715 and Add.1) until the thirty-sixth session.

9. Mr. HAJEK (Czechoslovakia) welcomed the wise decision which had been taken, since a great deal of preparation for the debate on the results of the Conference would be necessary in the appropriate institutions.

10. Mr. MATSUI (Japan) emphasized the importance of cartography and Japan's appreciation of the achievements of the United Nations in that connexion. Japan was presenting a draft resolution (E/L.982), which the delegations of Australia and India had agreed to co-sponsor, endorsing the recommendation of the Third United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for Asia and the Far East that a fourth conference should be held not later than 1964.^{1/} The generous offer of the Philippines to act as host country (E/3713/Add.1) should commend itself to all members of the Council.

11. The standardization of geographical names was a matter of concern to many Member States, and he therefore had no objection to the convening of a conference to deal with it, as was proposed in the United States draft resolution (E/L.983), on the understanding that the conference should be technical and that its

^{1/} See United Nations publication, Sales No.: 62.L.14, p. 8, resolution 2.

scope, nature, agenda and place of meeting should be carefully examined with due regard to the Secretary-General's report on international co-operation on the standardization of geographical names (E/3718 and Add.1-8). At least one year should elapse between the fourth United Nations regional cartographic conference for Asia and the Far East and the proposed conference, so that delegations would have ample time to study the results of the former before attending the latter.

12. Mr. KOTSCHNIG (United States of America), introducing his delegation's draft resolution (E/L.983), said that his Government was gratified to note the progress made by a number of Member States in the domestic standardization of geographical names, a highly technical matter which he believed could be facilitated by the convening of an international conference. The number of replies to the Secretary-General's note under Council resolution 814 (XXXI) was as yet too small to warrant a final decision, although some of the countries replying had felt that a conference should be held. The draft resolution therefore suggested an interim stage, in which the Secretary-General would consult Governments of Member States and the specialized agencies on the desirability of convening a conference and on the date, place and tentative agenda. He agreed with the representative of Japan that any such conference must be very carefully prepared, and there was merit in his suggestion regarding the timing of the meeting in relation to the fourth regional cartographic conference for Asia and the Far East.

13. Mr. ATTLEE (United Kingdom) stressed the vital importance of cartography in connexion with such aspects of economic development as land use, mineral exploitation, water resources, and transport and communications. He was pleased to note the emphasis placed on technical assistance in the Secretary-General's report on the Third Regional Cartographic Conference for Asia and the Far East, held at Bangkok (E/3713), and he pointed out that the United Kingdom Directorate of Overseas Surveys was co-operating in providing basic topographical mapping in the region. He strongly agreed with the views expressed by the representative of Japan concerning the fourth conference, and while the date and place were largely a matter for the countries of the region concerned, account should be taken, in fixing the date, of other international surveys and mapping conferences to be held in 1964; he hoped that the sponsors of draft resolution E/L.982 would be willing to insert, after the words "the necessary steps" in the operative paragraph, the phrase "bearing in mind the dates of other conferences on connected subjects". When the agenda was prepared, ample time should be given for the discussion of the various items, and there should therefore not be too many of them or too many learned papers presented. With reference to the establishment of subregional training centres for photo-interpretation, the need for which had been recognized by the Third Conference,^{2/} he said that training in all aspects of mapping from air photographs had been arranged in the United Kingdom for a number of personnel from the region. An information centre of the Directorate of Overseas Surveys, established in 1961 for the exchange of technical information, was in close liaison with various countries in the region and would be glad to co-operate with the United Nations map

information office which the Third Conference had recommended be established.^{3/}

14. His Government was still strongly in favour of an international conference on the standardization of geographical names, but he agreed with previous speakers that in view of the slow response from Governments, the Secretary-General's proposal (E/3718) to continue his inquiry and make a further report to the Council at its thirty-seventh session should be accepted.

15. Mr. JEANNEL (France) said that the cartographic activities of the United Nations were developing effectively, although on a modest scale. No one would deny the importance of standardized and hence simplified rules. Scholars and specialists in all fields of human knowledge could derive the greatest profit from international co-operation in cartography. From the directly practical point of view, such co-operation would facilitate studies of pre-investment and economic development.

16. France viewed with favour the results of the United Nations Technical Conference on the International Map of the World on the Millionth Scale, held at Bonn, and supported the recommendations it had adopted (E/3715 and Add.1). It also supported in principle the proposal to hold an international conference on the standardization of geographical names, subject, however, to certain prior conditions. While the findings of the Group of Experts on Geographical Names^{4/} were valid for France; they must be reconsidered in so far as they applied to the French-speaking countries of Africa. The National Geographic Institute (Institut géographique national) had been requested by the Governments of those countries to draw up their national maps. For that purpose, the Institute had had to abandon the rules for transcription which had been worked out in 1957 and reintroduce certain of the old rules which were based on French phonetics and spelling. The criterion adopted was that the names transcribed should constitute a series of sounds rendering as closely as possible the exact phonetic value of the words in the local language. In returning to such simple procedures, the Institute was complying with the general recommendations of the United Nations since the decision concerning the adoption of rules for transcription was left to the States concerned. The official replies from Upper Volta and Mali (E/3718/Add.2) confirmed the correctness of the procedure adopted. It was also in keeping with the Lebanese proposal for the transliteration of Arabic names into Latin characters.

17. For those reasons, the proposed conference on the standardization of geographical names, however desirable, should not be convened too soon, particularly as important work on problems of toponymy was still in progress in such countries as Burma, Ghana and Hungary. On that understanding, his delegation was ready to support the two draft resolutions before the Council (E/L.982 and E/L.983).

18. Mr. MATSCH (Austria) felt that the Group of Experts on Geographical Names had adopted a sound approach towards the proposal to convene an international conference on the standardization of geographical names. However, in view of the Secretary-General's report (E/3718), it might be appropriate

^{3/} Ibid., p. 9, resolution 5.

^{4/} See *World Cartography*, volume VII (United Nations publication, Sales No.: 62.I.25), p. 7.

^{2/} Ibid., p. 8, resolution 4.

to allow preparatory and consultations to continue a little longer and to request the Secretary-General to make a further report to the Council at its thirty-seventh session. A further argument in favour of such a procedure was the recommendation, in paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 1851 (XVII), that the greatest possible moderation should be exercised by all United Nations bodies in fixing their programme of meetings in New York for 1964. It might therefore be advisable not to schedule the international conference for that year. In the meantime, his delegation hoped that further progress in the work of standardization of geographical names would be possible on a regional basis. It intended to support the two draft resolutions (E/L.982 and E/L.983).

19. Mr. PICO (Argentina) stressed the importance of cartography, particularly for the planning and execution of development projects. Undoubtedly, in recent years, the United Nations had done much to encourage cartographic work and his delegation was pleased to note the progress that had been made. International co-operation in cartography would assume even greater importance during the United Nations Development Decade.

20. His delegation was satisfied with the results achieved by the Third United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference, held at Bangkok. It was important that the work of cartography being carried out in Asia and the Far East should be properly co-ordinated with that being done in such bodies as the Organization of American States.

21. His Government attached importance to the standardizing of geographical names and particularly to the recommendations of the Group of Experts on that subject. At the national level, Argentina was striving to co-ordinate the work of all public and private bodies concerned with that problem. In particular, it was intended to complete and bring up to date the national geographic dictionary which had been started some years before.

22. His delegation agreed with the Secretary-General that Member States should be consulted concerning the proposal to convene an international conference on the standardization of geographical names. Such a meeting would be of considerable importance and should therefore be very carefully prepared. He supported the suggestions made by the Secretary-General concerning the organization of such a conference (E/3718, annex). It was his understanding that the information to be submitted by individual Governments would not actually be discussed at the conference but merely used as background documentation. He supported the United States draft resolution (E/L.983).

23. Mr. RADIVOJEVIC (Yugoslavia) welcomed the efforts made to improve cartographic services in Asia and the Far East, as set forth in the report of the Secretary-General on the Third Regional Cartographic Conference (E/3713), and supported the recommendations that activities in that field should be intensified. He also supported the proposal that a fourth United Nations regional cartographic conference for Asia and the Far East should be convened not later than 1964. Although the standardization of geographical names did not present any problem in Yugoslavia, his delegation considered that a well-prepared and well-attended conference of experts on that subject could be useful. His delegation supported the two draft resolutions (E/L.982 and E/L.983).

24. Mr. BHADKAMKAR (India) stressed that there was a clear connexion between cartography and economic development, particularly for the developing countries. Cartography represented yet another field of technical activity where international co-operation was increasing. The more developed countries could certainly provide valuable assistance to the developing countries in that connexion.

25. During the Bangkok Conference, a working group had been set up to examine the various problems connected with the establishment of a regional cartographic organization. The group had concluded that such an organization should be set up with United Nations assistance, that it should be staffed by experts from ECAFE and that it should be linked with the ECAFE office. Its responsibilities would be to convince members that maps were necessary for economic development, to advise members on mapping techniques and surveying, to help members in establishing contact with cartographic organizations, to recruit cartographic experts for planning map projects, to promote the use of cartographic data for economic development and to train cartographers. The nucleus of the regional cartographic organization should be established in India, which had one of the largest and best surveying organizations in the world and which had already assisted neighbouring countries in mapping projects.

26. He also suggested that one of the proposed sub-regional training centres for photo-interpretation should be established in India, since the countries of the region would then no longer have to send personnel for training in Europe and since the terrain in India was more akin to that of the other countries of the region than to the countries of Europe.

27. His delegation considered that the standardization of geographical names was a very important problem and supported the recommendations of the Secretary-General concerning the convening of a conference on that topic (E/3718).

28. His delegation supported both draft resolutions before the Council (E/L.982 and E/L.983).

29. Mr. WALKER (Australia) emphasized the increasing importance of cartography for economic planning. Cartographic knowledge and equipment varied considerably from one country to another, and one of the most useful activities of the United Nations was the assistance it was rendering to developing countries in the improvement of their cartographic services. Those countries had certainly profited also from the discussion of the technical problems involved in the speedy mapping of developing areas which had taken place at the United Nations Conference on the Application of Science and Technology for the Benefit of Less Developed Areas.

30. Australia, which was looking forward to becoming a full member of ECAFE when the Council acted on the ECAFE recommendation to that effect, was happy to co-sponsor the draft resolution on the convening of the fourth United Nations regional cartographic conference for Asia and the Far East (E/L.982). As was clear from the very informative report,^{5/} the Third Regional Cartographic Conference for the same area had been very successful and encouraging progress was being made; the fourth conference should carry the work a step further. Australia was grateful

to the Philippine Government for its generous invitation to hold the conference at Manila.

31. The Secretary-General's report on international co-operation on the standardization of geographical names (E/3718) brought to mind the many difficulties involved in such standardization, some of which had been pointed out by the representative of France. The Australian delegation supported the United States draft resolution (E/L.983), which would give effect to the desire already expressed by many Governments that an international conference should be held to discuss the subject. He associated himself with the remarks made by previous speakers regarding the necessity for careful preparation. It was important, in particular, that the agenda should be carefully drawn up, as proposed in operative paragraph 1 of the draft resolution. In his view, the work of the conference should be confined to the exchange of information concerning the technical problems involved in standardization. In addition, care should be taken not to include in the agenda topics which could be dealt with by other methods, such as informal consultation. In addition, it was not always necessary to call a regional conference to discuss a specific subject of regional interest: such a subject could be discussed at other regional meetings which had already been arranged.

32. The PRESIDENT invited the observer from the Philippines to take the floor.

33. Mr. JIMENEZ (Philippines) drew attention to the letter from his Government tentatively offering the Philippines as a host country for the fourth regional cartographic conference (E/3713/Add.1), and emphasized that the offer would be confirmed as soon as Congressional approval of the necessary appropriation had been secured. He thanked those who had sponsored and supported draft resolution E/L.982 for welcoming his Government's offer.

34. Mr. HAJEK (Czechoslovakia) said that his Government attached great importance to the standardization of geographical names, as was clear from its communication of 28 January 1963 (E/3718/Add.1). He drew attention to the information contained in that communication regarding the composition and work of the national terminology commission and confirmed the view of the central administration of geodesy and cartography that possibilities of a broader exchange of experience and information in the field of geographical terminology would be most welcome.

35. The Czechoslovak delegation was attracted, at first sight, by the United States draft resolution (E/L.983), although it wished to stress the need for careful preparation which had already been mentioned by other representatives. The structure of the United States text seemed, however, somewhat illogical; it would seem rather premature for the Secretary-General to draw up a tentative agenda for the conference, as provided in operative paragraph 1, before Governments had been consulted on the desirability of convening such a conference, as provided in paragraph 2. From the statements already made by previous speakers, it would seem that Governments had widely differing views regarding the items to be included in that agenda. It would therefore be useless to draw up even a tentative agenda before Governments had been consulted. In view of the remarks he had just made, the United States delegation might wish to delete operative paragraph 1, for which the Czechoslovak delegation would be unable to vote in any event.

36. Turning to draft resolution E/L.982, he said that, although his delegation was anxious to promote co-operation under the United Nations in every possible way, the special situation of Asia and the Far East gave it pause in the present instance. It was for the Governments of that region to decide what conferences they wished, but not all the countries concerned were represented in the United Nations. As it stood, the text made no provision for the participation in the proposed conference of non-Member States. His delegation's support of the draft resolution would be contingent on the steps taken by the sponsors to guarantee full participation in the proposed conference by all the Governments that wished to do so.

37. Mr. CARRILLO (El Salvador) welcomed the efforts of the United Nations to promote progress in cartography. The Third Regional Cartographic Conference for Asia and the Far East had been highly successful and had adopted some very judicious resolutions. A point to which his delegation attached particular importance was co-operation in the mapping of frontier areas, on which the Third Conference had adopted a very practical recommendation.^{6/} He trusted that that point would be followed up at the proposed fourth regional conference for that area. His delegation supported draft resolution E/L.982 and welcomed the generous invitation of the Government of the Philippines.

38. He associated himself with the remarks made by previous speakers regarding the preparation and convening of an international conference on the standardization of geographical names. He supported the United States draft resolution as it stood.

39. Mr. MAKEEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that his country had not participated in the Third United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for Asia and the Far East and was not therefore in a position to evaluate its results. For that reason, it could not vote for the second preambular paragraph of draft resolution E/L.982. His delegation had protested at a previous session against the inadequate and unsatisfactory organization of that Conference; the same points arose with regard to the proposed fourth conference. In the United Nations, great stress was laid on co-operation for economic and social development; and yet the operative paragraph of the draft resolution provided for invitations only to "Governments of States Members of the United Nations and members of specialized agencies", thus excluding non-member Governments and making the conference unrepresentative of the region as a whole. He therefore proposed that the words "invitations to Governments of States Members of the United Nations and members of specialized agencies" should be replaced by the words "invitations to all countries of a particular region".

40. Turning to the draft resolution on the standardization of geographical names (E/L.983), he strongly endorsed the comments made by the Czechoslovak representative and the remarks of previous speakers regarding the preparation of the proposed conference. He supported the Czechoslovak proposal to delete operative paragraph 1, which was superfluous in any event; the Council could discuss the agenda of the

^{6/} *Ibid.*, p. 10, resolution 11.

conference at a later date in the light of the comments made by Governments. The USSR delegation's attitude to the draft resolution would depend on whether the Czechoslovak proposal was accepted and whether

provision was made for consultations with all interested Governments.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.